

Aesthetics, art, and pornography (London, 16–18 Jun 11)

Hans Maes

[x-post H-Ideas]

AESTHETICS, ART, AND PORNOGRAPHY

An interdisciplinary conference

16-18 June 2011

Institute of Philosophy, London

(in collaboration with the Aesthetics Research Group, University of Kent)

The aim of this conference is to investigate, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the artistic status and aesthetic dimension of pornographic pictures, films, and literature.

Is there such a thing as pornographic art? Or are pornography and art mutually exclusive? Can a line be drawn between these two domains of representation? Or is there perhaps some interesting overlap, some common ground worth exploring? To answer these questions certain fundamental issues in the philosophy of art need to be addressed. One cannot hope to critically examine the middle ground between art and pornography without seriously engaging with current research on the definition of art, the nature of aesthetic value, aesthetic experience, aesthetic properties, the relation between art and morality, the psychology of picture perception, and the role of imagination in art. However, more is involved than just an abstract philosophical problem. In the history of art, and especially also in the contemporary world of art (construed in the broadest sense), there are many paintings, photographs, prints, films, poems, short stories, novels and graphic novels which have been labelled 'pornographic art'. Any investigation of the artistic status and potential of pornographic representations would not be complete without a careful examination of such works that consciously explore the boundaries between art and pornography. The conference will bring together philosophers and aestheticians, art historians and film theorists, to explore these topics. This interdisciplinary approach is intended to throw new light on these general questions, and to lead to a more accurate and subtle understanding of the range of representations that incorporate explicit sexual imagery and themes, in both high art and demotic culture, in Western and non-Western contexts.

CONFIRMED SPEAKERS

JERROLD LEVINSON Philosophy, University of Maryland

JESSE PRINZ Philosophy, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

ELISABETH SCHELLEKENS Philosophy, University of Durham

PAMELA CHURCH-GIBSON Film & Cultural Studies, University of the Arts
London

MARTIN KEMP History of Art, Oxford University (Emeritus Research Professor)

Additional speakers to be announced.

CALL FOR PAPERS

We invite submissions on any issue related to this topic, ranging from abstract philosophical questions to detailed analyses of particular films, paintings, photographs, novels, etc. Papers from different disciplines and theoretical perspectives are encouraged.

Speakers will have a presentation time of approximately 40 minutes. Papers should not exceed 5000 words and should be accompanied by a 100-word abstract and a short CV. Please send papers to conference organiser Hans Maes (H.Maes@kent.ac.uk) by February 1, 2011.

Communication of acceptance:

March 15, 2011.

Submissions will be refereed by an international committee, and selected on the basis of general quality and relevance to the special topic of the conference. The organisers plan to publish (a selection of) the conference papers.

We welcome volunteers to serve as session chairs and commentators. We regret that we cannot cover travel or other expenses.

Organising committee: Hans Maes, Michael Newall, Murray Smith, Barry C. Smith, Jerrold Levinson, Jonathan Friday.

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Reference:

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