

Call for Papers: *Somaesthetics and Anthropology*

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The proposed issue of the *Journal of Somaesthetics* will explore the intersection of anthropology and somatic analysis. This call invites authors to think anew about socio-cultural anthropology's longstanding engagement with "the body" in light of the "somatic turn" in contemporary thought shaped by the philosopher Richard Shusterman's extensive corpus of work on somaesthetics.

From Pierre Bourdieu to Arthur Kleinman, Marcel Mauss to Mary Douglas, Thomas Csordas to Margaret Lock and Nancy Scheper-Hughes (and beyond), "the body" has been a central concern for anthropological theorists and the focal point of ethnographic practice. However, dominant currents within ethnographic research have tended to reduce the bodies to sites for the operation of power or resistance, ideology or subjectivity. For the proposed special issue, we invite authors to engage with the somatic condition/ing and aesthetic textures of social life and, in so doing, explore points of intersection and tension between somatic and aesthetic theory and anthropology.

As "an ameliorative discipline of both theory and practice," somaesthetics as defined by Shusterman, concerns the body "as a locus of sensory-aesthetic appreciation (aesthesia) and creative self-fashioning"; it "aims to enrich not only our abstract, discursive knowledge of the body but also our lived somatic experience and performance" (Shusterman, *Thinking Through the Body*, p. 27). These dual aims (somatic analysis and self-cultivation) are intimately familiar to anthropological fieldworkers concerned with the question of how it is that meanings and values become felt qualities in the everyday use of (our) bodies. However, inquiry into the *somatic* and *aesthetic* immediacies of everyday experience remains at the periphery of ethnographic analysis. Already in *Body and Emotion: the Aesthetics of Illness and Healing in the Nepal Himalayas* (1992), Robert Desjarlais introduced the notion of "embodied aesthetics," but anthropology has yet to engage ethnographically and theoretically with the rich and wide-ranging field of somaesthetics.

In order to address this gap in the literature and, we hope, generate new and future-forming dialogue between anthropology and the field of somaesthetics, we welcome work on a wide variety of topics and themes and invite different positions on anthropology inquiry including visual and multimodal approaches. Papers (**3000 to 6000 words**) can constitute case studies, ethnographic reflections or be more theoretically minded. Suggested topics include, but are definitely not limited to:

- Anthropological theory and somaesthetics
- Anthropology and/of Ordinary/Everyday aesthetics
- Anthropology of Design, Space, Action and/or Organization
- Anthropological approaches to perception and embodied cognition

- Ethnographic analysis of bodily practices and self-cultivation (e.g. ritual, habits, custom, routines)
- Somaesthetic approaches to learning, education and apprenticeship
- Cross-cultural comparison of somatic practices (including, for example, dance and other performance based artforms)

The *Journal of Somaesthetics* is a peer-reviewed, online and open access academic journal devoted to research that advances the interdisciplinary field of somaesthetics, understood as the critical study and meliorative cultivation of the experience and performance of the living body (or soma) as a site of sensory appreciation (aesthesia), practice, and realization. The term somaesthetics designates an interdisciplinary framework rather than a philosophical position. It deals, on the one hand, with the aesthetic experience of the body as a practice proper and, on the other, with the academic conceptualization of the experiencing body and the body experienced; it approaches the body as the mediating center between sensory experiences and cognitive realization. Somaesthetics describes an integrative field of research where aesthetic experiences meet theories about the body and its biological structures and functions, its phenomenological and epistemological functions, and its position and significances in culture and societies. The *Journal of Somaesthetics* invites proposals of academic papers, essays, and video articles from different fields of somatic practices, empirical research, art, and philosophy.

For more information about the journal, see <http://journals.aau.dk/index.php/JOS>

Schedule

- Deadline for 250 word proposal: October 15, 2024 (feedback by Nov 1)
- Deadline for draft articles: Feb 15, 2025
- Peer-reviews back: March 7, 2025
- Deadline for final articles: June 1, 2025
- Publishing: Summer 2025

Guidelines

- **Please submit a 250-word abstract to Mark Watson** (mark.watson@concordia.ca) **and David Howes** (david.howes@concordia.ca) **by October 15, 2024**. We welcome receiving inquiries ahead of time to discuss and develop potential ideas.
- Eventual papers should be between **3000 and 6000 words** and prepared for blind review, according to the Journal's style guidelines as indicated on the Journal's website: <https://somaesthetics.aau.dk/index.php/JOS/about/submissions>
- **Contact**
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