

Bodies of Belief: Somaesthetics of Faith and Protest

The Center for Body, Mind, and Culture invites proposals for papers to be presented at a 3-day conference, January 29–31, 2015, at Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton.

Human bodies are shaped not only by their genetic endowment but also by the belief systems of the cultures in which they develop and function. Such belief systems vary from unarticulated background assumptions to ritualized practices and explicit doctrines or even to formulated laws enacted and enforced by social institutions. Likewise, belief's somatic shaping ranges widely from the stylization of external appearance (including clothing and ornamentation) to the structuring of bodily actions and comportment (including essential practices like eating) and even to inner modes of affect (which are felt somatically). The beliefs that the human soma embodies and expresses are not confined to established social norms; they also include items of faith and commitment that are individualistic, nonconformist, or even antagonistic to the cultural mainstream. More than a mere instrument of compliance or worship, the soma is also a site and weapon of protest.

Our conference will explore the ways through which beliefs and their corresponding values are embodied and somatically contested in such cultural fields as religion, politics, ethics, and the arts. How are beliefs acted upon or counter-acted by bodies in these fields? How do artistic or literary representations reflect on such bodily actions or themselves participate in these actions?

Selected papers may be developed for publication in *The Journal of Somaesthetics* (<http://journals.aau.dk/index.php/JOS/>) or in a volume based on the conference papers.

Abstracts of 250 words, and a current CV, should be sent electronically as attachments, no later than October 20, 2014, to Richard Shusterman at bodymindculture@fau.edu. Please direct conference inquiries to the same address. Further information about the conference will be made available at <http://www.fau.edu/bodymindculture>, where you can also consult the programs of our prior international conferences. Prospective speakers will be notified by mid-November, 2014.