




Module 3 : Art & Aesthetics in Design

Lecture 6 : What is Aesthetics; 'Cognition and Laws of Beauty'; What is Neuroesthetics

The Lecture Contains:

-  What is Aesthetics
-  'Cognition and Laws of Beauty'
-  What is Neuroesthetics

 **Previous** **Next** 

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What is Aesthetics?

“Aesthetics is that branch of knowledge which deals with historically determined essence of human values, their creation, perception, appreciation, and assimilation.”

- YouriBorev (Russian Philosopher)

Aesthetic is a relative experience, which varies from person to person. Human behaviour based on tradition, culture, environment and habits greatly influence aesthetic perceptions. Each culture views things in respect to societal values and perceptions. Such attributes are interwoven in the overall concept of beauty or aesthetics. It is proved that like societal values, aesthetic appeal and perception keeps changing along with time. Indian traditional practices have been strongly influenced during the last two decades.



Plate 1A Medieval Architecture
(16th C Architecture, India)



1B 19th C Architecture, India



1C 20th C Architecture, India

(Source: 1A https://www.google.co.in/#hl=en&tbo=d&sclient=psyab&q=medieval+architecture+in+india&oq=Medieval+Architecture&gs_l=hp.1.1.0l4.7991.30719.0.33100.23.15.0.8.8.0.183.1903.0j15.15.0.les%3B..0.0...1c.1.axHBSQgaSE&pbx=1&bav=on.2,or.r_gc.r_pw.r_qf.&fp=7945610206cdf668&bpcl=39650382&biw=1006&bih=605 ; Dec. 6, 2012

1B https://www.google.co.in/search?hl=en&q=19th+century+architecture+in+india&bav=on.2,or.r_gc.r_pw.r_qf.&bpcl=39650382&biw=1006&bih=605&um=1&ie=UTF-8&tbm=isch&source=og&sa=N&tab=wi&ei=VG3AUJ_dFpG3rAf3h4C4BQ ; Dec.6, 2012

◀ Previous Next ▶

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1 C https://www.google.co.in/#hl=en&tbo=d&sclient=psyab&q=20th+century+architecture+in+india&oq=20th+Architecture+in+India&gs_l=hp.1.0.0i8i30.1307.4292.3.6554.9.9.0.0.0.0.239.1316.0j8j1.9.0.les%3B..0.0...1c.1.1A7OZZw0qM&pbx=1&bav=on.2,or.r_gc.r_pw.r_qf.&fp=7945610206cdf668&bpcl=39650382&biw=1006&bih=605 ; Dec.6, 2012)

The aesthetic activity largely revolves around 'cognition', and the 'law of beauty'. It is a continuous process of human activity, which formulates, confirms and perfects the results of cognition according to the laws of beauty. Perception of an object evokes feeling. Feeling could be instant and the reaction could be subject to the condition at that time. However, such reaction is largely influenced by previous experience and matured intellect of the person. Every society reflects the views of their aesthetic values and appreciation based on their material and cultural evaluation. Medieval Period Architecture (plate 1A) in India produced some of the finest medium scale architectures. Compare to classical period (4th C AD- 8th C AD) medieval produced relatively smaller scale architecture structure. However, qualitatively they maintained the same elegance and maturity. In contrast to the earlier Classical Period Art and Architecture (India), the Medieval Period witnessed stronger appearance of decorative motifs (plate 1A). The structural elements are covered with decorative elements. In 19th Century architecture (plate 1B) the decorative quality has become lesser compare to the 16th C Baroque quality art and architecture. 20th C certainly (plate 1C) has emerged with new aesthetics concept with much clearer shape and form. Earlier decorative motifs are being minimized and the structural forms are clearly visible. The new minimalist approach has influenced in every sphere of human life- house, bridge, furniture, household consumer goods, clothing, place of worship, public structures. The modern architectural vernacular revolves around simplicity in form. A new aesthetic appears that was not known to earlier era.

'Cognition and Laws of Beauty'

Aesthetic appreciation follows a complex neurological process. Cognition and Laws of Beauty is a fairly new subject that is trying to understand the aesthetic experiences at the neurological level. In order to understand how brain experience aesthetic it attracting large number of researchers from sciences, psychology, medical sciences to artists. Neuroesthetics is trying to combine neurological research with aesthetics by investigating the experience of beauty and appreciation of art on the level of brain its functioning and mental states. Therefore, experiencing aesthetic beauty reflects various levels of cognition and related experiences.

◀ Previous Next ▶

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What is Neuroesthetics?

“Neuroesthetics (or neuroaesthetics) is a relatively recent sub-discipline of empirical aesthetics. Empirical aesthetics takes a scientific approach to the study of aesthetic perceptions of art and music. Neuroesthetics received its formal definition in 2002 as the scientific study of the neural bases for the contemplation and creation of a work of art. Neuroesthetics uses neuroscience to explain and understand the aesthetic experiences at the neurological level. The topic attracts scholars from many disciplines including neuroscientists, art historians, artists, and psychologists.”

(Ref. read more <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuroesthetics>; December 7, 2012)

Cognition and the Laws of Beauty (plate2) is a continuous process. The perception, through cognitive faulty, is a continuous process of evaluation, perfecting and again reevaluating. Therefore, appreciation of aesthetic beauty is never ending and constantly changing to invent again.

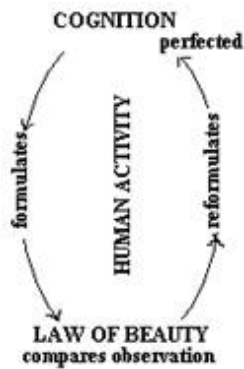


Plate2. Cognition & Laws of Beauty

Aesthetics deals with-

1. Nature of aesthetic perception, and form in art and life;
2. Principles of man's aesthetic approach to the world;
3. Philosophy of the aesthetics;
4. Essence and laws of art, etc.

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Perception of beauty does not have bearing to purposefulness. It may be appreciated without any purpose. ***Appreciation of an object does not reflect its purposefulness . Beauty is a concept that is beyond any purposeful justification.*** Realization of aesthetic beauty is not related to any material or object. It emits its essence because it is there. One feels and enjoys aesthetic experience through feelings and realization. However, aesthetics is a relative experience that may vary from culture to culture and person to person.

◀◀ Previous Next ▶▶