

Immanuel Kant's Critique of Judgment, our judgment of taste, proposes to examine aesthetics, particularly the question - what is beautiful? Judgments of Taste (aesthetic judgments) based on an individual's feelings are innately subjective yet remain universal – subsequently they maintain validity. These properties of subjectivity and the universal appear mutually exclusive but Kant maintains that they are complimentary or compatible as these feelings are *disinterested*. When *disinterested*, a legitimate aesthetic judgment, void of concept or cognitive interest, deems merit or value strictly in the feeling beauty elicits in the participant. Namely, to illustrate, the value invoked from a performance lies in the pleasure or pleasing feelings derived from the experience not in extracting additional use or meaning from the performance. Without interest or personal gain, Kant suggests engagement with objects will produce the same aesthetic response in all participants – ‘everyone should agree based on our faculties of imagination and free play.’ Kant expands offering two additional distinctive satisfactions, the *agreeable* and the *good*. As stated above, the prerequisite for beauty is our disinterest. Contrarily, the *agreeable* finds the participant passive yet *affected* – the existence of the object elicits pleasure. Thirdly, the *morally good* offers into existence purpose that is fundamentally beneficial beyond the object's mere existence.

Beauty introduced as a symbol of morality, is recognized through our senses while conversely morality is a concept of reason. Yet both instances involve reflection or judgment of something (a tree or perspective) outside us creating a connection between beauty and morality. Kant distinguishes the beauty of nature, his preference, from the beauty of art in relation to morality. He presents a separation wherein nature is freely given to us without an assumed or implied understanding. Conversely art potentially involves awareness or knowledge and in a pursuit of understanding we risk admiration built on conceit.

The sublime, in contrast to beauty, is without purposiveness – in its unlimited vastness, encounters with the sublime exist outside the faculty of our imagination. This presupposes then that we cannot define or determine any limits, or organize in a manner that provides order, or even initiate our intrinsic propensity to control or contain through understanding. This is the antithesis of beauty where identification of an object's purposiveness results from our disinterest – beauty for beauty's sake without purpose. Beauty, separate from us, experienced outside us, leads to ‘looking’ outward to witness beauty in objects or even occurrences in nature. Inversely the inherent introspection attached to sublimity suggests we turn inward projecting individual purposiveness separate from the inherent sublimity of nature.

Thoughtful application of lighting design considers and provides the participant, those within the space, both form and function - **Function** as utility in ambient light, providing overall distribution of light to task lighting for achieving specific goals such as studying at a desk. Accent light in contrast provides more **form** than function. Accent light enhances a space utilizing drama with mood, feeling, focus, distraction, accentuation. Lighting design, often routinely executed under the guise of a utilitarian lens, necessitates more attention to intention for its ability to impact the inhabitants of space. While safety is a design priority - allowing inhabitants to traverse space safely, highlighting

paths of egress, consideration should be made for the emotional and intrapersonal impact lighting can infuse in space. Inversely the absence of “lighting intention” conceivably generates a lack of spatial interest concomitantly creating a sense of ennui or detrimental discomfort for the inhabitants.

As lighting designers, we need to consider Kant’s aesthetic analysis of the universality of ‘beauty’ recognizing that beauty or visual interest carries validity ... the lighting concept or intentionality may not elicit an acknowledged significance for the user outside it feeling pleasurable. However, the potential for beauty carries merit. While lighting should fulfill the function of space, it is in a sensitivity to **form** we the designer are capable of concomitantly instilling feelings of oft unspoken, subliminal cerebral comfort to inhabit within the space.

As I move through the pliancy of my own lighting design interests from architectural to stage or film lighting, I need to ask myself does the lighting design merely provide the inhabitant with a sense of safety or security or ... provoke interest, equivalently a desire to linger longer? Does the space feel comfortable moreover nourishing? I may further ask myself have considerations been made for moments of awe. Kant revered nature – his admiration based in nature’s capacity to provide the sublime. This awareness presents immense potential. How am I able to partner with nature, harness its awe for potential sublimity? I have entered spaces, the Pantheon, Musee d’Orsay, Sainte-Chapelle, experienced overwhelming awe not solely for the immensity of scale, or ingenuity of structure but for the space’s relationship with natural light. On fortuitous occasion, the sun, its movement across the room, forcing elongated shadow, or the nuanced choreography of sun and clouds where the sun at time steps back and lets a cloud lead the dance offered a sense of sublime - this limitless natural occurrence is beyond comprehension. Natural light, its continuous change, its ephemeral mood, offers the designer limited control except for our agency to allow or deny its access into a space. It is in this manipulation of channeling/pulling light into space that allows the designer license on *how* and *where* the sun interacts within the interior. It is the mastery of this relationship where architects have accomplished genius loci – the elusive spirit of space that remains as an indelible impression.

Louis Kahn once said, “architecture appears for the first time when sunlight hits a wall.” To expand on this idea, architecture can and should promote mindfulness to the next greater context, namely the natural surroundings and the sensitivity to site in relation to the elements including the sun - the most salient consideration. Recognition of greater context, a sensitivity to site, innately responds to sustainability in the harnessing and harvesting of natural light. Today’s climate conversation arguably crisis presses lighting designers into a moral duty to not only offer utility, guide emotion through color or natural lighting techniques but demands reverence to our personal design impact. Our consciousness and delicacy as lighting designers bares potential to be stewards uniting in tandem the simple pleasure of beauty with the complex morality of sublimity.