



Call for Papers

The Aesthetics of Disaster

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The special issue of *The Polish Journal of Aesthetics*, titled “The Aesthetics of Disaster,” aims to examine the intricate relationship between art, tragedy, and human experience in the contemporary global context. Inspired by Susan Sontag's seminal work “The Imagination of Disaster” (1965), this issue seeks to explore how disasters, both natural and human-made, are depicted and interpreted through various artistic mediums. This exploration is particularly relevant in our current era, marked by the omnipresence of existential threats such as the global health crisis of COVID-19, conflicts in politically strategic regions and climate change. These crises evoke profound dread and mistrust, yet also galvanise us towards agency and transformative action.

In Sontag's words, “Ours is indeed an age of extremity.” The present-day reality reflects a continuous struggle between mundane existence and overwhelming terror. Our era's existential crises differ fundamentally from past encounters, not just in their scale and impact, but in their ability to touch us on a deeply personal and impersonal level simultaneously.

“The Aesthetics of Disaster” aims to investigate:

- The representation of disasters in visual arts, literature, cinema, and digital media.
- The role of aesthetics in mediating the experience of tragedy and destruction.
- Artistic expressions of resilience, hope, and the human condition in the face of calamity.
- The ethical implications of depicting suffering and tragedy through art.
- The potential of art as a tool for catharsis, remembrance, and social commentary.

By focusing on the aesthetics of disaster, this issue aims to expand the discourse within the field of aesthetics, offering new perspectives on how art interacts with extreme experiences. It will provide a platform for scholars, artists, and critics to engage with questions about the representation of disaster and the role of art in contemporary society. The issue encourages contributions that not only analyze aesthetic responses to disasters but also consider the broader social, cultural, and ethical dimensions of these responses.

Articles may explore, among other topics:

1. Artistic Representation of Natural Disasters:

- How do artists depict natural calamities such as earthquakes, hurricanes, and pandemics?
- The impact of visual and narrative choices in conveying the scale and emotional weight of natural disasters.



2. Human-Made Disasters and Art:

- Artistic responses to wars, terrorism, and industrial catastrophes.
- The intersection of political critique and aesthetic representation.

3. Ethics and Aesthetics of Suffering:

- The ethical considerations in representing human suffering and tragedy.
- The balance between aestheticisation and exploitation of disaster imagery.

4. Resilience and Rebuilding in Art:

- Depictions of human resilience, recovery, and rebuilding efforts in the aftermath of disasters.
- The role of art in community healing and memorialisation.

5. Digital Media and the Aesthetics of Disaster:

- The influence of digital platforms and social media on the dissemination and reception of disaster imagery.
- Virtual reality and immersive experiences in representing disasters.

We also invite submissions in the form of essays, reviews, poetry, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary expressions that explore the volume's theme from non-academic perspectives.

Author Guidelines:

We ask Authors to read our guidelines posted under the tab [For Authors](#) and to double-check the completeness of each submission (please remember to submit the abstract, keywords, bibliography, and a biographical note about the author collectively) before submitting.

Only complete submissions sent through the submissions page will be accepted—submission page: <https://submissions.pjaesthetics.uj.edu.pl/index.php/PJA>.

All submitted articles are subject to double-anonymized reviews. Articles published in *The Polish Journal of Aesthetics* are assigned DOI numbers.

Please do not hesitate to contact us via email: pjaesthetics@uj.edu.pl

About the Journal:

The Polish Journal of Aesthetics is highly regarded as an international forum for debate in aesthetics and the philosophy of art. The journal is published to promote the study and discuss philosophical questions about aesthetic experience and creative work. The Journal is open to different intellectual and artistic orientations. It publishes lively and thoughtful articles on various topics, from art, aesthetics, the philosophy of art, popular culture, and new technologies. The journal is a semi-annual (appears twice a year) periodical published by the Institute of Philosophy at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland.

Please visit our website at https://pjaesthetics.uj.edu.pl/en_GB/

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