

10th Vienna Forum for Intercultural Philosophy

Everyday Aesthetics and Everydayness from an Intercultural Perspective

27 February – 1 March 2026
Otto Mauer Zentrum, Währingerstraße 2-4, 1090 Vienna

Friday, 27 February 2026

Morning Session

9:15 – 9:30 Conference opening: Mădălina Diaconu and Mădălina Guzun Masoud

9:30 – 10:30 Keynote Yuriko Saito: *Aesthetic Challenges to Consumerism: Learning from Japanese Folk Beliefs and Practices* (Chair: Mădălina Diaconu)

10:30 – 10:40 *Break*

Chair: Mădălina Guzun Masoud

10:40 – 11:20 Bianca Boteva-Richter: *The Perfection of Imperfection, or Another Idea of Beauty — Some Reflections on Japanese Everyday Aesthetics*

11:20 – 12:00 Francesca Greco: *From the Tea House to Your House. The Circular Relationality of Aesthetic and Everydayness*

12:00 – 12:15 *Break*

Chair: Mădălina Guzun Masoud

12:15 – 12:55 Paulus Kaufmann: *Situational Japanese Aesthetics*

13:00 – 14:30 *Lunch (Café Stein, Währingerstraße 6-8)*

Afternoon Session

Chair: Rosa Fernández Gómez

14:30 – 15:10 Maddalena Borsato: *What Aesthetics for the Shokunin's Practice?*

15:10 – 15:50 Anna Zschauer: *The Janus-faced Japanese Everyday Aesthetic, or: Does It Work When It's a Brand?*

15:50 – 16:05 *Break*

Chair: Bianca Boteva-Richter

16:05 – 16:45 Lorenzo Marinucci: *Kawaii and Phenomenology*

16:45 – 17:25 Dario Vuger: *On Beauty of Infrastructures: Simondonean Aesthetics and the Japanese Everyday*

18:00 *Dinner (location tba)*

Saturday, 28 February 2026

Morning Session

9:30 – 10:30 Keynote Arto Haapala: *Aesthetics of the Ordinary and the Everyday* (Chair: Elisabetta Di Stefano)

10:30 – 10:40 *Break*

Chair: Francesca Greco

10:40 – 11:20 Leo Marko: *A Faint Frame: The Aesthetics of Swedish Fika and the Question of Its Uniqueness*

11:20 – 12:00 Lenka Lee: *The Aesthetics of Attentiveness: Central European Beekeeping and Interspecies Relations*

12:00 – 12:15 *Break*

Chair: Francesca Greco

12:15 – 12:55 Rosa Fernández Gómez: *Playfully Engaging the Everyday: The Rasa of Life in Kashmir Shaivism*

13:00 – 14:30 *Lunch (Café Stein, Währingerstraße 6-8)*

Afternoon Session

Chair: Anna Zschauer

14:30 – 15:10 Elisabetta Di Stefano: *Frugality and Humility: Categories of Measure for an Intercultural Everyday Aesthetics*

15:10 – 15:50 Nicola Ramazzotto: *Beyond Pleasure: Pain and the Transformation of Everyday Aesthetics*

15:50 – 16:05 *Break*

Chair: Maddalena Borsato

16:05 – 16:45 Mao Matsuyama: *Comparative Study of Aesthetic Care Theory and Salutogenesis: The Entanglement of Aesthetic and Ethical Values in Everyday Life*

16:45 – 17:25 Washington Morales-Maciel, Marcos Rostan Davyt: *Imagining Use: Experiential Knowledge and Cultural Frameworks in Everyday Design Aesthetics*

Sunday, 1 March 2026

Chair: Lorenzo Marinucci

9:30 – 10:10 Matti Tainio: *From Specified Aesthetics of Everyday Life and Art towards a General Aesthetics. An Inquiry at the Boundaries of Art and Non-Art*

10:10 – 10:50 Sara Borriello: *Weather, Atmospheres, and Everyday Life: Towards an Integrated Framework for Aesthetic Inquiry*

10:50 – 11:05 *Break*

11:05 – 11:45 Marcos Rostan Davyt, Nahuel Roel Aspée: *The Everyday and the Exceptional: Two Environmental Controversies in Uruguay*

11:45 – 12:00 Final discussion

Organizers

Mădălina Diaconu (PhD Bucharest 1996, PhD Vienna 1998, MA in Theology Vienna 2021) is Dozentin for Philosophy at the University of Vienna. She is member of the editorial boards of *Contemporary Aesthetics*, *Studia Phaenomenologica* and *Polylog. Zeitschrift für interkulturelles Philosophieren*, as well as vice-president of the Viennese Society for Intercultural Philosophy. She authored eleven monographs and (co)edited several books on Kierkegaard, Heidegger, the ontology of art, the phenomenology of the senses, the aesthetics of touch, smell, and taste, urban sense-scapes, environmental ethics, animality, atmosphere, and eco-phenomenology. Her latest book is *Aesthetics of Weather* (Bloomsbury 2024). <https://homepage.univie.ac.at/madalina.diaconu/>.

Mădălina Guzun Masoud has a PhD in philosophy (*Penser le logos et la traduction à partir de Martin Heidegger*, Sorbonne University and Bergische Universität Wuppertal). She works in phenomenology, intercultural philosophy and oriental studies, analyzing questions of language, art and architecture, with a focus on corporeality and earthiness. After a second master's degree in Islamic Studies, she pursued a post-doctoral project in Tübingen on language and foreignness in Heidegger, Waldenfels and the medieval Arabic thought. Currently an associated researcher at the *College of Fellows — Center for Interdisciplinary and Intercultural Studies* at the University of Tübingen, she is also the coordinator of the CIVIS PhD Network for "Plural Ontologies and Intercultural Philosophy". She wrote a book on the *Eternal Return and the Metaphysics of Presence. A Critical Reading of Heidegger's Nietzsche* (Nordhausen, Traugott Bautz Verlag, 2014) and several academic articles in phenomenology.

Abstracts and bio-notes

Friday, 27 February 2026

Yuriko Saito, *Aesthetic Challenges to Consumerism: Learning from Japanese Folk Beliefs and Practice*

Today's excessive consumerism afflicting industrialized societies is primarily driven by the aesthetic pursuit of the new and the fashionable. The resultant disposable culture is exacerbated by an anthropocentric worldview which regards the artifactual world as subservient to humans.

