



Merleau-Ponty and the Art of Perception

Duane Davis

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Philosophers and artists consider the relevance of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophy for understanding art and aesthetic experience.

This collection of essays brings together diverse but interrelated perspectives on art and perception based on the philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Although Merleau-Ponty focused almost exclusively on painting in his writings on aesthetics, this collection also considers poetry, literary works, theater, and relationships between art and science. In addition to philosophers, the contributors include a painter, a photographer, a musicologist, and an architect. This widened scope offers important philosophical benefits, testing and providing evidence for the empirical applicability of Merleau-Ponty's aesthetic writings. The central argument is that for Merleau-Ponty the account of perception is also an account of art and vice versa. In the philosopher's writings, art and perception thus intertwine necessarily rather than contingently such that they can only be distinguished by abstraction. As a result, his account of perception and his account of art are organic, interdependent, and dynamic. The contributors examine various aspects of this intertwining across different artistic media, each ingeniously revealing an original perspective on this intertwining.

Duane H. Davis is Professor of Philosophy at the University of North Carolina at Asheville and the editor of *Merleau-Ponty's Later Works and Their Practical Implications: The Dehiscence of Responsibility*.

William S. Hamrick is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. He is the coauthor (with Jan Van der Veken) of *Nature and Logos: A Whiteheadian Key to Merleau-Ponty's Fundamental Thought*; author of *Kindness and the Good Society: Connections of the Heart*; and the coeditor (with Suzanne L. Cataldi) of *Merleau-Ponty and Environmental Philosophy: Dwelling on the Landscapes of Thought*, all published by SUNY Press.



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