

The Aesthetic Regime of Art: Dimensions of Rancière's Theory

International Conference, Ljubljana, November 27–28, 2015

Organised by the Maska Institute and the Slovenian Society of Aesthetics, in collaboration with
AZIL Bookstore

At the Atrium ZRC – Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC
SAZU), Novi trg 2, Ljubljana, Slovenia

The aesthetic regime of art is a paradigm whose structure of connections between art and the everyday exceeds the classical territoriality of practices, skills and traditional classifications of art: it transpires in the overcoming of the boundaries between artistic practices and life. The conference aims to reflect on Rancière's political conceptualisations of the sensual, with the additional incentive provided by the publication of the Slovenian translation of his exciting book *Aisthesis: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art* (*Aisthesis: Prizori iz estetskega režima umetnosti*, Maska, 2015, trans. Sonja Dular), in which the author, in 14 chapters, considers 14 artistic examples (politics) as events or even "disruptions", which, among other things, intervene in the order of the existing distributions of the sensual in art by addressing something in the spectator that has not been addressed thus far by the other two regimes (the ethical regime of the image and the representational regime of art). These are examples of art and of discourses on art, which, from 1764 to 1941, gradually introduce previously unexplored modes of creation, production, reception and reflection of art. That is to say, Rancière does not focus on canonical modernist authors such as Mondrian or Kandinsky, Malevich or Duchamp; rather, he focuses on the treatment of practices in the Folies Bergère cabaret and on the poets who recorded these events, on the extravagant dancer and choreographer Loïe Fuller, Chaplin's films, Whitman's poetry, Craig's revolutions in set design, etc. In so doing, he is not guided by a desire to redefine modernism; rather, he aims to reflect on that which represented an aesthetic disruption in the modernist paradigm.

Already on Thursday, 26 November 2015 at 6 p.m., Jacques Rancière will hold an opening lecture entitled "The Aesthetic Revolution" as part of the French focus at the Slovenian Book Fair at Cankarjev Dom (Linhart Hall), Prešernova Street 10, Ljubljana, and will also be attending the conference over the next two days. The evening programme at the Slovenian Cinematheque, Miklošičeva Street 28, Ljubljana, on 27 and 28 November will be devoted to some of the films, artists and topics that Rancière treats on in his book *Aisthesis*.

During the Jacques Rancière's visit to Ljubljana, the Azil Bookstore is organising a sale exhibition of books both by and about Rancière in French as well as in Slovenian and English translations. Over 40 different titles will be displayed and up for sale at the Slovenian Book Fair at the Cankarjev Dom Culture and Congress Centre (at the Založba ZRC stand in the Second Floor Lobby of Cankarjev Dom) and in the Azil Bookstore (Novi trg 2).

Conference Schedule and Abstracts

(The conference will be held in English)

Friday, November 27, 2015

10:00 – 10:15 **Opening welcome**

Amelia Kraigher, editor-in-chief, Maska Institute

Lev Kreft, Slovenian Society of Aesthetics

Mathias Rambaud, Institut Français de Slovénie

PART 1: Fiction and the Sensible (chair Amelia Kraigher)

10:15 – 10:45 Rok Benčin, *Metaphorical and Metonymical Equality: From Rhetoric to Aesthetics*

10:45 – 11:15 Steven Corcoran, *The Aesthetic Regime of Art: “The Lost Thread” of Strategy*

11:15 – 11:45 Nina Seražin Lisjak, *The Aesthetics of Jacques Rancière: The Role of the Sensible in the Politics of Art*

11:45 – 12:00 Coffee break

PART 2: Aesthetics and Socialism (chair Amelia Kraigher)

12:00 – 12:30 Ivana Perica, *Hybridity: Discussing Austromarxist Aesthetics with Rancière*

12:30 – 13:00 Lev Kreft, *Dandy Socialism*

13:00 – 15:00 Lunch break

PART 3: Scenes from Photography and Film (chair Rok Benčin)

15:00 – 15:30 Jan Babnik, *Photography – Everyone’s Little Tramp*

15:30 – 16:00 Natalija Majsova, *Taking Cinematic Aesthetics into Outer Space: Paper Soldier and Dreaming of Space*

16:00 – 16:30 Darko Štrajn, *Immediacy as an Attribute of Cinema as Art*

16:30 – 16:45 Conclusion

Saturday, November 28, 2015

PART 4: Aesthetics and Politics in Contemporary Art (chair Lev Kreft)

10:00 – 10:30 Bojana Matejić, *Rancière: Art and the Demand for Human Emancipation*

