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Disrupted Horizons:
Potential Disclosures of Emergency Aesthetics

Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic determined a radical restructuring of social and political spaces. This change affected artistic production and reception, influencing individual and collective aesthetic experiences. By losing its physical dimension, art has moved to the digital sphere, engaging with alternative possibilities for display and connectivity. This paper examines the spaces unfolded by emergency aesthetics. Alongside reshaping sense perception, emergency aesthetics inspires political intervention by disclosing new conceptual frameworks that help us recognize and withstand present social, ethical, and existential crises.

Keywords

Emergency, Aura, Digital Hyperreality, Immanence, Politics

Social and political configurations are always mirrored by specific constellations of images, symbols, meaning-making, and creative processes. The place of art has changed dramatically since the pandemic began because art's physical and material character has been transposed onto the digital sphere. Museums, exhibitions, and collectives are all closed in compliance with sanitary norms. There is no physical space for art, no direct contact between an artwork and its audience, nor among the spectators themselves. This condition results in two fundamental issues that respond to the question: W h a t h a s b e e n l o s t s o f a r ?

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First, we shall address the collective character of artistic practices and sensory experiences. In theorizing the relationship between political and artistic practices, Rancière highlights the political power of aesthetics. Art can reframe the distribution of the sensible, intervening in the social structure favoring those whose identities, voices, and experiences are marginalized by the dominant societal order (2010, 139). The political power of aesthetics resides in its ability to create ruptures and interruptions within the sensible fabric. Art is a sensuous imaginary in which forms of life emerge, break down, and recombine (McKee 2016, 81). Aesthetics need not necessarily be a communal effort, but it has to function as a social glue to achieve the ultimate political effect. That regards the reception of artworks, which intend to create a shared aesthetic experience among the spectators. Reshaping sensory experiences by constituting "a new landscape of the visible, of the sayable and the doable," art helps create "the fabric of a common experience" in which "new possibilities of subjective enunciation may be developed" (Rancière 2010, 149, 142).

By reorchestrating the sensory fabric, art also restructures existing social bonds. This restructuration is due to art's capability of awakening consciences, essential to devise effective resistance tools and strategies (Rancière 2008, 85). How can art achieve political change when our social worlds have become atomized? Art's collective social function has dematerialized and moved to the virtual, digital space. As an inherently social space, cyberspace allows for a viral spreading of countless possible self-imaginings (Belk 2013, 487). Art has moved from community to communication, where resistance can be produced and disseminated through the rapid and dense networks of hyperreality.

This move leads us to the second issue, more intricately linked to the digital, mediated reception of works of art during pandemic times. Throughout his works, Benjamin conceptualized the aura. The aura, lacking a systematic definition, indicates the here and now of the artwork, pointing to its tiny sparks of contingency (1999, 510). The aura happens at a specific juncture of technological and social developments, conferring historicity to the work. Endowing aesthetic reception with a sense of uniqueness denotes a modality of exclusive, other than pure, presence. It can only be experienced through direct contact with the artwork, which is lost when the latter is reproduced. As Benjamin notes, "even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art lacks in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be" (2007, 220). The shift to the digital space entails that the aura's unique, ecstatic, authentic experience is now just

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a mirage. We have entered the dimension of repetition, the realm of mechanical reproduction. Even more so, we are experiencing the overwhelming flow of mass communication, hyperreality, and increasing centrality of the image. The image loses the potency of auratic images through its endless reproducibility on digital screens, marked by materiality and irreproducible uniqueness.

In this paper, I will examine these two issues in light of the ongoing emergencies. My discussion will move from the micro-sphere of individual aesthetic experience, highlighting the recent metamorphoses of the aura, to the macro-sphere of collective action and art's existential interventions.

