

SSPPP 2017

Ca' Foscari University Venice

ABSTRACTS OF THE SEMINARS

Nicolas de Warren (Husserl Archives at KU Leuven)

Flesh Made Paint

In this session, we shall discuss Deleuze's counter-phenomenological analysis of the paintings of Francis Bacon in *The Logic of Sensation*. In addition to exploring how Deleuze proposes an alternative approach to painting, expression, and embodiment to Merleau-Ponty's celebrated essay *Eye and Mind*, this session will also explore how Deleuze's analysis of painting resonates with Aby Warburg's idea of "Pathosformel."

Recommended texts: *The Logic of Sensation* (Deleuze), *A Lecture on Serpent Ritual* (Warburg).

Further suggested readings: *Triptych: Three Studies After Francis Bacon* (Jonathan Littell), *Francis Bacon* (Michel Leiris), *Looking back at Francis Bacon* (David Sylvester).

Roberta Dreon (Ca' Foscari University Venice)

Merleau-Ponty's Recherches sur l'usage littéraire du langage, his ideas on language and a few doubts

The talk will be focused on the recent publications of Merleau-Ponty's course notes dating back to the early fifties, *Le monde sensible et le monde de l'expression* and *Recherches sur l'usage littéraire du langage*. While preliminarily articulating his conception of expression, which plays a decisive role in explaining the continuity between perception and language, the talk will be centered on the second course, where the idea of the two alleged languages finds support and is developed in a more

radical direction through Merleau-Ponty's engagement with the experience of the writer trying to find new words to convey his own experience of the word. This emphasis on the *langage conquérant* at the expenses of ordinary shared linguistic practices is critically considered, also in the light of other research trajectories followed by the French philosopher in the same period.

Reading list

Merleau-Ponty M. 2001 *Psychologie et pédagogie de l'enfant. Cours de Sorbonne 1949-1952*, Lagrasse, Verdier.

Merleau-Ponty M. 2011 *Le monde sensible et le monde de l'expression. Cours au Collège de France. Notes, 1953*, Genève, MetisPresses.

Merleau-Ponty M. 2013 *Recherches sur l'usage littéraire du langage. Cours au Collège de France. Notes, 1953*, Genève, MetisPresses.

Matteo Giannasi (Ca' Foscari University Venice)

Feeling Like Art

The lecture shall address classic questions regarding the unity and relevance of the arts, against the background of a cultural and social paradox: despite a growing awareness of the late appearance, contingency, and eurocentrism, of the very notions of fine arts and aesthetics, contemporary societies are experiencing a progressive artification and aesthetisation, which are conquering ever growing aspects of human experience. The lecture shall apply phenomenological theoretical tools to the interpretation of opposite classic positions, occupied, respectively, by P. Kristeller and W. Tatarkiewicz, the former being credited for claiming there is no stable *definiendum* for a definition of art to capture, and that aesthetics and the arts are but recent phenomena rooted in western European culture, the latter maintaining that the modern introduction of such notions as fine arts and aesthetics in Europe was just a late and inevitable labelling of pre-existing mental states, experiences, and emotional responses.

The phenomenological approach, and in particular Husserl's own interpretation of art and aesthetic phenomena, shall be discussed with respect to such positions and against the background of the

classic questions of whether there is something in common, which the appreciation of a poem, of a sculpture, or of a melody, all share, and whether what they share is similar to what accompanies the appreciation of a landscape or a human face, and different from what accompanies the receiving of a compliment or the winning of a game. What happens, when something begins or ceases to be appreciated or experienced in that particular way, i.e. is there something which phenomenologically characterises the experience of art? And is that kind of experience something universal?

Reading list

Husserliana 23 *Phantasie, Bildbewusstsein, Erinnerung. Zur Phänomenologie der anschaulichen Vergegenwärtigungen. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1898-1925)*. [Imagination, picture/image consciousness, memory: on the phenomenology of intuitive presentations. Texts from the estate (1898-1925).] Edited by Eduard Marbach. The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1980.

T. Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, London, Blackwell, 1990.

P. O. Kristeller, «*The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics*» Part I, "Journal of the History of Ideas", Vol. 12, No. 4 (Oct., 1951), 496-527.

A. E. Peponi, *Frontiers of Pleasure. Models of Aesthetic Response in Archaic and Classical Greek Thought*, Oxford-New York, Oxford University Press, 2012

G. G. Starr, *Feeling Beauty. The Neuroscience of Aesthetic Experience*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 2013

W. Tatarkiewicz, *A History of Six Ideas*, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1980

Niall Keane (University of Limerick)

“Gleaning the unsaid off the palpable”: Heidegger and Poietic Experience

This lecture will examine the experience of art, truth, and poetry as outlined by Heidegger in two texts from the mid-1930s. The first is the “The Origin of the Work of Art”, and the second is a lecture Heidegger gave in Rome in 1936 entitled: “Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry”. I shall contextualize these texts and show how they shed light on the intersections of art, truth, and poetry in the development of Heidegger’s reflections on the origin and essence of art. These texts will then be brought together with two of Heidegger’s post-war lectures from 1958 entitled “The Essence of Language” and “Das Wort”, which are reflections on the poetry of Stefan George. While there are notable differences of emphasis amongst these texts, I shall conclude by considering them as illustrative of the arc of Heidegger’s attempts to the reconceive ‘experience’ and ‘truth’ in relation to works of art, and of poetry in particular, focusing particularly on the disruptive and transformative ‘experience’ that these encounters with works of art bring about.