10:30 – 11:00 Mojca Puncer, *Paradoxes of the Politics of Aesthetics: Artistic Striving for Community*

11:00 – 11:30 KITCH (Nenad Jelesijević & Lana Zdravković), *Subjectivation in Contemporary Art: Loosening of the Performative Order Based on the Statics of Performer–Spectator*

11:30 – 11:45 Coffee break

PART 5: The Aesthetic Regime in New Contexts (chair Lev Kreft)

11:45 – 12:15 Polona Tratnik, *Survival Tactics and Tools as Tactical Media*

12:15 – 12:45 Ernest Ženko, *Aesthetic Regime of Art in the Context of Media Archaeology*

12:45 – 13:00 Final Discussion and Ending of the Conference

Programme committee

Amelia Kraigher, editor-in-chief, Maska - Institute for Publishing, Production and Education

Rok Benčin, Lev Kreft, Slovenian Society of Aesthetics

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Abstracts

PART 1: Fiction and the Sensible

(1) Rok Benčin: “Metaphorical and Metonymical Equality: From Rhetoric to Aesthetics”

A decade and a half before *Aisthesis*, the magnum opus of Jacques Rancière’s work on the aesthetic regime of art, the term *aisthesis* was introduced by Rancière in *Disagreement*, his key contribution to contemporary political thought. In *Disagreement*, a draft idea of the aesthetic regime of art is presented as one deeply intertwined with modern forms of politics. In the period between the two books, the relation between political and aesthetical equality comes into focus. I will argue that this relation can also be grasped through another kind of differentiation in Rancière’s notion of equality. In *Disagreement*, Rancière claims that the capacity to make metaphors is one of the conditions of the occurrence of emancipatory politics. In other places, e.g. in *The Emancipated Spectator*, it is metonymy rather that is presented as the most significant political figure. The choice of the figure is by no means irrelevant, since philosophers from Heidegger to Deleuze have dismissed metaphor as belonging to the abandoned metaphysical sphere or even as suggesting an oppressive kind of politics. More recently, Ernesto Laclau discussed metaphor and metonymy as the “rhetorical foundations of society”. Nevertheless, Laclau’s use of Gérard Genette’s analysis of Proust to define the relations between both figures, suggests a move into the sphere of fiction and aesthetics, as defined by Rancière. Focusing on the concepts of metaphor and metonymy as they appear in Rancière’s works, I will trace the implications of the move from the rhetoric of society (Laclau) to the aesthetics of politics (Rancière).

Rok Benčin (rok.bencin@zrc-sazu.si) is a researcher at the Institute of Philosophy, Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU) and an assistant professor at the Postgraduate School ZRC SAZU. He recently published the book *Okna brez monad: estetika od Heideggerja do Rancièra* [*Windows without Monads: Aesthetics from Heidegger to Rancière*] (ZRC Publishing House, 2015).

(2) Steven Corcoran: “The Aesthetic Regime of Art: ‘The Lost Thread’ of Strategy”

In *The Lost Thread* [*Le fil perdu*], Rancière continues his reflections, within the aesthetic regime of art, on the connections between art and the everyday, as well as between art and politics. *The Lost Thread* maps a process of destruction of literature in the representational regimes of the arts, i.e. of what had been understood under the name of “fiction” ever since Aristotle, and the simultaneously advent of modern fiction. In contradistinction to many modernist narratives, Rancière here dispenses with the dialectical schema of destruction and creation, whereby creation follows in a second movement after the work of destruction has cleared the way. In *The Lost Thread*, this process of destruction is not merely the rejection of a negative term or a moment to be passed through in order for the new to appear but instead is a *positive means* of construction, an activity provided with its own narrative and temporality.

It might be said that in Rancière’s conception, the advent of the modern novel, or *literary realism*, is describable as a process of destructive creativity. That is what I’d like to show in the first part.

In the second part, I would like to highlight the implications for the politics of literature that this process of creative destruction – to be rigorously distinguished from Schumpeter’s so-called gale of capitalism – entails. The model of strategic action, that of great men hoping to achieve great ends or of great politics, is closely tied for Rancière to the representational regime of the arts, with its division of humanity into two – the distinguished and active men of high class and the invisible and passive men of work. As this process of destruction is strongly tied to a principle of equality, the politics of literature in the aesthetic regime of the arts thus entails a dismantling of this model of strategic action – and indeed Rancière points to many literary examples that consecrate its ruin. This outcome would seem to be intimately tied to the modern novel’s undoing of the “lie” of strategic mastery. If, as its name suggests, *realist literature* has an epistemological claim, a pretention to demystification, this is surely it.