Several tales and practices from the Japanese cultural tradition are timely and worthy of consideration for their relevance in addressing the dire consequences of consumerism. They resonate with today's academic reexamination of the nature and status of artifacts, ranging from animism and posthumanism to actor-network theory and new materialism.

One Japanese medieval folktale, told as a Buddhist teaching, is a story of humans throwing away old objects of daily use, foreshadowing the typical treatment artifacts receive in today's consumer culture. Despite the seemingly superstitious and fantastical storyline of discarded things revenging humans for the disrespect they suffered, its moral lesson lives on in contemporary Japanese popular culture, such as anime films.

Industrial capitalism as the engine for consumerism operates by enticing consumers to replace old things with brand new ones, even if their functionality remains intact. The oldness which condemns artifacts as rubbish is twofold, both with aesthetic considerations. Old things show their age from deteriorating materials, wear and tear caused by repeated use, and accidental damage. Even without such marks of ageing, they also start looking old when they are no longer fashionable or trendy. The old appearance in these two senses results in aesthetic obsolescence, which accelerates disposable culture.

Today's Japan is no exception to these problems of consumerism. However, its tradition offers various practices and aesthetic paradigms which challenge aesthetic obsolescence, whether as an intentionally proposed alternative or born out of sheer necessity. They include *nabi* aesthetics, the art of *kinsugi* (gold repair), *boro* (tattered fabric), *sakiori* (weaving with torn fabric), and *mitate* (appropriation and reuse of things). These are worth considering for offering alternative aesthetic strategies to consumerism and disposable culture, *as long as* we remain vigilant against aestheticizing poverty and creating another fashion trend.

Yuriko Saito is Professor Emerita of Philosophy at the Rhode Island School of Design, USA. Her publication includes *Everyday Aesthetics* (2007) and *Aesthetics of the Familiar: Everyday Life and World-Making* (2017, awarded the Outstanding Monograph Prize by the American Society for Aesthetics in 2018), both published by Oxford University Press, *Aesthetics of Care: Practice in Everyday Life* (Bloomsbury, 2022), and a number of journal articles, book chapters, and encyclopedia entries on everyday aesthetics, Japanese aesthetics, and environmental aesthetics. She is the editor of *Contemporary Aesthetics*, the first open-access and peer-reviewed online journal in aesthetics.



Bianca Boteva-Richter, *The Perfection of Imperfection, or Another Idea of Beauty — Some Reflections on Japanese Everyday Aesthetics*

Japanese aesthetics, known outside Japan mainly, but somewhat one-sidedly, as Zen aesthetics, extends far beyond the realms of art and culture. Japanese aesthetics, which has a long religious and philosophical tradition, is deeply rooted in Japanese everyday life and cultural traditions, shaping and influencing them in many different ways. There is a clear lack of separation between the artificial and the natural, as well as between art and everyday (objects and practices). Several aesthetic notions play an important role here, such as *wabi* (deficiency, loss, being lost), *sabi* (aged, patina, deep solitude), *iki* (elegance, coquetry, refinement), *yūgen* (dark, mysterious) and *kire* (cutting). Using two examples, firstly the aesthetic appreciation of an imperfect or slightly chipped ceramic bowl and the criteria for selecting bamboo branches for tea ceremony utensils, and secondly the significance of *5boji* (sliding doors) and their shadows, the concepts of *wabi*, *sabi*, *yūgen* and *iki* will be explained and applied to the examples. This elaboration shows how shadows and patina shape our everyday aesthetic perception and determine our appreciation of the things in this world. The cracked ceramic bowl and the imperfect bamboo branch thus become symbols of Japanese everyday aesthetics, testifying to the perfection of imperfection and the inseparability of culture and nature.

Bianca Boteva-Richter completed her PhD in Philosophy at the University of Vienna. She is a board member of the *Association Internationale des Professeurs de Philosophie* (AIPPh) and the *Wiener Gesellschaft für interkulturelle Philosophie* (WiGiP), a member of the *École Internationale de Philosophie Interculturelle* (EIFI) and an editorial board member of “Polylog” and “Forum International Philosophy”. She has been teaching at the Institute of Philosophy, Vienna, until 2024. Boteva-Richter has published several articles and anthologies: “Migration and Environment or about the Human as Climatic Being” (*Filosofia*, No. 79, SAV 2024, indexed Scopus); “The Library of Migrants” (in Mbu, Chakravorty, Clammer (ed.), *Writing in Times of Displacement*, Routledge India, 2023), “Migration and Epistemic Violence” (*Cuestiones de Filosofía*, No. 8 (31), Columbia 2022, indexed Scopus) and *Political Philosophy from an Intercultural Perspective*, Routledge 2021.



Francesca Greco, *From the Tea House to Your House. The Circular Relationality of Aesthetic and Everydayness*

The purpose of my presentation is to demonstrate the circularity of the relationship between art and everyday life from an intercultural perspective, by examining the aesthetical practice of the Japanese tea ceremony (茶の湯). The choice of this practice is not due merely to its intuitive and uncomplicated connection with a daily gesture, but rather to the fact that the exercise of this art-way (道) primarily aims to cultivate a general attitude towards oneself, ordinary objects, as well as the world at large. Ultimately, I argue that practicing the tea way manifests its true form both in individual and in collective or social atmospheric dispositions.

In my contribution, I will briefly introduce the art form of the Japanese tea ceremony, not so much in terms of its history as from a phenomenological standpoint of a first-person practicing experience. Far from depriving this art form of its reflective depth or expressive power characteristic of artistic and aesthetic experiences, I will then show how this performative, aesthetic art finds its proper fulfillment and destination in its ongoing practice in everyday life even without tea utensils. Finally, I intend to highlight the double link between the Japanese tea way and everydayness: on the one hand because it arises from a daily, functional routine of enjoying the flavor and the physiological benefits of tea — a custom that only gradually evolved into a disciplined cultural and aesthetic art form, albeit one highly exposed to

intersectional criticism, and on the other hand because drinking tea (as well as coffee and similar beverages), as a very common intimate and social habit in both ancient and contemporary societies across various traditions around the world, opens a possibility toward a global investigation of art, aesthetics, and practices of everydayness.

