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Three Conceptual Approaches to Sustainability from Aesthetics' Perspective

Abstract: This contribution considers ways to discuss sustainability in relation to aesthetic value. Three possible conceptual approaches are briefly presented – *aesthetic sustainability*, *the aesthetics of sustainability*, and *sustainable aesthetics*. I propose that the comparative discussion about the approaches could support dealing with aesthetic values in sustainability deliberation through developing aesthetic competence. Such practice could, in turn, support evaluative, descriptive, and speculative engagement with diverse sustainability agendas. Yet, the fruitfulness of the proposed conceptual approaches remains arguable in terms of sustainability transitions.

Keywords: aesthetic value; aesthetic competence; sustainability transitions; sustainability deliberation; sustainable aesthetics.

Introduction

Sustainability transitions are currently being discussed within various levels of practice.¹ The discussion engages not only individuals calculating their carbon footprints but also cities, countries, and businesses marketing their sustainability status as well as diverse fields of arts reshaping their uses of natural resources. Diverse curricula, laws, and institutional strategies are being reconsidered to take into account

¹ I draw my conception of sustainability transformations and transitions both from conceptual discussion and, because of my background, the discussion concerning practices mainly in Finland. As regards the former, see, e.g., Frank W. Geels, “From Sectoral Systems of Innovation to Socio-Technical Systems – Insights about Dynamics and Change from Sociology and Institutional Theory,” *Research Policy* 33 (2004): 897–920; Johan Schot, “Confronting the Second Deep Transition through the Historical Imagination,” *Technology and Culture* 57, 2 (2016): 445–56; and, Parker Krieg and Reetta Toivanen, ed., *Situating Sustainability: A Handbook of Contexts and Concepts* (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 2021). Geels (“From Sectoral Systems,” 900) has discussed sustainability transitions as changes in socio-technical systems providing diverse societal functions in which the systems “consist of artefacts, knowledge, capital, labour, cultural meaning, etc.” Regarding practices, see, e.g., European Union’s ‘Fit for 55’ legislation package (<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/green-deal/fit-for-55-the-eu-plan-for-a-green-transition/>); the University of Helsinki’s strategic plan (<https://www.helsinki.fi/en/about-us/strategy-economy-and-quality/strategic-plan-2021-2030/strategic-plan-of-the-university-of-helsinki>); Lahti – European Green Capital 2021 project (<https://greenlahti.fi/en>), Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra’s Lifestyle Test (<https://www.sitra.fi/en/projects/lifestyle-test-2/>); and, e.g., the sustainable production guidebooks in theatre (<https://theatregreenbook.com/>), music (<https://viileamusiikki.fi/english/>), and audiovisual industry (<https://ekosetti.fi/>).

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the updated scientific knowledge about human-induced global warming. Whether the choices and actions taken today will lead us to a sustainability transformation as a radical and overarching societal and cultural change is a matter of debate. Nonetheless, what has become clear is that such a change cannot be fostered by leaning *only* on some perspectives, economic or ecological, for instance. Could we then also apply the concepts and approaches of aesthetics in sustainability deliberations?

In this article, I argue that, because our sensitivity towards aesthetic values can most certainly underpin both morally condemned and praised behaviour and practice, it makes sense to enhance aesthetic competence also in relation to sustainability. For this purpose, I briefly consider three possible conceptual approaches to show what these different terminological combinations reveal of aesthetics' role in sustainability transitions, namely *aesthetic sustainability* (section 1), the *aesthetics of sustainability* (section 2) and *sustainable aesthetics* (section 3). While all similar, these approaches show different ways of interpreting the role of aesthetic values in assessing sustainability transitions on the one hand and the role of sustainability deliberation in aesthetics on the other hand. In short, they point not only at the significance of evaluating the aesthetic but also of experiencing with and through sustainability awareness as well as of transforming practices in aesthetics. I conclude by showing why discussing sustainability from the standpoint of aesthetics is important.

One may ask, is there any reason to presume that considering and speculating about the role of aesthetic values could have any significance for mitigating climate change and biodiversity loss or our adaptation to such processes, let alone the overconsumption of natural resources? Another question is *whether* such a discussion matters from the point of view of aesthetics, which nonetheless draws its powers from our philosophical and, therefore, abstract relationship with the perceivable realm. I do not claim to provide satisfying answers to these questions demanding, *inter alia*, conception on the relationship between aesthetic and ethical values.² However, I believe that assessing sustainability transitions also necessitates evaluation, description, and speculation in relation to aesthetic values. Through practice, these areas of thought and action may contribute to engaging with sustainability agendas. Yet, the fruitfulness of the proposed conceptual approaches remains arguable. To present these approaches that combine, in different ways, the notions of sustainability and the aesthetic, I start from perhaps the most obvious one – just on the level of words – because it follows the conceptual path of the already used concepts of economic, ecological, and social sustainability.