Now, concomitant with the transgression of the boundaries of great politics, or state politics, this ruin goes hand-in-hand with the masses’ demonstrations of political equality. The dismantling of the representational regime of the sensible, and in particular its strategic model of action, is the flipside of the advent of modern processes of equality, both in politics and everyday

life. Yet it would seem that this opening is equally disabling: it seems the effects of political equality, for example, are obtained only at a distance from strategy. In Rancière's conception, then, politics is at the very least hampered in its ability to effect "real" change in any strategic fashion, and indeed seems ultimately devoid in his work of any power of anticipation. But is it possible to have a politics without a strategy of some kind? I argue that the status of political strategy in Rancière's work is intimately related to this non-dialectical process of creative destruction in literature and that this seems to relegate the notion of strategy to the paradoxical status of a necessary illusion.

Steven Corcoran (spcorcoral@gmail.com), researcher at the Universität der Künste, Berlin, is the editor of *Dissensus* (Bloomsbury 2010), a collection of Jacques Rancière's essays, as well as *The Badiou Dictionary* (EUP 2015). His translation of Rancière's *The Lost Thread* is forthcoming with Bloomsbury (2016). He is currently writing on the dialectics of social and political emancipation.

(3) Nina Seražin Lisjak: "The Aesthetics of Jacques Rancière: The Role of the Sensible in the Politics of Art"

Jacques Rancière examines the relationship between aesthetics and politics and develops a conception of art's political dimension that responds to some of the main issues related to the politics of art. Modernism separates autonomy and politics and defines them as properties of art and not of experience. As Bürger demonstrates, Adorno's idea of the autonomy of art leads to political inefficiency. While Rancière's omission of the problem of the institution of art should be critically considered, the idea of the aesthetic efficiency, where the receiver participates in the production of the political effect of art, can function as a counterargument to the institutional inefficiency. Ideas about the end of modernism do not grasp the paradoxical character of the aesthetic regime of art because they chronologically distribute contradictory properties, such as art's specificity and its indiscernibility, like Danto does.

I focus on the crucial role of the sensible in Rancière's conception of art's politics. I show that there is a specific conception of aesthetics and the sensible at the basis of Rancière's

conceptual apparatus. This basis needs to be rethought since it is only partially explicated by the author. Therefore I review Rancière's references to Kant and Schiller and their consequences.

I examine two notions of aesthetics in Rancière's works. I show that in the context of Kant's conception of sensibility and reason as two singular faculties of knowledge, aesthetics and the distribution of the sensible concern a hierarchical relationship between reason and sensibility. The distribution of the sensible can be understood as an apriority that determines the possibilities of experience and constitutes the relationship between sensible perception and meaning. Kant's substitution of the objectivity of knowledge with the necessity of an intrasubjective apriority is relativized once more by Rancière through a historicization on an intersubjective level: the relationship between sensibility and reason turns out to be the contingent foundation of any social formation. Combined with Rancière's reference to Schiller's understanding of human as doubly determined by sensibility and reason this shift establishes a crucial relation between the sensible and the political. This introduces the possibility of another aesthetics, which revokes the power of reason over sensibility. Its essential concept is the aesthetic experience, based on Kant's experience of the beautiful and Schiller's free play. I argue that this concept implies not only the autonomy of sensibility but also the blurring of its distinction from reason and that it gives rise to both politics of aesthetics that Rancière theorizes. It grounds the crucial notions of the aesthetic regime: paradoxicality, the simultaneity of autonomy and heteronomy, the interdependence of autonomy and politics and the active perceiver.

By establishing a link between politics and the sensible dimension of aesthetics – which needs to be thought in a relation to reason – Rancière establishes a possibility of the politics of art that was considerably overlooked in 20th century thought, partly due to the recurrent philosophical denigration of the sensible.

Nina Seražin Lisjak (nina.serazin@gmail.com) is a PhD student of Philosophy and Theory of Visual Culture at the University of Primorska, Slovenia. She graduated from the University of Ljubljana, Department of Philosophy and Department of Sociology. Her main interests are aesthetics and ethics, and her current research is focused on the aesthetics of Jacques Rancière.

