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BEAUTY, UGLINESS, AND MEANING:
A STUDY OF DIFFICULT BEAUTY

By
Christine A. Palmer

A Thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Art Education

Department of Visual Arts
Brigham Young University

December 2009

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT
BEAUTY, UGLINESS, AND MEANING:
A STUDY OF DIFFICULT BEAUTY

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Master of Arts in Art Education

The emergence of modern art, and subsequently contemporary art, has brought with it a deep-rooted deliberation of the definition of beauty and its role in the realm of art. Unlike many representational artworks, contemporary art less often contains a beauty that is readily available on the surface of an artwork- an easy beauty. Instead, it often possesses a beauty that requires substantial reasoning and understanding- a difficult beauty. Just as the definition of beauty has and will continue to be culturally and historically changing, so must our methodological and pedagogical practices in regards to beauty and Aesthetics.

As Art Educators, I feel it is our responsibility to help students process artworks that may contain these complexities (such as difficult beauty), in search of meaning and understanding. Through understanding is derived fluency in processing the artwork, which, in turn, leads to appreciation, and pleasure.

The study conducted in this thesis investigated the relationship between beauty, ugliness, and meaning and explored the reasons behind judgments of beauty. It can be concluded, through the results, that beauty and meaning are closely related, and that meaning can have both positive and negative affects on judgments of beauty. Judgments of beauty are both cognitive and affective and appear to have social and cultural foundations, as well as a relationship to personal experience and meaning. Ultimately, strong personal meaning and experience, both positive and negative, outweighed physical, social, and cultural judgments of beauty. Meaning and experience greatly affect judgments of beauty.

As educators, we can take the information gleaned from this study to enhance the ability of students to process artworks which contain complexities and may require understanding. As students become more able to recognize and process beauty in its many forms, the fluency in which they process such artworks will increase, thus promoting more positive aesthetic experiences. The children's book, *Terrible the Beautiful Bear*, contained in Chapter Six of this thesis, is an example of how to teach this concept to young children. Helping students become aware that beauty exists in curious and difficult places, and prompting them to search for meaning, gives students a greater capacity to take part in its pleasure.

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Personal Narrative: The Genesis of a Thesis

Once upon a time, my sweet nine-year-old daughter, Claire, had a very ugly doll named Alfreda (Figure 1). Alfreda started out strange looking, and after nine subsequent years of loving and transporting her from here to there, Alfreda looked even more peculiar. She was certainly, in my opinion, not what most people would call beautiful. In fact, I suspect most might actually put her in the dreaded ugly category.

A couple of years ago, Claire had a friend spend the night. At around 10:00 pm, Claire came out of her room in tears. When I asked her what was wrong, she could barely reply through the sobbing, “Kaylee said Alfreda is UGLY!” We both stood there looking at each other in disbelief. Claire’s disbelief stemmed from the fact that she could not understand how anyone could think Alfreda was ugly. My disbelief was entrenched in the idea that somehow Claire did not know that Alfreda was indeed ugly. Quite to the contrary, she actually thought Alfreda was beautiful.

At that moment, I realized how profound the connection was between beauty and human experience. Human experience seemed to have the capability to triumph over physical appearance in pursuit of beauty. Experience and connection, as in the relationship between Claire and Alfreda, made Alfreda seem beautiful to Claire. Even though Alfreda’s physical appearance might not be beautiful to most, Claire was able to see a deeper beauty; a difficult beauty not readily available on the surface. Even young children have the capacity to process and take pleasure in a beauty that may be difficult for some to understand; in doing so, they allow themselves to take pleasure in a deep human value that can greatly enhance the experience of living.

As I contemplated the pedagogical implications of this incident, I reflected on a reoccurring experience I have with my pre-service Elementary Education students every semester at Brigham Young University. At the beginning of the term, I introduce them to an artwork (e.g., Figure 2, *Entertaining Favorite Ladies II*, by Jeanne Leighton Lundberg-Clarke). It is a bright and busy piece, in her self-proclaimed “maximalist” style, and not easily palpable to most of my students. I have the students write their initial reaction to the painting as soon as possible in their journals. At the beginning of each subsequent class period, we analyze and interpret the piece using many different methods; each time we come a little closer to understanding possible meanings behind the work. At the end of the semester, the students revisit their initial reaction and describe whether or not their opinion has changed and why. Without fail, the vast majority of the students, who had initially deemed the painting to be ugly and would have passed it by, found themselves connected to the painting, even uplifted, in a significant and meaningful way. Armed with a greater knowledge of the painting, the student’s perception of the painting had changed. Their thoughtful engagement with the artwork allowed meaning to prevail over physical properties.

The implications are profound. As art educators, we must try to understand the interaction between beauty, ugliness, and meaning and how judgments of beauty are made. By doing so, we can help students discover some of the valuable aesthetic experiences that reside in viewing works of art, and not simply pieces that come by beauty easily. John Keats said, “A thing of beauty is a joy forever” (*Endymion*, 1818). It is time to share that joy, and in some cases, help others become aware that such a joy even exists.



Figure 1- *Alfreda*



Figure 2- *Entertaining: Favorite Ladies II*, Jeanne Leighton Lundberg-Clarke, 1992

CHAPTER ONE- Introduction

*But it's a beautiful thing to strive after the beautiful,
And to suffer whatever we have to along the way.*

-Plato

In all of its elusiveness and resistance to definition or subjugation, beauty still abounds. (Alberro 2004; Scarry 1999) As evidenced by the countless writings of philosophers, theologians, aestheticians, poets and scholars throughout history, beauty is not only important, but also often described as an essential need (Plato 348 BC; Danto 2003; Santayana, 1896). It remains a deep-rooted human value that refuses to abscond. From Plato to Kant, Santayana to Danto, the topic of beauty is still one of great consequence. The study of beauty is a vital organ in the body of Aesthetics. As art educators, we should aspire to understand contemporary opinions and beliefs about beauty and usher current ideas of Aesthetics into a new generation.

The study conducted in this thesis investigates the relationship among beauty, ugliness, and meaning with the intention of addressing questions, such as: How are judgments of beauty made today? How much does meaning, experience, and knowledge affect judgments of beauty? Can there be beauty in ugliness or ugliness in beauty? Is this difficult beauty? Do people know that difficult beauty exists? Would it make a difference if they did? How can we, as educators, help others engage in beauty that would not be defined as an easy beauty? What can be done in the context of Art Education to ensure that the experience and the appreciation of beauty are encouraged and passed on, particularly to those who may be inclined to overlook its subtleties? In order to address these questions and tenets and properly shepherd the study of beauty into a

contemporary and comprehensive Art Education program, it is essential to first investigate the topic of beauty itself. To aid my investigation, I start with questions, such as: Can beauty be objectively defined? How has beauty been defined throughout history? How is it defined now?

If we assume, as did Aristotle, Epicurus, Kant, Santayana, and the like, that beauty is a source of pleasure, then a life that is attentive to that which is beautiful facilitates extraordinary and delightful experiences. As educators, we have the ability and the responsibility to aid our students in recognizing beauty in its many forms. Simply by helping them become aware that beauty exists in curious, even difficult, places gives students the capacity to take part in its pleasure.

It must be noted that I personally believe that instances remain where beauty cannot and should not reside; some examples of this include pornography, the grotesque, the desecrating, and the like. This thesis does not address the issue of determining which artworks fall into this category. Instead, it explores the idea that there exists an easy beauty (beauty that is accepted by most people as possessing pleasing physical properties), and a difficult beauty (beauty that is accepted by most people as possessing non-pleasing or ugly physical properties). The difficult beauty investigated in this thesis focuses on artworks that may contain complexities, ugliness, or other properties of difficult beauty, yet are appropriate for elementary school children.

Thesis Justification

Justification One- Inquiry of Beauty is an Essential Part of Human Culture and Should Remain as a Vital and Viable Component of a Comprehensive Art Education Program

The significance of beauty is evidenced by its pervasiveness in written philosophy throughout recorded history. Like the meaning of life, philosophers and scholars throughout history have attempted to solve its mystery: to label it, define it, dissect it, and understand its form and function. From Pythagorean ideals, which equated beauty with order, measure, proportion, and harmony, to Epicurean beliefs that connected beauty with pleasure, the topic of beauty is, and always has been, exceedingly important to people. Even in the eras of modernism and minimalism, the fact that beauty was often regarded with immense disdain and remained at the forefront of heated debate further suggests its importance. When referring to the subject of beauty in modernist times, Alexander Alberro (2004) states in *Beauty Knows No Pain*, “Although powerful arguments contested beauty’s continued validity throughout the century, its tenacity and unremitting appeal ensured the idea’s survival even through difficult times” (p. 37).

To us, as art educators in a postmodern age, the study of beauty is important to a contemporary comprehensive art education program, which includes the study of Aesthetics, Art History, Art Criticism, Art Studio, and Visual Culture, as defined by Hurwitz & Day in *Children and Their Art*, 2007. In the discipline of Aesthetics, it must be recognized that much of postmodern art clearly does not rely on a beautiful rendering of a woman’s figure or a picturesque landscape when seeking artistic value, as did artistic movements of the past. If it did, many contemporary artworks would be dismissed at first glance. In order to better understand and to teach the complexities of contemporary art, one must investigate the idea of beauty (or lack thereof) and specifically, the existence of difficult beauty.

The study of beauty has proven throughout history to be vital, diverse, and dynamic. Just as artworks have evolved, so have ideas about beauty. As art educators, we must acknowledge this change and strive to present art curriculum that also evolves accordingly.

Justification Two- Finding Meaning and Making Connections in Artworks of Difficult Beauty: Enhancing the Human Experience

In my own observations as an art teacher, I have recognized the tendencies of students, when given a choice, to engage almost exclusively with artworks that possess an *easy beauty* (beauty that is accepted by most people as possessing pleasing physical properties). Artworks that appear ugly, busy, disturbing, or strange are often overlooked or immediately rejected without any further consideration. By doing so, I believe a valuable aesthetic experience is lost. Artworks that possess *difficult beauty* (beauty that is accepted by most people as possessing non-pleasing or ugly physical properties) and may require complex understanding, often present the opportunity for a more profound experience than one might have with an artwork possessing easy beauty. Much of contemporary art can be classified as possessing difficult beauty, making its understanding and inclusion in Art Education even more imperative. I hypothesized that there is a significant relationship between beauty and meaning and that personal meaning has the ability to prevail over physical characteristics regarding judgments of beauty. The study conducted in this thesis investigates the relationship between easy beauty and difficult beauty. Furthermore, I hypothesized that if personal meaning does have the ability to overcome physical characteristics, which may not be readily pleasing or beautiful, then people are certainly capable of understanding and appreciating difficult beauty. As art educators, I feel it is our responsibility to help students become aware of difficult beauty and engage in the wonderfully unique experience it offers.

Justification Three- Teaching Difficult Beauty to Children: An Elementary Art Lesson Example

As art educators, it is our responsibility to reflect current best-practices and contemporary ideas sustained in the field of Art Education. Clearly, the complexities of contemporary art need to be addressed in current art curricula. I believe that not only teachers, but also children, are capable of processing such complexities if presented with curricula sensitive to topics such as Aesthetics and difficult beauty.

I realized through the experience with my daughter, mentioned in the personal narrative, that children of a very young age are capable of understanding and appreciating difficult beauty. If children are presented with a meaningful and engaging art curriculum that contains thoughts and observations addressing difficult beauty, then they may become more capable of finding and processing beauty in difficult artworks. Furthermore, their lives will be enriched because of the meaningful aesthetic experience such reflection provides.

An example of a lesson plan for young children focusing on difficult beauty is included in Chapter Six of this thesis. It is designed to engage children in creative and critical thought regarding difficult beauty. Although its emphasis is on beauty, it is a comprehensive art lesson plan that includes studies and activities in Aesthetics, Art History, Art Criticism, Art Studio, and Visual Culture.

CHAPTER TWO- Literature Review

The spectrum of beauty is far reaching. The following outline and subsequent timeline (Figures 3 and 4) identify several of the many philosophical figures throughout history who have made substantial contributions to the study of beauty. Although the discourse of beauty in terms of modern day aesthetics did not progress as an independent entity worthy of its own pursuit until the era of Baumgarten and Kant, it is still imperative to uncover the course that beauty has taken throughout history in order to understand its position in a postmodern world.

The Literature Review is comprised of three parts. Part One identifies selected philosophers and aestheticians through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries only as they relate to the history, study, and attempted definition of beauty. Part Two will discuss the genesis and evolution of the term *difficult beauty*. Part Three will discuss selected philosophers and aestheticians of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries as they relate to the topic of beauty.

Part One- A History of Beauty in Aesthetics

“The past is but the past of a beginning”

-H.G. Wells

In order to better understand the present, we must look to the past. This section addresses beauty as it has been defined throughout recorded history, according to Western tradition. Because of its ephemeral and elusive nature, beauty has been resistant to objective definition for thousands of years. Perhaps, it can be said that a definition of beauty is predicated upon the context, such as the time, place, and culture, in which it is being defined.

580-500 BC- Pythagoras

Pythagoras was a Greek mathematician and philosopher whose life was devoted to spiritual and ethical ideals, rules, structure, and mathematical laws. He believed that harmony and order were an expression of a universal order of reality. Although he was not concerned with aesthetic properties in art, he did profess that physical beauty consists in order, measure, proportion, and harmony and his beliefs influenced the teachings of Plato (Bredin & Santoro-Brienza, 2000).

469-399 BC- Socrates

Socrates propagated two main ideas regarding beauty. First, the beauty of a thing cannot be separated from its function. Socrates states, as related by Xenophon, “Things are beautiful if they are well made for the respective functions for which we obtain them, or if they are naturally well constituted to serve our needs.” (Bredin, Santor-Brienza, 2000, p. 25). Second, works of art attempt to represent the ideal rather than the actual. Ironically, Socrates was convicted and

executed for corrupting the minds of youth; the most significant youthful mind influenced by his teachings was Plato.

428-348 BC- Plato

As a devoted student of Socrates, Plato held a passionate interest in the nature of beauty. Plato equated beauty with truth, goodness, and excellence. To him, they were inseparable. He formulated an aesthetic theory in which art and beauty were identified with a supreme form, or the ideal (Bredin & Santor-Brienza, 2000; Hyland, 2008). Plato suggests that there are particular instances of beauty and justice that aspire to a universal ideal, truth, or form, which are based on the intelligible, rather than emotion or material presence (Pontynen, 2006). Actual objects, particularly artworks, are imitative and inferior to nature. Art is, at best, mimetic because it is a mere representation of the true form. At the same time, within the delight of physical beauty, we are able to contemplate the eternal essence of beauty (Bredin & Santor-Brienza, 2000).

Beginning from obvious beauties he must for the sake of that highest beauty be ever climbing aloft, as on the rings of a ladder, from one to two, and from two to all beautiful bodies; from personal beauty he proceeds to beautiful observances, from observance to beautiful learning, and from learning at last to that particular study which is concerned with the beautiful itself and that alone; so that in the end he comes to know the very essence of beauty. In that state of life above all others... a man finds it truly worth while to live, as he contemplates essential beauty. (Plato, Cited in Bredin & Santor-Brienza, 2000, p. 28)

The philosophy of Plato was the origin of the Mimetic or Imitationalist theory in modern day aesthetics; this theory asserts that an artwork should be judged according to its ability to most accurately represent the true, idealized form.

384-322 BC Aristotle

Aristotle departed from the Platonic view of the infinite, immeasurable, supreme form in several ways. Aristotle defined beauty in a teleological sense, whereas Plato defined beauty in a cosmological manner. Like Plato, Aristotle acknowledged formal perfection, such as harmony and symmetry, yet separated physical beauty from goodness (Bredin & Santor-Brienza, 2000; Hyland, 2008; Pontynen, 2006). “Physical beauty is disassociated from living transcendental goodness because goodness is a matter of conduct whereas beauty is a matter of condition” (Pontyten, 2006, p. 58).

Aristotle also recognized human experience in the perception of art and objects as a source of pleasure. According to Aristotle, artworks should be evaluated aesthetically, and their goal should be to provide aesthetic pleasure. Aesthetic pleasure is directly related to knowledge and intellect and is an effect of beauty (Bredin & Santor-Brienza, 2000). This rationale prepared a foundation for modern and postmodern aesthetics; beauty can be non-cognitive, self-referential, and the perfection of a kind. Furthermore, according to these criteria, non-pleasing, or ugly, subject matter can possess beauty if rendered well. (Bredin & Santor-Brienza, 2000; Hyland, 2008; Pontynen, 2006).

There is, however, a significant difference between the philosophy of Aristotle and modern/postmodern logic: Aristotle denies that reality itself is “merely a willful and thus purposeless construct” (Pontynen, 2006, p. 60). Aristotle asserts that there is a reason for everything, as illustrated by his emphasis on teleology.

341-270 BC- Epicurus

Epicurus further equated beauty with that which is pleasurable. Epicurus believed pleasure to be the highest good, and although he rejected pain as an evil, he felt that some pain was necessary at times as a means to achieving pleasure.

Contrary to the contemporary appropriation of the term "epicurean" to signify a person given to indulgence in hedonistic pleasures, Epicurus advocated what the Victorians would think of as refinement or "taste." He taught that "just as [someone] does not unconditionally choose the largest amount of food but the most pleasant food, so he savors not the longest time but the most pleasant," and that "Self-sufficiency is a great good... being genuinely convinced that those who least need extravagance enjoy it the most." (Terpening, 1998, "Epicurus and Victorian Aesthetes" para. 2).

Epicurus was a direct influence on the philosophical writings of George Santayana, as well as the later works of Walter Pater, as evidenced in Pater's *Marius the Epicurean*. The Epicurean philosophy also provides a historical background for the Hedonist theory in modern day aesthetics.

300-100 BC- The Stoics

The Stoics equated beauty with goodness and virtue and understood them in terms of harmony and proportion. They perceived the world and all its living creatures to be beautiful, expressing cosmic harmony and order. The delight in beauty is connected to the virtue it expresses (Aersten, Pappas & Ross, 2008).

213-273- Cassius Longinus

Author of *On the Sublime, Peri Hypsous*, Longinus regarded sublimity as an indistinguishable component of beauty. His writing provided the catalyst for inquiry of the

sublime by Immanuel Kant, who later distinguished a difference between beauty and sublimity (Gilbert Rolfe, 1999; Aersten, Pappas & Ross, 2008).

204-270- Plotinus

The philosophy of Plotinus was a response to the Stoics equation of beauty with symmetry. Plotinus suggested that symmetry is neither necessary nor sufficient as a condition of beauty. The philosophy of Plotinus seems aligned between the theories of Plato and Aristotle; beauty does not require symmetry; rather, it requires participation by the viewer. “There is no beauty in a body without its being perceived by a human soul” (Plotinus as cited in Aersten, Pappas & Ross, 2008, “Plotinus”, para. 2). This being said, Plotinus does not reduce beauty to merely a cognitive experience. Beauty is still equated with form. The soul takes pleasure in the form of unity.