² The relationship between aesthetic and ethical values is an enduring question in the aesthetics' debate. As for an introduction to the state-of-the-art discussion of the question, see Kalle Puolakka, "Aesthetics and the Ethics of Care: Some Critical Remarks," *ESPES. The Slovak Journal of Aesthetics* 12, 1 (2023): 130–136, accessed March 25, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8117798>.

Aesthetic sustainability

There is simply no reason why sustainability could not be an issue of aesthetics. Although the term sustainability, as it is used today, derives from and is still burdened by economic discussion,³ the notion of sustainability has a broad philosophical value allowing its use for different purposes.⁴ For instance, discussions of the notion's temporal dimension, that is, durability and its relationship with aesthetic value, have influenced the development of aesthetics and art studies and practices concerning art already before the knowledge about the environmental crises of our time. One powerful example of that is Vitruvius's *De architectura libri decem*, which discusses design and construction through three intertwined, more or less still-in-use, ideals.⁵ By setting a construction's durability in relation to its utility and applicability as well as to its appearance, Vitruvius seems to have been aware of sustainability as a more complex issue than bare durability.⁶ To assess whether buildings sustain the passage of time, evaluating their duration is insufficient – aesthetic values also count. Yet, Vitruvius' conception of sustainability was narrow: quality guarantees sustainability.⁷

A much more complex conception of sustainability is being discussed today also in philosophical and applied aesthetics.⁸ In the current situation, in which, according to a recent estimation, six out of nine processes that are thought crucial for the stabilization and resilience of the Earth system, do not anymore support the safe action space for humans,⁹ sustainability is both local and global issue. At the same time, it is just as much an issue of multispecies well-being, cultural integrity, social justice, and ecosystems' resilience as of prosperity. In this context, and regarding the numerous occasions in which we (could) assess sustainability, Sanna Lehtinen

³ The initiation of the sustainability discussion is often likened to the Brundtland Commission's work and the discussion about Sustainable Development, which emphasizes securing economic development by considering the given ecological and social constraints. See Brundtland Commission, "Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development" (United Nations, Oxford University Press, 1987), <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf>.

⁴ A good explication of sustainability notion's philosophical value is provided by Tim Ingold in his book chapter "Sustainability of Everything" in Tim Ingold, *Imagining for Real: Essays on Creation, Attention and Correspondence* (Routledge, 2021), 325–36.

⁵ Vitruvius, *Arkkitehtuurista (De architectura libri decem)*, transl. Panu Hyppönen, Lauri Ockenström and Aulikki Vuola (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2022/ c. 30–20 BC). The ideals to which Hyppönen et. al refer are *firmitas*, *utilitas* and *venustas*.

⁶ Vitruvius did not explicate *firmitas*, but it seems to imply a building's strength to resist the eroding effects that cumulate over time. Panu Hyppönen, Lauri Ockenström and Aulikki Vuola, "Johdanto," in Vitruvius, *Arkkitehtuurista*, 46. I have used 'durability' here to remark on the sustainability connotation of the idea. *Venustas* could also be understood to refer to beauty as such. However, as Hyppönen et al. ("Johdanto," 46) note, the word 'beauty' does not always refer to the same idea; in Vitruvius's time, *venustas* referred to the qualities of Venus.

⁷ One could also think of how, in the case of divine beauty affirmed by Platonists, beauty stands for both an aesthetic value and the represented sustainability status of the highest order.

⁸ See, e.g., Saito 2007, 2017; Lehtinen 2021; Korpelainen 2021; Haapala et al. 2023.

