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978-0-521-45418-6 - Politics and Aesthetics in the Arts
Edited by Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell
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This volume brings together new essays from distinguished scholars in a variety of disciplines – philosophy, history, literary studies, art history – to explore various ways in which aesthetics, politics, and the arts interact with one another. Politics is an elastic concept, covering an oceanic breadth of mechanisms for conducting relations among variously empowered groups, and these essays offer a range of perspectives, including nations, classes, and gendered subjects, which examine the imbrication of politics with arts. Together they demonstrate the need to counteract the reductionist view of the relationship between politics and the arts which prevails in various ways in both philosophy and critical theory, and suggest that the irreducibility of the aesthetic must prompt us to reconceive the political as it relates to human cultural activity.

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CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHY AND THE ARTS

Series editors

SALIM KEMAL *and* IVAN GASKELL

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Politics and Aesthetics in the Arts

Edited by

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Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	page ix
<i>List of contributors</i>	x
<i>Editors' acknowledgments</i>	xi
1 Contesting the arts: politics and aesthetics SALIM KEMAL AND IVAN GASKELL	1
2 "From the stage to the state": politics, form, and performance in the Elizabethan theatre LOUIS MONTROSE	11
3 Republican beauty, sublime democracy: civic humanism in Gadamer and Rawls J. M. BERNSTEIN	50
4 Travelers, colonizers, and the aesthetics of self- conception: Denis Diderot on the perils of detachment ANTHONY PAGDEN	85
5 The aesthetics of nationalism and the limits of culture DAVID CARROLL	112
6 Peripheral visions: class, cultural aspiration, and the artisan community in mid-nineteenth-century France NEIL MCWILLIAM	140
7 The war of tradition: Virginia Woolf and the temper of criticism DANIEL COTTOM	174

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[More information](#)

Contents

8	The discomfort of strangeness and beauty: art, politics, and aesthetics PETER DE BOLLA	204
9	The political autonomy of contemporary art: the case of the 1993 Whitney Biennial MICHAEL KELLY	221
	<i>Index</i>	264

Illustrations

- | | | |
|-----|---|----------|
| 6.1 | Antoine Etex, <i>Mort d'un homme de génie</i>
<i>incompris</i> , 1845, reproduced by permission of the
Musée des beaux-arts, Lyon | page 145 |
| 6.2 | Célestin Nanteuil, after Antoine Etex, <i>La Délivrance</i> ,
<i>ou la mort du prolétaire</i> , 1849, reproduced by permission
of the Cabinet des estampes, Bibliothèque nationale, Paris | 147 |
| 6.3 | <i>The Berryer</i> . <i>Chef d'œuvre</i> presented to the lawyer
Berryer by the Compagnons Passants Charpentiers du
Devoir, Bons-Drilles du Tour de France (Soubises) in
1845; reproduced by permission of the Compagnons
Charpentiers des Devoirs du Tour de France, Paris | 163 |
| 9.1 | Hans Haacke, <i>Photo Opportunity (After the Storm/Walker</i>
<i>Evans)</i> , 1992, reproduced by permission of the artist | 236 |
| 9.2 | Robert Gober, <i>Newspaper</i> , 1992, reproduced by
permission of the artist and the Paula Cooper
Gallery, New York | 239 |
| 9.3 | Laura Simpson, <i>Hypothetical?</i> , 1992, reproduced by
permission of the Sean Kelly Gallery, New York | 241 |
| 9.4 | Sue Williams, <i>It's a New Era</i> , 1992, reproduced by
permission of the 303 Gallery, New York | 243 |
| 9.5 | Janine Antoni, <i>Chocolate Gnaw</i> , 1992 (photo by
John Bessler), reproduced by permission of the artist | 245 |
| 9.6 | Cindy Sherman, untitled, 1992, reproduced by
permission of Metro Pictures | 248 |
| 9.7 | Byron Kim, <i>Synechdoche</i> , 1991–2, reproduced by
permission of Max Protetch, New York | 249 |
| 9.8 | Glenn Ligon, <i>Notes on the Margin of the "Black Book"</i> ,
1991–3, reproduced by permission of the artist; in the
collection of the Bothen Foundation, New York | 251 |

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There are many people we should like to thank, too many to list here. Jane Baston and Jane Whitehead, as always; Leo, Sara, and Rahim, as always; William and Kathryn Robinson. We would like to thank our Advisory Board members and the other readers and advisors on particular papers for the series, and those who have encouraged us through reviews, citations, and proposals for journals and further volumes. Perhaps it is fitting that a topic such as the relation of politics to aesthetics, so open to contention, so provocative of passion, and in some people's minds so entrenched in a system of received opinions and prejudices, should conclude the series. Throughout we have sought not only to bring together philosophers from both the analytical and continental schools, and theoretically minded practitioners of many other human science disciplines to consider common problems, but also to choose problems that in themselves challenge the theoretical status quo. The results have not fitted in with any existing orthodoxy, nor, we suspect, made many people feel more comfortable with their existing theoretical commitments. Our own choices have been informed by both politics and aesthetics: a politics and an aesthetics of surprise, quiet defiance, and disconcertion. With sincere thanks to all who have taken part in the series we now take our leave.