PART 2: Aesthetics and Socialism

(4) Ivana Perica: “Hybridity: Discussing Austromarxist Aesthetics with Rancière”

The paper draws on possibilities of applying Rancière’s views to the poetics and politics of “Red Vienna”, i.e. to the interwar period in which the *Social Democratic Workers’ Party of Austria* (SDAP) supported aesthetics structurally related to Rancière’s own conceptions on art and aesthetic revolution. The aim of the paper is to discuss possible junctions between Rancière’s understanding of *aesthetic revolution* and the historical experience of the Viennese social-democratic aesthetic practices.

Sharing a starting point with Schiller, Rancière displaces the revolutionary mission from state and party politics towards aesthetics. The political impulse of aesthetics consists in *hybridizing* the previously separated spheres and members of a political community and in bringing along new distributions of the sensible. *Hybridity* as a gesture of “putting two worlds into one” (Andrew Schaap) is pivotal in Rancière’s endorsement of the aesthetic abolishment of social stratification. From his early writings up to *Aisthesis*, his last major study on aesthetic disruptions, Rancière calls for an amalgamation and hybridization of “had and hand” (Andrew Parker), which includes the abolishment of the distinction between privileged and deprived members of a political community, between those who enjoy enough muse in order to participate in political and artistic life and those who, due to lack of time, are not qualified for the public sphere.

The interwar period in Vienna is remembered as the peak of the so-called ‘Austromarxism’, an intriguing and much-disputed attempt to maneuver between poles of liberalism and futile reformism on the one side and orthodox Marxism and bolshevism on the other. As though it were in line with Rancière’s observations on aesthetics and politics, Austromarxism tries to create a “new man” by combining, synthesizing or *hybridizing* diverse and sometimes even contrary traditions, by bringing together bourgeoisie and workers, aristocrats and peasants, or even capitalism and socialism.

Considering the theoretical premises of influential Austromarxist thinkers (Max Adler, Otto Neurath, Josef Luitpold Stern) and with a view to selected writers that worked within the same aesthetic and political setting (Hermynia zur Mühlen, Hugo Bettauer, Jura Soyfer), I want to negotiate the intervals between Rancière’s critical observations on the “archepolitical” authority of the “party” and the Austromarxist party politics that played an immense role in the aesthetic hybridization of the previously separate elements of everyday life. I want to explore Austromarxism by employing the notion of *regime* as both an anti-authoritarian *aesthetic regime* as well as an institutionalized *political regime* that allows for the aesthetic r/evolution of the Rancièreian type. The principle question of this paper is thus set against the background of Rancière’s anti-institutionalism and his consistent critique of “police”, be it the police of post-democratic regimes or the police of the Communist party: if Rancière finally acknowledges that police still “can produce all sorts of good, and one kind of police may be infinitely preferable to another” (Gert Biesta), could his thoroughly an-archic thinking allow for an “archaic” politics of party – on the condition that the latter carries out a class struggle with an aim toward abolishing class differences?

Ivana Perica (ivana.perica@uni-graz.at) earned her master’s degree in German and Croatian literature and language at the University of Zagreb. Thereafter, she completed her PhD thesis at the University of Vienna. Her doctoral thesis “The Private-Public Axis of the Political: The Disagreement between Hannah Arendt and Jacques Rancière” will soon be published by Königshausen & Neumann.

(5) Lev Kreft: “Dandy Socialism”

“It was a dark and stormy night...” That is how Edward Bulwer-Lytton started his 1830 novel *Paul Clifford*. “Le 13 décembre 1838, par une soirée pluvieuse et froid...” begins the narrative of Eugène Sue’s novel *The Mysteries of Paris* (after a “conceptual” introductory address to the reader). There are many more features connecting these two popular literary pieces of the Romantic period. In between the dark and stormy night and the cold and rainy evening, a new genre has emerged: the melodramatic social(ist) novel, together with new means of

communication – the novel-feuilleton printed in daily newspapers that was forced to disappear after Napoleon III introduced a special tax for newspapers publishing them, allegedly especially because of Sue, who was in the meantime elected and occupied a political function during the revolution of 1848. This subtle form of censorship suggests that a genre believed to be melodramatically mediocre had an excessive aesthetic-political attractiveness.