⁹ Katherine Richardson et al., "Earth Beyond Six of Nine Planetary Boundaries," *Science Advances* 9, 37 (2023): eadh2458. The processes described by the concept of planetary boundaries include climate change as one of them.

suggests *aesthetic sustainability* as a conceptual tool that allows maintaining the discussion about aesthetic values.¹⁰

As a concept, aesthetic sustainability functions as a means for assessing and comparing diverse parts of our perceptual reality from the point of view of aesthetic values in a way that could be related to the discussion about sustainability. It focuses our attention on the longevity of aesthetic appreciation supported, for instance, through inter- and transgenerationality.¹¹ For example, cultural heritage sites that are being protected and conserved against changes in aesthetic appreciation bear the idea of aesthetic sustainability in terms of temporality, as well as practices like sauna culture in Finland inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.¹² However, contrasting Vitruvius' mainly appearance-based approach to aesthetic value, the concept of aesthetic sustainability brings in environmental thinking and deliberation as well as that concerning well-being: assessing aesthetic sustainability today necessitates discussing how strongly we emphasize the role of ecological values, for instance, the well-being of ecosystems. This way the concept of aesthetic sustainability builds a dialogue with the evaluation of other dimensions of sustainability.¹³

Yet, the relationship between aesthetic quality and other aspects of sustainability evaluation remains disputable. For example, we may be willing to accept the high-maintenance of public parks that are considered aesthetically sustainable despite knowing that ecological fitness and the site's beauty might stand in dire conflict through the manipulation of biodiversity in the area.¹⁴ Some other cases might instead indicate that aesthetic and environmental unsustainability can go hand in hand. For example, buying a resource-intensive fast fashion shirt for the sake of its newness heralds limits to its aesthetic appreciation, which may increase demand for shirts and the necessary resources. Although it could be argued that fast fashion is aesthetically, though not environmentally nor socially, sustainable precisely because it relies on novelty value, we may be willing to negate both aesthetic, environmental, and social sustainability in the case of single fast fashion products. In this way, the concept of aesthetic sustainability may assist us in thinking and evaluating whether and on what premises particular objects, practices, and environments remain aesthetically appreciated.

As an accompanying dimension of sustainability, besides those of environmental, ecological, economic, social, and cultural sustainability, aesthetic sustainability

¹⁰ Sanna Lehtinen, "Aesthetic Sustainability," in *Situating Sustainability: A Handbook of Contexts and Concepts*, ed. Parker Krieg and Reetta Toivanen (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 2021), 255–67.

¹¹ Lehtinen, "Aesthetic Sustainability," 260.

¹² See UNESCO web page: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/sauna-culture-in-finland-01596>, accessed on January 23, 2024.

¹³ On the contemporary discussion, that is affirmative to building such a dialogue, see, e.g., Meyer 2008; Saito 2007, 2017; Di Carlo 2014; Kagan 2013/2011; Harper 2018; Lehtinen 2021.

¹⁴ Arto Haapala, "Esteettiset arvot muuttuvassa ympäristössä," in *Ilmastonmuutos ja Filosofia*, ed. Simo Kylönen and Markku Oksanen (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2020), 216–23. It must be noted that our conception of artefact's aesthetic sustainability might differ from that of natural environments.

brings both broadening and limiting elements to assessing sustainability. Concerning the former, the concept of aesthetic sustainability may add a missing element to our understanding of sustainability by underlining experientiality. This does not, however, mean focusing on people's private opinions and preferences as such. Instead, as a concept of philosophical aesthetics, aesthetic sustainability suggests discussing individual experiences, as well as experientiality in general, in relation with intersubjective experiences. In addition, the concept points at concerning particular perceptual objects from many mutually challenging perspectives as aesthetic appreciations also vary in different times and places. As such, aesthetic sustainability is distinct, though not separate, from social and cultural sustainability, and could support discussing sustainability across cultural borders through generating interest in understanding aesthetic experiences.¹⁵

Notwithstanding, detecting yet another dimension to sustainability can also be limiting because the more sustainability dimensions we have, the more difficult it becomes to define and achieve sustainability. From this perspective, the critique based on evaluating aesthetic sustainability might offer a counterforce to those pursuits of change in which the aesthetic ethos of societies is subsumed under other sustainability dimensions.¹⁶ Despite this limitation, the concept of aesthetic sustainability brings the question of aesthetic values to the broad discussion concerning sustainability deliberation thus urging one to think about the meaning of the aesthetic in general and specifically in each case – an element anyway needed to rethink our aesthetic choices.¹⁷

The aesthetics of sustainability

Like aesthetic sustainability, *the aesthetics of sustainability* calls for understanding experientiality. As concepts, they nonetheless differ. Whereas we can, in principle, discuss aesthetic sustainability without considering the broader sustainability discussion, with the aesthetics of sustainability this is no longer the case. The notion of the aesthetics of sustainability suggests pondering what that kind of aesthetics is like, which deals with sustainability in all its ambiguity. Thus, it turns the focus from the aesthetic realm per se to discussing aesthetics in a specific context. That context is characterized by global environmental change and polycrises as well as by sustainability agendas on various levels. For this reason, the notion is contemporarily influenced by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, the discussion led by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and, for example, the European Union, as well as by diverse governmental agendas both on the level of countries and

¹⁵ Lehtinen, "Aesthetic Sustainability," 260.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 264–65.