Francesca Greco is currently a PhD student in Philosophy at the University of Hildesheim in the field of intercultural philosophy specializing in Japanese Philosophy and Metaphysics. She is the vice president of the ENOJP (from 2024 onwards) and in the last five years was a research member of the DFG Koselleck-Project “Histories of Philosophy in Global Perspective” (2019 – 2024), within which she published her first monography entitled *Histories of Philosophy and Thought in the Italian Language. A Bibliographical Guide from 1480 to 2024* (2024). Her main interests are negativity (such as negation and nothingness), relationality, everydayness, and histories of philosophy.



Paulus Kaufmann, *Situational Japanese Aesthetics*

Many classic works of Japanese literature, such as *The Pillow Book* and the *Tsurezuregusa*, contain strikingly frequent aesthetic judgments. What is remarkable is that these judgments often do not center on landscapes or works of art but instead on everyday situations and transient scenes. In this respect, they differ considerably from aesthetic treatises in modern Western philosophy, which tend to focus either on artistic achievement or the sublimity of nature. My lecture will examine examples of such situational aesthetics, asking how judgments are formulated, what features are highlighted, and what conception of beauty informs them.

The aesthetics of situations reveals several distinctive traits. Situations are experienced multisensorily — not only through sight but also through sound, smell, and touch. Perception and reflection merge seamlessly, so that aesthetic appreciation is interwoven with lived experience rather than isolated contemplation. Each situation is also temporally and spatially bound: unlike a work of art, it cannot be detached from the flow of time, reproduced, or repeated. Moreover, situational aesthetics is inherently participatory; the observer belongs to the scene and may interact with what is judged aesthetically. Finally, following Yuriko Saito’s insights into everyday aesthetics, such judgments need not always be positive: in Japanese thought, as in daily experience more broadly, situations may appear beautiful or unattractive.

In my lecture, I will discuss a series of examples, showing how distinct aesthetic paradigms emerge from them. Whereas *The Pillow Book* articulates a courtly appreciation without strong Buddhist undertones, *Tsurezuregusa* develops an explicitly Buddhist perspective. By analyzing these contrasts, I aim to illuminate the plurality of situational aesthetics in Japanese cultural history and to show how they enrich our understanding of everyday aesthetics beyond a Eurocentric framework.

Paulus Kaufmann is Academic Director of the Center for Ethics and Philosophy in Practice, and Senior Lecturer at the Japan Center of the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich. In 2010, he completed his PhD with a thesis on a problem in contemporary moral philosophy. Since then, his research focuses on the conceptions of truth and meaning in the writings of the Japanese monk Kūkai (774–835). His field of expertise is Japan’s history of ideas with a special focus on early Japanese Buddhism and on the political discourse of the Edo period (1600–1868). Philosophically, he is furthermore interested in ethics, aesthetics, philosophy of language, and metaphilosophy.



Maddalena Borsato, *What Aesthetics for the Shokunin's Practice?*

The question of cooking as an artistic practice has become a classic topic within everyday aesthetics as it relates to food philosophy (Korsmeyer 1999; Monroe 2007; Kuehn 2012). A further question concerns the figure of the chef as author (Perullo 2017), and the categorical distinction in this field between artist and artisan.

Renowned Japanese gastronomic critic Masuhiro Yamamoto has recently re-emphasized the difference between the *ryorinin* of Kansai cuisine — centered around Kyoto — and the *shokunin* of Tokyo and Kanto cuisine, developed during the Edo period (Holt & Yamauchi 2019; Cang 2020). While the *ryorinin* corresponds to the common understanding of a chef — from which the celebrated *kaiseki* derives, inspiring world *haute cuisine* — the *shokunin* is, as the term itself suggests, one who practices a craft (not exclusively or primarily culinary).

In this talk, I use the practice of the *shokunin* to challenge the boundaries of everyday aesthetics. If the *ryorinin* transforms *kaiseki* into a form of performance art and celebrates the authorship of the cook, the *shokunin*, conversely, dissolves the figure of the author. Within the specific Japanese perspective, the *shokunin's* practice calls for an intercultural perspective that questions the applicability of the distinction between “weak” and “strong” everyday aesthetics. Notions of design, originality, and novelty that characterize authorship — together with the consumer-spectator’s passivity and irresponsibility — give way to repetitive actions, elementary preparations of very simple foods, and a full engagement with those who eat.

The *shokunin's* presence disappears — in the shadow that Tanizaki celebrates — because the *shokunin* manifests entirely through aesthetic practice. Thus, the question of what aesthetics for the *shokunin's* practice gradually loses meaning. It is not what is done, but how it is done, in the environment where it is done, that qualifies as aesthetic: the experiencing itself, the same gesture enacted through repetition and skill. In this, the aesthetic possibility of the *shokunin's* ordinariness blossoms.

Maddalena Borsato is a post-doc Research Fellow in Aesthetics at the University of Gastronomic Sciences (Pollenzo, Italy). Her research interests encompass gustatory aesthetics and food philosophy, eating disorders, the intersection of cooking, art and design, and everyday aesthetics from an intercultural perspective. On these topics, she is the author of one monograph and various scientific papers. A (messy) pastry chef since 2014, she actively participates in various projects – such as workshops and food design initiatives – that promote food as a tool for art and communication.



Anna Zschauer, *The Janus-faced Japanese Everyday Aesthetic, or: Does It Work When It's a Brand?*

Perhaps no country is better known for its everyday aesthetics than Japan. It is also widely known that what we today perceive as Japanese aesthetics is a product of philosophical negotiation since Meiji, when Western aesthetics was introduced to Japan and caused what Michael Marra has called a “hermeneutical colonization”. Aesthetics was one of the hermeneutical tools successful in creating national images of Japan, thereby historicizing the idea of “original Japan” in contrast to modernity. Today, everyday life in Japan hardly differs from that in other industrialized countries. One result thereof is that “Japanese everyday aesthetics” has become a brand that sells well not just abroad but also at home.

Thus, we may ask whether an everyday aesthetic whose origin (“Japanese aesthetic consciousness”), form and outcome are externally defined still corresponds to an authentic everyday aesthetic. The answer depends on whether we view everyday aesthetics as the way people have always artlessly shaped their living environments (bottom-up); or if we see it as a form of art which reflects on itself and its purpose (top-down). But what if everyday aesthetics is the latter, selling itself as the former? Can everyday aesthetics be artificial?