Aesthetic Ruptures

As intended in its usual sense, an emergency is "the irruption of a threat that demands an immediate response," whose unsettling character can range from "a passing confusion to a conceptual revolution to the shattering of a world" (Polt 2015, 588). Polt points out that an emergency would be better defined as "an event in which excess challenges sense and resists being interpreted" (ibidem). This excess, or surpassing, of our usual sense-dimension, eludes our traditional thought patterns and analytical frameworks. Hence, emergencies are events that expose the vulnerability of our existence, opening our sense to reinterpretation (ibidem, 587, 591). States of emergency such as the ones we are currently experiencing disclose the revelatory potential of artistic works. Artworks present themselves as unique events, as events of truth disclosing the remains of Being, what is left at the margins of our thought horizons (Heidegger 2012, 201; Zabala 2009). The disclosure of Being is an event that goes beyond "the envisionment through which we constantly see" (Heidegger 1979, 139); it is a rupture within the sensible fabric of reality (Rancière 2008, 85). Being's remains emerge as "an alteration, an event, or an emergency of the world picture," thus appearing as "an interruption of the reality we have become accustomed to" (Zabala 2017, 17). Art exposes the hypocrisy of historically constituted regimes of perception and intelligibility, revealing that the real is a fiction maintained by consensus thinking (Rancière 2009, 50; 2010, 148-149; Chanter 2017, 110). Art presents an ontological appeal we are invited to respond to, and, given its highly disruptive power, it presents itself in the form of a shock, as something that escapes our rational understanding (Zabala 2017, 17).

Similarly, Gadamer considered the work of art as an event that appropriates us into itself: "it jolts us, it overturns us, and sets up a world of its own, into which we are drawn" (2001, 70-71). Artworks have tremendous power

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to reshape our social worlds, disclose new ways of being and understanding, which challenge conventional ethical, logical, and aesthetic frameworks. Hence, aesthetics has to be conceived as the critical analysis of the affective and cognitive artistic forms "against the socio-political and ontological background" of various dimensions of human life (Kelly 2012, 22).

Reframing the Aura: The Digital Revolution

The digitization of art and its practices led to an overturning of the aura, which used to indicate "a strange weave of space and time: the unique appearance or semblance of distance, no matter how close it may be" (Benjamin 1999, 518). This distance has been effaced when art has turned into an immanent, ontological dimension. Benjamin viewed the loss of authenticity as a negative phenomenon, arguing that the aura derived from the artwork's singularity. The advent of photography marked the beginning of a new era, revealing the existence of the optical unconscious and bringing art into the frame of collective consumption (1999). The human unconscious inhabited the visual space of photography and, through the illumination of detail, it opened multiple perspectives that could have a creative or a political turn (ibidem, 510, 519). Reproducibility mirrored the new demands of the masses, which aspired to bring things closer, "spatially and humanly," and overcome every reality's uniqueness by accepting its reproduction (2007, 223). Notably, photographic developments contributed to subverting traditional aesthetic criteria and aesthetic judgment (1999, 523). The free play of interpretations supplanted the aura, and artworks were made available to a broader public, bridging the gap between artistic practices and social worlds.

Incompatible with reproducibility, authenticity endows the work with a mystical value that is also the basis of the cultic and ritualistic dimensions of earlier artworks in history (Benjamin 2007, 223-224). Cult and ritual are cultural dimensions that illuminate the close link between authenticity and authority. The artwork exerts authority over the spectator when it retains the mark of singularity and embeddedness in space and time; it records the signs of time, acquiring the traits of uniqueness that would make it even harder to replicate (ibidem, 220-221). Ultimately, the aura represents the anxiety of ephemerality, the fleeting transitoriness of the present moment.

The metamorphoses of artworks' distinctive traits can be schematized on a temporal spectrum. There is physical, material art on one side of the spectrum, i.e., art in its unique space and time, as an exclusive presence in direct contact with its audience. It is the original version of a painting, a distinct

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moment of uniqueness in a given spatiotemporal continuum. In the middle, there is photography. Photography unveiled a new mode of perception informed by the masses' desire to get closer to things; artworks could be endlessly reproduced, equal to their original, albeit the photograph itself mediates artworks. On the opposite side of the spectrum, digitized art travels on the networks of virtual mass distribution and retrieves the aura in the form of pure, immersive presence.

