



Aesthetics of Appearing (Cultural Memory in the Present)

Martin Seel

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This book proposes that aesthetics begin not with concepts of being or semblance, but with a concept of *appearing*. *Appearing* bespeaks of the reality that all aesthetic objects share, however different they may otherwise be. For Martin Seel, *appearing* plays its part everywhere in the aesthetic realm, in all aesthetic activity.

In his book, Seel examines the existential and cultural meaning of aesthetic experience. In doing so, he brings aesthetics and philosophy of art together again, which in continental as well as analytical thinking have been more and more separated in the recent decades. Within Seel's framework, to apprehend things and events with respect to how they appear momentarily and simultaneously to our senses represents a genuine way for human beings to encounter the world. The consciousness that emerges here is an anthropologically central faculty. In perceiving the unfathomable particularity of a sensuously given we gain insight into the indeterminable of our lives. Attentiveness to what is *appearing* is therefore at the same time attentiveness to ourselves. This is also the case when works of art imagine past or future, probable or improbable presences. Artworks develop their transgressive energy from their presence as sense-catching forms. They bring about a special presence in which a presentation of close or distant presences comes about.

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