354-525- St. Augustine

St. Augustine’s theory of beauty attempted a consolidation of the many precursory theories of beauty: “objectivity, transcendence, harmony, and pleasure” (Bredin & Santor-Brienza, 2000, p. 54). According to Augustine, aesthetic apprehension is a process that is experienced both intellectually and sensually. Through intellect, the Divine is experienced physically.

400-500- Pseudo-Dionysus

Pseudo-Dionysus was not concerned with the nature of physical beauty or the sensory perception of the beautiful. He was interested in a transcendent and divine beauty. He described such beauty in grandiose terms like *super beauty*, and *super-substantial beauty*, which were

descriptive of a beauty larger than life, a beauty of the terrible and sublime (Bredin & Santor-Brienza, 2000). Pseudo-Dionysus believed that beauty everywhere reveals the hand of God (Aersten, Pappas & Ross, 2008).

1225-1274- St. Thomas Aquinas

Aquinas defined beauty as an objective account or apprehension of an object. It is not by means of assessment that we hold something to be beautiful, but it is because of the object's actual harmony that it is perceived as beautiful. Aquinas further explained that beauty resides not in the pleasure derived from apprehending the object, but in the beautiful form of the object itself. He equated beauty with both *form* and *goodness*. The perception of beauty is both physical and cognitive; it is cognitive in its ability to unite the mind with the soul. Things give pleasure because they are beautiful (Bredin & Santor-Brienza, 2000; Pontynen, 2006).

1596-1650- Rene Descartes

At the time of Descartes, a scientific transformation had occurred that altered the perception and practice of art, which instigated the conception and birth of Cartesian Rationalism. There was a shift towards human experience as the source of knowledge and understanding rather than empiricism. Descartes argued that human reason, through universal and scientific principles could mirror the mind of God (Pontynen, 2006). He considered beauty as a form of harmony, defined as the "immanent presence of logic in the sensible world" (Bredin & Santor-Brienza, 2000, p. 77-78).

Descartes was a relativist. He recognized that different cultures hold different aesthetic values relative to beauty and that taste is regarded as an originator of our modern day aesthetic philosophy of relativism (Bredin & Santor-Brienza, 2000).

1711-1776- David Hume

Hume stated, “Beauty is no quality in things themselves. It exists merely in the mind which contemplates them” (Hume, 1987, “Essay XXIII,” para. 8). Hume emphasized the significance of the human experience and argued that sensory perception was more important than intellectual perception. Although there is a need for abstract ideas in order to be able to experience cognitive reflection, he regarded immediate experience as being much more powerful and significant. “In this realm, beauty, taste, imagination and sensibility find their proper dwelling” (Bredin & Santor-Brienza 2000, p. 79).

Hume believed it was natural to seek a standard of taste, but acknowledged that there will always be areas within which preference will differ due to culture, age, and similar factors. For instance, that which is considered beautiful within an American culture may be different than that which is considered beautiful in an African culture. Ultimately, he suggested that there is no objective standard by which such differences can be rationally resolved (Bredin & Santor-Brienza, 2000).

1724-1804- Immanuel Kant

Kant was the first modern philosopher to make his aesthetic theory an integral part of the philosophic system. He regarded philosophical reflection about art to be autonomous and the study of Aesthetics began to be regarded as its own entity, much as it is known today.

Kant first responded to the idea of Hume that the subjectivity of taste made it impossible to define beauty. In his earlier work, he is much more aligned with the philosophy of Hume, but in his later writings (e.g., *Critique of Judgment*) Kant presented a universal theory of beauty which leads to the development of Romanticism. Kant writes, “The beautiful is that which apart

from concepts is represented as the object of universal satisfaction” (Cited by Danto, 2003). His ideas supported the pursuit, admiration, and production of the beautiful. Perhaps Pythagorean in nature, the basis for this rationale is the idea of teleology, facilitating the ultimate harmony in all things (Aersten, Pappas & Ross, 2008).

Another distinguishable Kantian characteristic is that he distinguishes the beautiful from the sublime. He describes beauty in terms of formal order, such as harmony and proportion. Beauty is satisfied by taste. The sublime, on the other hand, exceeds taste, rules, reproduction and its experience requires imaginative freedom. The sublime takes precedence over beauty. Most prolific writers in modern day Aesthetics subscribe to Kant’s division of beauty and the sublime (Alberro, 2004).

1770-1831- Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

Hegel spoke of beauty as being inseparable from truth and goodness and related to the true form, or the Ideal. He removed his idea of beauty from Platonic philosophy by making the distinction that the Ideal as beauty requires a sensuous, affective appearance, whereas the Ideal as truth is realized cognitively (Aersten, Pappas & Ross, 2008). “Hegel spoke of beauty as the Ideal, the Idea in its spirituality and universality given determinate form: the immediate unity of the Concept immediately present in sensuous appearance.” (Aersten, Pappas & Ross, 2008, “Conceptual and Historical Overview,” para. 42). Art, Hegel believed, could make spiritual things tangible. Through the experiences of art is where the mind could become more fully self-aware.

As art moved further away from classical form, it also moved away from its ability to express true form or the Ideal. Hegel felt, as a result, that art no longer expressed the highest realization of the Ideal and, therefore, art was “something of the past.”

1844-1900- Freidrich Nietzsche

Nietzsche responded to Hegel’s claim that art was “something of the past” by stating that “art represents the highest task and the truly metaphysical activity of this life” (Cited in Aersten, Pappas & Ross, 2008, “Conceptual and Historical Overview,” para. 43). In regards to beauty, Hegel presented a theory of tragedy as arising from the conjunction of two fundamental impulses, which he called the Dionysian and Apollonian spirits. The Dionysian embodied a joyful acceptance of experience. The Apollonian demanded order and proportion. The Dionysian, in all its chaos, becomes dominate. Through this tragedy, Nietzsche illustrates that beauty and ethics are intertwined. Tragedy exists not to subjugate, but to affirm life in all its pain and to express the overpowering will to survive (Bredin & Santor-Brienza, 2000; Aersten, Pappas & Ross, 2008; Pontynen, 2006).

1848-1923 Bernard Bosanquet

Bosanquet added upon the philosophy of Hegel in several ways. With respect to Hegelian philosophy, Bosanquet believed that every finite existence necessarily transcends itself and points toward other existences and finally to the whole. Bosanquet was also keenly interested in the role of art in the development of character. He advanced the idea that art could both lead to an expression and expansion of the self not only as the artist, but also as the viewer by engaging in an artwork (Jaquette, 1984; Sweet, 2008).

Bosanquet's writings regarding the concept of difficult beauty were the most unique of his contributions to the realm of aesthetics. He explains that although beauty is sometimes easy and readily recognized and appreciated by the viewer, the excellence of some beautiful items may be difficult for viewers to recognize or appreciate without aesthetic insight. Objects or artworks that require aesthetic insight and understanding might even be considered to be ugly by the common beholder. Genres that may fit into this category include the tragic, the terrible, the grotesque and the sublime. Overlooking this type of difficult beauty, according to Bosanquet, is a mistake. "Ugliness is, Bosanquet argues, strictly speaking a failure in expression. Ugliness in art must not be confused with 'difficult art' — i.e., art that is beautiful, though many may fail to appreciate it" (Sweet, 2008, "Aesthetics," para. 10).

1859-1952 John Dewey

Dewey strongly emphasized the aesthetic experience and associated beauty with connecting nature to the Ideal.

If something is beautiful we objectify our aesthetic feeling. The great artist is impelled to creation, but the ordinary individual recognizes it. Aesthetic judgments operate according to principles of taste. These give us the characteristics of the objects which feeling calls beautiful. Taste is a matter of individual feeling, not of dry rules, and thus only a man of artistic nature is the right judge of works of art. Finally, aestheticism is the degeneration of aesthetic feeling, for it is simply love of the pleasures of beauty rather than a key to objective beauty in nature (Leddy, 2008, "Early Psychological Aesthetic Theory," para. 10).

1863-1952 George Santayana

In Kantian form, Santayana defined beauty as the pleasure regarded in experiencing the quality of a thing (Santayana 1896; Lachs 2006). In *Sense of Beauty*, he suggests that beauty is pleasure objectified and involves a qualified hedonistic experience.

Just as moral value involves a psychic interest or desire, an object that tends to meet it, and the essence is good, so aesthetic value requires a psychic drive, some object that tends to satisfy it, and the essence is beautiful (Lachs, 2006, p. 68).

Santayana's *Sense of Beauty* was the first American treatise on aesthetics and remains highly influential in current aesthetic discourse.

1889-1976- Martin Heidegger

Heidegger responded to the writings of Hegel in the form of the following questions: "Is art still an essential and necessary way in which truth happens which is decisive for our historical existence, or is art no longer of this character? Is beauty still an expression of the highest ideals of human historical life?" (Heidegger, 1971). In response to his own questions, Heidegger defines beauty in his essay, *The Origin of a Work of Art*, as the following:

Beauty is one way in which truth occurs as unconcealedness. Truth is the unconcealedness of that which is as something that is. Truth is the truth of Being. Beauty does not exist alongside and apart from this truth. When truth sets itself into a work, it appears (Cited by Pontynen, 2006, p. 292).

Heidegger believed that the nature of art is not only the making of the beautiful but the disclosure of "the being of beings." To Heidegger, beauty is equated with authenticity and truth and must be experienced, rather than understood. (Heidegger, 1971; Aersten, Pappas & Ross, 2008; Pontynen, 2006; Bredin & Santor-Brienza, 2000).

Figure 3- Historical Timeline of Beauty in Aesthetics- Part1

<i>The Study of Beauty: A Historical Timeline</i>		
Time Period	Influential Figures	Major Ideas
580-500 BC	Pythagoras (Greek)	Physical beauty consists in order, measure, proportion, and harmony.
469-399 BC	Socrates (Greek)	Beauty of a thing cannot be separated from its function. Works of art represent the ideal.
428-348 BC	Plato (Greek)	Beauty is associated with perfection, goodness, nobility, nature, divinity, Infinite, form, harmony, symmetry, supremacy.
384-322 BC	Aristotle (Greek)	Beauty linked to pleasure, excellence, beauty is measured.
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> First reference to the interaction between beauty/ugliness/pleasure. </div>	
341-270 BC	Epicurus (Greek)	Equated beauty with pleasure.
300-100 BC	The Stoics (Greek)	Equated beauty with goodness and virtue, harmony and order, world divided by gender.
213-273	Cassius Longinus (Roman)	Sublimity is part of beauty.
204-270	Plotinus (Greek)	Beauty should not be identified only in terms of harmony, symmetry and proportion. Beauty and the ideal, revelation of spirit in matter.
354-525	Augustine (Algerian), Boethius (Roman)	Beauty equated with unity, harmony, proportion, testaments to the unity of God.
400-500	Pseudo-Dionysius (Greek)	Beauty based on symbols of the divine, God is divine maker and creator. Eternity, infinity and perfection as a reflection of beauty.

Figure 4- Historical Timeline of Beauty in Aesthetics- Part 2

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Study of Beauty: A Historical Timeline</i></p>		
Time Period	Influential Figures	Major Ideas
1225-1274	Thomas Aquinas	Beauty is apprehended, yet resides in the form, which is connected to goodness. Rejected the idea that divinity is present in all things.
1596-1650	Rene Descartes (French)	Transformation from art to science, Beauty still connected to God, divinity, and perfection through the 1700s.
1711-1776	David Hume (Scottish)	Beauty exists in the mind. Taste, feeling sentiment and pleasure differs from person to person.
1724-1804	Immanuel Kant (German)	Beauty as universal satisfaction or delight. Distinguishes beauty from sublimity. Promoted the use of the term <i>aesthetics</i> in its modern sense.
1770-1831	Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (German)	Beauty is inseparable from truth and goodness and related to the ideal. Ideal requires sensuous appearance. Art no longer expresses the highest realization of the Spirit.
1844-1900	Friedrich Nietzsche (German)	Beauty includes rapture, frenzy, sublime. Beauty is more than appearance.
1848-1923	Bernard Bosanquet (English)	Absolute Idealism, addressed concept of difficult beauty.
	Difficult Beauty defined	
1859-1952	John Dewey (American)	Emphasized quality of the aesthetic experience, joining nature with the ideal.
1863-1952	George Santayana (Spanish/American)	Emphasis on pleasure of the experience. Preserving ideas of Kant. Essence of pleasure.
1889-1976	Martin Heidegger (German)	Questioned beauty as an expression of the highest ideals. Relates beauty to truth, but not to good.

Part Two- The Genesis and Advancement of the Theory of Difficult Beauty

The Origin of Difficult Beauty

What is the theory of difficult beauty? Who introduced it? When was it developed? Why did this theory evolve? The concept of difficult beauty has been festering beneath discussions of beauty, ugliness, pleasure, and pain since the term *Aesthetics* was appropriated by Alexander Baumgarten in the 1700s. Although the term *difficult beauty* remained elusive and somewhat dormant until the early twentieth century, the idea was omnipresent. As art and philosophy shifted from the representation of the ideal to expressionism, the need to address difficult beauty escalated until it finally surfaced and was defined by Bernard Bosanquet in his *Three Lectures on Aesthetics* in 1915.

Plato said, “If there is anything to live for, it is to contemplate beauty” (cited by Bredin, & Santoro-Brienza, 2000, p. 26). What is beauty without its opposite? If there was no ugliness, there could be no beauty. From the time of Plato, the subject of ugliness has been explored, just as the subject of beauty. In *Hippias Major*, the dialogue between Socrates and Hippias revolves around defining beauty. As quickly as Hippias categorizes something as beautiful, Socrates is able to exemplify an instance where the very thing Hippias considers beautiful could be considered ugly. For instance, Hippias suggests that a beautiful young maiden is something that would be considered universally beautiful. Socrates points out that in comparison to a Goddess, she would be ugly (Hyland, 2008). The festering begins.

Aristotle philosophized about the pleasure found in a tragedy, as well as the relationship of pleasure to beauty. He explained that although there is a different type of pleasure associated with tragedy, it is ultimately still pleasure. To illustrate this concept, Aristotle used the example

of a skillfully rendered corpse. Although it may be an uncomfortable subject to look at, the skillful rendering by the artist might still bring a sense of pleasure. Though not defined as such, this didactic example presents a very early illustration of difficult beauty.

Aristotle also suggests that the inability to appreciate a tragedy might be due to a “weakness of the spectators” (Hyland, 2008; Bredin & Santor-Brienza, 2000). This line of reasoning lays the foundation for later philosophers who take into consideration the viewer’s ability (or inability) to appreciate a work of art. Some of the philosophers influenced by this Aristotelian principle include Hume, Kant, Santayana, Pater, and Dewey as well as more recent aestheticians, such as Mothersill, Korsmeyer, Danto, and Schjeldahl.

In 1853, Karl Rozenkranz, who was a biographer of Hegel, wrote that ugliness possesses a positive character or presence. This was in contrast to the philosophy of Hegel, which esteemed that ugliness was an absence of beauty. Rozenkranz writes, “Ugliness is not a simple absence of beauty, but its positive negation. What does not fall under the category of beauty cannot be comprised under the category of ugliness either” (Cited by Bredin & Santor-Brienza, 2000, p. 91). He believed that ugliness, as well as beauty, were existential in nature.

In 1915, the term *difficult beauty* was realized by Bernard Bosanquet in his *Three Lectures on Aesthetic*. In his writing, Bosanquet describes three characteristics of difficult beauty: intricacy, tension, and width. In order for an object to achieve difficult beauty, it must exemplify at least one of the three characteristics.

Bosanquet describes *intricacy* in terms of being overwhelmingly complex in texture or design to a degree that it is almost impossible to comprehend. *Tension*, according to Bosanquet, deals with unpleasant subject matter or the discord of elements within a work of art. *Width* is “a

sort of dissolution of the conventional world... often achieved in apocalyptic art and the art of havoc, great comic farce, and theater and film *noir*” (Jacquette, 1984, p. 79).

The Need for Difficult Beauty

The early twentieth century brought with it a revolution by artists against beauty. In order to survive, beauty needed a subsequent evolution. Specifically, the modernist era ostracized the embracing of beauty to the point that it was nearly a crime for art to be beautiful (Danto, 2003; Alberro, 2004; Brand, 1999). By categorizing the term *difficult beauty*, Bosanquet advanced aesthetic theory into new realms of interpretation. With the development of Realism, Post-Impressionism, Modernism, Surrealism, and the like, his suggestion of difficult beauty would prove vital to the very survival of beauty for decades to come. The term difficult beauty offered pretence under which artworks, such as Picasso’s *Guernica* or Goya’s *The Third of May* could be considered in terms of beauty or pleasure. It also caused similar reconsideration for previous artworks that illustrated difficult subject matter, such as Pieter Bruegel’s *The Triumph of Death* or Titian’s *The Flaying of Marsyas*.

Certainly, Bosanquet could not have predicted the course of beauty through the modernist movement to the state of the arts today. His theory of difficult beauty, however, has maintained a strong position in the domain of aesthetic theory in postmodern times and continues to be added upon by contemporary aestheticians.

More recently, *In Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*, Carolyn Korsmeyer (2005) offered a paper entitled *Terrible Beauties*. In her writing, the idea of terrible beauty seems harmonious, with the term difficult beauty. Korsmeyer acknowledges that historically, most theories of beauty within the scope of philosophy connect beauty with

pleasure. Contrary to this rationale, she suggests that beauty can also be found in difficult subject matter, such as loss or death. Beauty can quite possibly make difficult truths more palpable.

“Terrible Beauty is bound up with the arousal of discomfoting emotions” (Korsmeyer, 2005, p. 52). However, to reflect on difficult beauty requires effort. Thus, difficult beauty is not often sought after or desired; it requires effort to engage with and reflect upon.

Korsmeyer further suggests that beauty can be found even in the most painful of subject matter. “With terrible beauty, attention is arrested by elements that strain the heart- and yet they induce us to linger over them and savor them in all our heartache and woe” (p. 52).

Currently, much of contemporary art deals with some type of difficult beauty. Although it is nearly a century later, the three characteristics of difficult beauty outlined by Bosanquet still ring true: intricacy, tension, and width. His logic helps provide a much needed lens through which postmodern art can be appreciated. One example of intricacy in the form of terrible beauty is exemplified in the work of artist Pepón Osorio in his installation piece entitled *Badge of Honor*, 1995 (Figure 5). Bosanquet’s idea of tension seems to be everywhere and one clear, contemporary example is the art of Damien Hirst, in his *Autopsy with Sliced Human Brain*, 2004 (Figure 6). Lastly, Koons clearly exemplifies Bosanquet’s idea of width in difficult beauty with his piece, *Michael Jackson and Bubbles*, 1998 (Figure 7).

Perhaps, one of the most poignant conclusions made by Korsmeyer can help one make sense of art in a postmodern world; through our understanding of terrible beauty, not all beauties are enjoyed, but they can be appreciated.