This problem is even more crucial when considered through the lens of Mark Johnson’s embodied aesthetics. Johnson assumes that our meaningful interpretation of the world is based on our bodily relationship with our surrounding. Everyday aesthetics is expression and medium of this hermeneutical foundation of our understanding. Individual and collective identity forms through sharing and inheriting respective practices.

So if it is true that Japan has been hermeneutically colonized, has this impact reached the level of everyday aesthetics, so that Japan is indeed buying its own everyday aesthetics to become authentic? Or is the everyday the last sanctuary of genuine Japanese world encounter disguised in a seemingly Western lifestyle?

Anna Zschauer studied German studies and History at Heidelberg University to become a secondary school teacher but then turned to intercultural philosophy. After research stays at Kyoto and Tokyo University, she obtained her doctorate from Hildesheim University, researching philosophical aesthetics in Japan. The thesis *Ästhetik und japanische Moderne. Interkulturelle Fallstudien* (Karl Alber Verlag, 2025) was awarded the Karl Alber Price 2024. After four years of working at a German high school, philosophical perspectives on teaching and learning became another great field of interest. Anna Zschauer is currently part of the Philosophical Institute at Hildesheim University.



Lorenzo Marinucci, *Kawaii and Phenomenology*

Kawaii is a global aesthetic phenomenon: it has been such for at least two decades, expanding from Japan and East Asia to Europe and the Americas, shaping forms of aesthetic appreciation, consumption, and self-expression. It is the only global aesthetic category with a non-Western origin, and probably one of the most pervasive and powerful in globalized societies.

Apparently grounded in a universal “cute response”, *kawaii* has been hitherto mostly explained in psychological-biological frameworks, or approached at the level of piecemeal cultural criticism. In this presentation I would rather argue for the necessity of understanding *kawaii* phenomenologically, as a surprisingly complex form of aesthetic consciousness, which ought to be properly understood through its noematic and noetic elements, and through visual models that, while not exclusive to it, specifically reflect Japanese art history. On the noematic level, *kawaii* is an aesthetic of the oral sensorium, corresponding to the multimodal space of sweet-soft-round-colorful-small; on the noematic, it represents the chance for a mediated, temporary return to child-consciousness (with modes of playfulness, innocence, nostalgia, as well as a gendered tone); finally, it is connected to non-mimetic expressive forms, which are a key to understand Japanese and East Asian forms of visual culture.

Lorenzo Marinucci is associate professor of aesthetics at the University of Tohoku, Japan. His research interests include phenomenology, neo-phenomenology, Japanese philosophy and Japanese aesthetics. He has been an active translator of philosophy, non-fiction and poetry from Japanese, English and German, and his first book, *The Sense of Scent: Japanese Olfactory Culture and Global Philosophy* will be out with Routledge in 2026.



Dario Vuger, *On Beauty of Infrastructures: Simondonean Aesthetics and the Japanese Everyday*

Notable for his radical reevaluation of cybernetics as a critical philosophy of technology, Gilbert Simondon's work dedicated substantial space to discussions (and impressions) on aesthetic being in the context of new technological advances and reconfigurations of daily environments that were brought with it. One notable example is a pervasive presence of cables as a motif throughout Simondon's major work. On the modes of existence of technical objects as well as other modes of modern infrastructures that – more or less – harmoniously blend with our everyday environment.

The aesthetic being of technology which Simondon saw as crucial for a development of techno-culture is a phenomenon that can be well exemplified through the unique technological landscapes found in Japanese post-war urban development. There also cables reign as the central infrastructure but also figure as a central motif of daily life inasmuch as they became a part of pop-culture. The aesthetic of urban technological infrastructure also perfectly encapsulates the Japanese sensibility of *wabi-sabi*, mindful acceptance of impermanence, appreciation of imperfection and favouring of simplicity.

In the mannerism of James Kirkup's (mis)interpretation who famously stated that "though the Japanese are very sensitive to beauty, they seem to be totally insensitive to ugliness", the aim of this paper is to discuss the technological aesthesis of everyday life in Japan through Simondonean aesthetics in order to arrive at the harmonious reconciliation of seemingly opposed aesthetic experiences — that of the urban life inside the Japanese technological infrastructures and the traditional conceptions of beauty embedded in Zen Buddhism.

Dario Vuger is a freelance curator and an assistant professor at the Art History Department, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Osijek, Croatia. He earned his MA in art history, museology and philosophy from University of Zagreb and his PhD with the thesis *Spectacle and Time in Contemporary Philosophy* from University of Ljubljana. In 2023 he edited the scientific monograph *Introducing Nostalgia Movements* for the Centre for Visual Studies in Zagreb, Croatia. He is a photographer by vocation and is a member of European Network for Japanese Philosophy, Central and East European Society for Phenomenology, among others.

Saturday, 28 February 2026

Arto Haapala, *Aesthetics of the Ordinary and the Everyday*

In this presentation, I connect some consideration about the existential structures of humans with issues of philosophical aesthetics. One of the bedrocks of human existence is stability. We want to, and in most circumstances, we can rely on the fact that the circumstances in which we live, are, by and large, the same as they have been before. We do not have to worry every morning that there would be irreplaceable changes in our immediate living environment. When there is such a danger, the very roots of our existence are threatened. Large natural disasters such as storms and flooding or human made catastrophes such as wars pose threats to human existence.

The ordinary and the everyday form the foundation of our routines and habits. Routines require time to be formed, and even though they can sometimes be a burden, they are very much a part of what we as humans are. It is simply not possible for us humans to create ourselves anew all the time. It is in our nature look for and create routines and in this way make our lives smoother and more fluent than without the habitualized practices.

Stability creates safety and comfort which is characteristic of any homey environment. We are in an environment which is familiar. The feeling of “being at home” has features which can be regarded as aesthetic. It is the atmospheric character of home as a whole that gives us comfort and satisfaction. This is the aesthetics of the homey and familiar. I do not deny that cracks and surprises in our everyday environment often have a positive aesthetic impact; we take aesthetic pleasure in experiencing something new. This has been the tenant in the Western arts and in philosophical aesthetics for long. My aim in this presentation is to point out the aesthetic relevance of the ordinary and familiar, and their existential roots.