Originally, aesthetic experience happened as ecstatic immobility, unfolding in the momentum of ahistorical transcendence triggered by the artwork's historical singularity. Today, the mystical dimension of art has acquired a new significance that poses it on the plane of hyperreality and hyperconnectivity. The pandemic has unveiled alternative spaces for artistic production and reception, primarily through digital technologies. These reshaped aesthetic experiences through digitization and 3D archives. Most artistic works are available in a digital form, making them accessible "regardless of location, wealth, or ownership" (Chaumont 2015). While being the hallmark of physical distance, the screen is also the portal that makes infinite connections possible. Entire museums and exhibitions have been digitized, making elitist art accessible to everyone. Art has become more widespread, and, in many cases, it has exited the capitalist market, becoming free and easily accessible. This expansion goes with the increased intimacy surrounding aesthetic experiences, which can be consumed inside our homes. Finally, digitized artworks preserve their form, as they remain unaffected by organic deteriorations. The idea of a unique and exclusive original has lost its relevance. What matters now is how art helps us reframe our thinking.

The virtual reception of art in pandemic times proved that physical space is not all there is, even for the visual arts. Through digitization, visual artworks can exist in virtual, digital spaces, interacting with each other and their audience in unforeseen versatile manners. An analogy can be drawn between the visual arts and music. As the most immaterial of the arts, music develops as a temporal unfolding that has a physical impact on its listeners. Music pertains to the immediate perception of time in its relationships with the sound material (Grisey 1987, 258); it absorbs the audience in a temporal continuum. The lack of materiality characterizes musical performances, which form bodies without organs—that is, "bodies with initially indeterminate functions where specific capacities are formulated and defined only in the course of their working out" (Campbell 2013, 164; Deleuze 1981, 47-48). Music always expresses a potentiality, a virtual possibility of being and becoming.

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Nonetheless, in Western music theory, composition follows a rigorous logic that is often overturned. The sonic form of the score is articulated in a series of variations of an idea presented through diverse occurrences and manifestations. The idea is virtual as it preexists all themes and acts as the condition for defining authentic images and their developments (Campbell 2013, 14). Musical performance's material is deduced from an abstract network of possibilities in which the threshold of perceptibility is constantly being crossed (ibidem, 16). The variation theme denotes an alteration of a standard form; it is a rupture within a somewhat predictable scheme. Each listening experience reveals something new about a piece, as the latter will never be played in the same way multiple times.

Moreover, notwithstanding its immaterial character, music is the art form that affects the body in the most direct and absolute manner. Music is never observed or contemplated; it is experienced as it relies on sonorous vibrations and direct bodily stimuli. The expressive power of music, mirrored by its virtual potentialities, reflects the needs of emergency aesthetics. Music and its experience express modes of becoming in ways that suggest opening alternative perspectives for thinking about the world (Campbell 2013, 2). A contemporary aesthetic of experimentation must build upon music's virtuality and performative openness. Aesthetic experience is centered on sensory responses, and art's immanence does not simply denote a pure presence but is projected onto the virtual possibilities of the future.

The retrieval of the aura through digitization has proved that, regardless of their visual or acoustic form, artworks absorb the spectators into alternative spaces of creation, reception, and collective participation. Digital aesthetic experience, the predominant mode of artistic reception in 2020, forced us to rethink art in less spatially and historically bounded terms. The shift from the real to the digital world denotes a shift from the transcendental to art's ontological dimension. When it enters the digital sphere, art acquires a new force that is as powerful as the transcendental quality of the aura. Art loses its transcendence in favor of pure immanence, pure presence, pure existence.