Figure 5- *Badge of Honor*, Pepón Osorio, 1995



Figure 6- *Autopsy with Sliced Human Brain*, Hirst, 2004



Figure 7- *Michael Jackson and Bubbles*, Koons, 1998

Part Three- Connecting Contemporary Aesthetic Views to the Recent Past

Until the early twentieth century, it was presumed that art should possess beauty (Danto, 2003). During the early twentieth century, several avant-garde artistic movements emerged that questioned and even dismissed the need for beauty in artwork. Some movements, like the Dadaist, sought to halt the quest for beauty altogether (Danto, 2003). Despite the attempt to silence beauty in art and aesthetic discourse, many scholars and philosophers continued, and continue, to speak and write of beauty today. “The persistence of the idea of beauty throughout the twentieth century is evidenced precisely by the very existence of the critiques against it” (Alberro, 2004, p. 37). In other words, the very fact that artists, critics, and scholars are discussing whether or not there is a need for beauty in contemporary art substantiates the fact that beauty remains an important topic of discussion.

The theory of beauty as a positive force in art and aesthetic discourse over the past twenty years has been championed by intellectuals, such as Arthur Danto, Wendy Steiner, Peter Schjeldahl, Dave Hickey, Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe, Alexander Alberro, Mary Mothersill, Peg Zeglin Brand, Carolyn Korsmeyer, and many others, and continues to remain a viable, spirited subject. Although their methods of inquiry and aesthetic philosophies may differ, they all share a common goal: to revitalize aesthetic judgments of beauty in a postmodern world (Alberro, 2004).

There are many different realms in which the topic of beauty is currently under investigation, such as: traditional theories of beauty (Plato), beauty and the sublime (Kant), and studies of beauty in horror or the grotesque. Although the terms *beauty* and *sublime* seem almost absent in the titles of articles found in current aesthetic journals, such as the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (Figure 6), *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts* (Figure 7), and *Contemporary Aesthetics* (Figure 8), the topic of beauty is alive and well, and can be found in

many other publications.

In *Beauty Knows No Pain*, Alexander Alberro suggests that many modern scholars are seeking a revival of the traditional idyllic beauty of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. “They seek to advance the beautiful as a structure of feeling energized by a sense of transcendental meaning and harmony, and of centrality of the human subject” (Alberro, 2004, p. 38). There have been numerous books and articles written over the past ten years that substantiate this claim. Most recently in 2008, Drew Hyland published *Plato and the Question of Beauty* which provides a serious and traditional investigation into the meaning of beauty. Rather than attempting to summarize the entire Platonic philosophy, Hyland focuses on three dialogues written by Plato that specifically relate to beauty: *Hippias Major*, *Symposium*, and *Phaedrus*. In doing so, Hyland infuses ancient philosophy regarding beauty into modern day aesthetics. There is also significant evidence that the philosophies about beauty held by other historical philosophers are still utilized. For example, Immanuel Kant is discussed extensively in a plethora of recent articles and books, such as: *Only a Promise of Happiness* (Alexander Nehmas, 2007), *The Abuse of Beauty* (Danto, 2003), and Kant’s *Justified Dismissal of Artistic Sublimity* (Uygar, 2008). Furthermore, books like *Extreme Beauty* (Swearingen & Cutting-Gray 2002) are compiled of essays devoted to philosophical writing pertaining to beauty. The essays revolve around the teachings of historical philosophers, such as Hegel, Arendt, and Heidegger. From Plato to Santayana, the writers of old are continually being resurrected, and reworked to find their way into contemporary theories of beauty.

The subject of horror, violence, grotesque, sexuality, and the absurd, and their relationship to beauty is unavoidable in a postmodern world. Discourse relating to such topics resembles the theory of difficult beauty described by Bosanquet, or *terrible beauty* by

Korsmeyer, yet, I believe Bosanquet could have not foreseen the style of art that was to come. How is the art of Serrano, Mapplethorpe, Sherman, and Hirst to be categorized in terms of beauty? Do their works possess any resemblance to beauty as it was conceptualized by past philosophers? In 1997, the Royal Academy of Arts held an exhibition entitled *Sensation*, which showcased controversial art by various contemporary British artists, specifically, art that dealt with death, violence, and sex. The ambition of the show was to provoke debate about the nature of contemporary art. In the book, *Apocalypse* (Rosenthal, 2000), the nature of the exhibit was discussed in detail, and the question was posed; “Are we dealing here with what one might term the aesthetics of revenge through a beauty that can be found even within such an obviously hideous experience?” (Rosenthal, 2000, p. 23). A question that could be posed in addition would be, “Is it even beauty at all that is being found, or could it be something else altogether?” As stated before, the intent of this thesis is not to determine which controversial artworks possess beauty, but to investigate a more benign concept of difficult beauty suitable for young children. As Bernard Bosanquet eloquently stated in the early 1900s, “Ugliness in art must not be confused with *difficult art*” (Sweet, 2008, “Aesthetics,” para. 10).

It is suggested by Peg Zeglin Brand (1999), in her article, *Beauty Matters*, that the seemingly recent revival of discourse on beauty is possibly a response to such controversial art that has infiltrated the realm of beauty. She writes:

This new ‘dark side’ of beauty is unexpected. It goads philosophy into delving into the moral, social, and political implications of a culture that finds the ugly beautiful. When anorexic girls, blood and vomit, junkies, dead sharks, and sadomasochistic sex come to be revered as beautiful, we can either remain disinterested or we can honestly confront the perversity of how beauty has come to matter in distinctly nontraditional ways (Brand, 1999, p. 7).

When considering the course that art has taken over the last ten years, and in alliance

with the thoughts of Brand and others, it seems unfeasible that beauty could possibly *not* be discussed. In response to Arthur Danto's prediction in 1994 that "beauty may be in for a rather long exile", Peter Schjeldahl replied in 1996 that "Beauty is Back!" (Cited by Brand, 1999, p. 9).

In the article, *Processing Fluency and Aesthetic Pleasure: Is Beauty in the Perceiver's Processing Experience?*, it is suggested by psychologists, Reber, Schwarz, and Winkielman, that beauty has been defined according to three main positions since the time of Plato (Reber, Schwarz, & Winkielman, 2004). These are: the objectivist view, the subjectivist view, and the contemporary interactionist view. The interactionist view combines both cognitive and affective responses and is based on the relationship between the object and the viewer. The authors of this article subscribe to the third position and further suggest that the aesthetic experiences regarding judgments of beauty are dependant upon the viewer's ability to process an object. "The more fluently the perceiver can process an object, the more positive is his or her aesthetic response" (Reber, Schwarz, & Winkielman, 2004, p. 365). It is important to note that, according to the authors, objects differ in the ease, or fluency, in which they can be processed.

What does all of this mean? It is my position that since the emergence of modern and postmodern art, the fluency of objects has decreased, thus demanding a new way of processing, or understanding, in order to experience the associated pleasure of a particular object. Reber, Schwarz, and Winkielman also assert that through simple studies regarding judgments of beauty, valuable information can be extracted related to aesthetic judgment. "Most researchers, including us, believe by studying such simple judgments, one can identify basic processes underlying the aesthetic experience... Thus, there are reasons to believe that judgments of preference, liking, and beauty are closely related" (p. 365).

The survey of beauty, conducted and documented in Chapters Three, Four, and Five of this thesis, offers a current study and analysis of judgments regarding beauty. Furthermore, Chapter Six of this thesis offers a suggested lesson plan for helping young children process images of difficult beauty more fluently.

Figure 8- Articles with Titles including Beauty/Sublime in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*

Year	Number of times beauty/beautiful is mentioned in a title	Number of times sublime/sublimity is mentioned in a title
2001	0	0
2002	0	0
2003	0	0
2004	0	0
2005	0	0
2006	0	0
2007	0	1
2008	2	2

Figure 9- Articles with Titles including Beauty/Sublime in *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*

Year	Number of times beauty/beautiful is mentioned in a title	Number of times sublime/sublimity is mentioned in a title
2006	0	0
2007	0	0
2008	0	0
2009	0	0

Figure 10- Articles with Titles including Beauty/Sublime in *Contemporary Aesthetics*

Year	Number of times beauty/beautiful is mentioned in a title	Number of times sublime/sublimity is mentioned in a title
2003	0	0
2004	0	0
2005	1	0
2006	0	0
2007	0	0
2008	0	0
2009	0	0

CHAPTER THREE- Methods

As stated in the previous chapter, Reber, Schwarz, & Winkielman suggest that simple studies of judgments about beauty can help determine the basic processes behind the aesthetic experience. In order to examine how judgments of beauty are made by my pre-service Elementary Education students at BYU, and to investigate the relationship between beauty and meaning, a survey of beauty was created to help gather information. The following survey methods were undertaken in organizing and completing the study of ranking beauty:

Survey Methods

1. Delineation of purpose
2. Creation of panels
3. Creation of survey
4. Approval of survey by IRB
5. Selection of participants
6. Administration of survey
7. Organization of data
8. Descriptive analysis of results
9. Interpretation of results

Delineation of Purpose

This survey of ranking beauty originated from the two personal experiences mentioned in the Personal Narrative. First was the observation of young Claire, who seemingly overlooked displeasing physical characteristics of her doll, Alfreda, to find a deeper beauty, deeply connected with meaning and experience. Second was observation of pre-service elementary teachers at Brigham Young University as they thoroughly processed an artwork that possessed

difficult beauty over the course of a semester. In both experiences, meaning and experience triumphed over physical characteristics, and perhaps even changed perceptions and added pleasure to the human experience.

The purpose of this survey was to further investigate this relationship between beauty, ugliness, and meaning and to investigate more thoroughly how judgments of beauty are made. What are the reasons behind judgments of beauty? It was hypothesized that if a connection can be made between the viewer and an artwork, then does it become more beautiful, therefore adding pleasure to the human experience? Furthermore, if young children can be made aware of the existence of beauty in curious (or ugly) places, will they become more adept in finding, understanding, and appreciating such beauty? These were the overriding questions that guided this thesis.

Creation of Panels

Six 8”x 10” panels were painted with acrylic paint on masonite board (Figures 11-16). Each panel depicted a woman in a different stage of life, painted in various styles. The panels were each separated into three portions: the head, the body, and the legs, to make them interchangeable. For instance, one woman’s head could be combined with another woman’s body or legs. Specific attention was paid not only to representing various physical characteristics (eyebrows, aging skin, blond or gray hair, and the like), but also to representing a variety of painting styles and formal properties (such as anime and collage, texture and color) in order to provoke varying responses among participants.

Figure 11- Panel A



Figure 12- Panel B



Figure 13- Panel C



Figure 14- Panel D



Figure 15- Panel E

Figure 16- Panel F



Creation of Survey

The survey was created primarily for the following reasons:

1. To gain understanding as to how participants make judgments of beauty
2. To investigate the connection between beauty, meaning, and experience
3. To analyze the reaction when beauty and ugliness are comingled and establish whether or not meaning and experience still hold the same magnitude under these circumstances

It was suggested by Dr. Brent Wilson (Art Professor, artist, and visiting scholar from Penn State University), that a secondary study be conducted by adding, subtracting, and altering titles to the artworks to determine if and how much the title of an artwork might affect judgments of beauty. The placement of titles is illustrated in figures 17, 18, and 19.

The bottom of the survey form (Appendices A-D) consisted of pictures of the six panels to be ranked with a corresponding identifying letter (A-F) and/or title. A small space was provided to rank the panels with the numbers one through six, from most beautiful (one) to least beautiful (six). In addition, several lines were provided next to each response for a written explanation as to why the participants ranked each panel as such.

Approval of survey by IRB

A lengthy application for conducting research involving human subjects was completed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Brigham Young University. In accordance with the guidelines set by the IRB, a consent form was developed and included in conjunction with the survey (Appendix E) to ensure that there were minimal risks to participants, and that their responses would remain confidential.

Selection of Participants

Participants were selected based on their enrollment in VAEDU 326 at Brigham Young University. VAEDU 326 is an Art Education class for pre-service elementary teachers and is the course mentioned in the Personal Narrative at the beginning of this thesis. Specifically, the participants were chosen because of the transforming experience mentioned regarding the painting, *Entertaining: Favorite Ladies II*. At first viewing, the students seemed to have predetermined judgments of beauty in regards to the painting. The survey was designed to investigate the reasons behind such judgments. The majority of the participants were college-aged females. 120 VAEDU 326 students were surveyed.

Administration of survey

Before administering survey, the actual panels were laid out in a row on a counter in the classroom. Each panel had a corresponding letter and/or title depending on which study was being given. Students were asked to view the panels in groups of four or five in order to accommodate spatial constraints, but complete the survey individually.

To introduce the survey in compliance with the IRB, the following dialogue was used in request for participation in *Ranking Beauty* survey:

Hello. My name is Christine Sorensen. I am conducting a research study regarding the concept of beauty. Your participation is completely voluntary and your responses will be kept confidential if you choose to participate. It will take approximately 10-15 minutes of your time and would be greatly appreciated. Your anonymous responses will be compiled into a study I am completing for my master's thesis at BYU in Art Education. I have painted six panels. For the study, you will rank the panels with the numbers 1-6 from the most beautiful (1) to the least beautiful (6). Then, you will write a brief response next to each ranking that describes why you ranked it the way you did. Please be candid. There are no right or wrong answers. This is not a test. It is merely a study about beauty. Please do not ask for information about the panels or consult with a friend about his or her opinion. I would simply like to know which of these panels you find to be the most and least beautiful, and perhaps why. Thank you very much.

If students chose to participate, they were given a "Survey of Beauty" questionnaire as well as a consent form. In order to keep answers confidential, the questionnaire was assigned a number that corresponded with their signed consent form. Their responses remained separate from their names.

Four different groups completed a survey unique to each group. The first group ranked the panels with no corresponding titles (Figure 17). The second group ranked the panels with a correct corresponding title (Figure 18). The third group ranked the panels when the titles were

incorrect (Figure 19). The fourth group ranked the panels when the heads of the panels were interchanged, and without a corresponding title (Figure 20).

Organization of Data

With the assistance of Dr. Brent Wilson, it was determined that the data should be organized in the following ways:

1. Statistical ranking of each panel from most beautiful to least beautiful
2. Descriptive analysis of written responses

Statistical rankings were recorded and transferred into graph format to represent percentages and illustrate how each panel was ranked most to least beautiful in each of the four studies.

A descriptive analysis of written responses was organized according to the nature of the response. This included positive or negative responses to the following three categories: formal properties of artwork, physical features or characteristics of artwork, and personal meaning of the artwork. The classifications of these statistics are discussed further in Chapter Four- Outcomes of Survey: Interpretation of Results.

Descriptive Analysis of Results

Data gathered in this survey of beauty were organized into various charts and graphs contained in this thesis. Each panel was analyzed individually in both graph and written format in Chapter Four, according to both statistical ranking and descriptive analysis of corresponding written responses.

Interpretation of Results

Conclusions were made according to these criteria and were written in detail according to each panel. They are contained in Chapter Four. Furthermore, the conclusions drawn regarding the relationship between an artwork and its title and are also contained in this chapter.

Figure 17 (Group 1- No Titles)



Figure 18 (Group 2- Correct Titles)



Death Pending *I Am Mother* *Social Security* *Pretty in Love* *Life's Adventure* *Learn, Teach, Create*

Figure 19 (Group 3- Incorrect Titles)



Pretty in Love *Death Pending* *I Am Mother* *Social Security* *Learn, Teach, Create* *Life's Adventure*

Figure 20 (Group 4- Interchanged Heads/No Titles)



CHAPTER FOUR- Outcomes of Survey: Interpretation of Results

The results from the survey were analyzed in two ways. First, statistical data, which represent percentages, were accumulated according to the ranking of beauty (1-6) that each panel received in the survey. The results from this analysis are illustrated in a detailed bar graph, based on ranking frequency, (Figure 21) as well as a Most/Least Beautiful Pie-Chart comparison, based on percentages (Figures 22 and 23). In addition to ranking the panels from most beautiful to least beautiful, participants in the survey of beauty were also asked to write a brief response to explain their choices behind ranking each image. A comprehensive analysis of these responses is divided into two sections and is included in this chapter. The first section contains data from Beauty Survey Groups 1-3 (Figures 17, 18, 19) and is organized according to each panel. The second section analyzes the results from Beauty Survey Group 4- Interchanged Heads. Beauty Survey Group 4- Interchanged Heads (Figure 20) is analyzed in its own section because the images are so dissimilar to the first three groups.

The results from the written responses were classified using descriptive statistics and organized in the following manner:

1. Positive or negative response to formal properties of artwork.
2. Positive or negative response to physical features or characteristics of artwork.
3. Positive or negative response to personal meaning of artwork.

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Formal Properties		
Physical Features/Characteristics		
Personal Meaning		

If a participant made a comment suggesting that his or her response was based on the aforementioned criteria, a point was assigned to that specific rationale (positive or negative). For example, if a participant ranked an image low on the beauty scale and wrote a written response like, “I hate the color pink”, a point was assigned to the negative group of Category 1 (positive or negative response to formal properties of artwork), since the effect was negative, and the color refers to formal properties of the artwork.

A written response could warrant points in more than one category. For instance, a participant could respond, “I hate pink, but the picture reminds me of my Grandma, so I like it”. This would garner a negative point in Category 1 (positive or negative response to formal properties of artwork) and a positive point in Category 3 (positive or negative response to personal meaning of artwork).

Description of Categories

CATEGORY 1- Positive or negative response to formal properties of artwork.

Category 1 included traditional elements and principles of art, such as: line, shape, color, texture, value, space, form, balance, rhythm, unity, proportion, movement, emphasis, variety, as well as non-traditional descriptive elements, such as shiny, glittery, and the like. Category 1 also incorporated artistic styles, such as Realism or Anime.

Example of Positive Response:

“I love the pink and gray color combination.” (A12)

Example of Negative Response:

“Too pink, too clashing. Gross.” (A16)

CATEGORY 2- Positive or negative response to physical features or characteristics of artwork.

Category 2 included physical features or characteristics of the artwork, such as eyes, hair, facial features, body type, clothes, accoutrements, and the like.

Example of Positive Response:

“I liked this one because of the girl’s big blue eyes”. (A5)

Example of Negative Response:

“Huge, big, dark uni-brow- Gross!” (A21)

CATEGORY 3- Positive or negative response to personal meaning of artwork.

Category 3 included emotional or personal responses to the artwork. It incorporated personal meaning or experience relating to subject matter.

