**Testing Kant**

The experience of beauty is a special sort of pleasure [1,2,3].

Kant: “Beauty requires thought, and ordinary pleasures do not.”

Test of Kant’s hypothesis: Can beauty be experienced without cognitive resources? Is this requirement unique to the pleasure of beauty?

### Continuous pleasure ratings

Custom touchscreen application emotiontracker.com

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stimulus</th>
<th>Continuous pleasure rating</th>
<th>Final beauty rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BEAUTY RATING (w/o secondary task)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did you feel beauty?</th>
<th>Definitely yes</th>
<th>Perhaps yes</th>
<th>Perhaps no</th>
<th>Definitely not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stimulus</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 30 s</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 90 s</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TRIAL SEQUENCE**

1. Stimulus
2. Continuous pleasure rating
3. Final beauty rating
4. Time 30 s
5. Time 90 s

**Beauty requires thought**

The experience of beauty is selectively impaired by a cognitive task.

### Future directions

Are there other obstacles to the beauty experience? Does clinical depression block access? What about drug addiction?

Is the integration of emotion and cognition crucial for other domains such as complex decision making?

**DISCUSSION**

The experience of beauty is characterized by high pleasure ratings during and after stimulus exposure, confirming earlier findings [7].

Surprisingly, people can experience beauty through touch and taste.

**Kant was right:** Beauty does require thought, while ordinary pleasures do not.

**REFERENCES**


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