

Everyday Aesthetics: European Perspectives. Introduction

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This introduction presents the main motivations behind the special issue on Everyday Aesthetics: European Perspectives. The idea has been to invite authors to reflect how European and Europe-inspired thinking has affected and developed further the field of Everyday Aesthetics. The articles of the special issue are presented through their main themes and how they contribute to the contemporary discussions of the field. | Keywords: *Everyday, Aesthetics, Everyday Aesthetics, Philosophical Aesthetics, Europe*

Everyday Aesthetics was born in the 21st Century as a sub-discipline of Anglo-American Aesthetics focusing on art and it has distinguished itself for its shift towards practices and objects of everyday life. Originally, Everyday Aesthetics was concerned in defining the everyday and its fields by renowned authors like Yuriko Saito (2007; 2017), Katya Mandoki (2007), Thomas Leddy (2012), Kevin Melchionne (2013; 2014), and Ossi Naukkarinen (2013; 2014; 2017). Later, it began to spread widely throughout Europe and it has extended to different topics (environment, city, design) and perspectives, intertwining the Anglo-American and European approach (Arto Haapala, 2005; 2017; Giovanni Matteucci, 2015, 2016; Barbara Formis, 2010; Dan-Eugen Ratiu, 2013; 2017; Elisabetta Di Stefano, 2017, 2020; Gioia Laura Iannilli, 2019; Sanna Lehtinen, 2020; 2021).

Today Everyday Aesthetics is no longer a sub-discipline of Anglo-American aesthetics but rather a philosophical trend that has been strongly developed in several directions. However, scholars representing Europe-originating approaches to the study of daily life are not enough taken into account in contemporary debates. For this reason, our thematic issue seeks to highlight a turning point in the progression of Everyday Aesthetics, demonstrating how European and Europe-based thinkers belonging to different philosophical traditions have given a contribution to the reflection on everyday life. For chronological reasons these scholars cannot be linked to Everyday

Aesthetics, however their thoughts can enhance this philosophical trend and guide it towards new paths.

In this special issue, young researchers and experienced scholars have taken up the challenge. Their articles draw a scenario that sheds new light on Everyday Aesthetics both by identifying new interpretative keys and by deepening some fields of research. Some authors have highlighted the importance of historical investigations. This is particularly clear in the opening contribution by María Jesús Godoy, who discusses David Hume's "functionalist aesthetics" and the role that the notion of sympathy plays therein in enabling our aesthetic appreciation of everyday objects. This approach is present also in Elisabetta Di Stefano's essay focusing on the concept of *decorum* as a paradigmatic example to track the history of everyday aesthetics. In their joint contribution, Giovanni Matteucci and Gioia Laura Iannilli investigate the continental philosophical roots of the notion of 'experience' through reference to the concepts of *Erlebnis*, *Erfahrung*, and *Lebenswelt*. The historical inquiry is a field for which Anglo-American aesthetics has traditionally had little interest, as it does not match its mainly analytical approach. It is nevertheless very productive when investigated through the lens of Everyday Aesthetics.

Other authors in this issue have focused on new understandings of European philosophical culture, highlighting links with Everyday Aesthetics. In his essay, Carsten Friberg applies an approach drawn from Gadamer's hermeneutics to rethink some central questions in the debate about Everyday Aesthetics. However, it is the Heideggerian tradition that gets the lion's share of the credit, sometimes interpreted in the light of other thinkers in some way connected to it. The more thoroughly reflected authors include Emmanuel Lévinas in Alfonso Hoyos Morales' article, which sets to study the phenomenological and ontological dimension of everyday aesthetics through the notion of 'enjoyment'. The philosophy and aesthetics of the recently passed away Jean-Luc Nancy are considered in Natasha Luna Malaga's essay, which discusses Nancy's conception of Being with respect to the theoretical value and specificity of Everyday Aesthetics. Also in this tradition, Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht proves an indispensable mirror to reflect Martin Heidegger's legacy in Thomas Leddy's article, which elaborates on Gumbrecht's distinction between "presence cultures" and "interpretation cultures" through the example of the everyday experience of taking a walk.

Along with this historical and theoretical concern, a great deal of contemporary research in the field of Everyday Aesthetics addresses its applicability to real life cases of philosophical and pragmatic interest. In the present issue, this is evidenced by the number of authors who have preferred to focus their efforts on specific fields or case-studies, thereby testifying to the versatility of European-originating Everyday Aesthetics. As a topic, statuary is presented in Barbara Formis' paper with respect to an ancient work of sculpture, the *Squatting Aphrodite*, which serves as a focal point for reflecting the emergence of everyday aesthetic sensibilities. In Madalina Diaconu's contribution, art collecting takes on new meanings and offers a chance to ponder on aesthetic practices and everyday behaviour.

Themes of great relevance in the contemporary debate such as environmental issues are more broadly present in Noora-Helena Korpelainen's article, which charts the development of aesthetic sensibility in the light of the matter of sustainability affecting the realm of the everyday. On a similar note, Dan-Eugen Ratiu's contribution addresses the relations between art and everyday life in the city from the viewpoint of a recent subfield in urban aesthetics, which is developing at the intersection between everyday and environmental aesthetics. The notions presented in this part of the issue, such as the 'aesthetics of sustainability' and 'creative' cities, find useful interpretative keys in *Everyday Aesthetics* which interweave with contemporary European culture and traditions. In this regard, Ossi Naukkarinen's essay demonstrates that philosophical and applied aesthetics, and *Everyday Aesthetics* in particular, can have practical application and provide theoretical tools for solving broad and acute social problems, spanning from poverty to hunger, racism, and data security. Laura Rossi closes the issue with an interview with the photographer Nino Migliori. In this interview, the photographer's work is studied as an example of *Everyday Aesthetic* thinking in the context of artistic practice.

From these essays we can understand that *Everyday Aesthetics* continues to be a line of thought rich in developments, especially in the dialogue with European and Europe-originating philosophical traditions. The crucial role of *Everyday Aesthetics* in the contemporary debate is confirmed by some very recent publications, such as the edited volumes *Paths from the Philosophy of Art to Everyday Aesthetics* (2019), *Everydayness. Contemporary Aesthetic Approaches* (2021) and the special issue of the journal *Popular Inquiry* (2021), titled *Forgotten Everyday: Expanding Everyday Aesthetics*.

In conclusion, as a philosophical trend, *Everyday Aesthetics* appears today to be open to new interpretations and applications that cross and overcome its original thematic boundaries. It has, however, managed to preserve the social and practical focus that lies at the core of its pragmatist foundation.

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