Example of Positive Response:

“This old woman is beautiful! I used to work at a nursing home and she reminds me of the people there.” (A7)

Example of Negative Response:

“This is rated so low for me probably due to the fact that I don’t have a ton of connections or lasting good memories with elderly people.” (A5)

BEAUTY SURVEY- GROUPS 1-3

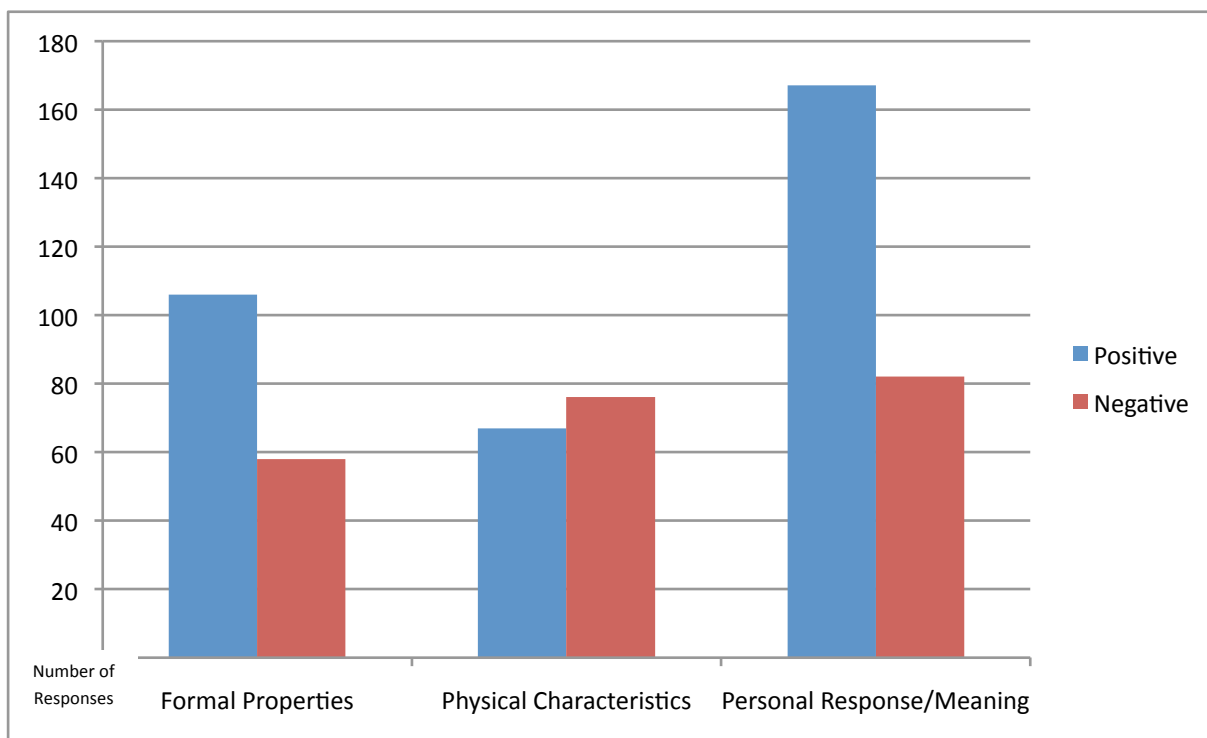
PANELS A-F: INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The majority of responses given by participants in ranking of beauty were associated with personal meaning, both in the positive and negative categories. Formal properties and physical characteristics were also determining factors, but were overpowered by personal meaning. Participants seemed primarily concerned with connecting to the artwork. If they were able to connect in a positive manner with the panel, then it became more beautiful. If the connection was negative, the panel became less beautiful. If no connection could be made, participants most often defaulted to physical characteristics and formal properties to render a judgment of beauty. In other instances when no connection could be made between the participant and the image, the respondent would rank the panel in the middle (neutral) and write something similar to “I didn’t know how to connect to this one,” or simply leave the space blank.

The lack of connection to the panels occurred mostly in relation to Panels D, E, and F. These panels were more ambiguous in meaning and therefore, seemed to provoke stronger responses in the areas of physical characteristics and formal properties rather than meaning. Furthermore, when the formal properties and physical characteristics were more blatant, a stronger reaction was invoked. For example, Panel E displayed a very observable artistic style of painting (Anime). Since its meaning was more ambiguous, participants commented primarily on the style, both positive and negative. Another example is found in Panel F, which contained a

very conspicuous physical characteristic; the Frida Kahlo inspired uni-brow. Since, once again, the participants had difficulty connecting to this panel, they overwhelmingly commented about the overpowering physical characteristic. It could be concluded that without an obvious meaning available (positive or negative), physical characteristics and formal properties subjugate meaning.

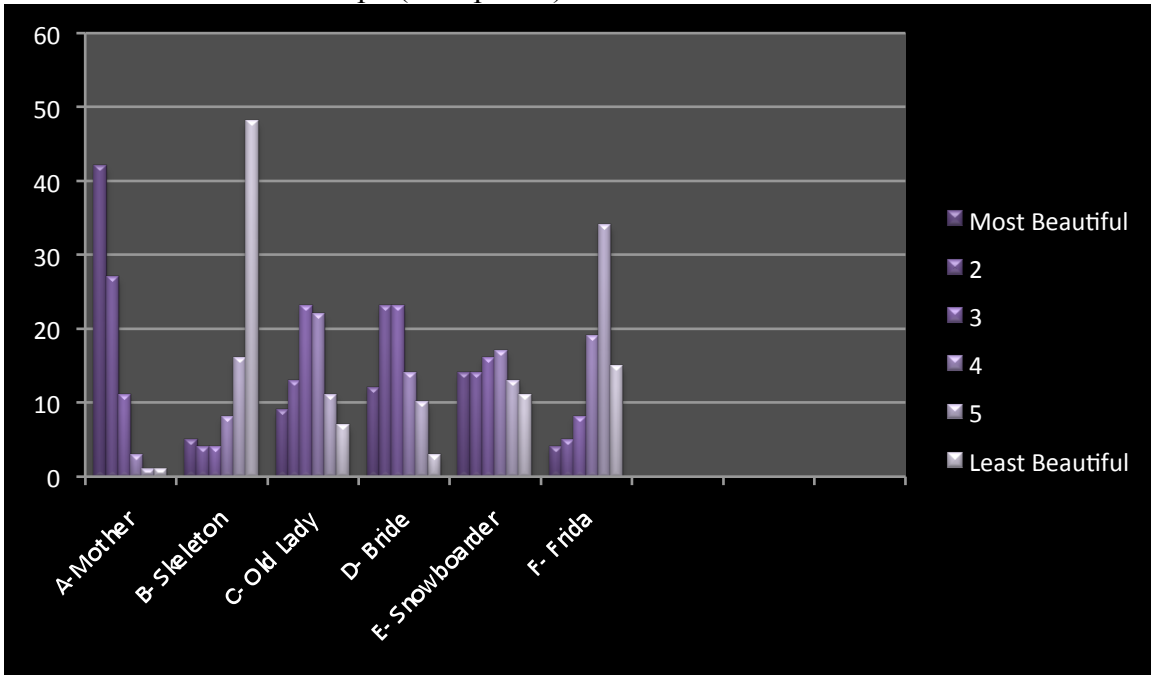
Beauty Study Group 4- Written Response Results



The following section contains a comprehensive analysis of Panels A-F, as contained in Beauty Survey Groups 1-3 (Figures 17, 18, 19). Included are statistical charts based on the frequency of numerical ranking of panels, as well as an in-depth analysis of the written results for each panel. Group 4- Interchanged Heads (Figure 20) is analyzed in its own, subsequent section since the images are so dissimilar to the first three groups.

Statistical Charts Based on Numerical Ranking (1-6) of Panels A-F

Figure 21- Cumulative Bar Graph (Groups 1-3)



Most and Least Beautiful Comparison Cumulative- Groups 1-3

Figure 22- Most Beautiful- Cumulative (Groups 1-3)

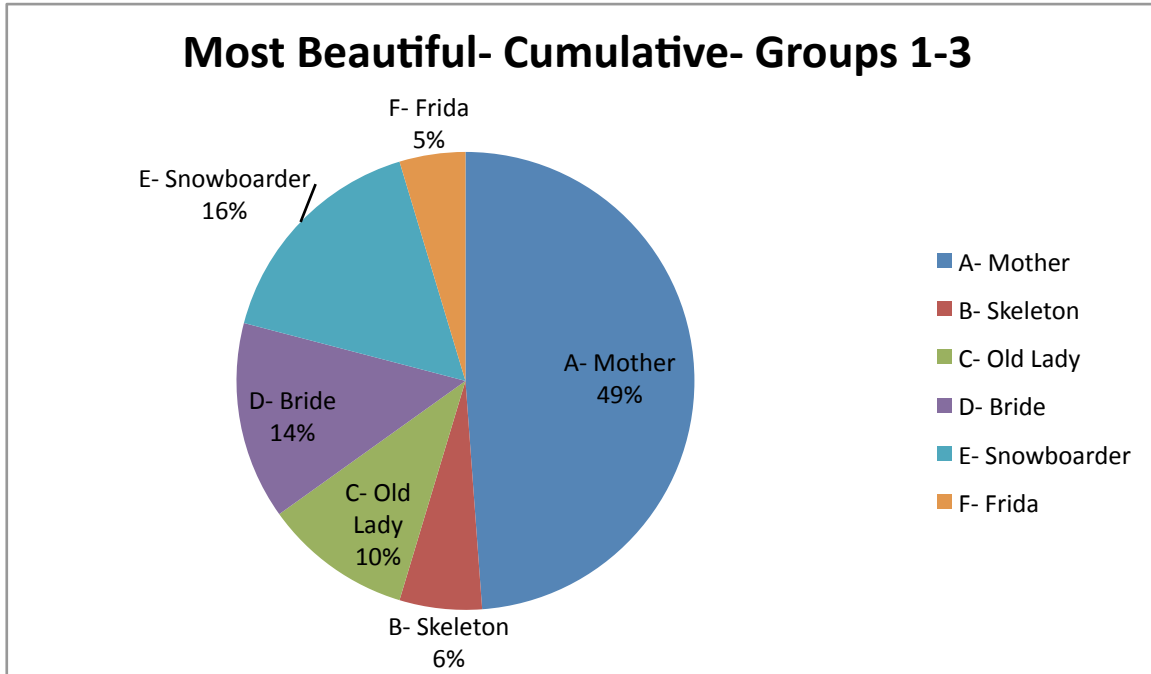
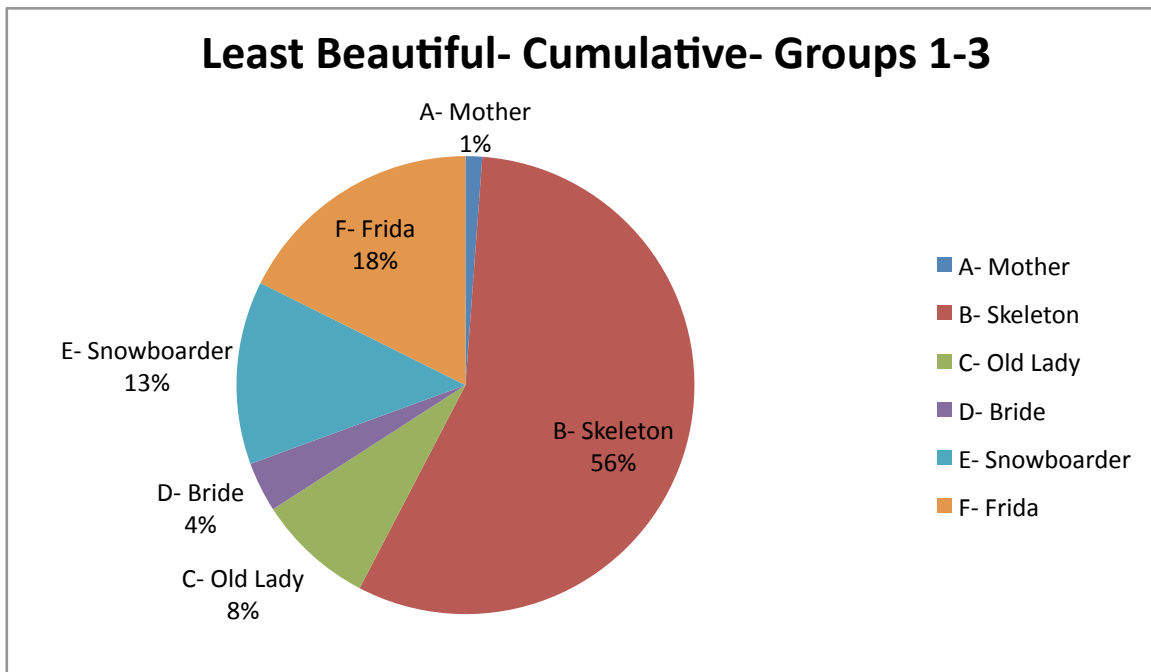


Figure 23- Least Beautiful- Cumulative (Groups 1-3)





PANEL A: INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Overall Ranking

On a scale of 1-6, 1 being the most beautiful, Panel A was consistently ranked the most beautiful image (1) in all study groups. As illustrated in the Most Beautiful Cumulative Graph (Figure 22), Panel A was ranked most beautiful by 49% of the participants.

As illustrated by the Least Beautiful Cumulative Graph (Figure 23), Panel A was ranked the least beautiful image (6) by only 1% of the participants.

Written Responses

- 31% of written responses included references to Category 1- Formal Properties
- 24% of written responses included references to Category 2- Physical Characteristics
- 62% of written responses included references to Category 3- Personal Meaning

The Relationship of Formal Properties to Panel A

Thirty-one percent (31%) of the written responses included reference to Category 1- Formal Properties. Of these responses, 90% were positive, 10% were negative. The majority of

the responses, both positive and negative, cited color as a determining factor. The following responses represent the majority of written responses regarding the formal properties of Panel A:

“I like the colors and the background.” (A12)

“The colors are soothing and the image is identifiable” (A11)

The Relationship of Physical Characteristics to Panel A

Twenty-four percent (24%) of written responses included references to Category 2-Physical Characteristics. Of these, 95.5% were positive associations with physical characteristics, .5% were negative. The physical characteristics mentioned varied considerably from facial features to clothes to facial expression, and the like. The following responses represent the variety of physical characteristics mentioned in the written responses regarding Panel A:

“She has soft eyes, and her face, and clothes look the simplest.” (B10)

“She just looked soft and pretty.” (C24)

“I liked the Mom’s smile.” (C30)

“Pretty, flowing hair, rosy cheeks.” (B24)

The Relationship of Personal Meaning to Panel A

Sixty-Two percent (62%) of written responses included references to Category 3-Personal Meaning. Of these responses, all (100%) of these written responses held a positive

association with personal meaning. There were no (0%) negative responses given regarding personal meaning. The following are a few representative responses:

“I love that she is holding her babies so close. It portrays a strong human emotion- love.” (A1)

“I like what it represents. I think it is beautifully painted and represents being a Mom... I get the feeling of happiness and contentment.” (A10)

“There is nothing more beautiful than a mother and daughter.” (B1)

“Young mother- reminds me of my wife.” (B19)

Affect of Title in Ranking Panel A

Only 3% of participants mentioned the title in their written responses regarding Panel A. These responses all occurred when the title was changed from *I am Mother* to *Death Pending*. Despite the title, participants still gave Panel A a high ranking in terms of beauty. The following are examples of such responses:

“The title is scary, but the painting is still cute- a mother holding her babies.” (C29)

“There is a sense of comfort in it despite the worrying title.” (C14)

Conclusions for Panel A

An overwhelming majority found Panel A to be the most beautiful and the most connected to positive meaning and/or experience. Panel A is most representative of an “easy

beauty,” because it was both pleasing according to physical characteristics, formal properties, and meaning. All (100%) of the respondents that associated their judgment of Panel A with personal meaning were influenced in a positive manner. Positive meaning obviously affected judgments of beauty of Panel A.



PANEL B: INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Overall Ranking

On a scale of 1-6, 1 being the most beautiful, Panel B was consistently ranked the least beautiful image (6) in all study groups. As illustrated in the Least Beautiful Cumulative Graph (Figure 23), Panel A was ranked least beautiful by 56% of the participants.

As illustrated by the Most Beautiful Cumulative Graph (Figure 22), Panel B was ranked the most beautiful image (1) by 6% of the participants.

Written Responses

- 21% of written responses included references to Category 1- Formal Properties
- 14% of written responses included references to Category 2- Physical Characteristics
- 64% of written responses included references to Category 3- Personal Meaning

The Relationship of Formal Properties to Panel B

Twenty-one percent (21%) of the written responses included reference to Category 1- Formal Properties. Of these, 59% were positive, 41% were negative. The majority of the responses, both positive and negative, referred to color and/or style as determining factors. The following responses represent the majority of written responses regarding the formal properties of Panel B:

“Great colors and interesting collage technique. Loose, free-flowing, painterly style.”

(A12)

“I love the antiqueness, the old/treasured look.” (C30)

“Because the color & image as a whole don’t appeal to me.” (C5)

The Relationship of Physical Characteristics to Panel B

Fourteen percent (14%) of written responses included references to Category 2- Physical Characteristics. Of these, 19% were positive associations with physical characteristics, 71% were negative. The primary physical characteristics mentioned were the flames or the outward physical appearance of the skeleton. It should be noted that when the skeleton was associated with death, it was noted in category 3- Personal Meaning. The following responses represent the variety of physical characteristics mentioned in the written responses regarding Panel B:

“Though a little scary, I really like the face and the image of the official document behind the body.” (C6)

“Skeletons are gross and not pretty to me.” (C19)

“I don’t like the burning skeleton.” (A12)

“All bones- not that beautiful.” (A21)

The Relationship of Personal Meaning to Panel B

Sixty-four percent (64%) of written responses included references to Category 3- Personal Meaning. The majority (98.5%) of these responses included a negative association with personal meaning regarding the image. The following are a few representative responses:

“I don’t really like this one, mostly because it’s scary to think about.” (A1)

“Looks unhappy and ugly. Fire and skeleton does not equal beauty.” (A8)

“It’s dark and sad.” (A9)

“It is just so dark and depressing in subject matter.” (B20)

“Makes me think of fire, death, Hell.” (B33)

Effect of Title in Ranking Panel B

Nine percent (9%) of participants mentioned the title in their written responses regarding Panel B. The participants in all groups consistently associated Panel B with death in their written responses, regardless of its associated title or lack of title. Even when the title of Panel B was changed from *Death Pending* to *Pretty in Love*, the participants continued to associate the image with death. The following are examples of responses when panel A was entitled *Pretty in Love*:

“Death is not pretty or desired.” (C2)

“I don’t find death beautiful.” (C20)

Conclusions for Panel B

A large majority (56%) found Panel B to be the least beautiful and was the most connected to negative meaning and experience. Panel B is most representative of a “difficult beauty” since it was not pleasing according to physical characteristics, formal properties, or meaning. Negative meaning obviously influenced judgments of beauty of Panel B since nearly all of the responses (98.5%) that referenced meaning in relationship to Panel B were negative.



PANEL C: INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Overall Ranking

On a scale of 1-6, 1 being the most beautiful, Panel C was ranked most beautiful (1) by 10% of the participants, as illustrated in the Most Beautiful Cumulative Graph (Figure 22). Panel C was ranked least beautiful (6) by 8% of the participants, as illustrated by the Least Beautiful Cumulative Graph (Figure 23).

Panel C was most often ranked in the middle in terms of beauty. As illustrated in the Cumulative Bar Graph (Fig. 21), 53% of the participants ranked Panel C as either 3 or 4 on the beauty scale of 1-6.