The Ontological Dimension of Art: From Perception to Sensation

The digitization of artworks and the proliferation of digital art and techniques have emphasized the ontological dimension of aesthetics, especially within the emergency framework—the mode of human sense perception changes with humanity's entire mode of existence. Then, the way human

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sense perception is organized and the medium in which it is accomplished is determined by historical and natural circumstances (Benjamin 2007, 222). That is why, usually, the mode of aesthetic experience changes over extended periods. However, an emergency is a sudden interruption in the usual framework of reality; it functions as a shock, an event of understanding that concerns our existence (Zabala 2017, 123). Inside an emergency, the traditional relationship between the art object, the artist, and the audience is overturned and "disturbed, agitated into new action by the danger its interventions reveal" (ibidem, 132).

The transcendental quality of art has been reframed into an immanent dimension (Deleuze, Guattari 1991, 48). Immanentism always presupposes a subjective stance that is not intentionally oriented towards the world and its objects but is involuntarily traversed by a series of vibrations (Michalet 2020, 84). Aesthetic experience is no longer a matter of contemplation but a cascade of stimuli and vibrations that directly affect the body and mind of the audience. In such a context, it seems anachronistic to speak of aesthetic perception. Perception is not a total immersion into an artwork but a cognitive synthesis of its components (Bundgaard, Stjernfelt 2015). Given all the stimuli produced by the digital display of artistic works in pandemic times, aesthetic perception has been substituted by aesthetic sensation, a modality of experiencing art that stresses its affects.

In his studies on cinema, Deleuze elaborates on the concepts of image-time and image movement. The image-time directly emerges from a rupture of the sensory-motor scheme, and it is denoted as a pure optical and sonic situation. These pure optical and sonic signs liberate the audience's senses, directly relating with time and thinking (Deleuze 1985, 28). The image-time is the actual immanent image, as it establishes an experience of integration between subject and object; that is, an experience of the absolute, intended as pure contemplation where the mind and the body, the interior, and the exterior, the world and the individual merge together (ibidem, 274-275). Pure contemplation occurs when our contact with the world is not mediated, in a moment where temporality is introduced only to think of this state of fusion (ibidem, 26; Michalet 2020, 160). The image-time derives the image-movement, which articulates the complex spatial motifs of processes of subjectivation, marked by a continuous displacement. The subject is continually displaced and deterritorialized on continuous variations, where no equilibrium is achieved, only constant metamorphoses (Deleuze, Guattari 1980, 621; Deleuze 1983, 39). The connotations of the image-movement mirror those of digital hyperreality in that they emphasize the endless, dynamic deferral of information and meanings.

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Meanwhile, the image-time illuminates the immanent character of art-works and their relation to thought processes. The contemporary dimension of aesthetics is sensation because of the forces and vibrations that art trans-mits by being a pure presence rather than a mere representation of some-thing else. These pure affections must find another deployment mode, i.e., thinking, to be effective (Michalet 2020, 109).

The function of art is to bring us to a state of contemplative passivity where our thought is put in motion with the absolute (Deleuze 1983, 191). The spectators discover a passivity, a suspension of action favoring an im-mersion in thought (Michalet 2020, 220). The role of the spectators is re-framed as they engage in a critical enterprise that, through the interpreta-tion of the artwork, makes them aware of the urgency of the latter's political message (Rancière 2008, 85). By having its ontological status, art moves the spectators' senses, engaging them in a critical work of interpretation and questioning. Authenticity and authority have been replaced by artistic au-tonomy, and aesthetic experience is reframed through a displacement from perception to sensation. Aesthetic reception translates the spectators' pas-sive contemplation into active engagement when the artwork triggers an alternative motion of thought that defies its conventional horizons.

