The Art of Philosophy: Visual Thinking in Europe from the Late Renaissance to the Early Enlightenment. Susanna Berger.
Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017. xiv + 318 pp. + 2 b/w pls. $65.

Illustrations, by definition, illustrate concepts and ideas. This was not always the case. In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe, they refined and even generated them. In *The Art of Philosophy*, Susanna Berger offers a groundbreaking reassessment of the role of image-making not just in the transmission of knowledge, but also in its production. She focuses on five widely imitated thesis prints, a genre of broadside in which annotated theories were laid out pictorially. The largely French and Italian genre has been woefully understudied, not least because it demands mastery of art historical and book historical research methods; an understanding of early modern printings techniques and how they shaped the information they communicated; fluency in neo-Latin; familiarity with the early modern development of "Aristotelian and anti-Aristotelian philosophies in the early stage of the 'scientific revolution'" (209); and an arsenal of magnifying glasses.

The study introduces the thesis print to an interdisciplinary audience by focusing on five highly influential examples designed by Martin Meurisse (1584–1644) and Jean Chéron (1596–1673) and engraved by Léonard Gaultier (ca. 1561–1641) in Paris, 1614–18. Berger untangles the roles of academics and printmakers in their design, explains the iconography and philosophy that each create, and traces the dissemination and influence of the scholarship that each one generated. It might seem unfair to burden just five prints with the duty of proving that images did not "simplif[y] preexisting philosophical concepts" but served to "enrich theoretical knowledge" and that image-making is a fundamental but forgotten mode of academic thought (3). But these thesis prints are no ordinary images. The amount of knowledge they convey requires a great deal of space (they measure up to twenty-nine inches [seventy-four centimeters]), and these five are so densely engraved that the direct transcription of their text requires sixty pages.

Berger creates an intellectual, textual, and visual framework for understanding these complex objects as philosophical trends, primary texts, and images. It crosses the disciplines and centuries to draw, for instance, on a German blockbook map (1480s), Albrecht Dürer's woodcuts (1510s and 1520s), tools of human dissection (1543), emblem books, Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651), and a professor's "naughty" iconography in a student's *album amicorum* (mid-late 1700s). Happily, the illustrations are appropriately generous for a study of illustrated texts and annotated images, and mercifully they include four-page foldouts whose nearly life-size reproductions make the thesis prints' engraved text legible.

At some moments, the context is so broad and learned that it could itself benefit from contextualization. For example, chapter 3, "The Visual Order of Student Lecture Notebooks," is the first art historical/philosophical study of the note-taking habits of early modern philosophy students in Paris. It unveils both a new corpus and new mode

of analysis to offer concrete evidence that students used drawing as a pedagogical tool. However, most readers will be wholly unfamiliar with the structure of philosophy curricula and students' note-taking strategies today, much less in the seventeenth century. This forces Berger to introduce each topic to beginners: she must bring those readers on a rapid learning curve to establish why the examples and *comparanda* she selected represent the trends she introduces, while simultaneously maintaining an advanced discussion for experts in several disciplines about how those examples redefine the image as a site of production of philosophical knowledge.

The Art of Philosophy is a masterclass in the use of interdisciplinarity to advance research in all the constituent fields, not just on the main topic. Some readers on this demanding intellectual journey may be surprised to learn that woodcut lines have the agency and authority to "allow us to pause and take pleasure in" the art of prints (175), but the novelty and erudition of this study are invigorating. For book historians, Berger's application of her framework to frontispiece illustrations and title vignettes (as contributors to the knowledge those books advance) opens new avenues to understanding where information lies and how it is mediated. This research is ambitious, and its implications are far larger than the corpus of five prints it examines.

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The Insistence of Art: Aesthetic Philosophy after Early Modernity.
Paul A. Kottman, ed.
New York: Fordham University Press, 2017. vi + 298 pp. $35.

It initially struck me as strange—even self-deluding—for a collection of essays that announces its regret at "how seldom nowadays specific artworks and artistic practices are seen as explaining, clarifying, requiring, or embodying the distinctive set of concerns articulated in that philosophical discipline we call aesthetics" to spend so little time on close reading, formal analysis, description, and other methods that prioritize the particularity of the aesthetic object (1). A contribution on metaphysical poetry by Andrew Cutrofello, for example, though largely concerned with John Donne, does not quote a single word of his verse. But the revisionist project editor Paul A. Kottman has in mind involves an understanding of the artwork that contravenes many of the assumptions that ground formalist practices. The artwork does not reflect aesthetic concepts—beauty, integrity, freedom—that are extrinsic to it; instead, it instantiates those concepts by virtue of its own capacity for self-reflection. Any method that situates art as an example of what exists beyond, behind, or even within it fails to answer its most insistent demands.

This notion of art's insistence appears in the collection's title, and other recurring terms like *claim* and *urgency* combine to create a version of aesthetics marked by mutual need and receptivity: art presses itself upon us, and our response to it matters.