Written Responses

- 25% of written responses included references to Category 1- Formal Properties
- 18% of written responses included references to Category 2- Physical Characteristics
- 61% of written responses included references to Category 3- Personal Meaning

The Relationship of Formal Properties to Panel C

Twenty-five percent (25%) of the written responses included reference to Category 1- Formal Properties. Of these, 86% were positive, 14% were negative. The majority of the responses, both positive and negative, cited color as a determining factor. The following responses represent the majority of written responses regarding the formal properties of Panel C:

“I love the pink and gray color combinations.” (A12)

“I just really liked the background. I thought it was nice how the grey was light in the background of the pink color.” (A14)

“The colors seem to clash and do not appeal to me.” (A3)

The Relationship of Physical Characteristics to Panel C

Eighteen percent (18%) of written responses included references to Category 2- Physical Characteristics. Of these, 31% were positive associations with physical characteristics, 69% were negative. The physical characteristics mentioned most often were the woman's old age, or the presence of cats. The following responses represent the variety of physical characteristics mentioned in the written responses regarding Panel C:

“I love this old woman. She looks so content in her fuzzy slippers and plentiful kittens.” (B 6)

“I like the purple cats and pink slippers.” (C7)

“Aging isn't a pretty sight.” (B13)

“She's old. Yuck.” (B21)

The Relationship of Personal Meaning to Panel C

Sixty-one percent (61%) of written responses included references to Category 3- Personal Meaning. Seventy-five percent (75%) of these included references to personal meaning were positive, 25% were negative associations with personal meaning. The following are representative of positive associations of Panel C to personal meaning:

“Cute little old lady. She looks so happy and grandmotherly.” (B2)

“I believe that the elderly are extremely beautiful, both in their age and their wisdom.” (C15)

The following are representative of negative associations of Panel C to personal meaning:

“My least favorite because even though the grandma is very cute and sweet, I don’t like the idea of growing old and living alone with cats.” (B3)

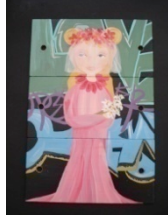
“It makes me think of the smell of old things and cats.” (C6)

Effect of Title in Ranking Panel C

Only 5% of participants mentioned the title in their written responses regarding Panel C. Participants who mentioned the title in their responses merely wrote the name of the title next to their response without expanding on whether or not it influenced their opinion. Changing the title of Panel C from *Social Security* to *I am Mother* did not affect responses.

Conclusions for Panel C

Although only 10% of participants found Panel C to be the most beautiful, it obviously invoked a connection to personal meaning or experience. Participants referred to personal meaning in their written responses 61% of the time, and the majority (75%) was positive. Panel C remained neutral in terms of beauty, ranked 3 or 4 on the beauty scale. Based on the written responses, although the personal meaning was often positive, physical characteristics (old, wrinkly woman) prevented it from receiving a higher ranking. Panel C could be classified as having characteristics of difficult beauty.



PANEL D: INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Overall Ranking

On a scale of 1-6, 1 being the most beautiful, Panel D was ranked most beautiful (1) by 14% of the participants, as illustrated in the Most Beautiful Cumulative Graph (Figure 22). Panel D was ranked least beautiful (6) by 4% of the participants as illustrated by the Least Beautiful Cumulative Graph (Figure 23).

Panel D was most often ranked in the upper-middle in terms of beauty. As illustrated in the Cumulative Bar Graph (Figure 21), 54% of the participants ranked Panel D as either 2 or 3 on the beauty scale of 1-6.

Written Responses

- 38% of written responses included references to Category 1- Formal Properties
- 27% of written responses included references to Category 2- Physical Characteristics
- 35% of written responses included references to Category 3- Personal Meaning

The Relationship of Formal Properties to Panel D

Thirty-eight percent (38%) of the written responses included reference to Category 1- Formal Properties. Of these, 54% were positive, 46% were negative. The percentages were nearly equal in both positive and negative responses regarding specific formal properties. For example, some participants found the graffiti background appealing, while just as many did not. The following responses represent the majority of written responses regarding the formal properties of Panel D:

“The different contrasting colors make it interesting to look at.” (A11)

“Too pink, too clashing. Gross.” (A16)

“Too abstract and weird.” (A19)

“Lots of colors. Catches the eye.” (A22)

“The background is my least favorite because it looks like graffiti.” (B10)

“The background is different, but I like it.” (B30)

The Relationship of Physical Characteristics to Panel D

Twenty-seven percent (27%) of written responses included references to Category 2- Physical Characteristics. Of these, 77% were positive associations with physical characteristics, 23% were negative. The physical characteristics mentioned varied from clothing to facial expression to facial features, and the like. The following responses represent the variety of physical characteristics mentioned in the written responses regarding Panel D:

“I like the flowers, dress, veil, etc.” (A12)

“Nice hair and accentuating features.” (A18)

“Only outside makes her beautiful.” (B20)

“The look and features of her face are pretty.” (B26)

“Looks somewhat ‘fake’ - not into it.” (B19)

The Relationship of Personal Meaning to Panel D

Thirty-five percent (35%) of written responses included references to Category 3- Personal Meaning. Of these responses, 83% were positive, 17% were negative associations with personal meaning. The majority of positive and negative responses associated Panel D with love and/or marriage. The following are representative of positive associations of Panel D to personal meaning:

“I like this one because it reminds me of a fairy or Ophelia from Shakespeare. It reminds me of being little.” (A9)

“Being in love is always beautiful.” (B4)

“She looks happy. She looks like she is about to be married. She’s a beautiful bride.”
(B33)

The following is representative of a negative association of Panel D to personal meaning:

“I relate this to a wedding and that’s too much work. It’s stressful.” (A20)

Effect of Title in Ranking Panel D

Only 8% of participants mentioned the title in their written responses regarding Panel D. Changing the title of Panel C from *Pretty in Love* to *Social Security* affected the meaning negatively in only 4% of responses. The following are examples of negative effects of the changed title:

“Love for power and social security just doesn’t seem right.” (C29)

“I didn’t really understand the meaning.” (C16)

The title affected the meaning positively in 0.4% of responses. The following are examples of positive affects of the title:

“Pretty title helps.” (B27)

“Marriage is a good step.” (C12)

Conclusions for Panel D

Panel D was interesting because it maintained almost equal percentages in the three classifications of written responses: formal properties, physical characteristics, and personal meaning. The author of this thesis believes that because there is no obvious meaning or interpretation of the Panel D, the judgment usually defers to physical characteristics or formal properties. None of the physical characteristics or formal properties, however, are blatantly overpowering; therefore, the responses were seemingly neutral, as was its ranking in terms of beauty.



PANEL E: INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Overall Ranking

On a scale of 1-6, 1 being the most beautiful, Panel E was ranked most beautiful (1) by 16% of the participants, as illustrated in the Most Beautiful Cumulative Graph (Figure 22). Panel E was ranked least beautiful (6) by 13% of the participants as illustrated by the Least Beautiful Cumulative Graph (Figure 23).

As illustrated in the Cumulative Bar Graph (Figure 21), Panel E was ranked at a fairly consistent level at each number 1-6 on the beauty scale. The breakdown is as follows:

Ranking	Percentage
1	16%
2	16%
3	19%
4	20%
5	15%
6	13%

Written Responses

- 50% of written responses included references to Category 1- Formal Properties
- 20% of written responses included references to Category 2- Physical Characteristics
- 30% of written responses included references to Category 3- Personal Meaning

The Relationship of Formal Properties to Panel E

Half (50%) of the written responses included reference to Category 1- Formal Properties. Of these, 54% were positive, 46% were negative. The formal properties mentioned varied considerably from elements and principles to technique and style when they rendered a positive association; however, when formal properties held a negative association, it was nearly always associated with the style of painting (similar to Anime). The following responses represent the variety of reasons behind positive associations regarding the formal properties of Panel E:

“I like the texture of the hat.” (A2)

“I like the glitter on the mountains- that is pretty.” (A7)

“Japanese style looks cool.” (A22)

“I really like the colors.” (B13)

The following responses represent the similarity of reasons behind negative associations regarding the formal properties of Panel E:

“I didn’t really like this one because it reminded me of Japanese animation and I don’t really like Japanese animation.” (A9)

“Anime eyes, not exciting or pretty to me at all.” (A16)

“I hate anime.” (B6)

“I’m not a huge fan of Manga.” (B9)

The Relationship of Physical Characteristics to Panel E

Twenty percent (20%) of written responses included references to Category 2- Physical Characteristics. Of these, 67% were positive associations with physical characteristics, 33% were negative. The physical characteristics mentioned in both positive and negative associations were similar in rationale. The following responses are representative of positive associations of Panel E to physical characteristics:

“I liked this one because of the girl’s big blue eyes. She just looked more childish and cute.” (A5)

“I like the big eyes and the fun hair.” (B22)

“She looks young and hip.” (B24)

“Cute face.” (C19)

The following responses are representative of negative associations of Panel E to physical characteristics:

“Huge eyes, crazy hair, baggy clothes.” (B2)

“Her eyes are abnormally large. She is unproportionate and her hair is spiky.” (B33)

The Relationship of Personal Meaning to Panel E

Thirty percent (30%) of written responses included references to Category 3- Personal Meaning. Of these responses, 83% were positive, 17% were negative associations with personal meaning. The majority of positive responses associated Panel E with fun and adventure. The negative associations of Panel E with personal meaning varied between feelings of apathy and sadness and of distaste for adventure. The following are representative of positive associations of Panel E to personal meaning:

“I think it represents fun. It makes me happy and excited to think of a fun day skiing.” (A10)

“Fun, athletic, adventurous, cute, flirty, cool, easy going.” (A21)

“Finding adventures in sports and life is exciting and beautiful.” (B7)

“She’s a snowboarder chick. Adventurous is always beautiful.” (B19)

“Health linked to beauty.” (C8)

The following are representative of negative associations of Panel E to personal meaning:

“This one doesn’t really interest me- I’m not a snowboarding fan.” (A1)

“Looks sad.” (B18)

Effect of Title in Ranking Panel E

Twenty-six percent (26%) of participants mentioned the title in their written responses regarding Panel E. Ninety-nine (99%) of the participants merely noted the name of the title next to the written response, and then deferred to physical or formal characteristics in the accompanied rationale. The following are examples of written responses when the title was mentioned:

“I like the big eyes and fun hair.” (B22)

“Beautiful because of the sparkles but the kid isn’t sparkling.” (B23)

Conclusions for Panel E

Panel E was similar to Panel D because it did not present an obvious interpretation or incite personal meaning. Without a personal connection to meaning, judgment usually defaults to physical characteristics or formal properties. Unlike Panel D, however, Panel E was not neutral in these areas. It illustrated a very observable painting style (Anime), which was classified under formal properties. Because the style was so strong, the reactions and written responses (both positive and negative) were as well.



PANEL F: INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Overall Ranking

On a scale of 1-6, 1 being the most beautiful, Panel F was ranked most beautiful (1) by 5% of the participants, as illustrated in the Most Beautiful Cumulative Graph (Figure 22). Panel F was ranked least beautiful (6) by 18% of the participants as illustrated by the Least Beautiful Cumulative Graph (Figure 23).

As illustrated in the Cumulative Bar Graph (Figure 21), 80% of the respondents ranked Panel F in the lowest three positions (4, 5, or 6) on the 1-6 scale of beauty. The breakdown is as follows:

1	5%
2	6%
3	9%
4	22%
5	40%
6	18%

Written Responses

- 21% of written responses included references to Category 1- Formal Properties
- 57% of written responses included references to Category 2- Physical Characteristics
- 22% of written responses included references to Category 3- Personal Meaning

The Relationship of Formal Properties to Panel F

Twenty-one percent (21%) of the written responses included reference to Category 1- Formal Properties. Of these, 67% were positive, 33% were negative. The vast majority (90%) of responses in this category, both positive and negative, referred primarily to the colors used in Panel F. While some participants found the green color scheme appealing, just as many participants found it unappealing. The following responses represent the majority of written responses regarding the formal properties of Panel F:

“I like the green background.” (B10)

“Love the bright beautiful background.” (B28)

“I don’t like the color green.” (A4)

“I find the greens garish and overpowering.” (B31)

The Relationship of Physical Characteristics to Panel F

Fifty-seven percent (57%) of written responses included references to Category 2- Physical Characteristics. Of these, only 9% were positive associations with physical characteristics, 91% were negative. Ninety-three percent (93%) of the responses in Category 2, both positive and negative, cited the uni-brow as the most influential physical characteristic. The following statements represent the similarity in responses in regards to physical characteristics of Panel F:

“This is rated most ugly for me and I know this is superficial, but unibrow does it for me. I can’t stand it.” (A5)

“Huge big dark unibrow- gross.” (A21)

“The unibrow? Distracts from the beauty of this and is all I can see when looking at it.” (B 5)

“I like the unibrow.” (A15)

“I love the eyelashes and strong brows.” (B14)

The Relationship of Personal Meaning to Panel F

Twenty-two percent (22%) of written responses included references to Category 3- Personal Meaning. Of these responses, 73% were positive, 27% were negative associations with personal meaning. The positive associations mentioned regarding Panel F with personal meaning varied considerably. Some participants cited characteristics such as creativity, intelligence, teaching, and uniqueness, while others made connections between Panel F and the artist Frida Kahlo. The following responses are representative of positive associations of Panel F to personal meaning:

“I enjoyed the reference to Frida Kahlo. Mimicking a Kahlo self-portrait to illustrate your identity as an educator was very effective.” (B6)

“This one is beautiful because creativity shows beauty inside one’s self. Uniqueness is sometimes great beauty.” (B11)

“Beauty of teaching.” (B14)

The negative responses focused primarily on the association of Panel F with Frida Kahlo. The following is representative of a negative association of Panel F to personal meaning:

“Reminds me of an artist we studied- Freda. Makes me think of bleeding arteries, etc.” (B24)

Effect of Title in Ranking Panel F

Only 6% of participants mentioned the title in their written responses regarding Panel F. Even when the title of Panel F was changed from *Learn, Teach, Create* to *Life’s Adventure*, participants continued to associate Panel F with teaching. The following is an example of a written response after the title was changed:

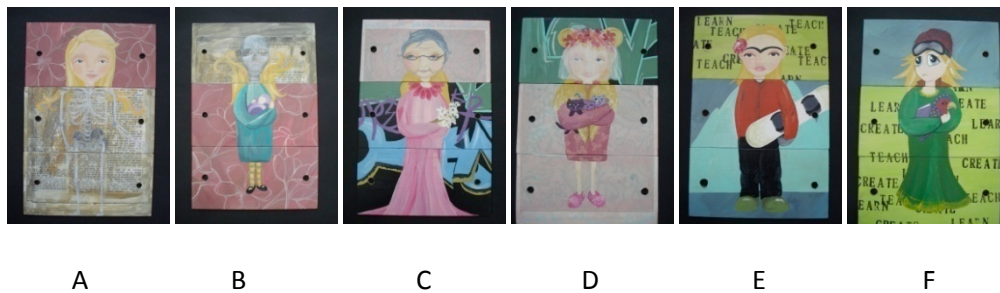
“The idea of teaching is great.” (C28)

Conclusions for Panel F

Panel F was similar to Panel E because it did not present an obvious interpretation or incite personal meaning. As stated before, without a personal connection to meaning, judgment usually defaults to physical characteristics or formal properties. Panel F illustrated a very observable facial feature (uni-brow), which was classified under physical characteristics. Because the style was so strong, the reactions and written responses (primarily negative) were as well. Furthermore, the intense negative reaction to this physical characteristic begs for questioning as to whether or not an obvious interpretation or meaning would even be enough to overcome the revulsion of the uni-brow.

Overall Affect of Title- Beauty Survey Groups 1-3

One participant, who ranked the panels when the titles were switched, added some insight to her responses through the following statement, “The names kind of threw me off, but the pictures affected me more than the names.” (C24) This statement summarizes the findings of this study regarding the affect of titles in ranking beauty. The title seems to have little affect on people when ranking beauty.



BEAUTY SURVEY- GROUP 4 (Interchanged Heads- No Titles)

PANELS A-F: INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Beauty Survey- Group 4 produced some very interesting results. Because of the interchanged heads, it seemed that participants were not only searching for beauty (or perhaps the least ugly), but also for cohesiveness. There was an obvious connection between a panel's ability to “match up” and its beauty. Participants often separated their responses, just as the panel heads had been separated from the bodies. For instance, written responses would often state something like, “I love the dress, but I can't stand the head.” Furthermore, the interchanging of the heads seemed to obscure the meaning in most of the panels for the participants. This, in turn, caused the respondents to defer to physical characteristics when rendering judgments of beauty. As illustrated in Figure 24, the judgments referring to physical characteristics far outweigh

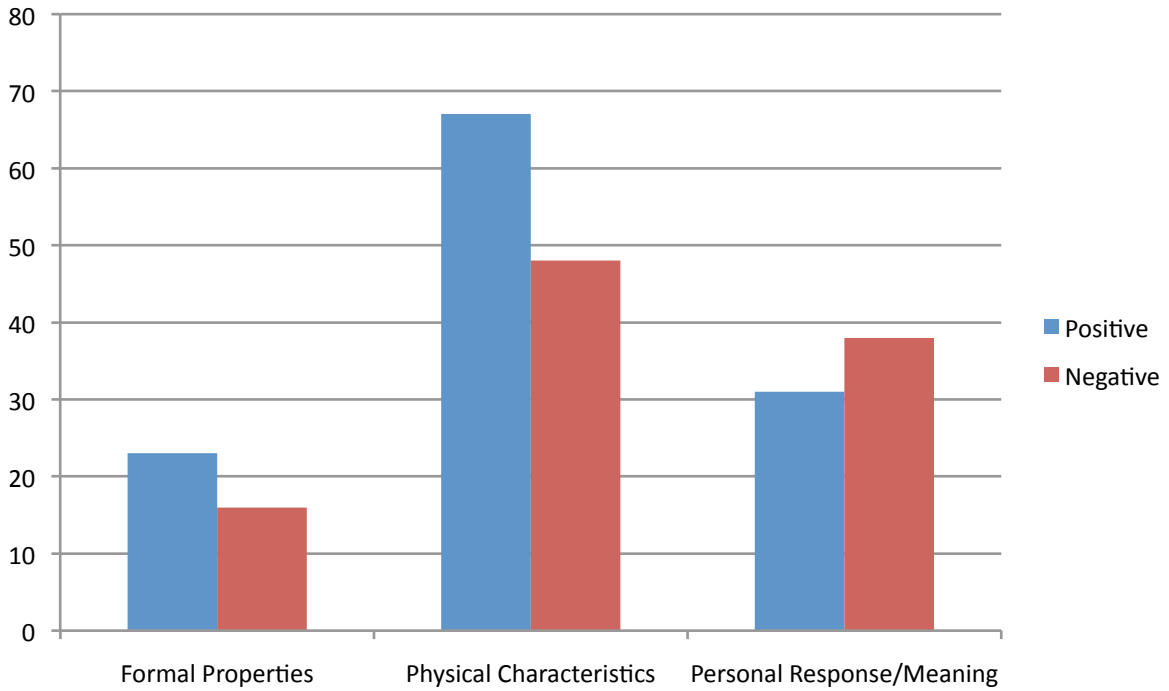
judgments made because of personal meaning in Beauty Survey Group 4 (Interchanged Heads); whereas, judgments of beauty made in Beauty Survey Groups 1-3 were based primarily on personal meaning.

