

Anthology: The Aesthetics of Political Organizing and Social Movements

Deadline: Oct 14, 2019

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Scholars, Artists, and Activists

Anthology: Politics as Public Art: The Aesthetics of Political Organizing and Social Movements

Edited by: Zoie McNeill and Martin Zebracki

This anthology will provide critical new insights into politics and social movements as inherently aesthetic, moving beyond the arts as political and playing with the political as artistic. It seeks cutting-edge contributions from leading and emerging scholars, artists, and activists that will update and expand notions that have dominated art practices in public spaces since the 1990s, such as relational aesthetics, dialogic art, new genre public art and socially-engaged art. It will bring these strands of scholarship in critical dialogue with more contemporary interdisciplinary art theories, notably choreopolitics, which are concerned with the artistic orchestration of the political in public art practice and performance in contemporary everyday contexts. In so doing, this collection will demonstrate the possibilities of public art for incorporating political changes and responses as part of its practice. Thereby, it aims to reveal how politically dispositioned public art may develop its critical potential to reciprocally inform creative practice and social change. The contributions at this politico-aesthetic nexus will do so in a concerted and greater endeavor to challenge, and politicize, the interwoven fabric of dominant norms, hegemonic policies and governmentalities, and processes of social marginalization and exclusion.

The volume is structured around two open-ended themes with the below guiding considerations. Essentially, we seek submissions that frame various protests and social movements through the idea of politics themselves as a form of public art.

Theme 1: The Arts of Political Movements: A Theoretical Genealogy

This theme encourages theoretical and experimental explorations into cultural and political studies, visual arts and performance studies, contemporary and socially engaged art theory, and critical dance studies.

We welcome accounts that engage with participatory understandings of art practice that range from the relational aesthetic work of Nicolas Bourriaud to the relational antagonism work of Claire Bishop to the critical dance studies of Rodney Diverlus. We also encourage contributors to consider the epistemological dimensions of the work of scholars like André Lepecki, Susan Foellmer and Susan Foster in addition to the more traditional social movement scholars including Mancur Olsen, John McCarthy, and Mayer Zald. We also seek contributions that build on class-based

social movement theory (such as Marxist theories), collective action and mass psychology theories (e.g. Émile Durkheim and Hannah Arendt), civil society and resource mobilization theories, identity politics, new social movement theory, and theories of affect.

As such, this theme asks questions such as:

How can theories and genealogies across the humanities and social sciences be used to understand protests, social movements and political actors as also aesthetic entities, objects or artistic actors? What can such protests and social movements offer to theoretical and interdisciplinary understandings or how do they challenge them?

What does understanding political organizing as inherently aesthetic or as a performance add to, or challenge, social mobilization and performance theories?

How can political assembly as a form of choreopolitics help re-framing the social movements of marginalized communities? (see work by Grant Kester, Rodney Diverlus, and Thomas DeFrantz, amongst others)

Theme 2: Bodies in Space: The Aesthetic Politics of Protest

This theme focuses on methodological and empirical contributions with a focus on bodily, lived experiences to consider issues such as public and/vs. private spaces and ownership, gentrification, new genre and participatory public art. Contributors may also expand on empirical translations and implications of key notions, including site specificity and neoliberal subjectivity. This theme moreover welcomes practice-based engagements with politics of space, including Foucauldian understandings of power and surveillance and theories around politics as practice. Furthermore, contributors are encouraged to 'put in place' issues around disidentification (e.g. Jose Munoz), queer studies (which critiques racialized sexual knowledges), queer of color critique (e.g. E. Patrick Johnson, Roderick Ferguson, and Cathy Cohen), and gendered subjectivity (e.g. Judith Butler and Jack Halberstam).

As such, this theme asks questions such as:

What can be understood by empirical explorations of bodies organizing in public space as not only political but also aesthetic entities or actors?

How do art, space, and politics interact in grassroots organizing? How do grassroots organizers utilize art and space to do their work? How do they reveal their 'publicness'? And how can the audience be understood in such political spaces?

How can creating space through choreopolitics challenge 'the State' and create critical, dissent-based dialogues amongst activists and the State? How are marginalized communities choreopoliced internally and externally? How can this empower and alter their work?

We envisage to choose 4-5 chapter abstracts for each theme. Abstracts are due 14 October 2019. First chapter drafts due Spring 2020. Word count roughly around 6 to 7K words, depending on confirmed publisher's guidance. Envisaged publishing deadline: end 2021/early 2022. All submissions will undergo rigorous peer review. We aim to work with an established university press.

Please send submissions here:
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeP6Ycz0xX5ZDE1uXssl1bS6sCTrqqKnTibRm2UjpcIhSYTJg/viewform>

If you have any queries, please feel free to email mcneill_zoie@alumni.ceu.edu AND m.m.zebracki@leeds.ac.uk. Submitters should hear back by mid-November.

Reference:

CFP: Anthology: The Aesthetics of Political Organizing and Social Movements. In: Arthist.net, Sep 22, 2019 (accessed Jan 24, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/21623>>.