



## **NEWSLETTER**

**July 2019**

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# The British Society of Aesthetics Annual Conference 2019

St Anne's College Oxford, 6-8 September

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN:

<https://british-aesthetics.org/product/bsa-annual-conference-2019/>

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Elisabeth Camp (Rutgers), 'Expressive Style as  
Perspectival Performance'

Paul C. Taylor (Vanderbilt), 'On the Very Idea of a  
Philosophical Practice: Preface to a Prophetic Aesthetic'

Stewart Lee (stand-up comedian, writer, director)



## INVITED SYMPOSIUM

*Filming Time: Film, Philosophy, and the cinema of Richard  
Linklater*

Nancy Bauer (Tufts)

Marya Schechtman (Illinois)

Murray Smith (Kent)

## SYMPOSIA

*Author-Meets-Critics Panel on Being for Beauty: Aesthetic  
Agency and Value*

Alex King (SUNY, Buffalo)

Dominic McIver Lopes (British Columbia)

Nick Riggle (San Diego)

Murray Smith (Kent)

*Mystery, Aesthetics and Spirituality: East and West*

David E. Cooper (Durham)

Xiao Ouyang (Wuhan)

Mark Wynn (Leeds)

Zou Yuanjiang (Wuhan)

*Ethical Responses to Fiction*

Adriana Clavel-Vázquez (Sheffield)

María Jimena Clavel Vázquez (St Andrews/Stirling)

Panos Paris (Birkbeck)

Nils-Hennes Stear (Southampton)

Robin Zheng (Yale-NUS)

*The Changing Nature of the Musical Object*

Zed Adams (New School for Social Research)

Georgina Born (Oxford)

Christopher Haworth (Birmingham)

Zach Weinstein (Toronto)

## REGULAR PAPERS

Claire Anscomb (Kent), 'Photography and the Contact  
Phenomenon'

Dieter Declercq (Kent), 'Satire and the Sick World.  
Coping, not Curing'

Jonathan Gingerich (Washington University in St Louis),  
'Agency, Moral and Aesthetic'

Robert Stecker (Central Michigan), 'Aesthetic Value,  
Inversion, and the Ethical Properties of Artworks'

C. Thi Nguyen (Utah Valley), 'Autonomy and Aesthetic

Engagement'

Jessica Williams (South Florida), 'Kant on Aesthetic Attention and the Freedom of the Imagination'

Nick Wiltsher (Antwerp), 'Towards an Aesthetic Ontology of Genders'

Mark Windsor (Kent), 'Hume's Standard of Taste: Erasing the Circle'

## POSTGRADUATE PAPERS

Larissa Berger (Siegen), 'A Minimal Two-Acts Model of the Kantian Judgment of Taste'

Aurélie Debaene (Kent), '#IWokeUpLikeThis':

Demystifying Photogenic Images'

John Dyck (CUNY), 'There are no Aesthetic Obligations'

Irene Martínez Marín Uppsala), 'Art Appreciation: Whether You Like It or Not'

Moonyoung Song (Maryland College Park), 'Aesthetic Explanation and its Selectivity'

Kathryn Wojtkiewicz (CUNY), 'The Responsibility of Creation: Diversity, Stereotypes, and the Hermeneutical Responsibility of the Fiction Creator'

## PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Emily Caddick Bourne (co-chair, Hertfordshire), Hans Maes (co-chair, Kent), Katerina Bantinaki (Crete), Emily Brady (Texas A&M), Louise Hanson (Durham), Eileen John (Warwick), Jason Leddington (Bucknell), C. Thi Nguyen (Utah Valley), Heleen Pott (Erasmus University Rotterdam), Dawn Wilson (Hull)

## The British Society of Aesthetics Archive and 2020 Anniversary

I have some archive material related to the formation and running of the Society. It was last held at the University of Sussex. More than simply catalogue this material, I plan to write a piece about it. But to make it more than a history of committee meetings and accounts, I'd like to write something about the people and ideas that created the Society. And compare it with the Society now. There's much of interest in the archive material; but I've no doubt there's more.