Although personal meaning remained indistinct in most of the interchanged panels, there was one panel in Beauty Survey Group 4 whereby personal meaning far surpassed physical characteristics and formal properties combined. Panel B (skeleton head with mother's body) incited intense written responses in relationship to personal meaning. As illustrated in Figure 25, the responses show very little variation, except for in the case of Panel B and its overwhelming ranking of the least beautiful. The written responses to Panel B further illustrate its dominance in this survey. In short, participants held great disdain for this panel and the meaning it held. It was ranked accordingly in terms of beauty.

The conclusions that can be drawn from Beauty Survey Group 4 further substantiate conclusions drawn from the other groups. Personal meaning will usually triumph over physical characteristics and formal properties in both positive and negative ways. If a personal connection cannot be made, the viewer will normally default to physical characteristics or formal properties when rendering a judgment of beauty. Interactions of beauty and ugliness seem to make it more difficult for a person to render a judgment of beauty unless there is an obvious meaning that can be assigned to the artwork. In this instance, a negative meaning renders a negative judgment of beauty; a positive meaning renders a positive judgment of beauty.

Figure 24- Comparison between Groups 1-3 and Group 4

Beauty Study Group 4- Written Response Results



Beauty Study Groups 1-3- Written Response Results

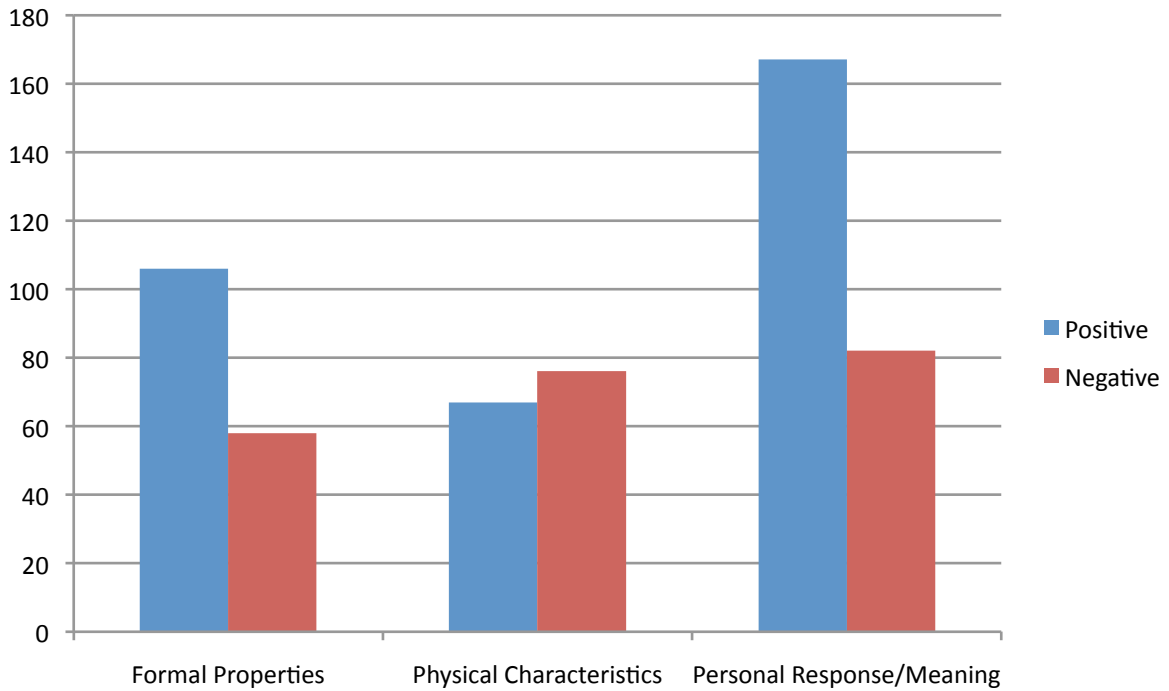
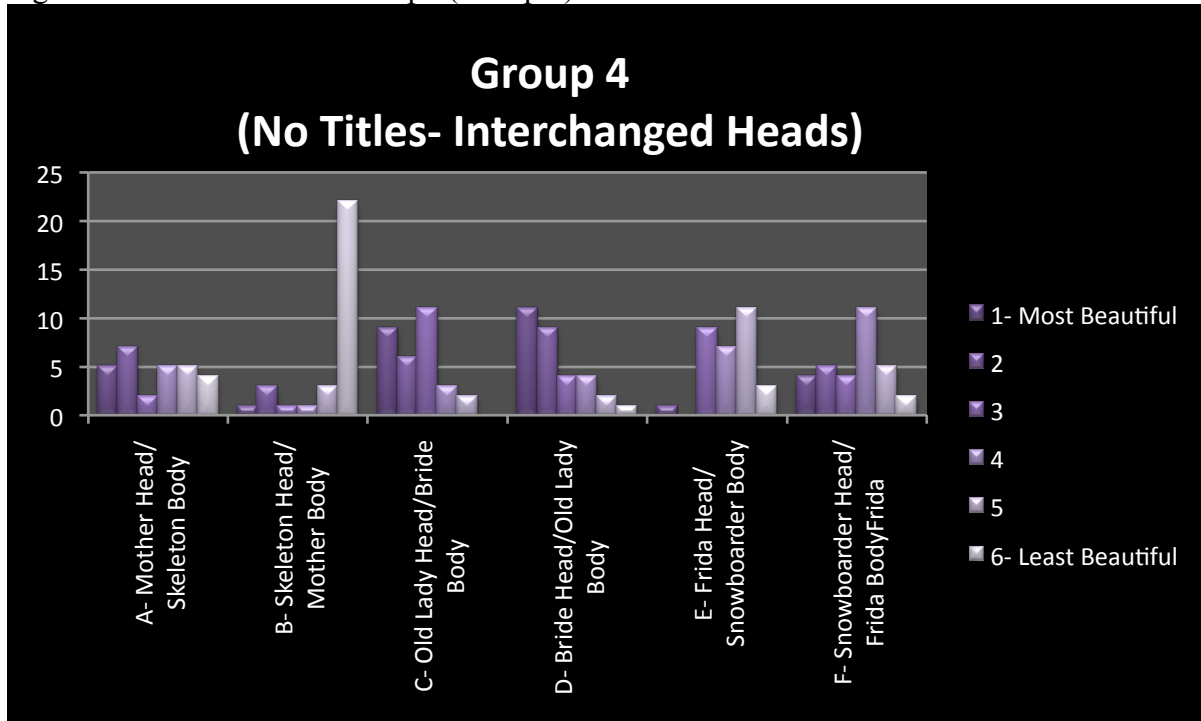


Figure 25- Cumulative Bar Graph (Group 4)



Most and Least Beautiful Comparison

Group 4 (Interchanged Heads)

Figure 26- Most Beautiful- Group 4

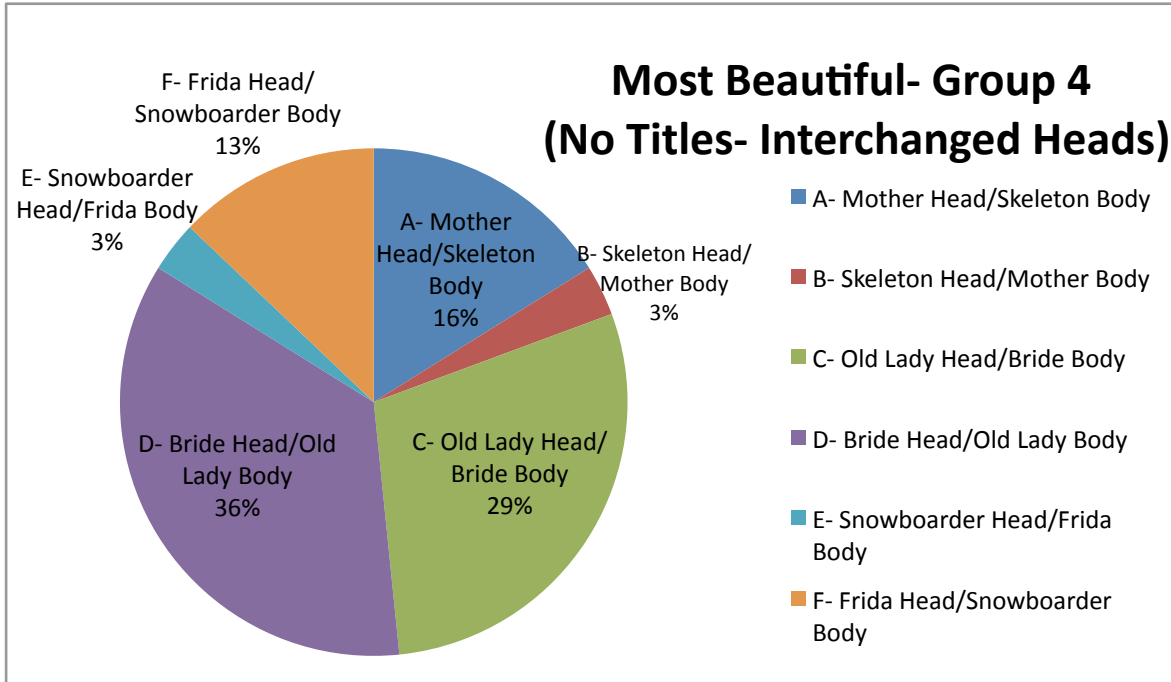
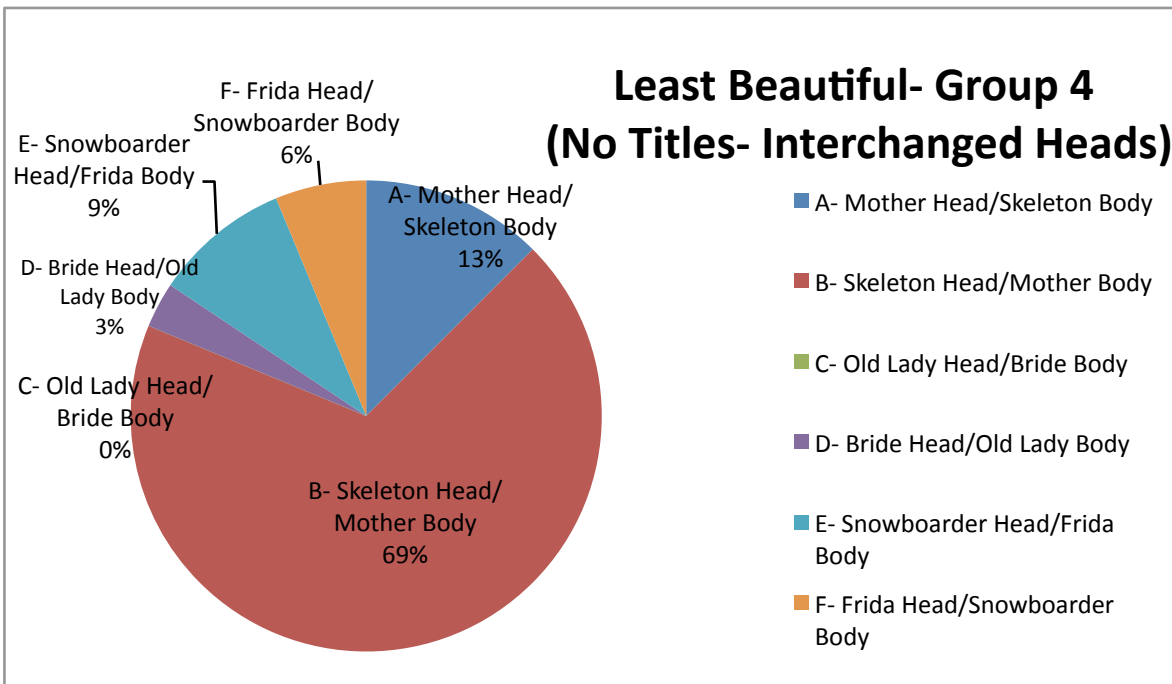
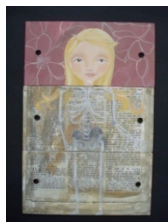


Figure 27- Least Beautiful- Group 4





PANEL A (INTERCHANGED HEAD): INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

As illustrated in Figure 25, Panel A was ranked fairly evenly from 1-6 in terms of beauty. Although the skeletal body was most often the least beautiful in the first three survey groups, when it was combined with the mother’s head, the distaste seemed to dissipate. After switching the heads, most respondents associated the skeletal body with an x-ray or science rather than equating it with death.

The formal properties most commented on included a positive reaction to the rendering of the skeleton and the flames. The majority of negative connections to personal meaning associated the body with thinness or anorexia. “It reminds me of some message for anorexia, where her face is pretty, but she’s just bones” (D 28).

The written results for Panel A were classified as follows:

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Formal Properties	11	5
Physical Features/Characteristics	3	1
Personal Meaning	4	11



PANEL B (INTERCHANGED HEAD): INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

As mentioned before, Panel B incited the most passionate and numerous responses of all the panels in this study in regards to personal meaning. It was rated the least beautiful by an overwhelming 69% of the participants. It is the opinion of this writer that this is because of two reasons. First, personal meaning is the most powerful of the three classifications by which a judgment of beauty is rendered. Secondly, the combination of the skeleton head holding babies created an intensely strong and apparent implication within the category of personal meaning; strongest category at its strongest level.

The word “scary” was used in many of the responses regarding personal meaning and Panel B. One such example is, “The context of the baby being held by the skull makes it a bit disturbing” (D15). It was interesting to note the contrast between judgments made about the skeleton body with the mother’s face as compared to the skeleton head with the mother’s body. The skeleton head on the mother’s body was found to be least beautiful more than five times as often as the mother’s head on the skeleton body (see Figure 27). This suggests that the mother’s body with the skeleton’s head is more easily associated with negative meaning, and, therefore, a negative judgment of beauty.

The written results for Panel B were classified as follows:

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Formal Properties	1	7
Physical Features/Characteristics	2	0
Personal Meaning	3	20



PANEL C (INTERCHANGED HEAD): INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

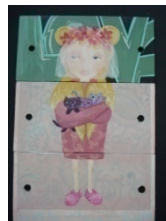
As illustrated in Figure 26, Panel C was considered to be most beautiful by 29% of the participants. It was ranked in the top three positions (1, 2, or 3) on the beauty scale by 84 % of the respondents. According to the written responses, Panel C seemed to be one of the most accepted panels in terms of beauty for two reasons. First, personal meaning remained positive. Secondly, the combination of the grandmother’s head with the bride’s body seemed to “match up” for most people.

Some of the responses that describe the majority of written statements in relation to personal meaning were as follows: “Grandmas are beautiful” (D11) and “This says to me, living happily ever after into old age” (D16). When describing the cohesiveness of Panel C, participants

responded with statements such as, “This picture looks the most “normal”. It flows together the best” (D15).

The written results for Panel C were classified as follows:

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Formal Properties	5	1
Physical Features/Characteristics	11	3
Personal Meaning	11	1



PANEL D (INTERCHANGED HEAD): INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

As illustrated in Figure 26, Panel C was considered to be most beautiful by 36% of the participants. This was the highest percentage of all the panels. It was ranked in the top three positions (1, 2, or 3) on the beauty scale by 77% of the respondents. Similar to Panel C, Panel D seemed to be one of the most accepted panels in terms of beauty. Unlike Panel C, however, Panel D held little personal meaning for the participants. Judgments of beauty regarding Panel D were determined by physical characteristics more than half (57%) of the time. Once again, many of the participants commented about the panel’s ability to “match up” and “look normal”. Other

comments referred to specific physical characteristics, such as, “Looks pretty, beauty is in the face” (D31) and “She is smiling and has flowers in her hair” (D 4).

The written results for Panel D were as follows:

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Formal Properties	6	4
Physical Features/Characteristics	17	4
Personal Meaning	4	2



PANEL E (INTERCHANGED HEAD): INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

As illustrated in Figure 26, Panel E was considered to be most beautiful by only 13% of the participants. Panel E was ranked the least beautiful by 6% of the participants. It was ranked in the low/mid positions (3, 4, or 5) on the beauty scale by 87% of the respondents. Consistent with the first three survey groups, the vast majority of the participants referenced physical characteristics (specifically the uni-brow) when rendering a judgment of beauty regarding Panel E. Panel E held little personal meaning for the participants, once again being overpowered by the abhorrent uni-brow. Judgments of beauty regarding Panel D were determined by physical characteristics two-thirds (66%) of the time. The written responses given in Beauty Survey

Group 4 were nearly identical to those responses from groups 1-3, when the uni-brow face was matched up with the correct body. For example, “Her hair is pretty but I don’t like her unbrow very much” (D 6), or “The uni-brow has got to go” (D 31).

The written results for Panel D were as follows:

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Formal Properties	5	2
Physical Features/Characteristics	7	16
Personal Meaning	3	2



PANEL F (INTERCHANGED HEAD): INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

As illustrated in Figure 26, Panel F was considered to be most beautiful by only 3% of the participants. Panel F was ranked the least beautiful by 6% of the participants. Panel F seemed to be neutral in terms of beauty for the majority of participants. It created no significant reactions, positive or negative, neither in terms of ranking beauty, nor in written explanations. One participant’s response seemed to capture the essence of this panel, “This one I didn’t hate or really like. It was a middle one” (D15). When participants reacted positively to physical features of Panel F, they almost always referred to the eyes, “Big, beautiful eyes” (D 31). Negative

responses regarding formal properties most often cited the style (Anime), just as when the same head was on the correct body in survey groups 1-3.

It can be concluded that although Panel F still maintained some of the same negative and positive responses as in groups 1-3, the attributes were not as strong as in other panels in this survey to warrant a most or least beautiful judgment, or even a passionate response either way.

The written results for Panel D were as follows:

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Formal Properties	2	8
Physical Features/Characteristics	13	3
Personal Meaning	6	2

CHAPTER FIVE- Conclusions

“We live only to discover beauty. All else is a form of waiting.”

-Gibran Khalil, *Sand and Foam* (1926)

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde wrote in 1890, “Beauty is a form of genius- is higher indeed than genius, as it needs no explanation.” In a large sense, this is true. For thousands of years, countless philosophers and scholars have attempted to objectively define beauty, yet beauty has proven to be impervious to such confinement. Although beauty eludes static definition, it remains a vitally significant human value.

With the emergence of modern art, and subsequently contemporary art, beauty is less often readily available on the surface of an artwork- an easy beauty. For example, as Reber, Schwarz, and Winkielman (2004) suggest, examples of contemporary art are processed less fluently than examples of representational art. Contemporary works of art often require substantial reasoning and understanding because they are abstract, ambiguous, non-representational, etc. In short, the more recognizable and easy to understand an artwork is, the more beautiful it often appears to the viewer. There are, however, instances when complexities, ambiguities, and other characteristics of difficult beauty are accepted, or perhaps even preferred, because they engage personal association and meaning.