¹⁷ On the concept of aesthetic choice and its relation to sustainability discussion see, Kevin Melchionne, "Aesthetic Choice," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 57, 3 (2017): 283–298 and Sanna Lehtinen, "Aesthetic Choice in the Age of Ecological Awareness," in *The Oxford Handbook of Mental Health and Contemporary Western Aesthetics*, ed. Martin Poltrum, (online edition, Oxford Academic, August 16, 2023).

cities.¹⁸ As a concept, the aesthetics of sustainability therefore functions as a deposit to an attempt to describe our age, and as such, it bears witness, in part, to the ventures of sustainability transitions.

In case sustainability transitions refer to changes in practices towards more profoundly considering the planetary boundaries and social justice, the aesthetics of sustainability can be thought of as one kind of sustainability transition taking place on the level of discourse.¹⁹ As a notion, the aesthetics of sustainability focuses the discussion concerning aesthetic values on the complexity of sustainability as an issue, thus positing a pledge for further debate on the topic and, because of its emphasis on experientiality, a plea for further exploration with the notion. In this sense, a groundbreaking proposal of the aesthetics of sustainability has been Yuriko Saito's Green Aesthetics described through minimalism, longevity, 'fittingness', "contrast between past and present," "perceivability of nature's function," health, and caring, the characteristics Saito considers relevant in contemporary design.²⁰ Other proposals exist, too.²¹ Nonetheless, we can consider the aesthetics of sustainability a sustainability transition in two ways.

Firstly, the aesthetics of sustainability is being approached in a way that is close to conceiving it as a subdiscipline of philosophically grounded applied aesthetics. In this regard, it resembles the already-existing approaches to the aesthetics of natural environments, everyday life, and cities, for example, which all provide, on their part, descriptively rich philosophical and experiential interfaces for discussing aesthetics and sustainability together.²² This approach underlines the research-related value of the notion and suggests sustainability with its contemporary connotations as a new topic to aesthetic inquiry. As such, it points to underpinning questions concerning our conceptions of relevant experiences when discussing sustainability. For example, how do we experience the phenomena that align with diverse sustainability agendas and what are those phenomena like? Can sustainability be experienced, and would it qualify as an aesthetic experience?

¹⁸ United Nations. THE 17 GOALS. Internet page. United Nations, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>, accessed on November 2, 2023. See, e.g., Pörtner, H.-O. et al. (eds.), "Summary for Policymakers," in *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, ed. H.-O. Pörtner et al. (Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 3–33.

¹⁹ Noora-Helena Korpelainen, "Cultivating Aesthetic Sensibility for Sustainability," *Slovak Journal of Aesthetics* 10, 2 (2021): 165–82.

²⁰ Yuriko Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 88–96. Saito elaborates on these characteristics in the book and much of her later work continues to argue for their significance. See Yuriko Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar, Everyday Life and World-Making* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), and *Aesthetics of Care: Practice in Everyday Life* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2022).

²¹ For example, Ecological Aesthetics could be another such proposal. See Xiangzhan Cheng, "On the Four Keystones of Ecological Aesthetic Appreciation," in *East Asian Ecocriticisms. Literatures, Cultures, and the Environment*, ed. S. C. Estok and WC Kim (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 221–36.

²² See, e.g., Mikkonen 2022; Brady 2021; Haapala et al. 2024; Di Carlo 2014; Lehtinen 2021; Saito 2017; Haapala 2020.

Secondly, the discussion of the aesthetics of sustainability seems to suggest a change in sensibilities and thus possibly also a new aesthetic movement. From this perspective, sustainability, as a goal and a value, is thought as something that may modify our aesthetic and moral attitudes. For Saito, for example, it happens through the guidance of our knowledge about environmental and cultural sustainability, in which the key could be to focus on aesthetic aspects of our everyday life objects and practices.²³ This approach gets support from expecting the diverse sustainability agendas to increase intervening in our everyday life directly or indirectly through sustainability transitions taking place in consumption and production. One central aspect of sustainability-oriented sensibility would then be the willingness to appreciate the intertwinement of aesthetic and ethical approaches. As Sacha Kagan points out, another important aspect of such a sensibility could be the capability to deal with complexity because, for cultivating sensibility in relation to sustainability, one may need to navigate across disciplines and worldviews which demands epistemic agility.²⁴

