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Somaesthetic Beauty

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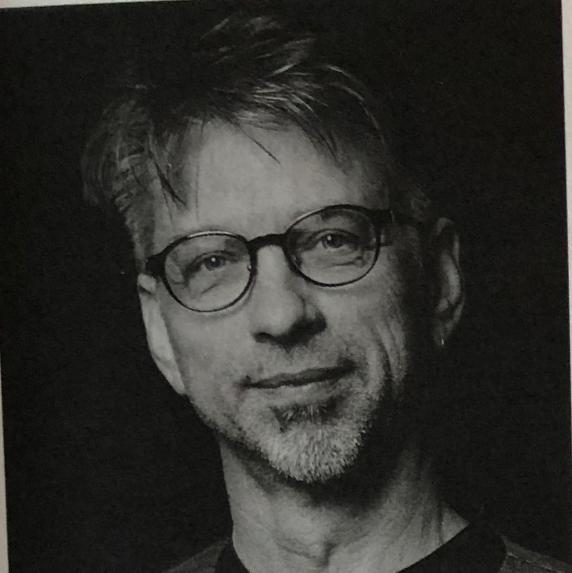
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Somaesthetic Beauty

There has not been written much on beauty in pragmatic aesthetics or in somaesthetics. I claim, however, that the experience of beauty is important for somaesthetics and its ameliorative ambition. My paper discusses the possibility of the experiences of beauty of dancing. My own experiences of dancing Argentine tango will be the experiential foundation of my investigation. Aesthetic experiences of dancing complicate the subject-object distinction that has been a bedrock of existing notions of beauty because it provides the target of an objectivization of (the experience of) beauty (e.g., Santayana). For aesthetic judgments of one's own movements, this theoretical and methodical anchor is a challenge because it conflates subject and object. A vital part of (practical, pragmatic) somaesthetics is centered in the awareness of one's own body and its actions emphasizing not only a subject's bodily existence but also its performative possibilities and transformative dimensions as part of a particular and variable context. The paper proposes that a different form of objectivization happens when the dancer is experientially delegating his or her agency to the interaction the dancer is engaged in; the dance is dancing the dancer. Distributed agency allows for a pleasurable awareness of one's own movements. One's own actions can now be experienced as constituents of an ever-emerging, beautiful unity.

Falk Heinrich is professor at Aalborg University (Denmark). He holds a PhD in interactive installation art. His research focuses on (1) participatory art and experiential culture with a focus on aesthetic and performative aspects and (2) development of methodologies that integrate artistic and academic approaches. He is the author of the books *Interaktiv Digital Installationkunst* (2008) and *Performing Beauty in Participatory Art and Culture* (2014). His artistic background is as a theatre actor/director and installation artist. His theoretical investigations have developed in close relation with practical artistic work. Heinrich has worked as head of studies, head of research and vice-dean of education at faculty of humanities, Aalborg University.