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Edited by Nancy Wellington Bookhart

The Aestheticization of History and the Butterfly Effect

Visual Arts Series

SERIES ON THE HISTORY OF ART

About the editor

Dr. Nancy Wellington Bookhart is an artist-philosopher who models the aesthetic framework which argues art and philosophy as equals in the development of humankind. Her research focuses on the intersection of race, history, and art as a social experiment in Western schools of thought. She received her doctorate degree in Philosophy, Aesthetics, and Art Theory from IDSVA (Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts). Dr. Bookhart interrogates the invention of race and stereotypes in her dissertation, 'The Black Veil of Freedom: On Kara Walker and the Aesthetic Education of the Black Man'. Bookhart is an avid presenter at national conferences on the theme of art theory, philosophy, and aesthetics. Bookhart is a contributing author for the text 'Diversity Matters: The Color, Shape, and Tone of Twentieth-First-Century Diversity', edited by Dr. Emily Allen Williams.

She recently completed a book review on Rebecca Peabody's text, 'Consuming Stories: Kara Walker and the Imaging of Race in America' for Art Inquiries Journal. Bookhart is working on several provocative titles, 'We Piss, We Shit, We Die: A Philosophical Discourse on Living, Dying, Being', post-dissertation text, 'SURVIVAL: The Black Man and Darwinian Discontent', 'Fashioning a Dissensus: Politics, Class, Capital', as well as a work of fiction on poverty. The fiction work on poverty is an extension of her studio work. Bookhart has exhibited locally, regionally, and nationally. She is the founder and director of 'The Museum Initiative at Paine College', active from 2008-2015, curating dozens of exhibitions. The 'Initiative' was founded on the idea that art participates in forms of humanity and is essential in molding minds in the acquisition of intelligibility. Bookhart is an Assistant Professor of Art at Paine College and serves as chair of the Humanities Department.

Summary

'The Aestheticization of History and the Butterfly Effect: Visual Arts Series' introduces the audience to philosophical concepts that broach the beginning of the history of Western thought in Plato and Aristotle to that of more modern thought in the theoretician Jacques Rancière in which the main conceptual framework of this anthology is predicated. The introduction is mainly concerned with Rancière's concept of the distribution of the sensible, which is the arrangement of things accessible to our senses, what we experience in real-time and space— compartmentalization and categorization of all things. These things do not just involve tangible items, but audible speech, written language, and visibilities. Rancière's theory of the regimes of art is undertaken as the unfolding of the distribution. Such is evoked in the various genres of visual art forms, from two-dimensional paintings to three-dimensional sculptures and architectures. Understanding the aesthetic regime of art is crucial for grasping how art performs time travel. One way of understanding this phenomenon is in terms of embodied philosophy imbued vis-à-vis art forms, which are subsequently challenged by contemporary artists. The contributing essays examine these reiterations, reevaluations— performances. Aesthetics is a term deriving from the 18th-century European Enlightenment. It is here that aesthetics as the study of beauty is probed for its political potential after the failure of the French Revolution. Many major thinkers during this period signed on to the aesthetic moment, recognizing that Reason in its present state failed to develop humankind beyond barbarism. J.E.B. Stuart's statue is part of an equestrian theme that approximates the Western canon of power and class in the pursuit of domination. But such power and domination will be dethroned in the restaging of history and the redistribution of said canon. This reimagining of the form not only alters perception but constitutes a new narrative.

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