

Summary

Amorphous aesthetic categories as creative and cognitive practices

The book entitled *Amorphous aesthetic categories as creative and cognitive practices* is a treatise on physical aesthetic categories in theoretical terms and in relation to various artistic practices: literature, in particular, dramatic literature, theatre, performance and visual arts perceived in performative terms – painting and architecture, as well as various inclusive artistic projects aimed at people with disabilities. A broad research perspective has been adopted in order to refer to and analyse a vast range of artistic activities. The main goal of these reflections on amorphous aesthetic categories is to present concepts ‘between’ disciplines and discourses suitable for describing artistic activities, which by definition are ‘entangled’ and situated in areas bordering various forms, genres or poetics.

Conceptually, the discussions in the book take into account the assumptions of the affective and sensory, performative, dramatic and cultural, post- and transhumanist and new humanities turns that developed out of Mieke Bal’s notion of wandering concepts. The discussion is interdisciplinary in nature, combining literary, theatre and cultural studies perspectives. These aesthetic categories have a transdisciplinary dimension and are referred to both in their theoretical aspect and while analysing specific works or artistic tendencies. A relational and engaged aesthetics is presented, which is the result of a performative view of artistic practices, as well as the methodological roots in a dramatic theory of literature and dramaturgy understood as a theoretical-cognitive matrix in humanistic reflections, which by definition is anti-binary and designed in the form of a multifaceted scientific discourse. References to philosophical, aesthetic and dramatic-performative concepts, theories and definitions, as well as artistic manifestos, are made during the course of the cogitations. The analysis and interpretation of the referenced works / artefacts / processes is of an aesthetic, trans-ethical and aesthetical nature. The cited fragments of treatises by philosophers, cultural anthropologists, sociologists, literary historians and essayists are juxtaposed or interlinked with analytical and interpretative fragments of individual works of art: theatre performances, poems, dramas, paintings, curatorial projects and installations.

This perspective is evident both in the theoretical introduction to the dissertation, entitled *From looseness to roughness – physical aesthetic categories as ‘in-between’ concepts*, and in the problematised layout of the content. The six chapters which form the essential mental core of the argument deal with the physical, amorphous aesthetic categories indicated in the title, i.e. looseness, translucency, fluidity, roughness, viscosity, odour and flavour-someness, as well as rasping roughness, hum and buzz. Each of the chapter titles is supplemented by the names of philosophers, writers or other artists whose work can be linked to the aesthetic categories analysed. Thus, Heraclitus, Zygmunt Bauman, Italo Calvino, Marek Bieńczyk, Aleksander Baumgarten, Philip Auslander, Julia Kristeva, Arnold Berleant, Samuel Beckett or Miron Białoszewski and others appear here – their oeuvre or concepts provide an important point of reference and context for analysing individual artistic works.

The entire argument is placed in a compositional framework: the book begins with a description of the *Sensory walk* as an important form for activating teaching work with students and ends with reflections triggered by perceptions of the atmospheric phenomenon of a storm. Indeed, the primary research assumption of the treatise is to show all examples of theoretical and artistic works as sensory experiences for both their creators and viewers – as an exponent of their polysensory perception of the world. Experientiality, the sensory experience that becomes the basis of aesthetic experience, occupies a central place here as a leading cognitive tool for both the viewer and the creator, as well as for the researcher. Increasingly, aesthetic experience in the field of many cultural texts also involves ethical engagement. Creators, audiences, researchers – all are immersed in sensual experience, which becomes the starting point for aesthetic perception and interpretation of the world. Often all three perspectives merge – research, artistic activities and experiments in the field of their reception develop into cooperation between one and the same person or artistic-research team. The physical becomes the starting point – a creative practice and a tool for cognition.

Translated by Rob Pagett