Eugène Sue was a star writer of 19th-century bestsellers in the form of novels – feuilletons – during the period between the two revolutions of 1830 and 1848. His first novel of this kind, *The Mysteries of Paris* [*Les mystères de Paris*] appeared in the *Journal des Debats* in 1842–1843, and immediately became a sensation and food for thought, translated in many major European languages. Afterwards, he was nearly forgotten and hardly ever mentioned in the company of “serious” writers like Balzac and Hugo or Dickens and Thackeray, who, however, took Sue’s allegedly mediocre melodramatic and popular narrative as a case to be followed. His temporary fame was confirmed by the response of Bruno Bauer’s group of young Hegelians, who found in Sue’s literary attractiveness a philosophical solution for all mysteries and conflicts of the period (Szeliga – Franz Zychlin von Zychlinski). Marx’s criticism of their philosophical and political position in *The Sacred Family*, written together with Engels, includes a lengthy and thorough critique of their “philosophical” readings of the novel, of the novel itself and of their and Sue’s understanding of the new bourgeois reality. Among other points, Sue’s alleged socialism is described with the help of a comparison between police and moral police.

Can we, along with a re-establishment of the context of *The Mysteries of Paris*, leave critique of ideology and literary critique of popular and mass culture behind to bring into the aesthetic field this melodramatic narrative of class society, and re-establish its politics of the aesthetic? The result brings out dandy socialism as aesthetic kinds of “mushrooms” (Théophile Gautier’s metaphor) growing on the humus of post-revolutionary and pre-revolutionary French bourgeois society in the period 1830 to 1848.

Lev Kreft (lev.kreft@guest.arnes.si) is a professor of Aesthetics at the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts – University of Ljubljana.

PART 3: Scenes from Photography and Film

(6) Jan Babnik: “Photography – Everyone’s Little Tramp”

In the presentation, we will briefly delineate Rancière's thought on photography – his treatment of photography, its history, realism, modernity, objectivity and the relation between text and image. Special attention will be given to Rancière's notions of “pensive image” and “the poverty of photography”, how they relate to photography and what they bear in common with Barthesian notion of “the third meaning”. Rancière’s writings on photography mostly revolve around its relation to art, or rather, around its nowadays privileged position in art. For Rancière, photography is “exemplary as an art of aesthetic ideas” – photography as a constant indeterminate of what Barthes termed *studium* and *punctum*. What can a reading of Jacques Rancière’s writings on photography add to our understanding of photography and where can we place it in relation to the tradition of photography theory? The examples he discusses are mostly from canonised authors such as Walker Evans, Alfred Stieglitz, Paul Strand, James Agee, Martha Rosler, Rineke Dijkstra, Jeff Wall, etc., and, rather importantly, he writes about the works and authors that are deeply imbedded in the arts and for which a lengthy and rich theoretical discourse already exists. We will examine whether his ideas are in anyway helpful for an understanding of the wider (socially and culturally, even technologically, inherently mutable) phenomenon of photography. We will also question the legitimacy of this type of examination (that confronts phenomenon in art with phenomenon in general). Shouldn’t it be precisely the reverse – shouldn’t one think of photography as an art only through the socially and culturally inherently mutable phenomenon of photography, perceiving it not as a tangible theoretical “object” to be *resolved* in relation to its position in art but rather as plethora of processes in their positions in the social sphere (art being one). Is thinking of photography as art nowadays in anyway productive for understanding photography? It seems far more suited for understanding art. Further, Rancière’s lucid reasoning shows precisely this point – thinking of photography as art neatly reveals (or should we say captures?) the aesthetic regime of contemporary art; but at the same time, this procedure leaves a bitter taste – as if photography lends itself to both – art and art theory – as a frivolous, indeterminate, “pensive image” tramp always being whimsically tossed around. And maybe it is precisely in this bitterness that power of photography rests, so

illusively. We need to ask ourselves whether thinking of art (or science for that matter) as photography would finally reveal the “photographic regime” itself.

Jan Babnik (babnik.jan@gmail.com) is the editor-in-chief of *Fotografija / Membrana*, a Slovenian magazine on photography, and director of the Membrana Institute (ZSKZ) – publisher of *Fotografija / Membrana*, books on photography and photography theory, and organizer of education modules (School of Photography Criticism). He is a PhD candidate in the Philosophy and Theory of Visual Culture course at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Primorska.

