

Call for Papers

Materiali di Estetica 12. 1 – “Music and Empathy: New Research Perspectives”

Empathy represents a central theme in understanding the role of the arts in shaping our affective lives. The empathic relationship mediated by the artistic object offers a key interpretative lens to analyze how emotions and feelings are evoked, shared, and transformed within aesthetic contexts, subsequently impacting our intersubjective relationships. Empathy has also been pivotal in understanding aesthetic and artistic enjoyment in general. Art stimulates a transformative process of the artistic object, which becomes expressive, fostering an emotional relationship with the represented subject and, simultaneously, an identification with the practices that led to its creation. The observer is thus engaged both empathically and neurologically. Today, however, the empathic relationship mediated by art is also central to a broader debate about the "transformative" function of emotions in aesthetic experiences, their renewed educational role, the limitations, and possibilities of employing artistic objects in experimental, particularly psychological, contexts, and extending to studies on immersive digital experiences and performance. Philosophical reflection has long explored the role of emotions and empathy in artistic creation and enjoyment. From Theodor Lipps, who placed it at the core of his aesthetics, to more recent analyses straddling philosophy and neuroscience, empathy emerges as a bridge between subjective, intersubjective, and aesthetic experiences. This issue of **Materiali di Estetica** aims to explore the theme of empathy in relation to the arts, particularly music and sound. Philosophical reflections on the relationship between music and affectivity span centuries and authors: from Plato to Aristotle's *Politics*, through Kant, to contemporary thinkers. Psychology and neuroscience have also provided new paradigms for understanding the empathic relationship elicited by music and beyond. We propose to delve deeper into the relationship between empathy and music, offering a comprehensive overview of current research on this topic encompassing philosophy, psychology, neuroscience, sociology, pedagogy, and intersections between these disciplines. Contributions exploring empathy in other art forms—cinema, photography, plastic arts, theater, performance, as well as digital art, virtual reality, and installations—will also be welcomed.

Research Topics

Contributions may include, but are not limited to:

- Philosophical theories of empathy in the arts, especially in music and dance, from classical philosophy to contemporary developments.
- Reflections on psychological and neuroscientific approaches to studying the role of music and sound in generating emotions, feelings, and empathic relationships.
- Empathy in artistic experiences: how it is evoked and shared across different media.
- Digital art and virtual reality: new paradigms for empathy in the technological age.
- Interdisciplinary approaches to empathy: intersections of philosophy, neuroscience, pedagogy, and technology.
- Empathy in spectator-artwork, spectator-audience, and creator-audience interactions.

Information for Authors

Submissions are accepted in Italian, English, French, and Spanish. Manuscripts should be between **25,000 and 40,000 characters** (including spaces, footnotes, and bibliography) and adhere to the journal's editorial guidelines (available at [this link](#)). Each submission must be accompanied by:

- A **brief abstract** (maximum 1,000 characters, including spaces).
- **Four keywords** in English.

Proposals should be sent to materialidiestetica@unimi.it by March 16, 2025. The editorial team will acknowledge receipt and, after verifying the submission's alignment with the journal's objectives, initiate the peer-review process. Submissions will undergo double-blind peer review by two reviewers.

Deadlines

- Submission deadline: March 16, 2025

- Notification of acceptance, conditional acceptance, or rejection: April 15, 2025
- Final version submission deadline: April 30, 2025
- Publication: June 2025

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