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**EDITORIAL: THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF
EMPIRICAL STUDIES OF THE ARTS**

The present issue marks the completion of *Empirical Studies of the Arts*’ (*ESA*) 30th anniversary volume. This special occasion warrants reflection upon the principal reason for which this outlet was created, captured in the opening sentence of the *Journal*’s first editorial written by Colin Martindale, its founding editor: “*Empirical Studies of the Arts* is designed to serve as an interdisciplinary forum for scientific studies of all of the arts and of aesthetics in general” (1983, p. 1). To achieve this goal, *ESA* was to fulfill two specific roles. First, it would be a central repository of scientific investigations into the arts and aesthetics, enabling researchers in various disciplines to access a single source to keep abreast of developments. Second, due to its inherently interdisciplinary composition, it would be an intellectual breeding ground to facilitate cross-pollination of ideas among disparate areas of research. This second role was deemed “more exciting” than the first, because of the well-established fact that injection of ideas into neighboring fields facilitates the emergence of creative insights. The aim of the *Journal*, both in terms of its overarching goal as well as its more specific roles, remains the same: To bring to bear the highest calibre of scientific research across disciplines to address hypotheses of interest in the arts and aesthetics.

In his editorial to mark the 25th anniversary of *ESA*, Paul J. Locher presented an informal text-based history of the content of the *Journal* from Volume 1 to Volume 25 (Locher, 2007). Three hundred and fifteen articles had been published up to that point in *ESA*, with an average of 6.3 articles (range 5-8 articles) per issue. They could be broadly categorized into nine topic areas: Psychology of Art, Literary Studies, Creativity, Cross-Cultural Studies, Film, Music, Assessment and Statistical Procedures, Applied Aspects of Aesthetics, and Miscellaneous. Since then, the *Journal* has published 58 articles, with an average of 7.1 articles (range 5-13 articles) per issue. To identify shifts in content

that occurred during the past five years compared to the first 25 years, we report in Figure 1 the percentage of articles representing each topic area as identified by Locher in 2007, for those two epochs of interest. As can be seen, over the last five years Psychology of Art has continued to represent the greatest percentage of content in the *Journal* at 41% (compared to 34% in Volumes 1-25). Another notable trend over the last five years is the reduction in the percentage of studies representing Literary Studies (down to 3% compared to 21% in Volumes 1-25), and increases in the percentage of studies representing Creativity (up to 17% compared to 9% in Volumes 1-25) and Film (up to 14% compared to 5% in Volumes 1-25). Interestingly, the *Journal* did not receive a single submission involving Cross-Cultural Studies in 2008-2012. The representation of articles in the other four content areas in Volumes 26-30 remained relatively stable compared to Volumes 1-25.

That Psychology of Art continues to represent the greatest percentage of content in the *Journal* is perhaps not surprising, given that it is most closely aligned with the research interests of its audience—composed as it is of scientists, artists, educators, creators, and consumers of the arts. However, the two divergent trends in the percentage of manuscripts representing the topic areas of Literary Studies versus Creativity and Film may be explained by the interplay of two

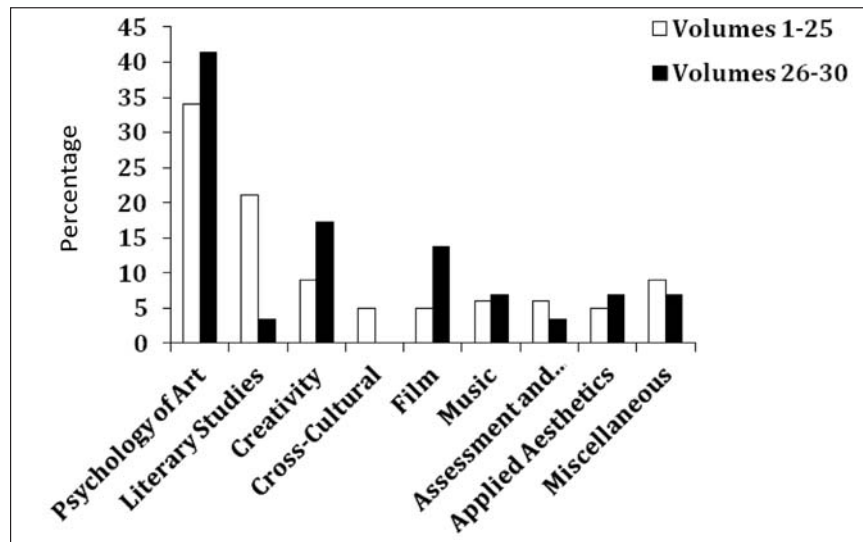


Figure 1. Representation of topic areas in the journal across 30 years: Comparing the first 25 volumes to the last 5 volumes.

