



EVENTAL AESTHETICS
RETROSPECTIVE 1

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RETROSPECTIVE 1

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Retrospective 1



Mandy-Suzanne Wong
and Heather Kettenis

What's so monumental about the number ten? Early 2015 saw the publication of this journal's tenth issue: why is this cause for celebration?

Surely it is not because EA's publications would now fill up our hands – one for each finger, so to speak – because this online publication demands very little in the way of physical space. And yet it seems to us that tenth anniversaries are celebrated everywhere for precisely that reason: the number ten belongs to that part of our bodies which we use to make things and make things happen. When the number ten occurs in relation to things we have accomplished, things that we have caused or helped to occur, those things and their number resonate within us.

Things that occur are events. Events are affects: they are things that have effects, that make a difference; and their impact, however small, is felt somehow. Events *happen*.

Therefore tenth anniversaries are aesthetic experiences and expressions of the evental.



Our way of conducting this anniversary is by inviting our readers to look back at what occurred in those first ten issues. After all, the word “anniversary” is really a misnomer in this context: it's not ten years but ten issues that are of interest here. So again, why celebrate?

The following articles speak for themselves on that point. They represent the kind of academic work that appears in all our issues and in our opinion deserves to be celebrated. For an article, being celebrated means being read and thoughtfully considered – being reread. For editors, authors, scholars, and philosophers such as ourselves and our readers, celebrating and being celebrated helps to remind us of exactly what we do, why we do it, and why it is important.

With this retrospective, we hope to encourage EA's dedicated readers to revisit the evocative thoughts and writings that have made this publication happen, thereby instigating more thinking, additional discussion, and inspired creativity among our audiences. We hope this retrospective will give new and prospective readers a sense of what this journal does. We hope it will encourage all readers to revisit – or peruse for the first time – the entire back-catalogue of *Evental Aesthetics*, not only the selection offered here.



Why this selection? How did we decide on the contents of the retrospective? Like many aesthetic decisions, this one bears strong traces of the arbitrary. We chose from as many different back-issues as we felt capable of working with in the time we allotted to the retrospective, for which Heather Kettenis designed a completely new layout. We asked our Editorial Board to nominate memorable pieces that somehow reflect EA's uniqueness. We chose a range of topics and perspectives; varied tones, voices, and philosophical traditions; and authors from diverse disciplines and various points in their careers. Our goal: to showcase the heterogeneity of aesthetic thinking.

We also divided the collection between articles and Collisions. In EA, articles run from 4,000 to 10,000 words and delve as deeply as possible into some philosophically pertinent aesthetic question, usually in some sort of academic style. Collisions, which run up to 2,500 words and often address particular aesthetic experiences or practices, pose specific aesthetic questions but with questioning itself – philosophical, analytical, critical, and creative – as the goal. In a Collision the idea is not to come to a conclusion, as one usually does in an article, but to spark open-ended discussions, often in unexpected styles.

The Collision – a form of writing that is also a provocative encounter between an author and an aesthetic experience, practice, or question – is an invention of EA's editors. We are proud of it. To our surprise and delight, its popularity and the variety of spins that our authors place on it persist in burgeoning. In recent years, we learned that some philosophy instructors have begun using Collisions as teaching tools, assigning their students to develop their writing and thinking by practicing the Collision form. The pieces in this collection should convey a sense of the Collision's multifarious potential. But again, a mere collection barely scratches the surface of what EA's authors have realized and discovered in the Collision form.



As for the future of *Evental Aesthetics*, we aim to continue publishing peer-reviewed philosophy and scholarship along the lines of a traditional journal. We also intend EA to remain online and open-access, free of the costs and strictures of printing. To us, "open-access" means *free of charge to authors and readers*: we have not and never will charge our contributors to publish their work in EA or assess subscription fees to readers. Instead, the journal is supported by its Editors-in-Chief. To offset the dubious, unreliable, and unscholarly

reputation which some open-access journals have incurred by charging publication fees to would-be authors, we are determined to achieve ever-higher standards of thought, scholarship, authorship, and editorship. We are committed to open-access publishing because we believe that all scholarship is in a sense independent scholarship, for each project is born of some spark within an independent mind. We do not believe that good research and solid thinking should be available only to those at universities and those who can afford to access “pay-per-view” databases.

That said, we hope to continue to think somewhat beyond the usual academic forms. We will continue to seek high-level writing and thinking that suits traditional models—alongside projects that challenge and distort those models. As an example of the latter, we’re now calling for proposals for Collision-style engagements with academic books, taking the concept of the book review beyond summary and evaluation to questioning and discussion. With this and other such ideas, we hope to expand the possibilities of written questioning without eschewing the clarity, relevance, self-evident quality, and professionalism that is vital to academic audiences.

We would like to thank all our editorial colleagues, all our contributors, and all the readers—wherever you are—who have followed this journal’s progress since its inception. This retrospective is for you. 📖

Evental Aesthetics: The First Ten Issues

[Aesthetics After Hegel](#)

[The Missed](#)

[Art and the City](#)

[Premodern Aesthetics](#)

[Animals and Aesthetics](#)

[Aesthetic Histories](#)

[Poverty and Asceticism](#)

[Aesthetic Inquiries 1](#)

[Hijacking](#)

[Vital Materialism and Aesthetics](#)