Arto Haapala received his Ph.D. in Philosophy at Birkbeck College, University of London, and his M.A. in Aesthetics at the University of Helsinki. He has been Professor of Aesthetics at the University of Helsinki since 1995. He has done research on different problems in aesthetics, particularly in ontology and interpretation of arts, as well as in environmental aesthetics, and Martin Heidegger’s philosophy. His most recent interests are in the aesthetics of everyday environments, urban aesthetics and problems of sustainability.



Leo Marko, *A Faint Frame: The Aesthetics of Swedish Fika and the Question of Its Uniqueness*

The Swedish word “fika” denotes a social practice that generally involves drinking coffee, eating pastries and spending time together. The concept has attracted attention due to the ubiquity of *fika* in Sweden, the value attached to it, and the fact that the word lacks obvious counterparts in other languages. *Fika* is now included in the national list of intangible cultural heritage, and has been described both as unique and as representative of Swedish attitudes (Levande kulturarv 2015, Sjöberg 2021, Almroth 2023). *Fika* might also very well be high on a list of what Swedish people cherish most in life. Notably, the concept of *fika* is furthermore used extensively as a marketing tool for tourism and goods.

However, to emphasize the cultural uniqueness and marketable traits of *fika* might obscure its fundamental aesthetic meaning and value. The particularity of *fika* is not found in its Swedishness or in such things as the cinnamon roll, but rather in the way it provides what Diana Taylor calls a “scenario” which facilitates a certain range of aesthetic experience (Taylor 2003). Like the Japanese tea ceremony, the practice of *fika* generates reverence for sensuous pleasure, commonplace activities, the situated encounter, and atmosphere. At the same time, *fika* is not art, and in stark contrast to tea ceremony, it lacks almost all formalization. *Fika* is an everyday occurrence of sensuous pleasure and socializing, but it is distinguished and partly separated from other activities, most significantly from work and ordinary purposiveness. The faint frame of *fika* illuminates the relation between extraordinary and ordinary, key to understanding the nature of aesthetic experience in everyday life (Leddy 2012, Saito 2017). *Fika* appears to be on the threshold between having and not having a specifically aesthetic quality, and it carries its own implications regarding what crossing that threshold entails.

Leo Marko is a researcher at Stockholm University, Department of Culture and Aesthetics. He received an MA-degree in aesthetics from Södertörn University in 2013 and a PhD in theatre studies from Stockholm University in 2024. His doctoral dissertation develops a theory of liveness through considerations of sense-making and ineffability, drawing on both contemporary performance theory and Zeami’s fifteenth century writings on *nō* theatre. Currently he is involved in research in everyday aesthetics, *butoh*, and different concepts of nature.



Lenka Lee, *The Aesthetics of Attentiveness: Central European Beekeeping and Interspecies Relations*

This paper examines how beekeeping, as an everyday practice, provides a unique perspective on intercultural aesthetics. By focusing on the practices of Czech beekeeper, gardener, and artist Jan Karpíšek, the analysis highlights how this traditional activity is being adapted in urban environments. The study goes beyond a symbolic interpretation of bees and investigates their role as active agents. It emphasises how their biological functions — such as creating hexagonal combs or sealing with propolis — lead to the generation of distinct aesthetic forms.

The paper applies Yuriko Saito's aesthetics of care, complemented by Josephine Donovan's call to recognise animals as subjects with their own stories, to beekeeping. This framework highlights how the beekeeper's attentiveness and respect for the bees' well-being are not merely ethical but are themselves aesthetic practices. Karpíšek illustrates this approach by allowing himself to be vulnerable among the bees and cultivating a sense of belonging to their community. His methods include avoiding protective clothing, designing spacious hives that respect the bees' needs, and carefully selecting treatments that minimise harm. His practice is further influenced by his affinity for Zen, reflecting an Eastern philosophical approach to everyday life.

The analysis positions Karpíšek's work within the larger context of urban beekeeping, emphasising its importance in understanding the fusion of modern urban lifestyles and traditional rural ones. It examines the tension between idealised cultural narratives about bees and the ecological risks associated with urban beekeeping, such as competition with wild pollinators and the potential spread of disease.

In conclusion, the paper posits that beekeeping can cultivate an interspecies and intercultural aesthetics rooted in cooperation and shared vulnerability. It illustrates how daily routines can evolve into a form of co-creation that challenges anthropocentric views on authorship and practice.

Lenka Lee is an assistant professor at the Department of Aesthetics, Masaryk University (Brno, Czech Republic). She works in the fields of everyday aesthetics, ornament theory, popular culture, and courtly culture. Her monograph *The Treatise De Amore in the Context of Courty Love* examines recurring elements of courtly love in medieval literature and poetry. In recent years, she has published extensively on ornament in relation to subcultures, everyday practices, and repetition, drawing on Gilles Deleuze to rethink patterns, variation, and difference. Her work also explores more-than-human aesthetics, focusing on interactions between humans and bees in artistic, cultural, and ecological contexts.



Rosa Fernández Gómez, *Playfully Engaging the Everyday: The Rasa of Life in Kashmir Shaivism*

Within the currents of Indian philosophy, the Tantric ones, stand out for their clear defense of ordinary existence and everyday pleasures (*bhoga*) as valuable tools for attaining the desired goal of non-dual consciousness or liberation (*mokṣa*), a liberation which specifically in these currents, happens within this very life and, thus, the *jivanmuktā* (lit. the “liberated while alive”) is the one who, in this very life, attains the higher level of awareness that allows her to experience her own personal life in the depersonalized state or a *rasika* or aesthete.

Particularly, Kashmir Shaivism is prominent within Tantrism as the classical metaphysical background that gave birth to the main Indian aesthetic theory: the *rasa* theory of aesthetic pleasure applied to Sanskrit theatre and by derivation, as a codified emotional language, to other arts such as dance and sculpture.

In this paper, I will first deal briefly with the *rasa theory*, as presented in Abhinavagupta's main work, *Abhinavabhāratī*, and then expand on it on the wider metaphysical plane of Kashmir Shaivism's texts — what I have elsewhere called *the rasa of life* — in order to show how, from them, an aesthetic view of the universal unfoldment of consciousness (*caitanya*) can be posited as an unending process of self-recognition between the two aspects of illuminating awareness (*prakāśa*) and self-reflective recognition (*vimarsā*).

