

Cambridge University Press

0521839033 - Artistic Truth: Aesthetics, Discourse, and Imaginative Disclosure

Lambert Zuidervaart

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

## Artistic Truth

### *Aesthetics, Discourse, and Imaginative Disclosure*

It is unfashionable to talk about artistic truth. Yet the issues traditionally addressed under that term have not disappeared. Indeed, questions concerning the role of the artist in society, the relationship between art and knowledge, and the validity of cultural interpretation have intensified. Lambert Zuidervaart challenges current intellectual fashions. He proposes a new critical hermeneutics of artistic truth that engages with both analytic and continental philosophies and illuminates the contemporary cultural scene.

People turn to the arts as a way of finding orientation in their lives, communities, and institutions. But philosophers, hamstrung by their own theories of truth, have been unsuccessful in accounting for this common feature in our lives. This book portrays artistic truth as a process of imaginative disclosure in which expectations of authenticity, significance, and integrity prevail. Understood in this way, truth becomes central to the aesthetic and social value of the arts.

Lambert Zuidervaart is Professor of Philosophy at the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto, and an Associate Member of the Graduate Faculty in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Toronto.

Cambridge University Press

0521839033 - Artistic Truth: Aesthetics, Discourse, and Imaginative Disclosure

Lambert Zuidervaart

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

# Artistic Truth

*Aesthetics, Discourse, and Imaginative Disclosure*

LAMBERT ZUIDERVAART

*Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto*



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
 0521839033 - Artistic Truth: Aesthetics, Discourse, and Imaginative Disclosure  
 Lambert Zuidervaart  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
 The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK  
 40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA  
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
 Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain  
 Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa  
<http://www.cambridge.org>

© Lambert Zuidervaart 2004

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception  
 and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,  
 no reproduction of any part may take place without  
 the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2004

Printed in the United States of America

*Typeface* ITC New Baskerville 10/12 pt.    *System* L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 2<sub>ε</sub> [TB]

*A catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.*

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data*

Zuidervaart, Lambert.

Artistic truth : aesthetics, discourse, and imaginative disclosure /  
 Lambert Zuidervaart.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-521-83903-3

1. Truth (Aesthetics) I. Title.

BH301.T77Z85 2004

111'.85 - dc22

2004040679

ISBN 0 521 83903 3 hardback

Cambridge University Press

0521839033 - Artistic Truth: Aesthetics, Discourse, and Imaginative Disclosure

Lambert Zuidervaart

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

*For Cal, Henk, and Nick*

## Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xiii
Introduction: Critical Hermeneutics	1
1.1 Locations	2
1.2 Directions	7
1.3 Border Crossings	11
PART I. HERMENEUTICAL MATRIX	
1 Beardsley's Denial	17
1.1 Meaning and Metaphor	19
1.2 Contested Theories	24
1.3 Literary Predications	29
2 Reciprocations	34
2.1 Existential Affirmation	35
2.2 Postmetaphysical Deconstruction	46
2.3 Toward Reconstruction	51
3 Kant Revisited	55
3.1 Aesthetic Validity	56
3.2 Cultural Orientation	65
3.3 Art Talk	68
PART II. CONSTRUCTIVE CLEARINGS	
4 Truth as Disclosure	77
4.1 Heidegger's Disclosedness	79
4.2 Assertion and Interpretation	84
4.3 Correspondence and Disclosure	90

Cambridge University Press

0521839033 - Artistic Truth: Aesthetics, Discourse, and Imaginative Disclosure

Lambert Zuidervaart

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii	<i>Contents</i>	
5	Imaginative Disclosure	101
5.1	Heidegger's Anti-Aesthetics	102
5.2	Art and Vocation	109
5.3	Cogency and Truth	113
6	Artistic Truth	118
6.1	Critical Aesthetic Theory	119
6.2	Authenticity, Significance, Integrity	127
6.3	Art Talk and Artistic Truth	134
PART III. LINGUISTIC TURNS		
7	Logical Positivist Dispute	143
7.1	Emotivism versus Propositionism	145
7.2	Propositional Acts	151
7.3	Meaning and Integrity	157
8	Goodman's Nominalism	162
8.1	Art as Symbol System	163
8.2	Truth without Truth Bearers	171
8.3	Appropriateness and Significance	175
9	Wolterstorff's Realism	182
9.1	Fictive World Projection	183
9.2	Propositions without Import	191
9.3	Actuality and Authenticity	196
10	Aesthetic Transformations	203
10.1	Traces of Truth	204
10.2	Footprints in the Sand	213
	<i>Notes</i>	219
	<i>Bibliography</i>	259
	<i>Index</i>	271