Kwok-ying Lau (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)

Merleau-Ponty’s Phenomenology of Pictorial Vision: from the Cézanne article to “Eye and Mind”

This talk provides a comprehensive understanding of the philosophy of art of Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) in relation to his phenomenological and ontological thought from the period of his first mature work *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) to the time of his untimely death in 1961. It sketches the essential moments of Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of pictorial vision from the Cézanne article of 1945 to *Eye and Mind* of 1961, drawing supplementary information from other sources. It attempts to answer the two basic questions underlying Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy of art. 1. Why did Merleau-Ponty favored singularly Cézanne among all Western painters? 2. Why the privilege given to Cézanne in the first place disappeared in the last writings of Merleau-Ponty? By way of answering these two questions, this talk attempts to show that:

- i. Since Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology aims at a rehabilitation of the sensible, he has an aesthetics constructed around his meditations on art and painting which forms an integral part of his philosophy.
- ii. The evolution of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of pictorial vision is parallel to the development of Merleau-Ponty's ontological thinking, with the effect that his meditation on painting occupies progressively a more central position within his entire philosophical endeavor.
- iii. The aesthetics embedded in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of pictorial vision is an aesthetics of a new type: it is not a conceptual framework constructed to explain or to give sense to aesthetic experience in general; rather, it is aesthetic experience understood as experience of the sensible which provides the basis for a new conception of ontology: ontology of the flesh which is the Sensible-in-itself, the origin of all forms of idealities.

This talk thus contributes to throw light on the complex relation between phenomenological ontology and aesthetics in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy.

Claudio Majolino (University of Lille)

Beyond Good and Bad: Remarks on Phenomenology and Contemporary Art

Although the defining features of what is usually called "phenomenology" are quite vague and may differ significantly from author to author, there is no doubt that several thinkers usually labeled as "phenomenologists" have written on art in general, specific forms of art in particular and even on singular works of art. This holds true for Ingarden, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, M. Henry and many others. Moreover, the issue of the "essence of art" is one of the most recurrent in the so-called phenomenological tradition. But can "phenomenology", in any of its putative forms, soundly and satisfactorily address the question "what is (a work of) art?" in a time where the answer to this very question could be as broad as to include, literally, "anything"? One of the main issues of the debate on contemporary art is in fact to accept or reject the claim that "everything whatsoever is/can be art". Is phenomenology ultimately able to deal with such a daunting task? This lecture will be roughly divided in three parts. I will begin by drawing a map of the most distinctive approaches to art variously dubbed as "phenomenological". After having highlighted their potential common

traits, I will briefly measure their strengths and weaknesses, especially with respect to their ability to answer to the key question “is *this* (a work of) art?”. In the third and final part I will turn to Husserl’s notions of “phantasy”, “example”, “evaluation” and “esthetical attitude” as to see whether they may contain some promising insights to consider the issue at stake from the point of view of transcendental phenomenology.

Regina-Nino Mion (Istanbul Technical University)

Husserl’s theory of image consciousness

The lecture gives an overview of Edmund Husserl’s theory of image consciousness [Bildbewusstsein] with a special focus on his early texts (until 1905). Accordingly, it will be explained what are the three objects in image consciousness: i) the physical image [das physische Bild] or the physical thing [Bild Ding]; ii) the image object [Bildobjekt]; and the image subject [Bildsubjekt]. The distinction between phantasy presentation [Phantasievorstellung] and physical imagination [die physische Imagination] will also be discussed. The main source for the lecture is Text No 1 in Husserliana XXIII, Phantasy, Image Consciousness, and Memory. Husserl’s theory will be illustrated with examples of various artworks.

Panos Theodorou (University of Crete)

Toward a phenomenology of the “sensus communis” in art experience

Kant’s notion of a *sensus communis* as ground for the possibility of establishing the intersubjective commitment of the aesthetic judgment has been the center of a wide discussion in the philosophy of art. Both within the Kantian scholarship (e.g., Allison and Guyer) and in the general discussion (e.g., Gadamer, Lyotard, and Arendt) on our experience and estimation of the works of art, this notion surfaces as pivotal for a theory regarding these phenomena. This notion has a long history behind itself. Kant uses it already in his pre-critical period, apparently influenced by the Scottish moral and aesthetic tradition that was referring to a “common sense” as basis for our communication and agreement on issues of morality but also of aesthetic assessment. The western philosophical tradition in general draws heavily from analyses traceable back to Aquinas and to