From texts such as the *Śivasūtras* and *Vijñāna Bhairava Tantra*, we can delineate a view of the mystic-aesthete (*jīvanmuktā*) as an actor *cum* spectator of her own life, who envisions her ordinary existence as colored by innumerable occasions to experience her true nature thanks to the adoption of an attitude of playful engagement in her own everyday situations as if it really was the Play of a Unique Universal Consciousness.

Rosa Fernández Gómez is Lecturer in Aesthetics and Theory of the Arts at the University of Málaga. She has been a visiting research scholar at the University of Varanasi, the University of Hawai'i, SOAS, University of London, and Seoul National University, where she has conducted research on intercultural dialogue in aesthetics and Asian aesthetic traditions. She is also a member of the research group TRAMA, based at the Complutense University of Madrid. Her publications and research trajectory began in comparative aesthetics, with a particular focus on Indian and European traditions, and since 2010 have expanded to include East Asian aesthetics, in dialogue with contemporary debates on pragmatic aesthetics, and issues related to environmental, feminist and everyday aesthetics. She is a member of the Executive Committee of the Spanish Society of Aesthetics and Art Theory (SEyTA), serves on the Editorial Board of *Contrastes. Revista Internacional de Filosofía*, and is a member of the Executive Committee of Brill's Transcultural Aesthetics book series. She has recently edited a special issue on Aesthetic Confluences between Everyday Life and Nature at *Themata* (2025). Her book chapter *Aesthetics and Transculturality* is forthcoming with Bloomsbury, and she is currently working on a monograph on transcultural aesthetics.



Elisabetta Di Stefano, *Frugality and Humility: Categories of Measure for an Intercultural Everyday Aesthetics*

This paper addresses the debate between “weak” and “strong” everyday aesthetics by arguing that ordinary aesthetic life should not be interpreted by analogy with art, but through categories that emerge historically from everyday experience itself. Following Władysław Tatarkiewicz's history of ideas approach, I reconstruct the trajectories of two key categories, frugality and humility, across different epochs and cultures, showing how notions once considered mainly moral or religious can today be reinterpreted as aesthetic attitudes.

Frugality, far from implying deprivation, originally signified abundance and wise enjoyment of the fruits of the earth. From its Latin roots (*frux, frui*), to Stoic moderation (Seneca), to Enlightenment thought (Montesquieu), to Ivan Illich's convivial critique of consumerism, frugality has historically marked an art of right measure, sufficiency, and simplicity. As an aesthetic category, it promotes moderation, simplicity, and conviviality, resisting the hyper-aesthetic culture of excess typical of contemporary consumer societies.

Humility, derived from *humus* (“earth”), has followed a different but complementary trajectory. Marginal in classical Greece, it acquired centrality in the Judeo-Christian tradition (Augustine, Aquinas) and resonates with Confucian moderation and Buddhist compassion. In contemporary philosophy, David Cooper links humility to a non-anthropocentric humanism, while Emily Brady connects it to the

experience of the natural sublime. Across these historical moments, humility emerges as an aesthetic disposition that resists *hubris*, cultivating respect for limits, vulnerability, and natural cycles.

By reconstructing the history of frugality and humility, and highlighting their intercultural resonances — from Confucian harmony to Islamic sobriety, from Buddhist compassion to Mediterranean *aurea mediocritas* — this paper demonstrates their potential to strengthen a “strong” everyday aesthetics attentive to ethical and ecological concerns. Ultimately, they outline a sustainable art of living in an age of ecological crisis, showing how intercultural resources and historical traditions can inspire contemporary practices of eating, caring, and inhabiting environments with balance and respect.

Elisabetta Di Stefano (Ph.D. in Aesthetics and Theory of the Arts) is Full Professor of Aesthetics at the University of Palermo. Her research focuses on three main areas: renaissance art theory, ornament theory, and the aesthetics of everyday life, with particular attention to the environment, architecture, and design. She is the founder and coordinator of EVA Network, an international network dedicated to promoting the study of everyday aesthetics. Selected Publications: *A Brief Inquiry into the History of Everyday Aesthetic Ideas. Care of the Home in the Thought of Socrates and Xenophon* (Anuario filosofico 58/1, 2025); with Diego Mantoan, *Libro d'arte biodiverso. Parole e immagini tra estetica, arte e ambiente* (Edizioni Bisso, Palermo, 2024); *Beauty as Care. Designing Atmospheres for Healthcare Places* (“Contemporary Aesthetics”, vol 12, 2024); *Caring for the Landscape: From Participatory Art to Everyday Aesthetics* (“Studi di estetica”, anno LII, IV serie, 2/2024); *Frugality. An Aesthetic Category for a Sustainable Art of Living* (“Contemporary Aesthetics”, vol. 11, 2024); *Estetica urbana* (Milano, Mimesis, 2023); *Che cos'è l'estetica quotidiana* (Roma, Carocci, 2017).



Nicola Ramazzotto, *Beyond Pleasure: Pain and the Transformation of Everyday Aesthetics*

This talk explores the intercultural dimensions of everyday aesthetics through the lens of pain and suffering, focusing on practices of enduring, expressing, and sharing pain. Such practices invite an expanded understanding of aesthetics, one that encompasses both theories of perception and sensibility and practices of meaning-making that shape shared everyday life — ranging from perceptual and affective habits to mourning rituals, from gestures of care in domestic life to memorials of collective trauma.

I argue that, while traditional accounts of everyday aesthetics often emphasize ordinary pleasures, atmospheres, or routines, a feminist and postcolonial perspective reveals how the fabric of everyday life is also shaped by structural inequalities that permeate daily perception — including the ways in which we experience pain. Certain forms of suffering are publicly acknowledged and even valorized, whereas others, connected to marginalized groups — such as women’s chronic pain often dismissed in medical contexts, the suffering of migrants at borders, or the stigma surrounding mental illness—are silenced or treated as grounds for discrimination. This asymmetry shapes our perception and sensibility, marking people’s dwelling in the world with everyday atmospheres of inadequacy, inhibition, shame, anger, resentment, and displacement.