Whether as a subdiscipline or a contemporary sensibility, the aesthetics of sustainability flourishes through the tools of aesthetics, such as the idea of aesthetic sustainability and the interest in understanding experiences and appreciations. Although we certainly are not in a place to discuss the first-hand experience of sustainability in a broad sense as long as global warming continues, that does not have to limit philosophical inquiries on experiencing (un)sustainability.²⁵ As Emily Brady wonderfully shows through discussing Cryosphere Aesthetics,²⁶ questions of appreciation, experience, and aesthetic judgement will demand philosophical capability also in the future: melting glaciers are, among other things, poignant reminders of experiences' main constraint, subjectivity, for it is not at all clear how future generations' experiences and appreciations could be judged. Because aesthetic experiences require those who experience, the idea of future generations necessarily underpins the aesthetics of sustainability, thus adding one more feature of critique to aesthetic consideration.²⁷

Diverse aesthetic conceptions may underpin discussions concerning sustainability. For example, considering aesthetic sustainability and the aesthetics of sustainability show that it is not always clear what is meant by sensibility. Is it a propensity

²³ Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar*.

²⁴ Sacha Kagan, "Aesthetics of Sustainability: A Transdisciplinary Sensibility for Transformative Practices," *Transdisciplinary Journal of Engineering & Science* 2 (2011): 65–73.

²⁵ Noora-Helena Korpelainen, "On Experiencing Sustainability – Clarifying the Sensory Approach with the Pragmatist Aesthetics' Conception of Aesthetic Sensibility," *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy* 15, 2 (2023): 1–18.

²⁶ Emily Brady, "Global Climate Change and Aesthetics," *Environmental Values* 31, 1 (2021): 27–46. Brady focuses our aesthetic attention and appreciation on those areas of Earth still covered by ice and snow while deepening our understanding of our possibilities to experience and appreciate the cryosphere.

²⁷ See Remei Capdevila-Werning and Sanna Lehtinen, "Intergenerational Aesthetics – A Future-Oriented Approach to Aesthetic Theory and Practice," *Philosophical Inquiries* 9, 2 (2021): 174–94. Note that the idea of future generations was already built to the way Brundtland Commission defined sustainability as development that does not endanger future generations' abilities to meet their needs. Brundtland Commission, *Our Common Future*, 16.

to identify (aesthetic) value, now being used and developed in the context of sustainability transformation? Is sensibility essentially a skill to be voluntarily perfected? Or, perhaps sensibility should be understood as an aesthetic taste specific to our age and thus also doomed to be outdated in the future? Or, perhaps it is a style, a way that appearances are set forth contemporarily? In addition, we could conceive contemporary sustainability-oriented sensibility as a virtue developed as the ramification of humans' unsustainable relationship with nature, or, instead follow the idea of sensibility as a crucial constructive relationship between the experiencer and the experienced?²⁸ Whatever conception we may follow matters for it also influences who we think of being contemporarily capable of aesthetic experiences, appreciation, and consideration. In this regard, the aesthetics of sustainability, as a suggested topic, also displays questions about inclusiveness, participation, and fairness.

Sustainable aesthetics

Compared to the previous approaches, *sustainable aesthetics* is more speculative. It refers, due to contemporary connotations of sustainability, to such aesthetic appreciation, judgement, and experience as well as such aesthetics research that is aligned at least with ecological and social sustainability. In this approach then, the complexity of sustainability is a crucial starting point. It needs to depart, for example, from those approaches which reduce sustainability to connote responsibility because that might lead to jeopardizing complexity. To take into account the limited natural resources and the tipping points of the Earth's systems, to start with, requires considerable calculative impact assessment in every particular case, and such assessment is not universally accessible. For this reason, also, sustainable aesthetics refers not so much to a moral attitude than a method of inquiry. It consists of practices that both actively minimize their environmental charge and strengthen social justice – “[...] practices that meet the needs of a human community in ways that are consistent with the flourishing of the ecosystems on which we depend.”²⁹

Despite its speculativeness, sustainable aesthetics is being explored through the fields of art and approaches to design and lifestyles.³⁰ Within philosophical aesthetics, the previously presented conceptual approaches of *aesthetic sustainability* and *the aesthetics of sustainability* are examples of such exploration. Those explorations and their conceptual underpinnings matter from the points of view of research and cultural understanding. But I would argue that they also matter from the point of view of sustainability transitions due to polysemy of sustainability and the aesthetic, the multidisciplinary context at hand, and the urgency of sustainability transformation:

²⁸ On the latter perspective, see Roberta Dreon, *Human Landscapes. Contributions to a Pragmatist Anthropology* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2022).