For example, there are fascinating letters from the Society's first Hon. Sec. (using too what seems a standard mission statement from Herbert Read) to get finances for a journal and to attract leading artists to the Society's Advisory Committee (which included Benjamin Britten, Sir Kenneth Clark, Professor H.J. Eysenck, Sir John Gielgud, Yehudi Menuhin, Henry Moore, Victor Passmore, Stephen Spender, etc).

It's a long shot, I realise, but I invite any members of the Society to contact me with anything they think might help, both with writing an anniversary piece based on archive material and indeed on the whereabouts of material, especially from around 1960 (I should add that the Trustees know I have this small, but I think valuable, archive):

[jeffreypetts@hotmail.com](mailto:jeffreypetts@hotmail.com)

See also:

<https://british-aesthetics.org/about-the-society/>

Jeffrey Petts,

Thanks!

## Conference Reports

### **Narrative Justice:**

#### **A British Society of Aesthetics conference on aesthetic education from theory to practice**

Edge Hill University from 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019

Rafe McGregor hosted Narrative Justice: A British Society of Aesthetics Conference on Aesthetic Education. The conference was generously funded by the British Society of Aesthetics and facilities provided by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Edge Hill. The purpose of the conference was to exchange ideas between aesthetics and criminology – more specifically, to explore the intersection of the two disciplines in relation to narrative representation. As such, there were four speakers from each discipline. The conference was opened by Sarah Worth (philosophy, Furman), who presented a fascinating discussion of the way in which universities in the southern American states are confronting – or in some cases avoiding – their connections with slavery, some of which are substantial. Stephen Wakeman (criminology, Liverpool John Moores) argued for the significance of fictional representations to criminology, using HBO's *Game of Thrones* as a paradigm of contemporary penal policy. Derek Matravers (philosophy, Open) sketched a sophisticated position between Louis Mink and Noël Carroll in order to establish the relevance of super-truths in determining the relationship between non-fiction narrative representation and truth. Andrew Millie (criminology, Edge Hill) concluded the first day by tracing several areas of overlap across the subdisciplines of visual sociology, philosophical aesthetics, and theoretical criminology by means of the concept of taste. The second day was opened by Ronnie Lippens (criminology, Keele), who began with the novels of Don DeLillo, moved on to the relationship between law and waste, and then foregrounded the importance of

Lucifer as a model for twenty-first century leadership. Vladimir Rizov (criminology, Suffolk) used illustrations of suspected criminals being forced to pose for prototypical mugshots to argue for a power relation between photographer and subject that extends to all documentary photography and remains ethically problematic. Eileen John examined the transformative significance of words, reading, and writing in the context of incarceration, focusing on Malcolm X's experience as represented in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Naziya O'Reilly (philosophy of education, Leeds Trinity) closed the conference with an explanation of how Stanley Cavell's life, as represented in *Little Did I Know: Excerpts from Memory*, constituted a philosophy that could – and should – be applied to restorative practice at schools. All presentations were followed by lively discussions between and among the different disciplines and perspectives on justice and narrative. The conference was attended by twenty-six delegates, staff, and students.

### **Portraits and Philosophy**

11 May, 2018, National Portrait Gallery

This symposium, hosted and co-organised by the National Portrait Gallery, sought to address various philosophical questions around portraiture.

Kathleen Stock (Sussex University) opened the proceedings with a paper on objectification and 'subjectification' in portraiture, followed by Diarmuid Costello (University of Warwick) who addressed the notion of shame in relation to Lee Friedlander's late self-portraits.

In the next session the photographer Nadav Kander was interviewed by Max Houghton (London College of Communication) and the morning of the symposium was concluded with a roundtable discussion.

In the afternoon we had four more presentations: Hans Maes (University of Kent) on 'Portraits of Unkonwn

People', Bence Nanay (University of Antwerp) on 'Portraits of People Not Present', Stacie Friend (Birkbeck: University of London) on 'Real Portraits in Fictional Worlds', and Martin Hammer (University of Kent) on 'Creating and Viewing Portraits'.

After a final and fruitful roundtable discussion, audience members were invited to visit the special exhibition 'Tacita Dean: PORTRAIT' and the permanent collection of the National Portrait Gallery.