(7) Natalija Majsova: “Taking Cinematic Aesthetics into Outer Space: Paper Soldier and Dreaming of Space”

The paper takes up Rancière's conceptualization of the ethical, representational and aesthetic regimes of art in order to explore what might be left of art if the scale of the world were to be expanded out to include the cosmos rather than being constrained to Earth. Starting from the presumption that (following, inter alia, Lacan's suggestion in *Television*) the beginning of the space age may be considered as an event that radically reshapes the coordinates of subjectivity, the paper discusses the reverberations of this supposition in the realm of aesthetics. Is aesthetics capable of following this premise and, if so, by which means and with which results? Rather than aiming at coining a universal “formula” for an aesthetics of the space age, the paper seeks to provide a detailed reading of the process: of aesthetic pathways toward the space age, if the latter is not seen as a mere extension of terrestrial ways of being. The paper focuses on two recent examples of Russian cinematography: Alexei Uchitel's *Dreaming of Space* (2005) and Alexei German, Jr.'s *Paper Soldier* (2008) – two films that are overtly preoccupied with the beginning of the space age and its implications and are part of a peculiar segment of contemporary 21st century Russian popular culture: popular culture “in outer space.” The two films will be examined against the backdrop of Rancière's regimes of art, in order to be torn out of more conventional readings, which reduce them to representations of the socio-cultural context of the Soviet myth of Soviet outer space superiority. Rather, they will be discussed as statements, contextually bound, yet harboring an element of excess. It must be emphasized that, like in the

case of the avant-gardes of the early 20th century, this formal, stylistic excessiveness does not automatically render them art of the aesthetic regime. Returning to the question of outer space subjectivity, and the eventual moment of the beginning of the space age, the paper elaborates on how, when, and why this matters in the first place; in other words: where does cinematography go when it goes to space?

Natalija Majsova (nmajsova@gmail.com) received her PhD (2015, dissertation title: “Outer Space in Contemporary Russian Film”) and MA (2011) in Cultural Studies from the University of Ljubljana. Since 2012, she has worked as a researcher at the Centre for Cultural and Religious Studies and been a teaching assistant at the Department of Cultural Studies (both University of Ljubljana). She is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the ERUDIO Business School (Ljubljana), and an expert associate of the Cultural Centre of European Space Technologies (KSEVT, Slovenia).

(8) Darko Štrajn: “Immediacy as an Attribute of Cinema as Art”

In the last twenty years or so of the 20th century, cinema as art became increasingly an object of expanding interest for philosophers – and not only French ones, of course. However, French philosophers are principal references when ranges of questions concerning film and thinking are discussed. French film theory from its early days onwards amply borrowed ideas, notions and logics from philosophy and aesthetics. Jacques Rancière is undoubtedly a major thinker, who in his huge *oeuvre* pays an important tribute to cinema and very noticeably intervenes into the field, which is globally recently identified as philosophy of film. In chapter 11 (The Machine and Its Shadow) of his book *Aisthesis*, he comes up with the notion of *immediacy* as linked to the notion of cinema: “Immediacy is what the art of projected moving shadows demands. Since this art is deprived of living flesh, of the stage’s depth and theatre’s words, its instant performance must be identified with the tracing of a writing of forms.” Rancière discovers “immediacy” when he is trying to point out how cinema organizes within its capacities a “distribution of the sensible” and he takes Chaplin not just as an example but as a decisive figure in the time when film was becoming – and defining itself – as an art form. Of course, as a philosopher, who cannot but draw

on texts – in this instance, on Shklovsky, Meyerhold and, maybe most prominently, on Jean Epstein. Another film theorist, Rachel Moore, was lured by Epstein's observations and conclusions in a similar effort to define cinematic art, claiming that Jean Epstein "aligns his pure cinema with primitive language." Then Moore asserts that "film is a more primitive form of language than words," which corresponds – even if neither author cites the other – to Rancière's reflection on a reciprocal relationship between language and cinema in his book *Intervals of Cinema*: "It is a practice of language that also carries a particular idea of 'imageness' (*imagéité*) and of mobility. It invented for itself a sort of *cinematographism*." Immediacy, which becomes apparent as a suitable answer to the demand of the art of "projected moving shadows," in the case of Chaplin, has to do with movement; what *Charlot* does makes him and his art not just comprehensible through Meyerhold's formula of theatrical art, but also makes him part of the same aesthetic process that generates art and its inventions of "glitches" in the work of a machine.

Darko Štrajn (darko.strajn@guest.arnes.si) is a philosopher and a sociologist. He is currently working in the research programme in educational sciences at the national Educational Research Institute and he lectures on film and media theory at the graduate school AMEU – ISH, Institute for Studies in Humanities in Ljubljana.

