



The Aesthetics of Desire and Surprise: Phenomenology and Speculation

Jadranka Skorin-Kapov

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The Aesthetics of Desire and Surprise: Phenomenology and Speculation covers issues central to contemporary continental philosophy (desire, expectations, excess, rupture, transcendence, immanence, surprise). The proposed term *desire//surprise* captures the phenomenological-speculative character of the pair *not yet* and *no longer*. Non-obvious parallels between different thinkers are drawn, and the argumentation is organized around philosophical figures relevant in the sequence *desire – excess – pause (rupture, break) – recuperation (surprise)*. The works of Levinas, Žižek, Bataille, Blanchot, Foucault, and Ricoeur are interpreted and positioned according to the proposed template of desire - excess - pause. The consideration of limit experiences involves authors fascinated by transgression, and the question of whether excess is immanent or transcendent. This discussion considers works by Nietzsche, Deleuze, Žižek, and Foucault. The analysis of surprise and the beginning of recovery after the pause considers works by Fink, Merleau-Ponty, Nancy, Lyotard, Dufrenne, Bachelard, and Seel. The provocative argument elaborated in this work is that *surprise starts with indifference*. Furthermore, the argument is that surprise begins where the concept reaches its ending, hence that the limit of speculative thinking at its ending is the limit of aesthetics at its beginning. The work of Hegel, Schelling and Jaspers are discussed in order to argue for the beginning of aesthetics there where knowledge ends.

Philosophical thematic is contextualized via sections on artists such as Duchamp and Mondrian, and on some films, provoking interest of aestheticians working in art history and cultural studies departments.

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