Just as the definition of beauty will continue to be culturally and historically changing, so must our methodological and pedagogical practices regarding beauty and Aesthetics. As Art Educators, I feel it is our responsibility to help students process, understand, and interpret artworks that may contain complexities, such as difficult beauty, in search of meaning and

understanding. Through understanding is derived fluency in processing the artwork, which, in turn, leads to appreciation, and pleasure.

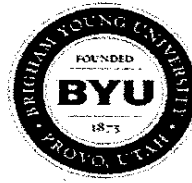
The study conducted in this thesis investigated the relationship between beauty, ugliness, and meaning and explored the reasons behind judgments of beauty. It can be concluded, through an analysis of the collected data, two important findings. They are: (1) that beauty and meaning are closely related, and (2) meaning can have both positive and negative affects on judgments of beauty. Judgments of beauty are both cognitive and affective and appear to have social and cultural foundations, as well as a relationship to personal experience and meaning. Ultimately, strong personal associations and experience, both positive and negative, outweighed physical, social, and cultural judgments of beauty. Meaning and experience greatly affect judgments of beauty.

As educators, we can take the information gleaned from this study to enhance the ability of students to process artworks that may require deeper analyses in order to create personal connections. I believe, as students become more able to recognize and process beauty in its many forms, the fluency in which they process such artworks will increase, thus promoting more meaningful aesthetic experiences. The children's book, *Terrible the Beautiful Bear*, contained in Chapter Six of this thesis, is an example of how to teach this concept to even young children. Helping students become aware that beauty exists in curious and difficult places, and prompting them to search for meaning, gives students the capacity to take part in its pleasure.

Appendix A

Approval Letter from Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Institutional Review Board
for Human Subjects



Brigham Young University
A-285 ASB . Provo, Utah 84602
(801) 422-3841 / Fax: (801) 422-0620

March 25, 2009

Christine Sorensen
375 S. Locust Ave.
Pleasant Grove, UT 84062

Re: Beauty, Ugliness, and Meaning: How do People Rank Beauty?

Dear Christine Sorensen

This is to inform you that Brigham Young University's IRB has approved the above research study.

The approval period is from 3-25-2009 to 3-24-2010. Your study number is E090089. Please be sure to reference this number in any correspondence with the IRB.

Continued approval is conditional upon your compliance with the following requirements.

1. A copy of the 'Informed Consent Document' approved as of 3-25-2009 is enclosed. No other consent form should be used. It must be signed by each subject prior to initiation of any protocol procedures. In addition, each subject must be given a copy of the signed consent form.
2. All protocol amendments and changes to approved research must be submitted to the IRB and not be implemented until approved by the IRB.
3. The enclosed recruitment advertisement has been approved. Advertisements, letters, Internet postings and any other media for subject recruitment must be submitted to IRB and approved prior to use.
4. A few months before this date we will send out a continuing review form. There will only be two reminders. Please fill this form out in a timely manner to ensure that there is not a lapse in your approval.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sandee M.P. Munoz".

Christopher Dromey, PHD, Chair
Sandee M.P. Munoz, Administrator
Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects
CD/se

Appendix B
Consent Form for Beauty Survey

A Survey About Ranking Beauty Consent to be a Research Subject

Introduction

This research study is being conducted by Christine Sorensen, a master's student at Brigham Young University to determine how people rank beauty. You were selected to participate because you are currently a student at BYU. Participation is completely voluntary and responses will be kept confidential.

Procedures

You will be asked to complete a survey in your classroom. The study consists of viewing six painted images and ranking them in terms of beauty. You will rank the images with the numbers 1-6. 1 is the most beautiful, 6 is the least beautiful. You will then write a brief response next to each ranking which describes your reasons for ranking it as such. The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes. The results will be compiled, assessed and included in a master's thesis study.

Risks/Discomforts

There are minimal risks for participation in this study. However, you may feel emotional discomfort when answering questions about personal beliefs regarding beauty. There are no right or wrong answers and your responses will be kept confidential.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits to subjects. However, it is hoped that through your participation researchers will learn more about your own personal assessment of beauty.

Confidentiality

All information provided will remain confidential and will only be reported as group data with no identifying information. All data, including questionnaires and tapes/transcriptions from the focus group, will be kept in a locked storage cabinet and only those directly involved with the research will have access to them. After the research is completed, the questionnaires and tapes will be destroyed.

Compensation

There is no compensation for participation in this survey.

Participation

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at anytime or refuse to participate entirely without jeopardy to your class status, grade or standing with the university.

Questions about the Research

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Christine Sorensen. Email: hotbisque@comcast.net
Phone: 801-796-1233.

Questions about your Rights as Research Participants

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact Christopher Dromey, PhD, IRB Chair, 422-6461, 133 TLRB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602,
Christopher_Dromey@byu.edu.

I have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPROVED EXPIRES
MAR 25 2009 - MAR 24 2010

Appendix C
Beauty Survey Groups 1-4

Group 1

Please rank the 6 images in order of beauty.

1 is most beautiful.

6 is least beautiful.

Next to each image, write a brief reason why you ranked it as such.

MOST

BEAUTIFUL

1 _____
reason: _____

2 _____
reason: _____

3 _____
reason: _____

4 _____
reason: _____

5 _____
reason: _____

6 _____
reason: _____

LEAST BEAUTIFUL



A



B



C



D



E



F

Group 2

Please rank the 6 images in order of beauty.

1 is most beautiful.

6 is least beautiful.

Next to each image, write a brief reason why you ranked it as such.

MOST

BEAUTIFUL

1 _____
reason: _____

2 _____
reason: _____

3 _____
reason: _____

4 _____
reason: _____

5 _____
reason: _____

6 _____
reason: _____

LEAST BEAUTIFUL

I am Mother

Death Pending

Social Security

Pretty in Love

Life's Adventure

Learn, Teach, Create



A



B



C



D



E



F

Group 3

Please rank the 6 images in order of beauty.

1 is most beautiful.

6 is least beautiful.

Next to each image, write a brief reason why you ranked it as such.

MOST BEAUTIFUL

1 _____
reason: _____

2 _____
reason: _____

3 _____
reason: _____

4 _____
reason: _____

5 _____
reason: _____

6 _____
reason: _____

LEAST BEAUTIFUL

Death Pending

Pretty in Love

I am Mother

Social Security

Learn, Teach, Create

Life's Adventure



A



B



C



D



E



F

Group 4

Please rank the 6 images in order of beauty.

1 is most beautiful.

6 is least beautiful.

Next to each image, write a brief reason why you ranked it as such.

MOST BEAUTIFUL

1 _____
reason: _____

2 _____
reason: _____

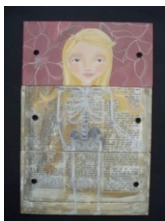
3 _____
reason: _____

4 _____
reason: _____

5 _____
reason: _____

6 _____
reason: _____

LEAST BEAUTIFUL



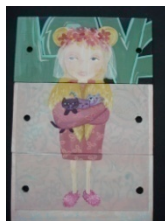
A



B



C



D



E



F

CHAPTER SIX- Teaching Difficult Beauty to Children: An Elementary Art Lesson

The following is an example of a lesson plan for young children focusing on difficult beauty. It is designed to engage children in creative and critical thought regarding difficult beauty. Although its emphasis is on beauty, it is a comprehensive art lesson plan that includes studies and activities in Aesthetics, Art History, Art Criticism, Art Studio, and Visual Culture.

What
Makes



Something



Beautiful?

A child's guide to understanding difficult beauty

Elementary Art Curriculum (Grades K-3)

By Christine A. Palmer

A BEARY GOOD OUTLINE

1. Sometimes beauty can be **BEARY** difficult.....p.100

- Aesthetics/Studio/Art Criticism Lesson Plan
- Bear Pattern (Lesson Handout #1)
- Fabric Bear Instructions (Lesson Handout #2)
- Letter to Parents (Lesson Handout #3)
- Beary Interesting Questions (Lesson Handout #4)

2. Something is **BEARY** wrong!p.106

- Art History/Visual Culture Lesson Plan
- Something is Beary Wrong (Lesson Handout#5)

3. *Terrible, the Beautiful Bear*.....p.119

- Children's Book by Christine Palmer

Sometimes Beauty can be **BEARY** Difficult!

Lesson Theme: Sometimes Beauty can be **BEARY** Difficult!

Focusing on: *Terrible, the Beautiful Bear* -An artistic inquiry based story and lesson plan.

Target Grade Level: K-3

Estimated Time: 1-2 Weeks

In Class Learning Tasks- 4-8 hours

At Home Learning Tasks- varied

Assessment-10 min.

National Visual Arts Standards:

- K-4:** (1b) Describe how different materials, techniques, and processes cause different responses.
- (1c) Use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences and stories.
- (3a) Explore and understand prospective content for works of art.
- (3b) Select and use subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning.
- (5b) Describe how people’s experiences influence the development of specific artworks.
- (5c) Understand there are different responses to specific artwork.

Content Indicators:

1. Students will know the term “difficult beauty.”

2. Students will understand that the same subject matter can be considered beautiful by some people, yet ugly by others.
3. Students will know that experiences can affect opinions, both positively and negatively.
4. Students will understand that there are many different opinions regarding artistic merit.

Process Indicators:

1. Students will participate in an aesthetics discussion about the pretty, the beautiful, and terrible beauty based on the questions from *Terrible, The Beautiful Bear*.
2. Students will gain an opinion as to whether or not “less pretty” or even ugly things can be beautiful.
3. Students will appreciate different levels of beauty.
4. Students will be able to describe what makes something beautiful.
5. Students will create a beautiful bear and be able to transform it into difficult beauty through their own experiences.
6. Students will write and/or illustrate a book to share their experiences about the transformation from beauty to difficult beauty.

Assessment:

- Yes/No check-off for participation in class discussion about book.
- Letter to Parents- Lesson Handout #3 signed by parent/guardian acknowledging participation in activity.
- Completion of Beary Interesting Questions- Lesson Handout #4
(Checked-off for completion)
- Illustration or book about experience(s) with bear.

Vocabulary:

Opinion-1: a view, judgment, or appraisal formed in the mind about a particular matter 2: belief stronger than impression and less strong than positive knowledge.

Definition suggestion for young children: The way you think or feel about something. (*Chocolate-chip cookies are better than oatmeal/raisin cookies.*)

Difficult/Terrible Beauty- Beauty that is bound up with the arousal of discomforting emotions. (1)Korsmeyer, Carolyn

Definition suggestion for young children: Beauty that is not beautiful to everyone and takes some understanding.

Materials Needed:

- *Terrible, the Beautiful Bear* children's book
- Bear outline for studio activity (See lesson handout #1)
- Pre-made fabric bears (see instructions for making fabric bears- lesson handout #2) or paper bears printed on card stock
- Paint, crayons or markers for studio activity
- Lesson Handout #3- Letter to parents
- Lesson Handout #4- Beary Interesting Questions

Motivation: Read *Terrible, the Beautiful Bear*. Conduct an art inquiry-based discussion based on the questions in the back of the book (see learning task 1).

Learning Tasks:

Aesthetics

1. After reading *Terrible, the Beautiful Bear*, conduct an art inquiry discussion based on the following questions:

- Why did Louise think the bear was so beautiful in the beginning of the story?

(It was clean and new, it had fancy clothes, it wore her favorite color, and the like.)

- What happened to the bear to make it “not so pretty”?

(Its clothes were ruined, it got dirty, the dog tore its arm off.)

- Why did Louise think her bear was beautiful in the end?

(It had been with her through all of the hard experiences, it was still her friend.)

- What is the difference between easy beauty and difficult beauty?

(Most people can appreciate beauty, while terrible or difficult beauty is harder to like. Terrible beauty requires more understanding and openness.)

- How can the way we FEEL about something make it more beautiful?

(If we like it, or appreciate and understand something, then it can help us connect and appreciate its inner beauty.)

- How can the way we feel about something make it less beautiful?

(If we do not like something, then it can become less beautiful based on our inner feelings of distaste.)

- Can something “not so pretty” to some people still be beautiful to others? Why?

(Yes, people have different experiences and tastes that influence their judgments, both positive and negative.)

- Can you think of something only you think is beautiful?

Studio

2. Students will create their own beautiful bear by using one of the following methods:

Option 1- Fabric Teddy Bear

Materials needed:

Pre-made fabric bears (see instructions for making fabric bears- Lesson Handout #2), paints, permanent or fabric markers, buttons, fabric, and other decorative items. Students can add additional decoration at home, such as clothes or accessories.

Preparation:

Pre-cut, and pre-sew bears based on fabric bear pattern, (remember to leave small opening for students to be able to stuff their bears)

- Students will stuff their bear with batting, have the final hole sewn up by teacher, and paint their bears with fabric paints or permanent/fabric markers.

Option 2- Paper Teddy Bear

Materials needed:

Paper bears created from paper teddy bear pattern, scissors, markers, other items for decorating (such as fabric, sequins, glitter.) See Lesson Handout #1.

Preparation:

Copy paper bear pattern onto heavy cardstock for each student. For younger students, pre-cut bears.

- Students will cut their bear out and personalize it by painting and decorating it with paints, markers, fabric and other media.

Aesthetics/Studio

3. Students will take their bears home let their bears share experiences with them for a period of one week. Send home Lesson Handouts #3 and #4.

- Students will take home their bears and a letter to parents explaining the sharing experiences activity. See Lesson Handout #3.
- Students will be encouraged to bring the bear everywhere possible to enhance their sharing experience.

Aesthetics/Criticism

4. Parents will participate by completing the handout “What do you think of my bear?” at the beginning and the end of the week. See Lesson Handout #4- Beary Interesting Questions.

Aesthetics/Criticism

5. Students will show their bears to the class at the end of the week and answer one of several suggested questions about their experiences:

- What was your favorite experience with your bear last week?
- Did anything happen last week to change how it looked?
- How did you feel about the bear before and after the week?
- Is there anything about your bear that other people might think is not so pretty or even ugly?
- Do you feel the same way?

Studio/Aesthetics/Criticism

6. Students will illustrate and/or write a short book or single picture about their bear and its experiences over the week.

Adaptations:

Special-Needs Students

- Students who are unable to create their own bear can have another student or teacher's aid help create the bear for them to take for the week.

Instead of having to color or paint the bear, the student can choose a color of construction paper to use for the bear pattern. Decorations, such as buttons, fabric pieces, and colored paper can be glued down by student with assistance instead of painting or coloring.

- Students unable to write or illustrate the experiences they had with their bear can verbally share their experiences and thoughts with the class.

Cutting Costs

- Use option #2- Creating paper bears cuts down considerably on cost and preparation time.

Something is **BEARY** wrong!

Lesson Theme: Something is Beary Wrong!

Focusing on: Art History- Prehistoric, Egyptian, Renaissance, Pop Art, Surrealism

Target Grade Level: K-3

Estimated Time: 1 Day

In Class Learning Tasks- 2-4 hours

Assessment-10 min.

National Visual Arts Standards:

- K-4:** (1b) Describe how different materials, techniques, and processes cause different responses.
- (4a) Know that the visual arts have both a history and specific relationships to various cultures.
- (4b) Identify specific works of art as belonging to particular cultures, times, and places.
- (4c) Demonstrate how history, culture, and the visual arts can influence each other in making and studying works of art.
- (5b) Describe how people's experiences influence the development of specific artworks.

Content Indicators:

1. Students will know that art is made differently at different times in history and by different cultures.
2. Students will understand that works of art can be analyzed by the style in which they were created.

3. Students will know that the style of a painting can be used to estimate the time in which the artwork was created.

Process Indicators:

1. Students will match bears created in the style of a movement in art history with a corresponding painting.
2. Students will be able to describe why each bear matches or represents a specific painting.
3. Students will complete a worksheet demonstrating their ability to analyze paintings based on their specific styles.
4. Students will create a bear that reflects our current culture and time period.
5. Students will gain an opinion about how art works are created today, in our present time and culture to reflect our society.

Assessment:

- Completion of Lesson Handout #5- Something is *Beary* Wrong!
Checked for accuracy by reviewing answers as a class, revised if necessary and then turned in for completion check-off.
- Completion of studio task- visual culture bear followed by verbal check-off by teacher of student response;

After student completes bear representing current culture, student will verbally describe to teacher one characteristic of their bear that reminds them of their everyday life.

Vocabulary:

1. **Portrait**- A picture of a person.
2. **Prehistoric**- A time before recorded history.
3. **Renaissance**- Art movement of 14th- 16th centuries. Rebirth of art bridging the gap between medieval and modern times.

4. **Abstract**- Unrealistic depiction of something.

5. **Cubism**- A form of abstract art that is often fragmented and shows multiple sides of an object simultaneously.

6. **Surrealism**- Realistic depiction of unrealistic subject matter (fantasy and dream-like).

Materials Needed:

- Artworks reflecting specific periods in art history

1. **Prehistoric**- 10,000-15,000 BC- The painted cave at Lascaux, France.

2. **Ancient Egypt**- 1290–1255 BC- Tomb wall depicting Nefertari, the great royal wife of pharaoh Ramesses II.

3. **Renaissance**- Approximately 1300-1600- Titian, *Portrait of Isabella of Portugal*. 1548

4. **Cubism**- Early 1900s- Pablo Picasso, *Girl with a Boat (Maya Picasso)*. 1938

5. **Surrealism**- 1920s- Salvador Dali, *The Elephants*. 1948

- Corresponding bears reflecting specific periods in art history

- Bear outline printed onto cardstock for studio activity (See Lesson Handout #1)

- Magazines or pictures of visual culture images to be used in collage, crayons, or markers.

- Lesson Handout #5- Something is Beary Wrong!

Note: The purpose of this exercise is **not** to have students memorize different art movements in history. It is simply intended to help children recognize that there were different art styles throughout history and to help them recognize and identify their differences.

Motivation: Come into class looking terribly concerned and tell the students you have a problem. The art director of the local museum was creating a display depicting how teddy bears might have been depicted differently in artworks through the years. As she was trying to organize the paintings, all of the bears actually fell off the artworks. She has asked you and your class to try to put them back in their proper time period in art history. Can you help?????

Learning Tasks:

Art History / Visual Culture

1. Hang the five artworks.
2. Place lost bears in a bag or box to be drawn out individually, discussed, and put in its proper place.
3. Instruct students that they will be looking at works of art closely to try to determine when and how it was created. This will help them find the proper place in art history for the lost bears.
4. Have a student draw one bear from the bag and show it to the class. Give the students an opportunity to see if he or she is able to place the bear in the appropriate artwork without assistance. If not, then they can ask the rest of the class for help.
5. Discuss with the class their reasons for placing the bear in the corresponding artwork. Suggested questions are:

- What similarities do you see between the bear and the artwork that made you choose that painting?
- Why wouldn't the bear fit in another painting? What are some differences?
- When do you think it was painted? A long time ago? Last week? What makes you think so?
- Which painting do you think is the oldest? Why?
- Do you think we can tell how old a painting is by HOW it is created?
- Do you think we can tell how old a painting is by WHAT is in the picture?