Faced with this asymmetry, I argue that the task of everyday aesthetics is twofold: first, to acknowledge and study these forms of perception and sensibility in their plurality and specificity, without ennobling them from an elevated perspective that risks reproducing paternalistic or colonial attitudes; and second, to examine and foster attempts at meaning-making and flourishing within these everyday atmospheres — ranging from practices of endurance and care to artistic production as outcry and creative resistance. An everyday aesthetics of pain must therefore navigate between mere acceptance of the given and the too-easy aestheticization of suffering, reframing everydayness as a contested terrain that discloses both the fragility of existence and the transformative potential of aesthetic experience.

Nicola Ramazzotto holds a PhD in Aesthetics from the Universities of Pisa and Florence, with a dissertation on Heidegger and Dewey. His research focuses on aesthetics, pragmatism (especially Dewey), phenomenology (especially Heidegger), classical German philosophy, and the critique of metaphysics. He has published in several international journals and co-edited *L'estetica pragmatista in dialogo* (ETS, 2022) and *For Sense Is This Wonderful World* (Brill, 2026). He is currently co-editing Dewey's *Experience and Nature: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).



Mao Matsuyama, *Comparative Study of Aesthetic Care Theory and Salutogenesis: The Entanglement of Aesthetic and Ethical Values in Everyday Life*

In recent years, within the fields of environmental aesthetics and everyday aesthetics, attention has focused on the aesthetic-ethical significance of care-oriented actions. For example, Yuriko Saito demonstrates that caring for one's immediate environment from an aesthetic perspective and cultivating aesthetic literacy can potentially lead to ethically better living (Saito 2022).

Similarly, in Germany, based on different academic traditions, the ethical value inherent in aesthetic experience has been articulated. For instance, Axel Honneth extends the discussion of recognition relationships to encompass humans and things in general. Drawing on Heidegger's "*Sorge*" and Dewey's pragmatism, he proposes the primacy of recognition over neutral cognition (2005).

These aesthetic and philosophical currents can be closely related to the key concept of "Sense of Coherence (SOC)" in the theory of Salutogenesis proposed by medical sociologist Aaron Antonovsky within health and welfare studies, which researches well-being from a more empirical standpoint. According to Antonovsky, maintaining and improving our physical and mental health requires attention to non-pathological lifestyle habits and environmental factors beyond medical treatment. He posits that SOC, composed of three dimensions — "comprehensibility," "manageability," and "meaningfulness" — plays a crucial role (1984). These senses are cultivated in everyday life through interactions with familiar objects, such as cleaning the house or maintaining personal belongings.

This presentation will examine concrete examples, such as community gardens, practiced based on Salutogenesis. By comparing care theory, which has recently developed within an aesthetic context, with Salutogenesis, it aims to clarify the substance of the entanglement between practical value and ethical value within everyday actions.

Mao Matsuyama is an associate professor at the Department of Architecture, Faculty of Design, Okayama Prefectural University. Her research focuses on the relationship between human beings and human-made things, from daily tools to the vast scenery of the urban environment. Her recent paper is "Aesthetic Evaluation of the Atmosphere in Everyday Environments — A Case Study in Ashiyahama Seaside Town, Japan" (*Contemporary Aesthetics*, 2024) and "Aesthetic Range of Martin Seel's Concept of *Aesthetic Recognition*" (*The Japanese Journal of Aesthetics*, 2020). Matsuyama received her master's degree from Hokkaido University, where she studied natural science, aesthetics, and art theory. She worked as a curator for the Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art from 2011 to 2020 and as a research associate for Mukogawa Institute of Esthetics in Everyday-life (Mukogawa Women's University) from 2020 to 2024. She is also a member of the Kobe Institute for Atmospheric Studies.



Washington Morales-Maciel, Marcos Rostan Davyt, *Imagining Use: Experiential Knowledge and Cultural Frameworks in Everyday Design Aesthetics*

Contemporary aesthetics of design faces a theoretical impasse: dominant approaches (functional beauty, adherent beauty) characterize design objects as “mute, areferential, or inexpressive”, requiring inattention and automatism to preserve their everyday character. This creates what we call the *dilemma of everyday aesthetics*, i.e. evaluation seems to demand the very attention that destroys everydayness, forcing objects into artification or ritualization to become aesthetically accessible.

This paper challenges these assumptions by identifying contexts where evaluation occurs naturally within everyday experience without sacrificing its ordinary character. Through phenomenological analysis of wear, damage, and replacement scenarios, we show that users engage in aesthetic evaluation when familiar objects fail and alternatives must be considered. In these moments, imagination becomes a vehicle for what we call *experiential knowledge*, i.e. mentally projecting interactions with potential replacements to assess usability and aesthetic qualities.

Drawing on design theory’s concepts of affordances and signifiers, we argue that everyday objects operate within culturally specific frameworks that guide behavior and judgment. When objects fail, users activate embodied simulation, constructing scenarios that integrate kinesthetic imagination, temporal projection, and affective anticipation. Beauty emerges as the evaluation of projected usability, where form is appreciated not as abstract visual quality but as affordance for satisfying embodied experience.

This approach scaffolds intercultural everyday aesthetics by recognizing that signifier codification requires shared frameworks between designers and users, frameworks that vary culturally yet enable evaluation within practical engagement. Unlike critical design or ritualized traditions that suspend everyday automatism, our experiential model locates aesthetic meaning within unnoticed contexts where objects integrate into life, fail, and require replacement.

Our contribution redefines everydayness: evaluation can occur within ordinary contexts without artification, particularly in replacement scenarios where imagination enables projected use while remaining embedded in practical concerns.

Washington Morales-Maciel is a Visiting Academic at the School of Arts, Design and Architecture, Aalto University, Finland (since 2025), and Associate Professor at the Schools of Art, Humanities and Educational Sciences, and Architecture, Design and Planning, Universidad de la República, Uruguay (since 2011). He has served as a member of Uruguay’s National Research and Innovation Agency (ANII) since 2021. He holds a PhD in Philosophy from the Universidad de la República, with a focus on the philosophy of literature. His current research explores the aesthetics of design alongside philosophical inquiries into art and culture.

Marcos Rostan Davyt is a research assistant in aesthetics at Universidad de la República (Montevideo, Uruguay). His research focuses on the dynamics of aesthetic reasons in the context of art criticism and environmental controversies.



