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Under The Sign of Regret

Cesarco, Alejandro

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LUND UNIVERSITY

PO Box 117
221 00 Lund
+46 46-222 00 00

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Author(s) Alejandro Cesarco	Date of issue	
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Title and subtitle Under The Sign of Regret		
<p>Abstract</p> <p>“Under the Sign of Regret” focuses on aesthetically mediated responses to regret. It interrogates the qualities of the feeling of regret as well as what is produced under its influence (as objects and as experiences). These two aims—considering regret as a mode and as a tool—hinge between two complementary definitions of aesthetics: on the one hand, the quality of feelings or the “distribution of the sensible”; and on the other hand the specific regime for identifying and reflecting on the arts.</p> <p>My research looks at regret as an aesthetic mode and as a methodological tool. It recuperates the positive qualities of regret without overvaluing it as a great gain. This hovering between loss and gain sets up the research as a tactic against the achievement driven and production principled art-field.</p> <p>The hypothesis is to consider regret as a generative force (one that seeds and propels forward), as a bittersweet drama of adjustments (between who we are and who we aspired to be, or between what we make and our shortcomings), and ultimately, as a way of questioning perspective itself (distance, visibility, point of view, and, most importantly, time).</p> <p>After setting up a conceptual map of regret in the introductory chapter I turn my attention away from the psychological and sociological origins of regret towards its effects in the world, namely the effects it has as a creative force in the arts. I am arguing, on the one hand, that regret, as a sub-category of depression, is at the core of how the contemporary individual operates socially. And, on the other hand, I am making a distinction between feeling regret and using regret as a methodological drive.</p> <p>Reading artistic forms and experiences through a lens of regret does not mean that the works analysed are about regret, or narrate a story of regret, but rather that they embody and thus help exemplify some of the traits, characteristics, and modes that emerge from considering regret conceptually.</p> <p>I have identified two particular characteristics of producing under the sign of regret: suspended agency and ghostly haunting. Each of these characteristics are taken up in individual chapters that define and ground these modalities of production (principally through the methodologies and tropes employed in my own artistic practice as well as other selected examples), while continuing to mull over the different shades of meaning of regret as a generative force.</p>		
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