An artistic shock discloses these alternative horizons. The sensible per-ceptual shock does not depend on the aura, but it is caused by "the uncanny, by that which resists signification" (Rancière 2009, 63). According to Ran-cière, this artistic shock redirects artistic practice to the field of social inter-vention. It is the point where art disrupts the usual regimes of perception, reorchestrating the political through "a reconfiguration of the given percep-tual forms" (2010, 133; 2009, 63). Extraordinary and unimaginable, art must be shocked into emergency (Heidegger 2012, 94). Philosophy and art, con-sidered as parallel endeavors, are different modalities of understanding the same phenomena: the former by forming concepts, the latter by creating images and producing affects. These modes of thought converge and inter-twine, yet without synthesis or identification (Deleuze, Guattari 1991, 187). Each has its specific creative mechanisms, constantly in flux and subject to experimentation. Philosophical aesthetics is the philosophy of experience (Jørgensen 2015, 620-621). The development of an aesthetics of experimen-tation is crucial to the reconstruction of alternative spaces in emergency aesthetics. The analysis of a work of art is substituted by disclosing its expe-riential possibilities whereby new conceptual frameworks can be formed.

Philosophy should adopt a new image of thought leading to a radical transformation. This image must derive from a state of crisis following the collapse of the sensory-motor matrix (Rancière 2008, 67). As a result of this

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collapse, we find ourselves confronting something "unthinkable within thinking itself" (Deleuze 1985, 220-221). As states of crisis, emergencies force us to reconsider our thought patterns. Sensation precedes perception, so internal reverberation precedes exterior projection (Michalet 2020, 104). Deleuze explains that all perceptive syntheses recall organic syntheses, such as the sensibility of senses. Therefore they recall the primary sensibility that we exist (1968, 99). Each organism is "in its receptive and perceptive elements, in its guts, a sum of contractions, retentions, and expectations" (ibidem)., Aesthetic experience stemming from within is an expanded form of thinking that triggers new motions of thought. The digital screen functions as a plane of immanence, marked by an incessant continuum of images and sounds in a state of flux (Deleuze, Guattari 1991, 39-62). The screen blurs the line between materiality and immateriality to the extent that even our sense of self is extended to cyberspace (Belk 2013).

Ontology, aesthetics, and ethics converge into an immanent understanding of artistic practices, essential to conceive a philosophical aesthetics of experimentation. The ethical dimension of aesthetics emerges when considering the experience of a work of art as a hermeneutical phenomenon concerning humanity (Gadamer 1989, 87). Aesthetic experiences articulate a mode of self-understanding, which occurs through the projection of our possibilities on the artwork, alongside "understanding something other than the self, and includes the unity and integrity of the other" (ibidem, 83).

Politics and Art in Cyberspace

The problem of ethics naturally poses the question of emancipatory and revolutionary politics. The Covid-19 pandemic posited unforeseen challenges to contemporary societies as, alongside the sanitary, environmental, and economic emergencies, social spaces and habits have undergone a radical transformation. Communities have been restructured as empathy and mutual respect shifted towards a physically atomized dimension: it is no longer going towards the other but moving farther away from them.

The necessity of social distancing has determined a radical reconfiguration of social and political spaces, which have rapidly been relocated into digital hyperreality. We are fully experiencing what Baudrillard (1983) called "the ecstasy of communication," where the operations of culture, commodities, mass movement, and social flux all converge into the immanent operational surface of the screen. This hyperreality derived from the sheer speed, intensity, and extensiveness of virtual relational networks has

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acquired centrality in pandemic times. Baudrillard speaks of ecstasy because the saturation of the space, so high that it flows into a delirium of communication, produces "a state of fascination and vertigo," a singular form of pleasure, but aleatory and dizzying (132). This ecstatic, saturated digital space has increasingly gained prominence in our daily life, as our interpersonal relationships have almost entirely become immersed into the amorphous, fluid networks of virtual mass communication. Social and artistic practices have been decentered and deterritorialized into these networks. Technological developments opened new spaces of interaction, self-fashioning, and artistic creation and reception. The digital sphere offers and distributes a wide range of alternative aesthetics and cultural texts, a set of meanings that generates its sensorium.