Sunday, 1 March 2026

Matti Tainio, *From Specified Aesthetics of Everyday Life and Art towards a General Aesthetics. An Inquiry at the Boundaries of Art and Non-Art*

My paper seeks to bridge the divide in between the aesthetics of art and everyday aesthetics by examining the boundaries of art, non-art and everyday things. An interest for this boundary has existed at least since 1960s when Allan Kaprow became inspired by John Dewey's theory aesthetic experience. Dewey's theory blurred the line between art and other things by emphasizing the quality of the experience instead of the object.

Kaprow's attempts to conjoin art and everyday took place in various conceptual happenings that were spontaneous and had non-linear quality and usually were difficult to separate everyday actions. Thus, Kaprow's work differs greatly from other 1960s artworks that mixed everyday things to them. Unlike Andy Warhol's Brillo Boxes, which remained firmly within artworld conventions, Kaprow attempted to detach his work from the institutional frame of art.

Since then the boundary between art and everyday has been tested in various ways. Artists have incorporated everyday materials in their work, brought their works outside art institutions, performed everyday gestures as art and so on. These practices continue to play important role in contemporary art.

In the early 2000s Ossi Naukkarinen introduced the concept of artification, a development that functions in reverse to Kaprow's work. The term artification describes the phenomenon where everyday actions and events were compared to and seen similar to art. This shows in various practices from gastronomy to sport. A talented chef can be described as an artist and the movements of an athlete can be seen as pleasing as an artwork.

My paper will explore these borderlines of art and everyday and make an inquiry about different artistic and scholarly efforts of crossing, obscuring and evaporating them.

Matti Tainio is a visual artist and researcher, working as a senior lecturer at the University of Lapland. He is a Doctor of Art from Aalto University. Before his current position Tainio has worked as an independent artist and as a researcher in various Finnish universities. Tainio's research interest is focused on the aesthetic experience in various settings. His approach to the research in aesthetics can be described as applied aesthetics with a pragmatist perspective. Currently, Tainio is interested in the aesthetics of darkness, the aesthetics of contemporary physical activities and the connections between art and everyday.



Sara Borriello, *Weather, Atmospheres, and Everyday Life: Towards an Integrated Framework for Aesthetic Inquiry*

In recent decades, *everyday aesthetics* has drawn attention to ordinary experiences such as weather, emphasizing their pragmatic, ethical, and world-shaping dimensions. From this perspective, weather is primarily understood through its impact on our daily lives rather than as an object of detached contemplation. On the other hand, the theory of atmospheres (Schmitz, Böhme, Griffero) conceptualizes weather as an external emotional force that surrounds and attunes us, rather than a merely projective feeling.

My talk offers a critical comparison between these two approaches, exploring the potential of combining the neophenomenological approach to weather phenomena with the more pragmatic orientation of everyday aesthetics (particularly Yuriko Saito's *aesthetics of care*) in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between human beings and their environment through the lens of weather. Building on Mădălina Diaconu's work, I argue that *weather aesthetics* can be considered a distinct field within everyday aesthetics, capable of capturing the significance of weather as a multisensory, synesthetic, and perceptually pervasive phenomenon, while also acknowledging its practical and concrete aspects.

Given the challenges of the Anthropocene, it has become essential to adopt an integrated approach that recognizes both the practical and affective significance of weather, while also accounting for its undeniable objectivity and equally unquestionable subjective perception. Such a framework can deepen our understanding of weather's role in shaping emotional experiences, while fostering care, respect, and a more engaged response to the climate crisis. By linking the pathic-externalist perspective of atmospheric theory with approaches that emphasize active yet non-manipulative engagement with the environment, this talk proposes a framework for weather aesthetics that is both theoretically rigorous and highly relevant to contemporary ecological challenges.

Sara Borriello earned her PhD in Aesthetics at the University of Rome Tor Vergata, where she investigated the concept of "climate" from an aesthetic-phenomenological perspective, drawing on Hermann Schmitz's New Phenomenology. She has held research stays at the Humboldt University of Berlin and the University of Leipzig, and she is currently an OeAD postdoctoral fellow at the University of Vienna under the supervision of Mădălina Diaconu. In addition to numerous contributions to journals and edited volumes, her research on climate is explored in the monograph *Arie e luoghi. Fenomeni meteo-climatici e atmosfera* (Mimesis, 2024).



Marcos Rostan Davyt, Nahuel Roel Aspée, *The Everyday and the Exceptional: Two Environmental Controversies in Uruguay*

This presentation explores the normative role of aesthetic reasons in environmental controversies, focusing on two recent cases in Uruguay: a real estate project in Punta Ballena (a coastal area of national symbolic value) and the waste management conflict in Empalme Olmos (a rural town long affected by a landfill). Drawing from debates in environmental and everyday aesthetics, we argue that aesthetic experiences (both positive and negative) mediate social mobilization and influence political outcomes, yet their reach proves uneven. In Punta Ballena, the exceptional beauty of the landscape mobilized a broad "aesthetic community", integrating environmental, economic, and cultural arguments into a successful campaign for protection. The site's symbolic status within the national imaginary ("Uruguay Natural") transformed aesthetic concerns into political commitments recognized at institutional levels. By contrast, in Empalme Olmos, the aesthetic disvalue of living daily with odors, waste, and degraded landscapes has fueled sustained local resistance. However, these everyday aesthetic experiences, though politically intense, have not expanded beyond the locality, limiting their capacity to influence decision-making at the institutional level.

The comparative analysis shows how the categories of the "exceptional" and the "everyday" produce different scales of aesthetic community and, consequently, different degrees of normative force in public decision-making. This asymmetry reveals a paradox: aesthetic reasons can underpin environmental protection, but in doing so they may reproduce territorial hierarchies by privileging symbolically valued landscapes over ordinary environments.

By linking theoretical debates on aesthetic obligations (Carlson, Saito, Williams) with empirical cases in Latin America, the presentation seeks to contribute to intercultural everyday aesthetics. It suggests that understanding how cultures shape the articulation of the everyday and the exceptional is key to assessing the political relevance of aesthetics in environmental controversies.

On **Marcos Rostan Davyt** see p. 15.

Nahuel Roel Aspée is a research assistant in political science at the Universidad de la República (Montevideo, Uruguay). His research focuses on environmental politics, public policy, and subnational politics, combining applied data analysis and visualization to support research and policy-oriented work.