PART 4: Aesthetics and Politics in Contemporary Art

(9) Bojana Matejić: “Rancière: Art and the Demand for Human Emancipation”

The aim of this paper is to examine the issue regarding the discrepancy between political and critical art in Rancière's theory, with the emphasis on the concept of *ought-to-be* / *demand* for human emancipation. Rancière confronts the conception of critical and political art in favor of its politicality – *dissensus* – since critical art, as Rancière argues, ends up being the instrument of the traditional Enlightenment program and emancipation. Such an art consolidates the social division and fails to produce the desired emancipated community. Critical art questions its own limits and powers, maintains Rancière, neglecting its real political effects. Political art, *dissensus*, contrariwise, presupposes the aesthetic dimension in which “the topography of what is in and what is out are continually criss-crossed.” But what is the condition for staging this dissensual scene? How do individuals, things and words enter into this aesthetic stage of equality? Rancière clarifies that the political appears in the field of encounter, or rather, in the confusion between two opposite processes: politics and policing. In terms of young Marx, this terminology of Rancière's could be translated into the conflict between the social truth as a presupposition and the status quo as a given history.

The polemic regarding human emancipation in young Marx presupposes a form of *ought-to-be*, some *demand*, or, as young Marx noted in his *Letters to Ruge*, some *sollen*, which, in the final analysis, arises from the conflict between given and its immanent, assumed truth. In light of this argument, Rancière elucidates the condition for producing the aesthetic dimension: the condition is a conflict between politics and policing. In this regard, I will try to indicate that critical art, as opposed to political art, manages to express a universalizing (not universal) demand for human emancipation (equality) in its anti-humanist endeavor.

Bojana Matejić (bojanamatejic00@gmail.com) is a contemporary art theoretician and visual artist. She is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts, at the University of Arts in Belgrade, where she studied painting, theory of arts and philosophy (aesthetics). She obtained her

Ph.D. at the Belgrade University of Arts with her dissertation entitled *Emancipatory Practices in Contemporary Theory of Art* under the supervision of Professor Dr. Lev Kreft. Her main research interests include contemporary Marxist and psychoanalytic theories of art, labour theory, American contemporary theory of art, etc.

(10) Mojca Puncer: “Paradoxes of the Politics of Aesthetics: Artistic Striving for Community”

This paper addresses contemporary participatory, community-based art practices and is inspired by Rancière’s rehabilitation of aesthetics as a new philosophy of *aisthesis*. This new philosophy of sensation and perception is radically different from the aesthetics and philosophy of art, which is primarily the aesthetics of a work of art itself. Rancière prefers to talk about the aesthetic regime of art that forms the complex and contradictory relationship between the autonomy of art and overcoming the boundaries between art and life. Such an overcoming is at the foundation of contemporary community art practices. Community-oriented art takes over the concern for the common good, looking for new productive and ethical principles of co-working within the community, and encourages efforts for lasting and sustainable changes. In a society where alternatives are lacking at the systemic level, a certain alternative is offered by art. Among other things, such approaches would aim to activate a *provolutive* and self-organizing process in the production of social relations, which are in this time of crisis, in relation to neo-liberalism and capitalist hyper-production, often infringed upon and maybe non-active. Therefore, art theorists rightly have pointed out how, in Europe, in this period of crisis in respect to the degradation of the welfare state, there is the risk of the instrumentalization of participatory art in its drive to reconstruct and strengthen of social bonds. Rancière believes that, when art is summoned to put its political potential towards mending social bonds, politics and aesthetics vanish together into ethics or its instrumentalization in the name of achieving a form of consensus. What needs to be redefined is the actual production of subjectivity in respect to its connectivity to a community. This paper aims to contribute to the analysis of community-oriented art from an aesthetical and political perspective and also to evaluate the ethical aspects therein.

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(11) KITCH (Nenad Jelesijević & Lana Zdravković): “Subjectivation in Contemporary Art: Loosening of the Performative Order Based on the Statics of Performer–Spectator”

Rancière's understanding of politics (an aesthetical activity – a process of distribution of the sensible) is as a scandal that reveals radical equity of whoever with whomever establishes themselves in opposition to the police's logic of “proper” naming, allocation and classification of people and concepts. The police (unlike the Althusserian repressive apparatus or Foucauldian discipline) set distributions between modes of acting, being and speaking, and take care that bodies are set at certain places and to particular tasks, according to their names; it is an order of the visible and the speakable that oversees the (in)visibility of particular activity, that one word is heard as speech and another as noise. The political is, conversely, an activity that relocates the body from its set place, changes the purpose of a space; it is an activity that makes visible what should not be seen, and understandable as speech what has been heard as noise. True politics starts precisely at the point when those who “do not have time” to do anything except what they have been ordered to do by the normative police order “take that time that they do not have, to become visible as a part of the common world and demonstrate that their mouths emit common language, not only expressions of pleasure or pain.” Politics is therefore the possibility of the impossible, “a radical rupture caused by, strictly speaking, an impossible event, when those who should not speak illegitimately usurp the word.” The very start of politics is necessarily characterized by the act of speaking. Since it is about a break with ways of feeling, seeing and speaking that re-defines what is visible, what is possible to be said about it, and who the subjects are capable of doing that, political emancipation or subjectivation is, for Rancière, an aesthetical question. How do we link that fact with (critical) art? How to understand construction of the political in contemporary art in times of canonization of “political”, “engaged”, “activist” art

