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The Art of Politics: Aesthetic Dimensions of Repression, Resistance, and Reparation

Wednesday 3 June 2026 10:45 (1h 30m)

This roundtable explores the political power of art in contexts of repression, resistance, and reparation. Art has long made visible both direct and structural violence experienced by women, racial minorities, Indigenous peoples, LGBTQ+ communities, migrants, political dissidents, and other marginalised groups. Its sensory register - visual, auditory, tactile, and more - shapes how political realities are experienced and understood. As Bleiker (2017: 262) observes, aesthetic engagement can challenge what is visible, thinkable, or debatable in politics. The discussion will examine how art functions across three dimensions:

1. Repression: How states and institutions deploy aesthetic regimes to control narratives, reconstruct history, and reinforce exclusionary identity narratives.
2. Resistance: How artists and social movements expose injustice, contest power, and mobilise publics through visual, performative, and participatory practices.
3. Reparation: How art contributes to collective memory, recognition, and societal healing, offering alternative frameworks for justice and reconciliation.

By integrating scholarly and practice-based perspectives from academics and artists, this roundtable highlights the politics of art as a lens for understanding and transforming global political dynamics. It will showcase how artistic interventions can both illuminate structural inequalities and act as catalysts for social and political change.

Track Classification: Critical Alternatives for World Politics