

The Object as Process. Essays Situating Artistic Practice.

Deadline: Nov 30, 2019

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Call for Chapters

Objective:

As a research team devoted to artistic practice, we are motivated by the questions: How does artistic practice lead to the production of knowledge? How does, in turn, artistic knowledge relate to its material base? How does contingent materiality guide the artist towards finding form and developing a statement?

The proposed volume is consecrated to the object as a process in order to offer new insights into the ways the object (broadly construed, comprising digital and other non-classical objects) becomes an active element in artistic practice. This exploration intends to furnish a better understanding of artistic production.

In order to maintain the material aspect of artistic practice in focus, the volume's contributions are invited to employ reflectively terms such as: 'object', 'thing', 'product' and 'form'. Similarly 'resistance' can be used as a means of brining materiality into focus, inasmuch as materiality is commonly understood to contribute by resisting the artist's intentions and ideas. Finally, the function of the body can be explored as a vector of overcoming reductive polarities such subject-object, mind-matter, active-passive, etc.

Background:

The transformation of the traditional understanding of the subject-object relationship defined 20th century philosophical debates. Emerging from within the scientific sphere, the field of mathematics and Poincaré's analysis situs, this transformation left no theoretical and practical discipline unaffected. The Heideggerian concept of Dasein is arguably one of the most articulate and resonant expressions of this transformation. The notions of Being-there and Being-in-the-world effected a profound break with the Cartesian dualism *res cogitans/res extensa*, by rendering the subject into a topological space which no longer represents the centre of experience. In this space, the egological understanding of the subject progressively vanishes, leaving behind a human figure shaped by the relationships of its surrounding objects. Numerous phenomenological responses attempted similar recastings, from Patocka's a-subjective phenomenology to Merleau-Ponty's idea of the world, to which a subject belongs, rather than merely being in it. Different scientific fields directed their interest towards the same problematic. Consider, for instance, within the field of anthropology, Tim Ingold's extensive research or the recent works by Fernando Domínguez Rubio.

In this frame, the being of the subject emerges as a constant process of establishing relationships with objects (Gegenstände) that, in their turn, exert a specific force on the subject itself. Accordingly, the subject modifies objects that, in their turn, generate the space experienced by the subject. At the same time, the object, as an active entity in continuous transformation, shapes the subject and plays an active role in the subject's daily practice. This last phenomenon, which, within the field of the Anthropology of Art, and especially in Günter Anders' oeuvre, was identified with a kind of psychology of things, brings attention to the role played by the object in artistic practice. In fact, as remarked by Roberto Esposito, artistic objects are not just simple things; they display a kind of subjective force that makes them entities capable of acting upon processes. It is precisely this character of the object – the understanding of the object as process – that the volume intends to highlight within the artistic practices as well as within every creative process.

Within a technological context in which both objects and subjects face the force of dematerialisation exerted by digital technology, it is of extreme importance to inquire into the ways in which the object, its materiality, affordance, resistance and digital dematerialisation could influence – and maybe determine – the creative process and the artistic practice.

Recommended topics

Chapter proposals for the volume include but are not limited to topics such as:

- The object in Art.
- Insights into affordance within the frame of an 'autonomous' object.
- The body as sensitive space of conciliation between 'subject' and 'object'.
- The phenomenon of dematerialization and its impact on practices (digitalization).
- Analysis of the material (and non-material) characteristics (e.g. resistance) and the influence these can have on the creative process.
- Energetic transformations across material, form and object.
- Intentionality, resistance and the art object.
- Art historical approaches to the object in artistic practice.
- Processes of reification.
- Epistemic vs. aesthetic things.
- Insights into the relations between performativity and the imaginary.
- Analysis of specific case studies.
- Mental images, inner mental work: denying the material object.
- Artistic appropriation.

Editorial Team

Prof. Dr. Stephan Schmidt-Wulffen

Dr. German A. Duarte

Submission procedure:

We invite you to submit by 30-11-2019 an abstract (300 words) + a short bio to the following address GDuarte@unibz.it Authors will be notified by 20-11-2019. Full chapters are expected to be submitted by 01.03.2020. All submitted chapters will be reviewed through a double-blind review.

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Reference:

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