Beauty requires thought

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

**INTO**

DAAD

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**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

1 5 10

**TRIAL SEQUENCE**

Continuous pleasure rating — Final beauty rating

**BEAUTY RATINGS**

Definitely beautiful (N=53)

Perhaps beautiful (N=97)

Definitely not beautiful (N=93)

**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.

**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?

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**REFERENCES**


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**EXPERIMENT 1**

2-back task (letters)

**EXPERIMENT 2**

Digit span task

**EXPERIMENT 3**

Verbal response once at the end of each trial

Cognitive load reduces pleasure of beautiful but not ordinary experiences, both during ...

and after stimulus.