For this reason, the real and the digital are no longer distinct. We live in a world of incessant image-making, meaning-making, and mass communications where the media are an integral and fundamental part of social reality (McRobbie 1994, 203). Social reality is partly extended to the digital world, entangled in its networks of hyper-communication. The pandemic time is an epoch of mediated contacts that prompted a shift from communities to communication and from contact to connection. Hyperconnectivity and new media present a highly disruptive potential linked to their rapidity and diffusion (Mróz 2019, 6), opening new avenues for practicing resistance and enacting dissensus. Cyberspace offers countless sites for experimentation and reworlding (Belk 2013, 486). The collective dimension is oriented towards potential developments and virtual restructurings of social spaces and political subjectivities in the digital sphere.

Rancière asserts that art becomes a social, revolutionary practice when taken outside the workshop or museum, inciting us to oppose the system of domination by denouncing its participation in that system (2010, 135). It mobilizes us by disrupting how bodies fit their functions and destinations; it is a multiplication of connections and disconnections that change the cartography of the perceptible, the thinkable, and the feasible, thus allowing for new modes of political constructions of everyday objects and new possibilities of collective enunciations (2008, 72-73). Artistic practices create a sensorium, a specific partition of the perceptible (2010, 122). The material sensorium of everyday experience is what ties communities together. This connection does not entail that collective unity stems from the fact that everybody agrees, but that sense is in agreement with sense (ibidem, 81). A new sensorium signifies a new ethos (ibidem, 119). It is crucial to start thinking about the future trajectories of art and aesthetics concerning politics and

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ongoing emergencies. Emergency aesthetics, which is also aesthetics of ex-perimentation, creates the conditions that allow us to respond to the exis-tential call of art in the twenty-first century (Zabala 2017, 111).

Danto notes that art today is not for connoisseurs or collectors alone. The globalization of the art world means that art addresses us in our human-ity (2006, xvi). However, while Danto believes that we seek meanings in art that neither philosophy nor religion can provide, the role of art, especially in a condition of emergency, should not be that of finding some transcendental meanings. Instead, art should use its power of affection to foster existential interventions. As struggles proceed, art will proliferate as a force of imagina-tion and action, anger and joy, resistance, and community (McKee 2016, 81). We need new art spaces as resistance camps to articulate contemporary collective visions, as collective liberation always has an aesthetic dimension, understood as an activity of dissensus that never ends (ibidem, 80). Dissen-sus enables that "previously discounted voices are made to count through a reorganization of what counts as meaningful" (Chanter 2017, x). In pan-demic times, art should not be a consolation or a haven. Instead, it is essen-tial to use the accessibility of digitized art to form new political subjectivities and rethink the established political and social orders. Now more than ever, art should thrust us into an emergency rather than rescue us outside of it (Heidegger 2014, 281; Zabala 2017).

Fostering Emergency Aesthetics: The Art that We Need

What has emerged during the pandemic is the existential call of art, most evident through its enhanced immanence. The ontological appeal of art is linked to its existential undertakings. Present times require that works of art demand different existential interventions, prompting projects of social transformation. In today's atomized world, the need for politics becomes pressing. Emergencies generate the sense-dimension of possibility as they reshape the possible, the past, and the present (Polt 2015, 594).

Most importantly, emergencies call for "emergent thinking," which must be able to stand the emergency itself, staying with it, enduring it, speaking from it (ibidem, 596). Within our current globalized system, "the problem is not only the emergencies we confront but the ones we are missing" (Zabala 2017, 2-3). The most significant emergency we face today is the lack of a sense of emergency (ibidem). As Vattimo notes, one can never theorize the lack of emergency without considering a shift to praxis, multiplying the con-flicts at every level (2015, 586). Absent emergencies demand a new artistic

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shock (Zabala 2017, 5). By rupturing the sensible fabric, political and artistic practices hollow out and multiply established realities in a polemical way (Rancière 2010, 149). Instead of offering reassurance, art should be relentlessly unsettling and disturbing, as "the art that reallymatters engenders rather than removes anxiety" (Taylor 2011, 3). Emancipatory politics blooms from art that intervenes against the indifference and absent-mindedness permeating our social existence (Zabala 2017, 124-125).

