Facts and Values in Aesthetics (Florence, 24-28 Jun 14)

Villa Finaly, Florence, Italy, Jun 24–28, 2014
Deadline: Mar 1, 2014

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Facts and Values in Aesthetics: Contemporary Stakes and Approaches

The Sixth Mediterranean Congress of Aesthetics will take place at Villa Finaly in Florence, Italy, from the 24th to the 28th of June, 2014, and will be concerned with the contemporary debate over the opposition of facts and values in aesthetics.

Please note the extended deadline: March 1, 2014
(was January 12, 2014)

In a text entitled The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy and Other Essays (2004), Hilary Putnam argues convincingly against a classic opposition which does not serve philosophical reflection positively; in fact, this apparently unquestioned and unquestionable dichotomy, which is the nature of all dogma, leaves many unsolved, untreated, unseen and unexamined problems.

Putnam's analysis mostly focuses on the theory and practice of knowledge, but one can legitimately extend it to other fields, starting with that of aesthetics, which sooner or later is confronted with the question of whether one defends or rejects the dichotomy. Keeping or rejecting it implies reasons to do so, but often these reasons remains implicit, most especially in aesthetics.

Certain observable features in the fields of aesthetics, practice and artistic creation show that old evaluation criteria may now be obsolete. This is because upon further consideration, the definition of value remains opaque: should the artwork be judged according to its moral value, its market value, or its formal value? To side with or against the concept of value in art and aesthetics does not preclude a certain number of differences concerning the very nature of what is meant by value. If traditionally the 'fact' was the work, taken in all its tangibility, currently the materiality of the object no longer seems to play such a major role. Art is increasingly populated by

so-called ‘immaterial’ or ‘ephemeral’ works and is therefore rarely, or badly, quantifiable according to old aesthetic and economic evaluation criteria.

Aesthetic judgement, the keystone of all philosophical thought on art, as well as the practice of criticism seem to be jeopardized. Can we pass judgement? If necessary, would the aesthetic be transformed? Would it be eradicated from its very origins as a science of the sensible? Practical-moral questions are gaining the upper hand over more conventionally formal questions. The social function of art therefore seems to be against a radical idea of artistic and aesthetic autonomy. Socio-political issues come to also integrate aesthetic questioning, now in an increasingly expanded sense, where the authority of the people involved, their social status, their nationality, their origins, can come to add (or sometimes subtract) an element to the very value of works they create or simply enable us to perceive.

The link between the economic and the cultural, notably with the increasingly important commitment to cultural policies, allows us to understand that the cultural value of art sometimes predominates over the old universal value it used to have. The progressively pragmatic contextualization of works within the social space puts forward a new definition of aesthetic value, no longer eternal and ideal, but rather anchored in the sensible and the politico-economic issues of a culturally specific situation.

At the time of this 6th Congress, the Mediterranean basin passes through an unparalleled crisis. How can we not ask the question of the role of art in such a context? What is the value of art, and how can we view this crisis from the perspective of aesthetics? The context and the current changes support the idea that the question of ‘value’ and its confrontation with the concept of ‘fact’ is urgent. What role do artistic practices and aesthetic theories play? A role of emancipation, of liberation, escape, or transformation? Or on the contrary, could art become another means to subject individuals to the status quo?

As can easily be noticed, the question of maintaining or rejecting the dichotomy of facts and values is at the heart of the most pressing issues. This conference cannot ignore it.

Proposals may address the following topics, but are not limited to them:
- the pros / cons : what facts? what values? and for what purpose?
- aesthetic judgment (can we do without it?) and criticism
- ethical and practical moral questions

- socio-political questions
- the link between the economic and the cultural (including: cultural policies, their choices and their consequences)
- contexts and current changes
- facts and values in artistic practices
- issues of censorship and the law
- art and biotechnologies, what limits, what is allowed or not - and why?
- differences in the arts and practices (film, dance, performance, theatre, etc.)
- issues of identity, gender

Preference will be given to proposals for papers on the relationship between aesthetics, philosophy of art and ethical, moral, and socio-political contemporary issues.

Please note that three keynote speakers have already confirmed their participation: Marie-José Mondzain (Paris), Fabrizio Desideri (Florence), Pere Salabert (Barcelona).

Proposals should include a title, an abstract of approximately 250 words (1,500 characters including spaces), and a short biography and bibliography of the author. They should be sent by email to Jacinto Lageira (jlageira@wanadoo.fr) and Evangelos Athanassopoulos (evangelos.athanassopoulos@sfr.fr) before March 1st 2014. The proposals will then be sent anonymously to a selection committee. A reply will be sent before March 15th. Selected participants will then receive information about Congress registration (through Paris 1 services) and accommodation arrangements (through Villa Finally services - see website).

Organising Committee:
- ACTE Institute (Art Creation Theory Aesthetics) - UMR 8218, University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne and CNRS, Research Group Æsthetica - Art and Philosophy
- Evangelos Athanassopoulos (University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne)
- Barbara Formis (University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne)
- Jacinto Lageira (University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne)

With the participation of:
- Société Française d’Esthétique
- Società Italiana di Estetica (SIE)
- Chancellerie des Universités de Paris
- École doctorale Arts plastiques, Esthétique et Sciences de l’art, University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne
- Aisthesis. Pratiche, linguaggi e saperi dell'estetico
- Proteus, Cahiers des théories de l’art

Scientific Committee:
Matilde Carrasco Barranco (University of Murcia), Dominique Chateau (University Paris 1), Richard Conte (University Paris 1), Filippo Fimiani (University of Salerno), Christophe Genin (University Paris 1), Giovanni Matteucci (University of Bologna), Raffaele Milani (University of Bologna), Mario Perniola (University Roma 3 Tor Vergata), Salvador Rubio Marco (University of Murcia), Maryvonne Saison (University Paris X), Carole Talon-Hugon (French Society of Aesthetics / University of Nice), Dionysios Zivas (Hellenic Society for Aesthetics).

- Villa Finaly, Chancellerie des Universités de Paris
http://www.villafinaly.sorbonne.fr
- ACTE Institute - UMR 8218 - Æsthetica, Art and Philosophy
http://www.institut-acte.cnrs.fr
- Société Française d'Esthétique
http://www.s-f-e.org
- Società Italiana di Estetica (SIE)
http://www.siestetica.it/
- Aisthesis. Pratiche, linguaggi e saperi dell'estetico
http://www.fupress.net/index.php/aisthesis
- Proteus, Cahiers des théories de l'art
http://www.revue-proteus.com/

Reference:
CFP: Facts and Values in Aesthetics (Florence, 24-28 Jun 14). In: ArtHist.net, Jan 16, 2014 (accessed Nov 24, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/6783>.