

Department of Philosophy Colloquium Series

Aesthetic Suprematism in Post-Kantian (German, Chinese, Mexican) Axiology

Thursday,
October 20
4-6 p.m.

Watson Hall
Room 517



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Though it has much older roots, the idea that the realization of specifically aesthetic and not just moral or ethical values is necessarily a part of 'the highest good' becomes especially prominent in post-Kantian reflections on the summum bonum, particularly among the German Idealists and Romantics and their critical inheritors across Europe, in China, and in the Americas. In this talk I will explore a more radical position which emerges within this tradition, which can be found in various forms in Schelling, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Wang Guowei, and José Vasconcelos (among others), which I will call 'aesthetic suprematism'. This is a view according to which the realization of aesthetic value is not just a necessary part of the highest good but is itself the highest kind of good. After setting the post-Kantian context for the emergence of this tradition, I will present some of the claims made on behalf of this position from these figures, and then attempt to further articulate various options for what is (and is not) supposed to be implied by the aesthetic suprematist axiology. I will conclude by raising questions about the viability of aesthetic suprematism as an alternative to two leading kinds of positions in the history of value theory: first, alternative value suprematisms (eg those which place theoretical, ethical, religious value as the highest kind of good), and second, value pluralisms which intend to reject the idea of a hierarchy among different kinds of values.

Everyone Welcome!

For accessibility requirements, please contact philosophy@queensu.ca

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<https://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/administration-and-operations/covid-19-vaccination-requirements>