Homo Tangens and Aesthetic Experience: Between Form, Texture and Temperature

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Three factors contribute to the emergence of homo tangens in aesthetic theory. First, one of the sequences of the debate on aesthetic experience was the conclusion that this experience is not limited to art and aesthetic values. Somaesthetics and everyday aesthetics have become major forms of expanding the concept of aesthetic experience.

Second, an expansion of the importance of so-called secondary or "lower" senses for aesthetics is gradually taking shape. The rehabilitation of the sense of touch, smell, and taste in aesthetics (M. Diaconu), the debate over whether food can be art (A. Meskin), and other works have contributed to the possibility of aesthetic research on touch. Third, philosophical studies of touch (J. Derrida, G. Agamben) and its role in the diversity of forms of human activity are developing more and more intensively. All this allows us to speak about the existence of homo tangens as a special type of human existence. Is it possible to study the forms of aesthetic experience as one of the states of homo tangens? To answer the question, it is necessary to show what elements touch consists of, and what forms of interaction of these elements produce aesthetic experience, i.e., what aesthetic effects are caused by the interaction of the forms of the elements.

The basic elements of touch should include texture and temperature. The variety of forms of texture and temperature produces different aesthetic effects of touch. For example, three points can be distinguished in temperature–the highest for the threshold of perception (the hottest), the lowest (the coldest), and zero (which corresponds to the temperature of perception of the point of touch). It is an interaction of the form of the manifold of this element that causes an aesthetic effect. In addition, it is possible to distinguish various dynamic forms (montage) of the interaction of texture and temperature in the aesthetic experience.

The study of aesthetic factors involved in the activity of homo tangens allows us to expand our understanding of somaesthetics and everyday aesthetics, as well as to show the essential role of aesthetic experience in human life.