The screen has become the main immanent surface where operations unfold, rapidly creating meanings and circulating information (Baudrillard 1983, 127). We are constantly already thrown into this restless flux, where art's social and political stance is highly convoluted. To understand how art is to impact, it is necessary to ask what it means, for art, to make an impact. In establishing a new horizon, a work of art displaces us by carrying us into the openness and out of the usual realm (Heidegger 2002, 40). Art refuses to install itself within an already open horizon, and this refusal results in the artistic shock that defines us by the traditions and the relationships we stand in (Zabala 2017, 121-122). From this stems the ontological appeal of art, which sparks existential interventions. Artworks are existential projects of social transformation. (ibidem, 124). This transformation is the core of emergency aesthetics, a philosophical stance capable of interpreting the existential disclosures of contemporary art (ibidem, 6). Emergency aesthetics is an aesthetics of experimentation that reflects the nature of our being, which is subject to possibilities; our existence is vulnerable, and our sense is always open to reinterpretation (Polt 2015, 597). Creating the possibility of a world, art "opens on to the world's political possibilities, the possibility of the political, the world as a political possibility, and the politics of the possible" (Dronsfield 2015, 166).

The aesthetic quality of philosophy resides in its openness and its profound relation to thinking (Jørgensen 2015, 622). Aesthetic experience is emotional, perceptive, suggestive, and, by expanding our thinking, it is a prerequisite for philosophy to take shape as an art of interpretation (ibidem, 615, 620). Interpretation is an anarchic endeavor because it can never strive for completeness, but it attempts to grant an open field to what is singular and unrepeatable (Zabala 2017, 113; Bruns 1992, 17). Art aims to produce a new perception of the world, thus creating a commitment to its transformation (Rancière 2010, 142). Artworks are points of departure to change a world that requires new interpretations rather than better descriptions (Vattimo, Zabala 2011, 5). Philosophy is not a disengaged, contemplative, or neutral reception of objects, but the practice of an interested, projected, and

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active possibility (Vattimo, Zabala 2011, 14). Emergency aesthetics is where aesthetics and politics can thrive together, creating new critical spaces for aesthetic, ethical, political, and social intervention.

Future Projections

The problem we are facing today concerns the translation of art into a political change in an atomized world. Starting from evaluating how aesthetic experience has changed in pandemic times, we have now come to the question of political action. Politics and aesthetics are intertwined because they create new subjectivities and expose new visibilities (Rancière 2010, 125). Enacting dissensus, artistic and political practices are inherently revolutionary and creative. Art can rupture the sensible fabric, disrupting the dominant order of perception and altering the sphere of perception and visibility. In producing these affects, art influences the social world. Naturally, this dimension has changed when art has become immanent and when aesthetic experience has turned into a more connected, immediate, widespread dimension. A primary goal of aesthetics today is to explain how, in some contemporary art, demands on art are turned into demands by art (Kelly 2012, 22-23).

Art in all its forms demands to reframe horizons of perception, giving way to sensation, to a more direct and total experience of artworks. This reframing is mirrored by expanding our horizons of thought, which unfold alternative possibilities for creative, political, and social propositions. Aesthetics must become "a modus operandi" because art "generates a set of aesthetic possibilities" that then translate into political thinking (Bennett 2012, 2, 51). Philosophical aesthetics must incite a transformation project for the future, intervening against indifference and working through the paradoxes of social realities (Zabala 2017, 124). The emergencies we are facing concern our social, urban, environmental, and historical existence; they demand "a general reconsideration of our standing in the world" that will "save us from the indifference that continues to prevail" (ibidem). Foster argues that what is most valuable is a sense of actuality in the powerful sense of the term: artworks that can constellate different registers of aesthetic, cognitive, and critical experience and different temporality orders. This actuality should open onto future work rather than experience (2015, 155). We must strive for an art that does not linger onto the past, and an aesthetic experience that, having absorbed all of the digital aura's vibrations, inhales the present and is projected onto future projects of existential intervention. This aim is, to me, the future direction that emergency aesthetics should take.

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