²⁹ “Philosophers for Sustainability Guidelines” (February 2020): 1, <https://www.philosophersforsustainability.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/PfS-Sustainable-Practices-Guidelines-Feb-2020.pdf>, acc. on January 28, 2024.

³⁰ Eco-dramaturgy, eco-musicology, and eco-criticism provide good examples of this.

conceptual clarifications and descriptive evaluations concerning our relationships with aesthetic values may help us become aware of changes taking place in diverse practices and contemplate those needed.

As a concept, sustainable aesthetics nonetheless seems internally contradictory. Due to sustainability's unavoidable connotation of the passing of time, the fruition of sustainable aesthetics would seem to require ensuring that all pursuing of well-being and the good done in the name of sustainable aesthetics would also indirectly lead to practices within planetary boundaries. Sustainable aesthetics implies its sustainability in the long run. Aesthetics, on the other hand, endures through factors that require cultivation also after meeting some targets, which is why harnessing an aesthetic approach to speed up sustainability transitions would be limited. However, the possible contradiction of sustainable aesthetics also motivates the approach. Even though one could argue that aesthetic experiences play a minor role in the global sustainability deficit – for example, by combining the search of aesthetic experiences to arts and entertainment – the opportunities to use and develop aesthetic sensibilities are affected by global warming. It unavoidably affects, through environmental change and biodiversity loss, conditions by which we experience and appreciate aesthetic values, for instance, by narrowing living conditions, which already influence living in diverse places on Earth.³¹ The demand for sustainable aesthetics thus exists.

Speculativeness might also be essential to sustainable aesthetics. Even if we could measure, for example, carbon footprints of diverse aesthetic experiences and our inquiries into them – which I strongly doubt – that would tell little about the aesthetic dimension of the approach. Sustainable aesthetics calls for understanding our approaches to sustainability through aesthetic means. On a practical level, it concerns, first of all, the organization of aesthetic specialization, that is, conducting aesthetics research, teaching, and learning. These practices are already influenced by sustainability agendas posing demands, for example, on the mobility of researchers, practicalities of gatherings, and accessibility of publications and aesthetics education, to start with. How the discipline deals with those demands can be an issue of sustainable aesthetics. But because aesthetics is by no means limited to disciplinary practices pursued in academic and artistic settings, we could also extend the significance of sustainable aesthetics to practices in which numerous aspects of the world and existence become experienced, appreciated, and judged through sensory perception and consideration of aesthetic values.

³¹ On this issue and aesthetics, see, e.g., Matthew Auer R., “Environmental Aesthetics in the Age of Climate Change,” *Sustainability* 11, 18 (2019): 5001; Ariane Nomikos, “Place Matters,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 76, 4 (2018): 453–62; and Brady, “Global Climate Change and Aesthetics,” 27–46.

Conclusion

Inquiring aesthetic experiences and appreciations, for example, through works of art and diverse environments, can elevate the experienced quality of life. Yet, pursuing human well-being and overall good can be thought to result in the overconsumption of natural resources. Tackling environmental and social crises generated by human-induced global warming and steering the human population towards an ecologically sustainable path of practices demands all points of view as well as action within all fields of practice. Already this suffices to point out the significance of discussing sustainability from the standpoint of aesthetics. The broader answer nonetheless holds that research and inquiries concerning aesthetics and art provide comprehension of aesthetic values that may be unique to those approaches and thus significant when dealing with aesthetic values in their relation to sustainability.

The three conceptual approaches that I discussed could offer a starting point for engaging ourselves in sustainability deliberation from an aesthetics perspective. Certainly, the presented approaches are not all-inclusive. Several concepts and approaches of philosophical aesthetics and art studies may prove revealing when discussing sustainability, and here, I have only highlighted some central angles of the proposed questions. Reconciling aesthetics discussion with that of sustainability will not, of course, solve the crises of our time. Instead, it may in part, help enhance the aesthetic competence needed for concerning aesthetic values in sustainability deliberation. However, lifelong learning in aesthetics means not only critical thinking but also perceptual exploration, which may be of use when challenging existing practices and ways of thought.

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