Cambridge University Press

0521839033 - Artistic Truth: Aesthetics, Discourse, and Imaginative Disclosure

Lambert Zuidervaart

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Preface

The preliminary sketch of this book arose from two studies that had recently come to completion. The first, published as *Adorno's Aesthetic Theory*, raised questions about Theodor W. Adorno's conception of artistic truth. But it also defended Adorno from criticisms on precisely the same topic. As the Adorno study drew to a close, I participated in a second study, an interdisciplinary research project on mass-mediated culture. Published as the collaboratively written book *Dancing in the Dark*, edited by Roy Anker, that project convinced me of something I already knew from my work on Adorno: philosophical aesthetics, as traditionally understood and practiced, is outdated with respect to hotly contested cultural issues. To address such issues, it needs to be reconceived, in conversation with social theory, with newer fields of inquiry such as communications and cultural studies, and with emerging discourses on public art and cultural policy. So I set myself the ambitious challenge of reconceptualizing philosophical aesthetics in a single volume to be titled "Cultural Politics and Artistic Truth."

While working my way into relevant literature in several different areas, I discovered that two volumes would be required. The first, which you are reading, examines the aesthetic, linguistic, and epistemological underpinnings of contemporary art. It does so in conversation with several twentieth-century philosophers on the topic of truth in art. Although nonphilosophers might find these conversations abstruse, their intent in this book is to help illuminate the current cultural scene. The second volume, which is still being written, will address political, economic, and broadly cultural issues. It will develop a social philosophy designed to accommodate newer forms of public art as well as older artistic practices either denigrated or ignored by modernist aesthetic theories. Reconceptualizing the field as "art-in-public," I shall propose a new understanding of art's societal roles and recommend new approaches to cultural policy. The two volumes remain closely linked, even though they can and will be read separately.

Cambridge University Press

0521839033 - Artistic Truth: Aesthetics, Discourse, and Imaginative Disclosure  
Lambert Zuidervaart

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

I have had the good fortune to be in hospitable settings for this work. In the 1990s I served as the board president and chief volunteer fund raiser for the Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts (UICA) in Grand Rapids. UICA is the largest multidisciplinary center for contemporary art in the state of Michigan. Daily interactions with dancers, film makers, musicians, visual artists, and writers, together with practical immersion in the challenges facing arts organizations, have thoroughly shaped my philosophical reflections. I am grateful for this opportunity to be a “public intellectual” within a local microcosm of the North American cultural scene. Among the hundreds of volunteers, staff, and board members with whom I worked, let me single out a few for special mention: Marjorie Kuipers, UICA’s executive director at the time; Gail Philbin, the program manager; Hank Meijer and Kate Pew Wolters, honorary cochairs of a major capital campaign; Julie Christianson Stivers, the immediate past president of UICA’s board and my capital campaign cochair; and Daryl Fischer, the board vice president and my frequent discussion partner. Of the hundreds of West Michigan artists for whom UICA provides a cultural nexus, let me mention several whose work and conversations have animated my thoughts: Jay Constantine, Linda Nemec Foster, Dana Freeman, Darlene Kaczmarczk, James Karsina, Steve Nelson, Deb Rockman, Steve Schousen, Paul Wittenbraker, and Diane Zeeuw. I have also learned much from an informal discussion group for civic leaders organized by City Commissioner George Heartwell, who has since become mayor of Grand Rapids. These cultural workers demonstrate the commitment to dialogue and creative experience that marks contemporary art at its best. To all of them, and to the many others I have not named, I simply say, Thank you.

The academic settings for this project have been equally hospitable. Calvin College, where I taught for seventeen years, stands out among liberal arts colleges for its promotion of faculty scholarship. I am grateful for excellent services provided by the Hekman Library and the Information Technology Center, as well as for generous research funding provided by the college and its Alumni Association. My writing also received significant grants from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), an independent federal agency in the United States. Without such support I could not have completed this book. My former colleagues at Calvin College, both in the Department of Philosophy and in an interdisciplinary reading group on continental philosophy, proved to be stimulating discussion partners. Again, I cannot mention everyone, but let me name a few. In philosophy, Ruth Groenhout, Lee Hardy, John Hare, and David Hoekema provided constant encouragement for the project as a whole and insightful comments on specific chapters. I received the same from colleagues in other disciplines: Simona Goi, Clarence Joldersma, Will Katerberg, and Henry Luttkhuizen, with whom I have published two books whose topics intersect this project. I also want to thank



Cambridge University Press

0521839033 - Artistic Truth: Aesthetics, Discourse, and Imaginative Disclosure

Lambert Zuidervaart

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Preface*

xi

Donna Kruithof for her secretarial help, and Victoria Zapata for the research assistance she provided one summer as a McGregor Fellow.

I left Calvin College in 2002 to take up a position at the Institute for Christian Studies (ICS), a graduate school for interdisciplinary philosophy in Toronto. My colleagues at ICS have welcomed me into their intellectual community and cheered on the completion of this book. I especially want to thank Adrienne Dengerink Chaplin, James Olthuis, and Bob Sweetman for their attentiveness to my ideas and their remarks on parts of the manuscript. I am also grateful for the research assistance Matt Klaassen has provided.

