

The Abuse of Beauty: Aesthetics and the Concept of Art (The Paul Carus Lectures Series 21)

By Arthur C. Danto

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Danto simply and entertainingly traces the evolution of the concept of beauty over the past century and explores how it was removed from the definition of art. Beauty then came to be regarded as a serious aesthetic crime, whereas a hundred years ago it was almost unanimously considered the supreme purpose of art. Beauty is not, and should not be, the be-all and end-all of art, but it has an important place, and is not something to be avoided.
Danto draws eruditely upon the thoughts of artists and critics such as Rimbaud, Fry, Matisse, the Dadaists, Duchamp, and Greenberg, as well as on that of philosophers like Hume, Kant, and Hegel. Danto agrees with the dethroning of beauty as the essence of art, and maintains with telling examples that most art is not, in fact, beautiful. He argues, however, for the partial rehabilitation of beauty and the removal of any critical taboo against beauty. Beauty is one among the many modes through which thoughts are presented to human sensibility in art: disgust, horror, sublimity, and sexuality being among other such modes.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
Charting the disappearance of beauty as a primary artistic value in the 20th century, Danto (The Transfiguration of the Commonplace, etc.) offers a hot-and-cold mix of philosophical musings and autobiographical reflections that attempt to restore a place for beauty as an "option for art" and a "necessary condition for life as we would want to live it." To that end, the veteran art critic and Columbia University philosopher discusses and, at various points, disagrees with Hume, Kant and Hegel, building a view of beauty as one among many modes through which artworks may present thoughts to human sensibility. He distinguishes between natural and artistic beauty, between beauty and sublimity, and between beauty internal to an artwork and external to it. Although Danto clearly defines an artwork as an "embodied meaning," he does not as clearly define what he means by beauty, making much of his discussion unnecessarily vague. It is also unnecessarily meandering, too often feeling like notes from assorted lectures, which is how most of the chapters originated. "Read it as an adventure story," he says, "with a few philosophical arguments and distinctions [brought back] as trophies." But good adventure stories need a strong narrative, and there isn't one here. Still, there are trophies: philosophical insights of genuine value to anyone interested in beauty, art or the connections between the two.
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Review
This is a brave thesis in the context of the analytical tradition in which it is being presented. -- *Philosophy in Review, July 2005*

About the Author

Arthur C. Danto is Johnsonian Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at Columbia University. He is the art critic for The Nation and author of more than 20 books.

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This The Abuse of Beauty: Aesthetics and the Concept of Art (The Paul Carus Lectures Series 21) book is not really ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you get by reading this book is usually information inside this guide incredible fresh, you will get information which is getting deeper a person read a lot of information you will get. This The Abuse of Beauty: Aesthetics and the Concept of Art (The Paul Carus Lectures Series 21) without we recognize teach the one who studying it become critical in contemplating and analyzing. Don't always be worry The Abuse of Beauty: Aesthetics and the Concept of Art (The Paul Carus Lectures Series 21) can bring any time you are and not make your bag space or bookshelves' turn out to be full because you can have it within your lovely laptop even phone. This The Abuse of Beauty: Aesthetics and the Concept of Art (The Paul Carus Lectures Series 21) having very good arrangement in word and layout, so you will not experience uninterested in reading.

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