



PŘEDNÁŠKOVÁ SÉRIE LECTURE SERIES

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Aesthetic Recollection

What is the aesthetic value of recollection? In this talk, I aim to provide a general definition of aesthetic recollection, and the conditions under which it obtains. I take recollection to be a cognitive process of involved or engaged contemplation through which one consciously and deliberately brings to mind the past. There is a wide diversity of acts of recollection, starting from acts motivated by communal interests such as civic recollection of notable deeds (e.g., civil war; Riegl, 1996; Carroll, 2005), to self-oriented acts, such as retrieving events from one's episodic past. But can such acts generate an aesthetic effect? My focus will be on acts of art-mediated recollection. I argue that there are cases when the aesthetic status of artifacts or performances conceived for the sake of recollecting matters, when they are more than mere vehicles for nostalgia. In support of this hypothesis, I examine the relation between aesthetic appreciation and recollective contents (e.g., public representations, communal values, genealogical connections etc.), with a specific focus on the aesthetic means through which recollective contents are coded. I elaborate on the view that memorial contents are not always causally driven (Bartlett, 1928), in the sense that, in certain contexts, recollection is not a matter of re-presenting or re-activating facts which obtained in the past (Bloch, 1998; Küchler, 2002).

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