Because the book has been so long in the making, with many excerpts presented as conference papers, it is impossible to list all the scholars whose comments have prompted new insight or whose collegiality has sustained my work. But let me mention many: Jay Bernstein, James Bohman, Deborah Cook, Maeve Cooke, Michael Nyhof-DeMoor, Alessandro Ferrara, Stefan Forrester, Victor Haines, Tom Huhn, Martin Jay, Bert Kögler, Ron Kuipers, Stephen Lake, Thomas McCarthy, L. Ryan Musgrave, Ira Newman, Heinz Paetzold, David Rasmussen, Karla Schultz, Yvonne Sherratt, Robert Stecker, James Swindall, Marcus Verhaegh, Merold Westphal, and Eddie Zemach. The early stages of writing benefited from a highly productive research visit to the Freie Universität Berlin in 1994. There I presented the first draft of Chapter 4 in an evening lecture series organized by Christoph Menke and Ruth Sonderegger. I appreciate their interest and that of Axel Honneth and Albrecht Wellmer, the cosponsors for my visit. A more recent research visit, this time to Frankfurt in 2001, and equally productive, was cosponsored by Axel Honneth and Rolf Tiedemann. I am also indebted to James Schmidt at Boston University, whose NEH Summer Seminar on *Dialectic of Enlightenment* came at a crucial time when my intellectual energies were flagging.

As a result of such widespread encouragement, earlier versions of several chapters and sections appear as journal articles and essays. Details for the journal articles, in *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, can be found in the bibliography. Parts of the Introduction and Chapters 3 and 6 come from the essay “Artistic Truth, Linguistically Turned: Variations on a Theme from Adorno, Habermas, and Hart,” in *Philosophy as Responsibility*, edited by Ronald A. Kuipers and Janet Catherina Wesselius (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2002), pp. 129–49. An earlier version of Chapter 4 appears as “If I Had a Hammer: Truth in Heidegger’s *Being and Time*,” in *A Hermeneutics of Charity*, edited by James K. A. Smith and Henry Venema (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press [a division of Baker Book House], 2004). I am grateful to the editors and publishers for permission to include these materials here. I am also appreciative of the astute criticisms given by two anonymous readers for Cambridge University Press. They prompted significant revisions that, I trust, have made this a better book.

One of the most important members of UICA during my tenure there, both as a volunteer and as an artist, was Joyce A. Recker. She is also my

Cambridge University Press

0521839033 - Artistic Truth: Aesthetics, Discourse, and Imaginative Disclosure  
Lambert Zuidervaart

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

companion for life. I thank Joyce for providing both lively inspiration and untiring support. As I write this I cast a reassuring glance at the beautiful golden lab who joined our household shortly before this project began – reassuring as much to me as to her. It is not common, I suppose, for philosophers to thank their canine companions, but Rosa Luxemburg Parks has been a source of sanity and delight for more than thirteen years. And the very human friendship of Ron Otten, who lived with us in 1991 and who has been our household’s mutual soul mate for even longer, is a gift that exceeds description.

The first sketch for “Cultural Politics and Artistic Truth” emerged in 1991 from graduate seminars I led at ICS as a sabbatical replacement for Calvin Seerveld. Little did I know then that the project would mushroom into two volumes. Nor did I know that, a few months before completing the final draft of the first volume, I would become Hendrik Hart’s successor in systematic philosophy at ICS. With their broad European training, both Cal and Henk have taught me over the years to think outside rigid disciplinary boxes without giving up the rigor of philosophy at its best. So has my former colleague at Calvin College, Nicholas Wolterstorff, a leading analytic philosopher in the intellectual tradition to which the four of us belong. Cal, Henk, and Nick are generous and gifted mentors. Over the many years required for this book to take flight, they were the eagles whose wings carry their young. All three are emeritus professors now. I can think of no more fitting tribute to their presence in my life and work, and in that of my contemporaries, than to dedicate this volume to them.

## Abbreviations

- AT* Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans., ed., and introd. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).
- ÄT* Theodor W. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie* (1970), *Gesammelte Schriften* 7, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, 2d ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972).
- CJ* Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- OW* Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art” (1935–36), in *Off the Beaten Track*, ed. and trans. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 1–56.
- SZ* Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (1927), 15th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1979).
- TM* Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, 2d rev. ed. (New York: Crossroad, 1989).
- WM* Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik* (1960), 4th ed. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1975).
- UK* Martin Heidegger, “Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes,” in *Holzwege* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1950), pp. 7–68.

Cambridge University Press

0521839033 - Artistic Truth: Aesthetics, Discourse, and Imaginative Disclosure

Lambert Zuidervaart

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

Artistic Truth

*Aesthetics, Discourse, and Imaginative Disclosure*