within the existing art paradigm? If we – within the notion of the politics of aesthetics – introduce new forms of circulation of speech, exposure of the visible and production of affects that define new abilities while breaking with the old paradigm of the possible, it is about the involution of a critical formula: making visible that which otherwise remains hidden – in a performance. How, and is, it possible/necessary to avoid the paradigm of spectacle by doing that? It is no longer about the art that involves current, critical, political content (although this is not excluded) as its object, but rather about a radically different understanding of our own position, aim and method of operation. This also means a mode of production conceived beyond dominant form(at)s of institutionalization, stardom, branding, festivalization. It is about specific ways of building space and providing visibility/communication that exceed the (aestheticized!) standardized division between spectator and performer; its abolition may mean an exit from the paradigm of the culture industry, or, the loosening of the performative order based on the statics of that division.

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PART 5: The Aesthetic Regime in New Contexts

(12) Polona Tratnik: “Survival Tactics and Tools as Tactical Media”

Today, the art being produced in almost any part of the world is mainly following global trends and is therefore addressed as only one sort of art – contemporary art in general – whereat one could discuss the links of the mainstream currents with the ideologies in power. Supposedly, there are no differences between art produced in different political and economic contexts. Yet the question of art as politics, i.e. the ability to act as historical agents is extremely relevant and it is to be discussed in reference to the political and economic context. In the beginning of the millennium, Bio Art has become one of the central genres of contemporary art. It is signified by thematizing the advent of the age of biotechnology with all its prospects in manipulating the living of the world – the body, animals and plants – for various objectives, such as the food industry, medicine, pharmacy, aesthetics, etc. For art that has staked out the title of Biotechnological Art, or Bio Art in short, it is significant that it include biotechnology in its procedures and display that inclusion in its performances, production of living “sculptures”, performative installations and workshops. Bio Art might often be interpreted as the promoter of biotechnology, and also the dominant ideology; however, it can be ascertained that some Bio Art projects, as Rancière writes about literarity, “introduce lines of fracture and disincorporation into imaginary collective bodies” (Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 39). In Slovenia, Bio Art is strongly present and has evolved its specific, socially engaged rhetoric, which is related to the strong relevance of critical theory of society in the tradition of aesthetics, just as there has also been strong interest in the tactical media since the fall of the Berlin Wall. In the paper, the manifestations of survival tactics and tools are to be analyzed as tactical media in the framework of neoliberal capitalism.

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monographs, including among others, *Hacer-vivir más allá del cuerpo y del medio* (Mexico City: Herder, 2013).

(13) Ernest Ženko: “The Aesthetic Regime of Art in the Context of Media Archeology”

Media archeology is a relatively new academic discipline that has stemmed from several different sources. It found and still finds inspiration in early excavations into layers of modernity performed by Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer; in studies of power and knowledge of Michel Foucault; in the history of New Film; in works of media theorists such as Marshall McLuhan and Friedrich A. Kittler; and also in various studies that try to understand the role of the past in our contemporary digital media culture. When it focuses on past developments, media archeology rejects the myth of linear progress and tries to excavate examples of neglected or even forgotten media (deviations, errors, accidents) that did not lie in the center of attraction and therefore importance, but which, nevertheless, point to an idea that “it could have been otherwise” – that alternative histories are possible.

It seems obvious that media archeology focuses primarily on media and technology; however, this does not imply that in this context questions related to aesthetics and politics are of no relevance. Probably quite the contrary is the case; namely, if media is a complex apparatus that has the distribution of the sensible as a main function, then a series of questions arises: Is there a meaningful relation between media archeology and the political aesthetics of Jacques Rancière? Is Rancière’s book *Aisthesis*, in which he provides us with a series of scenes from the aesthetic regime of art (but also examples from photography, film, and so on), an exercise in media archeology? On the other hand, is it possible to think of media archeology as an approach that could help us form a deeper understanding of the aesthetic regime of art, which is “already two centuries old yet still so obscure?”

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