

Flashtalks June 4 session Spring Cycle “More than meets the eye”

13:30 – 13:45 Eleftheria Pistolas: Filling-in the Blanks of Ganzfeld Art

Abstract: The Ganzfeld has attracted interest from various fields over the past 9 decades. Beyond the fields of visual perception and consciousness, this multifaceted effect has garnered attention from a wider public by virtue of its application in contemporary art by artists such as James Turrell. Until now, these art experiences have merely been described to elicit immersive experiences in the field of empirical aesthetics, with no empirical evidence. This study aimed to elucidate when and how aesthetic experiences in Ganzfeld art arise. We investigated the appeal of Ganzfeld art using a mixed-method approach, combining behavioral and neural measures with questionnaires, rating scales, and interviews. In general, this study focused on various facets of Ganzfeld art, pertaining to the elicited states of consciousness, the aesthetic experience, the peculiarity of the perceptual experience and the potential relation with the experience of the sublime.

Eleftheria Pistolas is a PhD researcher, supervised by Prof. Johan Wagemans at the GestaltReVision lab, Department of Brain and Cognition, University of Leuven. Her research is aimed at unravelling how we see, hear, feel – in general, perceive – things the way we do in everyday life. To this end, she combines her background in experimental psychology and her personal keen interest in art to study the perception of art using a multi-method approach, combining behavioral (eye-tracking) and neural (EEG) measures with rating scales, questionnaires and interviews. A common thread throughout is the focus on crossmodal perception and the role of the perceiver, both in Ganzfeld art as well as the interaction in the visuo-tactile exploration of sculptural art.

13:45 – 14:00 Elisabeth Van der Hulst & Jonas Rutgeerts: Time for a Change: Variability, Predictability, and their Role in the Aesthetic Appreciation of Modern Dance

Short abstract: Within research on perception and art, dance and other performing arts remain an underexplored field. Nevertheless, this artform is of outermost interest due to its ‘durational’ nature. The input that reaches the observer changes constantly, in contrast to traditional visual art like paintings or photography. Yet, the choreography of a dance, which provides the organization of this input over time, remains unexplored in empirical aesthetics. This study presents interdisciplinary research on the importance of variation and predictability in choreography for the appreciation of dance. In addition, we reveal how choreography might guide viewing behavior in the observer.

Elisabeth Van der Hulst is doctoral researcher at the KU Leuven, supervised by Prof. Johan Wagemans. Besides fundamental research on perceptual organization, she applies the knowledge from perceptual research to questions of empirical aesthetics. As part of the interdisciplinary research group PALETTES, she combines her own background in experimental psychology with the expertise from researchers in the humanities to unravel the importance of choreography in dance appreciation. In all her projects, the individual as a unique observer with unique experiences plays a central role.

Jonas Rutgeerts is a dramaturg and researcher. His research mainly focuses on dance in all its types and forms. He studied philosophy (KU Leuven) and dramaturgy (University of Amsterdam) and holds a PhD in philosophy from the Higher Institute of Philosophy (KU Leuven). Since 2023, he has been affiliated with the interdisciplinary research group PALETTES (KU Leuven). As a dramaturg, he has

worked with Needcompany, Toneelgroep Amsterdam, Ivana Müller, David Weber-Krebs, Clément Layes and Arkadi Zaidés, among others.

14:00 – 14:15 Chris Linden: Exploring the Materiality of Contemporary Art

Abstract: Contemporary art often features atypical and unique materials, beyond the more traditional paint-on-canvas. The specific qualities of these materials elicit a wide array of behaviours: viewers can get closer to or further from various works, view from different angles, and engage with artworks' depth and texture. We examined the diversity of these explorative behaviours across a series of three contemporary exhibitions. Using mobile eye-tracking, we capture how visitors navigate exhibition space and engage with artworks.

Chris Linden is a doctoral researcher and FWO fellow in psychology at KU Leuven. Born and raised in Canada, he has been living and studying in Belgium for over 6 years. His research focusses on engagement with artworks in museum and non-museum settings, using mobile eye-tracking and questionnaires to explore how museums and galleries impact our perception of art.

14:15 – 14:30 Stefanie De Winter: Reconstructing Color Field Painting in Augmented Reality

Abstract: This talk introduces *IRECONA*, an interdisciplinary project exploring how AR (and VR) can support new conservation practices in modern art, with virtual reconstruction as a key strategy. Focusing on Color Field painting, it develops protocols for dealing with irreversible material change. Case studies of Morris Louis (canvas degradation) and Frank Stella (fading fluorescent paints) illustrate how such changes obscure artistic intent. Discrepancies in conservation and art historical literature reveal a lack of conceptual alignment. *IRECONA* argues for thematizing aging as an essential dimension of interpretation, not only a problem to be solved.

Stefanie De Winter is an art historian with a background in painting conservation. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow at KU Leuven, supported by the Flemish Research Foundation (FWO), and a member of the Young Academy. Her interdisciplinary research combines art history, conservation studies (as a member of ARCHES, UA), vision science (as a member of PALETTEs, KU Leuven), and digital technologies such as AR and VR (in collaboration with TU Delft). Her project *IRECONA* explores new approaches to aging and conservation in modern art, focusing on Color Field painting and digital reconstruction of visual experience.

14:30 – 14:45 Maarten Coëgnarts: The Hidden Patterns of Cinematic Meaning-Making

Abstract: This presentation explores the role of dynamic patterns in cinematic storytelling, drawing on Gestalt psychology and embodied cognitive science. Unlike non-temporal art forms such as painting, film poses unique challenges due to its temporal flow and shifting imagery. Through the use of visual diagrams and animated overlays, the presentation highlights how fundamental conceptual structures—such as container, object, and path—organize emotional and narrative dynamics in film scenes. By tracing patterns of inclusion, exclusion, entry, and exit, it reveals how underlying perceptual structures contribute to the viewer's interpretive experience, offering an innovative, diagrammatic approach to understanding meaning in moving images.

Maarten Coëgnarts is Assistant Professor of Film Studies at the University of Antwerp, Researcher in the Arts at LUCA School of Arts, and Research Fellow at the University of the Free State. His work explores the connection between embodied cognitive processes and meaning-making in film. He is a core member of FilMind, a FilmEU-affiliated Centre of Excellence dedicated to fostering transdisciplinary collaboration between film practitioners and cognitive scholars in media and film studies. He also serves as co-editor of *Projections: The Journal for Movies and Mind*.

14:45 – 15:00 Guido Devadder: Reframing the Circle

Abstract: Combining presentation and live demonstration, this talk explores an artistic research project that reimagines Joseph Plateau's phenakistiscope (1832). While canonical film history primarily recognizes this device for introducing the shutter mechanism, its inherent circularity is often neglected or reduced to a mere technical constraint. This project proposes circularity not as a limitation, but as an unexpectedly rich and idiosyncratic alternative to the linear, frame-based logic of cinema. As a direct perceptual consequence of the circular format, viewers are no longer guided by a fixed progression. Instead, they must actively navigate the animation, engaging in a more embodied and exploratory mode of attention.

Guido Devadder is an artistic researcher and a faculty member in the Department of Audiovisual Arts at LUCA School of Arts, Brussels. He is currently pursuing a PhD in the Arts at KU Leuven - LUCA School of Arts, supervised by Roel Vande Winkel and Steven Devleminck. His research focuses on reimagining abandoned visual media and forgotten modes of creating and perceiving moving images, bridging historical technologies with contemporary artistic practice.