Martin Hammer (University of Kent)

## **The Philosophy of Film Without Theory Conference**

University of York, 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> January 2019

Supported by the British Society of Aesthetics, the White Rose College of Arts and Humanities and the University of York Philosophy Department, the conference hosted 66 delegates from England, Scotland, Australia, the USA, Guyana, Romania, Sweden, Spain, the Czech Republic, Israel, Croatia, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany. There were 10 plenary talks and 20 parallel session presentations by philosophers, film studies scholars, film critics, art historians, and film-makers all intent on exploring a

wide range of non-, a, and anti-theoretical ways of engaging in the philosophy of film under the 'without theory' rubric.

The conference co-directors Craig Fox (California University of Pennsylvania) and Britt Harrison (University of York) welcomed delegates at the start of the first day before handing over to Andrew Klevan (Oxford) for the opening plenary talk. Andrew put his own methodological marker down with an argument for the value of 'Ordinary Language Film Studies'. In the second plenary, entitled 'We do not have to have a theoretical interest in morality: Murdoch's Metaphysics as a Guide to Movies', Lucy Bolton (Queen Mary) brought Iris Murdoch into fascinating contact with the disturbing 2012 film *Compliance*. Mik Burley (Leeds) then took a close look at *Dead Man Walking* in his paper 'Disclosing Religious and Ethical Possibilities through film'. Sophie Grace Chappell (Open), confessed her unabashedly populist taste in movies, to much delight, as an entrée into her talk 'Going to the pictures with Roger Scruton: imaginative identification in literature – and film'.

The first day's twelve parallel talks took delegates on a cinematic journey from Micky Mouse to Werner Herzog, Wittgenstein to Ben Hur, Rilke to *Wings of Desire*, and *A Few Good Men* to the Dardennes Brothers, before the day rounded off with enjoyable discussions, and food, at York's popular tapas restaurant, Ambiente.

The second day began with two short plenaries from conference co-directors Craig Fox and Britt Harrison: Craig investigated 'Paying Attention to Love in Berman's Scenes from a Marriage' before Britt tried out some ideas about 'Dramatic argument in *The Godfather*: the value of contradiction'. Screenwriter, priest and medieval philosopher Colin Heber Percy roamed unfettered across two centuries of philosophical and theological ground in 'The flesh is weak: Empathy and becoming human in Jonathan Glazer's *Under the Skin*'

and Rob Van Gerwen (Utrecht) drew on Robert Bresson's fascinating notions about acting, as part of his own 'The character as a spectator in the picture'. In the penultimate plenary, Victor Dura-Vila offered some challenging insights into Antonioni's classic *L'avventura*, the relation between moral and aesthetic value, and the relation between research and teaching. Throughout the day 8 additional parallel sessions explored invited delegates to 'abandon theory and embrace race', 'not take Thomas Kuhn to the movies', consider 'film history as a challenge to analytic aesthetics' and understand aspects of pornography in terms of the 'aesthetics of embodiment'. The conference was brought to close by David Macarthur (Sydney) in a thoroughly apposite talk, 'Film and Skepticism: Cavell on our relation to others on film.'

abreast of ongoing and future developments in this exciting new area of philosophy of (in and through) film. It is hoped that there will be a second Philosophy of Film *Without Theory* Conference in 2021, this time in the United States.



Conference Delegates in the Bowland Auditorium, Humanities Research Centre



Conference Co-directors Craig Fox and Britt Harrison

Whilst those attending the conference did not arrive at a consensus about what the philosophy of film without theory might be, the subject's value, resources and potential as a family of open-ended methodologies was undisputed. In the wake of the conference, Craig Fox and Britt Harrison are guest-editing (with Editor-in-Chief, Rob van Gerwen) a special issue of the online journal *Aesthetics Investigations* on the conference topic: philosophy of film *without theory*. The Conference website has been repurposed to keep delegates and the growing number of interested parties



Lucy Bolton (Queen Mary College, London University)



Mik Burley (University of Leeds)

A philosophical rewarding and downright fun - in the words of many of the delegates - time was had by all, not least thanks to the excellent location and facilities of the Humanities Research Centre at the University of York.

## **CALLS FOR PAPERS**

See the BSA website for details and more news:

<https://british-aesthetics.org/news/>

## **FUNDING AND AWARDS**

The latest funding opportunities are also on the website.

Go to:

<https://british-aesthetics.org/funding/>