factors. First, the last five years have witnessed a rather dramatic expansion of research in the areas of Creativity and Film. Indeed, we conducted a search in PsycINFO on 5 April 2012 in which we entered the terms “creativity,” “film,” and “literature” as keywords, and retrieved the total number of reports representing each keyword in the epochs 1983-2007 and 2008-current. As illustrated in Figure 2, whereas the average number of reports per year for Creativity and Film has increased steeply in the last five years compared to the period 1983-2007, it appears to have remained relatively stable for Literature. This suggests that the greater relative representation of manuscripts in the areas of Creativity and Film in the pages of *ESA* may in part be a reflection of general growth in research in those topic areas. Second, the last five years have witnessed the appearance of several new journals focusing on the arts and aesthetics such as *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, and *Scientific Study of Literature*, among others. This suggests that scholars now have access to a larger number of outlets for their work, a thrilling prospect for a healthy and growing field of research. This may explain a distribution of work on the topic of Literary Studies among a larger number of outlets, and thus its relatively reduced representation in the pages of *ESA*.

Notably, the most recent five years of *ESA* have continued to showcase the rich diversity of thematic content reflecting its first 25 years (Figure 1).

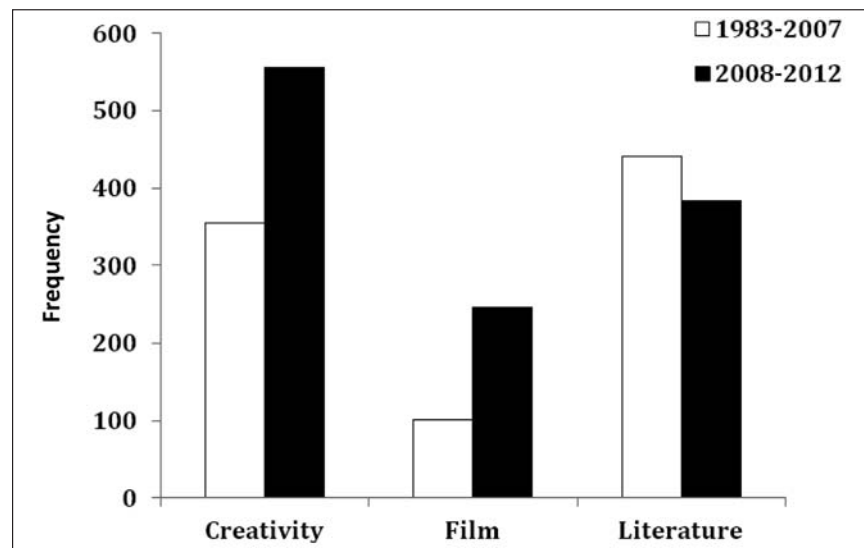


Figure 2. Average number of reports in PsycINFO with the terms “creativity,” “film,” and “literature” as keywords across 30 years: Comparing years 1983-2007 to 2008-current.

Furthermore, the *Journal* has also been keen to include manuscripts introducing methodological advances to the field. For example, the most recent special issue devoted to the biennial congress of the International Association of Empirical Aesthetics (IAEA) included articles on methodological advances to color analysis in film (Chen, Wu, & Lin, 2012), and the physiology of museum experience (Tröndle & Tschacher, 2012). This is in recognition of the fact that good method is crucial not only for the resolution of theoretical controversies, but also in the development of better theories (Greenwald, 2012). It is our wish that *ESA* will continue to be a primary forum for the interplay between theory and method to advance the scientific study of aesthetics and the arts.

Recently, the *Journal* has seen the introduction of a number of new features to facilitate the needs of scholars in the field (see Vartanian, 2012). Specifically, we have introduced *Brief Reports* and *Theoretical Notes* alongside standard *Research Articles* to better represent the diversity of approaches to tackle problems of interest in the arts and aesthetics. Second, to shorten the duration of time between acceptance of manuscripts and their availability on the *Journal's* website, beginning in 2013 the publisher will make available corrected proofs via the Early Online View (EOV) link on *ESA's* website. This should result in the rapid communication of findings to the *Journal's* audience, as manuscripts will be made available to subscribers prior to their inclusion in a specific issue.

We would like to express our gratitude to scholars who have published their high-caliber research in the pages of *ESA* over the last 30 years, its large and interdisciplinary audience who play a key role in disseminating the ideas represented in these pages to the field, and the countless reviewers who have tirelessly maintained *ESA's* high publication standards. The *Journal* continues to enjoy a close relationship with IAEA, serving as its official journal since 1995, as well as with the Baywood Publishing Company which has produced the *Journal* since its founding. Given its solid foundation and continued development, we enthusiastically look forward to the future of the *Journal*. We close by encouraging the submission of manuscripts reporting scientific studies of any area related to the arts and aesthetics.

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