Cicero and his surrounding Roman appropriation of Stoic sources. Cicero is reported as the first to have used the expression “sensus communis” and Aquinas takes and uses it as a translation of Aristotle’s “koinē aesthesis” (κοινή αἴσθησις). In this propagation of a notion that refers to a capacity in the soul that lies behind the five senses and has the ability to function as an organizer of the *sensoria propria* but also as the touchstone or judge of the truth of what is given to the senses appears to be an excellent and deep discovery in the area of epistemology. But how did this notion become so transformed as to be seen as a kind of *feeling* that plays a role in the sphere of morality and of aesthetic appreciation? And how, especially in Kant, it acquires the crucial role of grounding the possibility of intersubjectively committing judgments in the area of aesthetic experience? The question has tantalized the aforementioned traditions and discussions. Until now it has only peripherally bothered the relevant analyses in the sphere of Phenomenology. It seems that a proper understanding and further penetrating in this issue demands that we have a suitable analysis of the feeling and emotive phenomena capable of accounting for the possibility of grounding intersubjective and also objective judgments in the sphere of aesthetic assessment and of experience of values more generally. What I intend to present in the forthcoming Workshop is (1) a concise presentation of the history of the term “*sensus communis*,” (2) a reconstruction of Kant’s appeal to and use of it, (3) a critical analysis of the main Kantian understandings of its place in Kant’s third *Critique*, (4) a short reference to Arendt’s interpretation of it in the context of her development of a Kantian theory of politics, and (5) the main guidelines for a phenomenological appropriation of the line of thought and for a renewed understanding of *sensus communis* as a complex intentional experience in which we are presented with not only aesthetic but also praxial values in general. Finally, an effort will also be made to delineate a tentative elucidation of the ‘essence’ of the works of art, compatible with a thusly achieved understanding of the experience under discussion, as well as to try to explore the state of contemporary and current art production.

Reading list

- Allison, Henry. 2001. *Kant's Theory of Taste: A Reading of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*. Cambridge University Press. Esp. ch. 7.
- Guyer, Paul. ²1997. *Kant and the Claims of Taste*. Cambridge University Press. Esp. ch. 8.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. ²2004. *Truth and Method*. Continuum. Ch.-§ 1.B.ii
- Kant, Immanuel. 2002. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Cambridge University Press. Esp. Part 1: Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment.

- Arendt, Hannah. 1992. *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*. Chicago University Press. Esp. 10th-13th Sessions.
- Lyotard, Jean-François. 1992. "Sensus Communis," in Andrew Benjamin (ed.), *Judging Lyotard*. Routledge, pp. 1-25.
- Theodorou, Panos. 2012. "Husserl's Original Project for a Normative Phenomenology of Emotions and Values," in Ivo De Gennaro (ed.), *Values: Readings and Sources on a Key Concept of the Globalized World*. Leiden-Boston: Brill, pp. 265-289.
- Theodorou, Panos. 2014. "Pain, Pleasure, and the Intentionality of Emotions as Experiences of Values: A New Phenomenological Perspective," *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 14, / Special Issue: Andreas Elpidorou and Lauren Freeman (guest eds), The Phenomenology and Science of Emotions, pp. 625-641.

Fotini Vassiliou (Athens Advanced School of Fine Arts)

Aesthetic Experience: From Kant to Husserl to Merleau-Ponty

Our point of departure in this seminar will be the presentation of some key elements of Kantian Aesthetics with our interest focused more specifically on the "Analytic of the Beautiful" in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790). We will then turn to Edmund Husserl with the aim of exploring three important dimensions of his theory on aesthetic experience and showing their relevance to Kant's theory. These dimensions concern (a) the character of disinterestedness, (b) the role form plays in the constitution of aesthetic objects, and (c) the relation of aesthetic experience to conceptual acts. In our discussion we will have the opportunity to address questions regarding, for example, Husserl's parallelism of the phenomenological attitude to the aesthetic attitude, the mereological relations of parts and the consequent emergence of aesthetic qualities, the relation between simple sensuous perception, image consciousness and aesthetic contemplation, the interrelation of the different sense modalities in contemplating pieces of the visual arts. Finally we will examine how all these themes are dealt with in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological philosophy and we will pay particular attention to the pertinent role played by perceptual intentionality for the constitution of aesthetic experience.

Reading List

Kant, Immanuel, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, Königlich Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Band V (Berlin: Georg Reimer 1908, 1913), pp. 203-244. English translation by Paul Guyer, *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 89-127.

Edmund Husserl, "Husserl an von Hofmannsthal, 12. 1. 1907" in *Briefwechsel*. Band VII: *Wissenschaftlerkorrespondenz*, pp. 133-36 (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic, 1994). English translation by Sven-Olov Wallenstein, "Letter to Hofmannsthal," in *SITE* magazine 26-27, 2009.

Edmund Husserl, *Phantasie, Bildbewusstsein, Erinnerung. Zur Phänomenologie der anschaulichen Vergegenwärtigungen. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1898-1925)* (Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1980). English translation by John Brough, *Phantasy, Image Consciousness, and Memory (1898-1925)* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005).

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *L'oeil et l'esprit* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961). English translation by Carleton Dallery, "Eye and Mind" in *The Primacy of Perception*, pp. 159-90 (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964). Revised translation by Michael Smith in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader*, pp. 121-149 (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993).