- Do you think we can tell WHO painted a painting based on how it was painted?
- What kinds of things do you see that might be considered an artist's style of painting? (Do they use certain colors, lines, or other elements of art? Is it realistic looking or not?)
- Is there anything in the painting that could tell us WHERE it was painted?

5. Repeat learning task 4 until all bears have found their corresponding artworks.

6. Pass out Lesson Handout #5- Something is Beary Wrong! Let students match the bears up close to reinforce and assess what they just learned.

7. Discuss with students how they think a bear would look if it represented our current time period and culture.

- What would it look like?
- What color would it be?
- What would it be wearing?
- What kinds of things would it like to do?
- What would it eat?
- Where would it go?

8. The students will work collectively to create a huge class bear representing the culture which surrounds them (symbols, logos, fashion trends, hairstyles, and the like.)

9. Draw a large outline of a simple bear on butcher paper.

10. Pass out magazines or images representing visual culture. Let students each find one image which they feel represents the world around them. Explain again that they are looking for things that represent the world which surrounds them (logos, styles, and the like.)

11. Each student will take a turn dressing or decorating the large class bear (adding clothes or a hairstyle, logo.) They can choose to draw on the bear or add a picture or logo cut from the magazines (collage).

Optional Extension Activity

Using Lesson Handout #1, each student can design an individual collaged bear that depicts our present time and culture. This can be created using markers, crayon, paint, cut out images and logos from magazines. Emphasize that something about the bear should represent the world around them (symbols, logos, fashion trends.)

Further Extensions:

- Students can create their own ancient cave drawings similar to Lascaux
 1. Put brown craft paper on the underside of tables.
 2. Make the room dark.
 3. Have students try to draw a picture of their pet or favorite animal while lying down in their “table cave” using black crayons.

Inter-Disciplinary Connections:

- **SOCIAL STUDIES-** Have students explore more about Ancient Egypt and the time of Queen Nefertari and discover **hieroglyphs**, sarcophagi, and other ancient treasures.

Resources:

1. Korsmeyer, Carolyn. (2005). *Terrible Beauties. Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art.* Blackwell publishing

“Something is Beary Wrong”- Supplemental images

1. Prehistoric- 10,000-15,000 BC- The painted cave at Lascaux, France.



2. Ancient Egypt- 1290–1255 BC- Tomb wall depicting Nefertari, the great royal wife of Pharaoh Ramesses II.



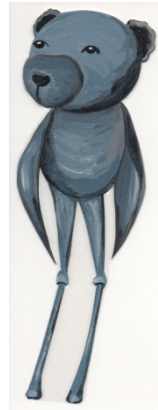
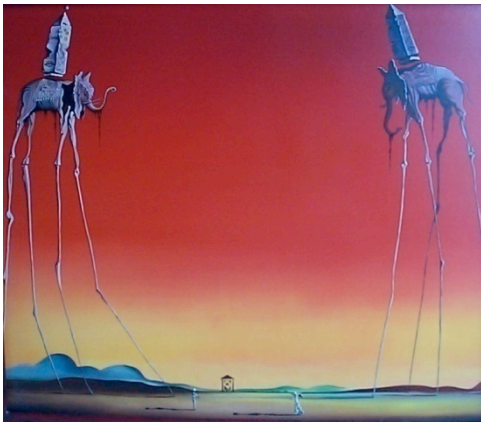
3. Renaissance- Approximately 1300-1600- Titian, *Portrait of Isabella of Portugal*. 1548



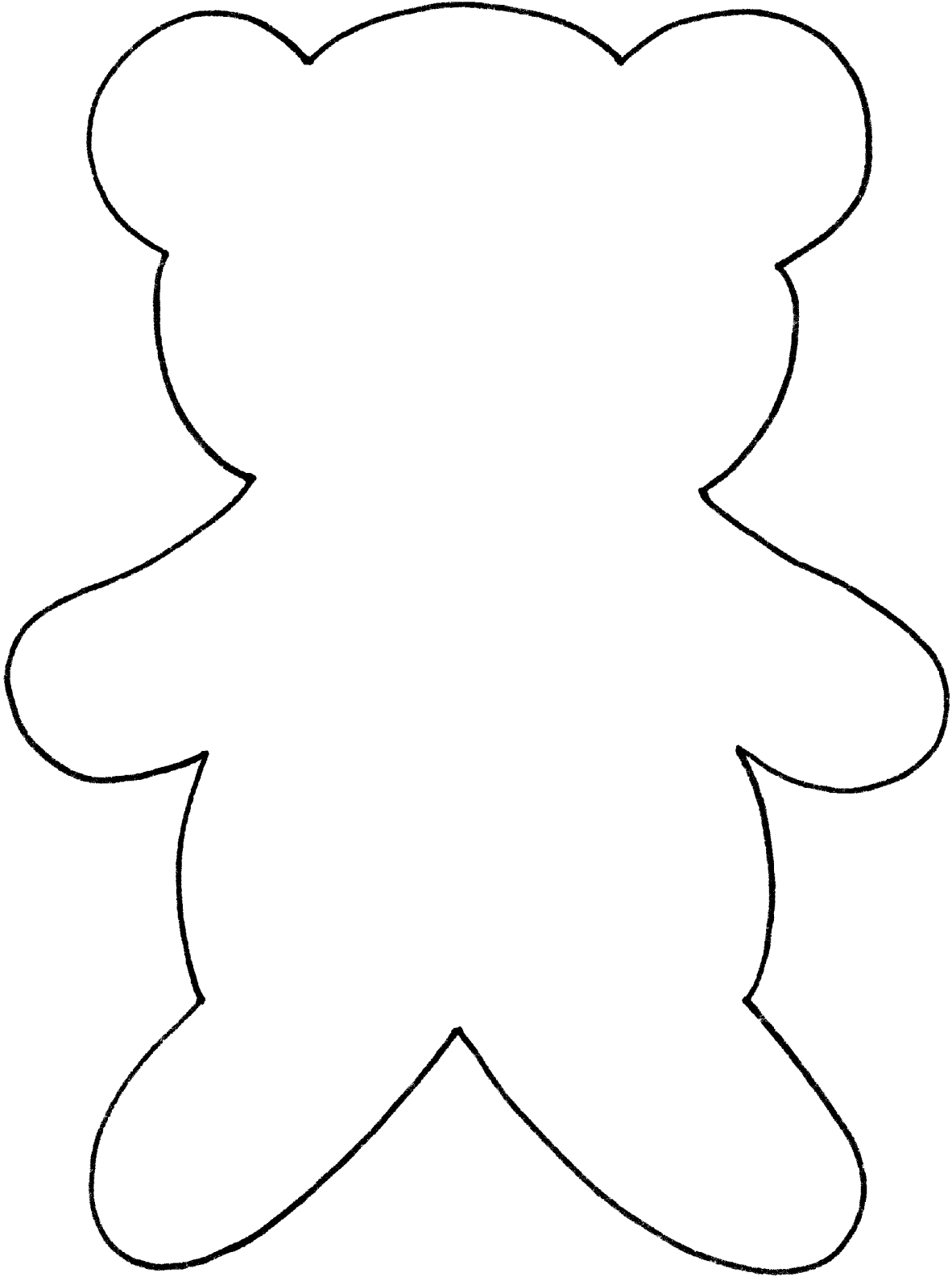
4. Cubism- Early 1900s- Pablo Picasso, *Girl with a Boat (Maya Picasso)*. 1938



5. Surrealism- 1920s- Salvador Dali, *The Elephants*. 1948

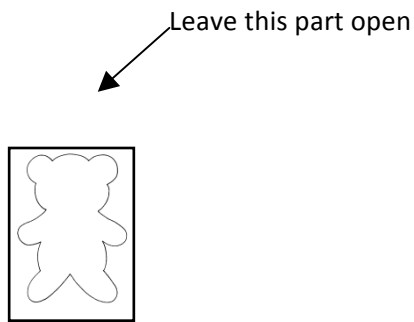


Lesson Handout #1- Bear Pattern



Lesson Handout #2- Fabric Bear Instructions

1. Cut bear figure out using Lesson Handout #1 (Bear pattern).
2. Trace around bear onto white fabric using a pencil. Fabric should be doubled to provide both a front and a back for bear.
3. Before cutting, sew both pieces of fabric together on pencil outline. Do not sew it entirely! Leave the space on top of the bear's head (between the ears) open for flipping inside out and stuffing.



4. Cut around bear after it is sewn.
5. Using the opening between the ears, flip bear inside out so the seam lines are no longer visible. Since it is difficult to reach inside the small opening, a pencil or other long tool can be used to make sure the arms, legs and ears are completely turned inside out.
6. Stuff the bear with poly fill or cotton stuffing.
7. Sew opening closed.

Lesson Handout #3- Letter to Parents

Dear Moms, Dads, Grandmas, Grandpas, Uncles, Aunts, or

anyone else, who will watch over _____ this week,

Our class is participating in an exciting activity! _____ will be bringing home a special friend from school. Although it may only look like a simple bear, it is much more than that. This bear will experience the life of your child for the week and will then become part of an art/writing project at school.

What does this mean for you?

During the week, please encourage your child to have the bear with him/her as much as possible; breakfast, lunch, dinner, ballet, soccer practices, family outings, playing with friends, chore time, walking the dog, bedtime, and so forth.

The experiences are a major part of this project, so your encouragement and support is extremely appreciated. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Note:

Please sign below after the week is over if your student completed this challenge and have them return it to school. Thank you!

Sign Here _____

Parent/guardian of _____

Lesson Handout #5- *Something is Beary Wrong!*

These bears are lost and need to get back to the picture where they belong. Can you look closely at the pictures and draw a line from each bear to its matching picture?



Terrible, the Beautiful Bear



**Terrible,
the Beautiful Bear**

By Christine Palmer

Have you ever wanted something so badly you could hardly stand it? That is how Louise felt.

It was Louise's birthday and she had waited FOREVER for this day to come! She was hoping that for this birthday she would finally get a Pretty, Pretty Beauty -Bear, just like she had seen on T.V.

Right when she saw the pink flowery box in the pile of presents, she knew her dream was about to come true.

Sure enough, she opened the box and there it was... and it was even more beautiful than it looked on T.V.!

It had soft brown fur, a fancy purple dress with matching shiny shoes, and purple, sparkly fairy wings. And, it wouldn't be a true Pretty, Pretty, Beauty-Bear without the most gorgeous golden crown and jewels Louise had ever seen.

This was the best day ever.



During her birthday party, Louise's little cousin Morty thought it would be funny to make her new bear dance on the birthday cake. Before Louise could snatch her bear back from Morty, it was covered in rainbow frosting.

Louise

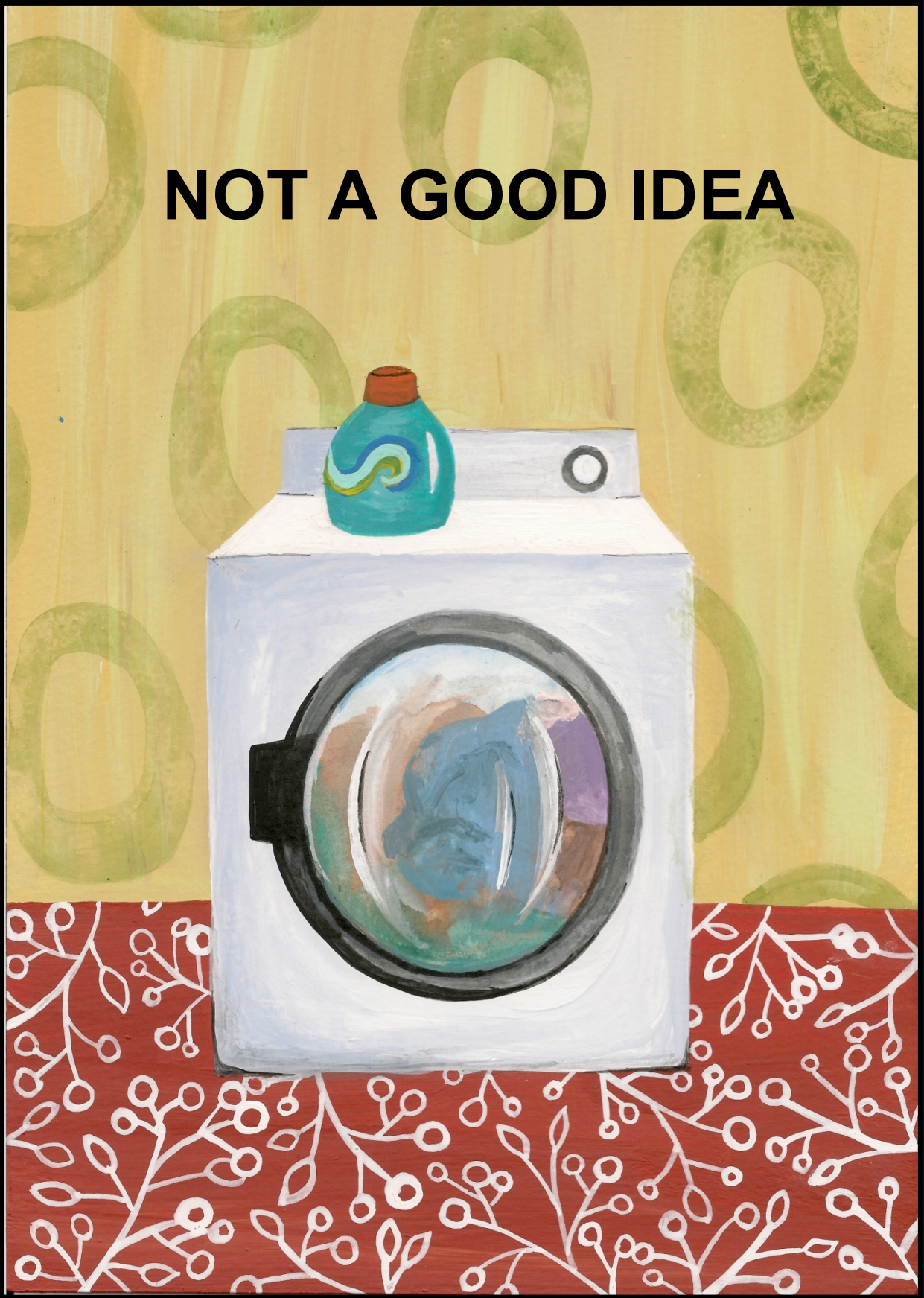
couldn't believe her eyes. Already, her beautiful bear was looking dirty. Delicious, but dirty.

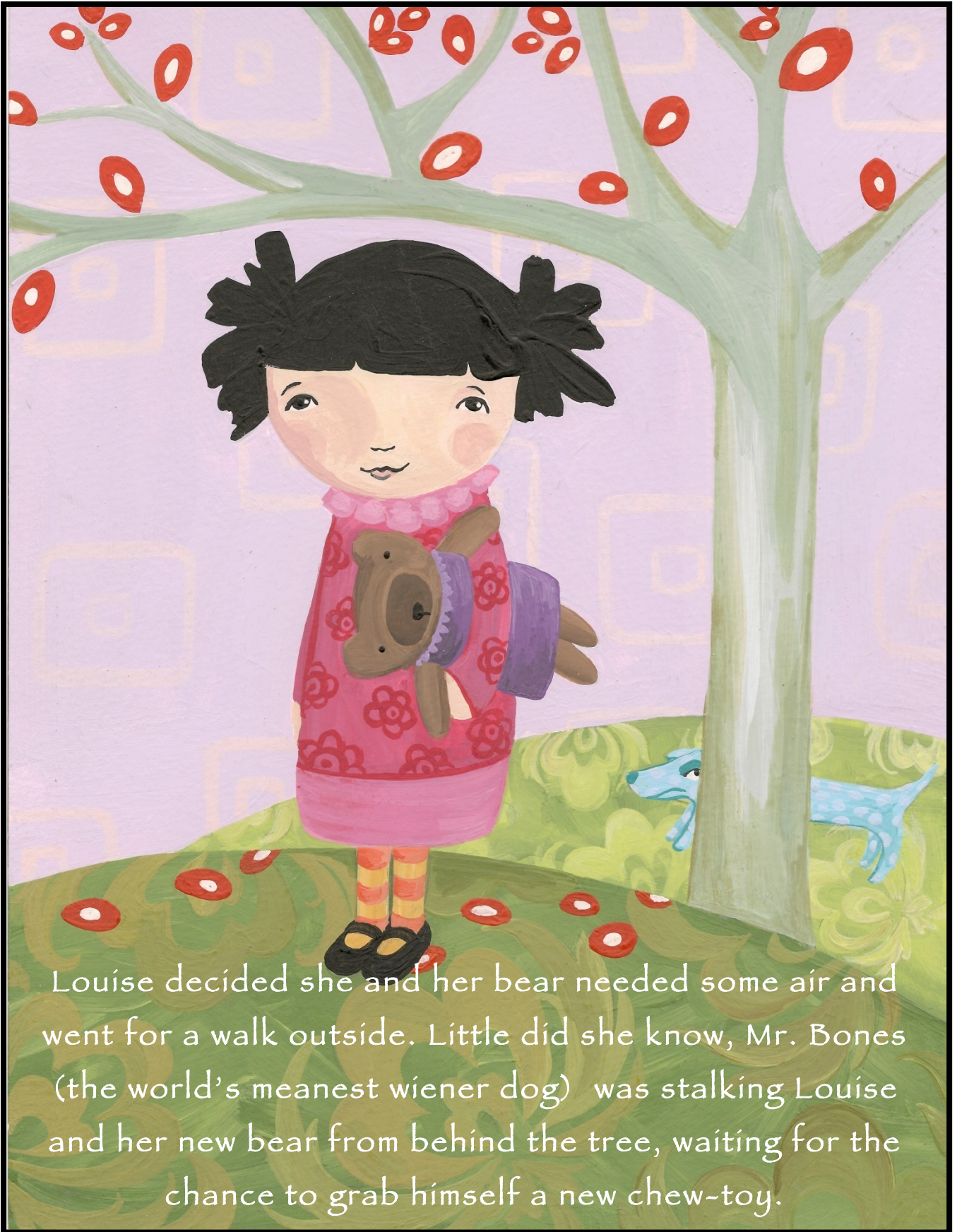
Louise knew her Mom was doing some laundry, so she thought she could easily clean the bear's pretty fairy wings and shoes by throwing it in the washing machine. In fact, she thought, the washer would make the crown and jewels sparkle even more!

It turned out , doing laundry without her Mommy was not a good idea.

When Louise's bear came out of the washing machine, the wings and shoes were nowhere in sight. In fact, the crown and jewels were gone too! Louise emptied all of the clothes out of the washer and all that was left on the bottom of the washer was a plastic pile of sparkly goo, with unidentified chunks in it. It reminded Louise of that weird Jell-o salad her aunt makes at Thanksgiving- with marshmallows and nuts and other stuff that should not be in Jell-o.

NOT A GOOD IDEA





Louise decided she and her bear needed some air and went for a walk outside. Little did she know, Mr. Bones (the world's meanest wiener dog) was stalking Louise and her new bear from behind the tree, waiting for the chance to grab himself a new chew-toy.



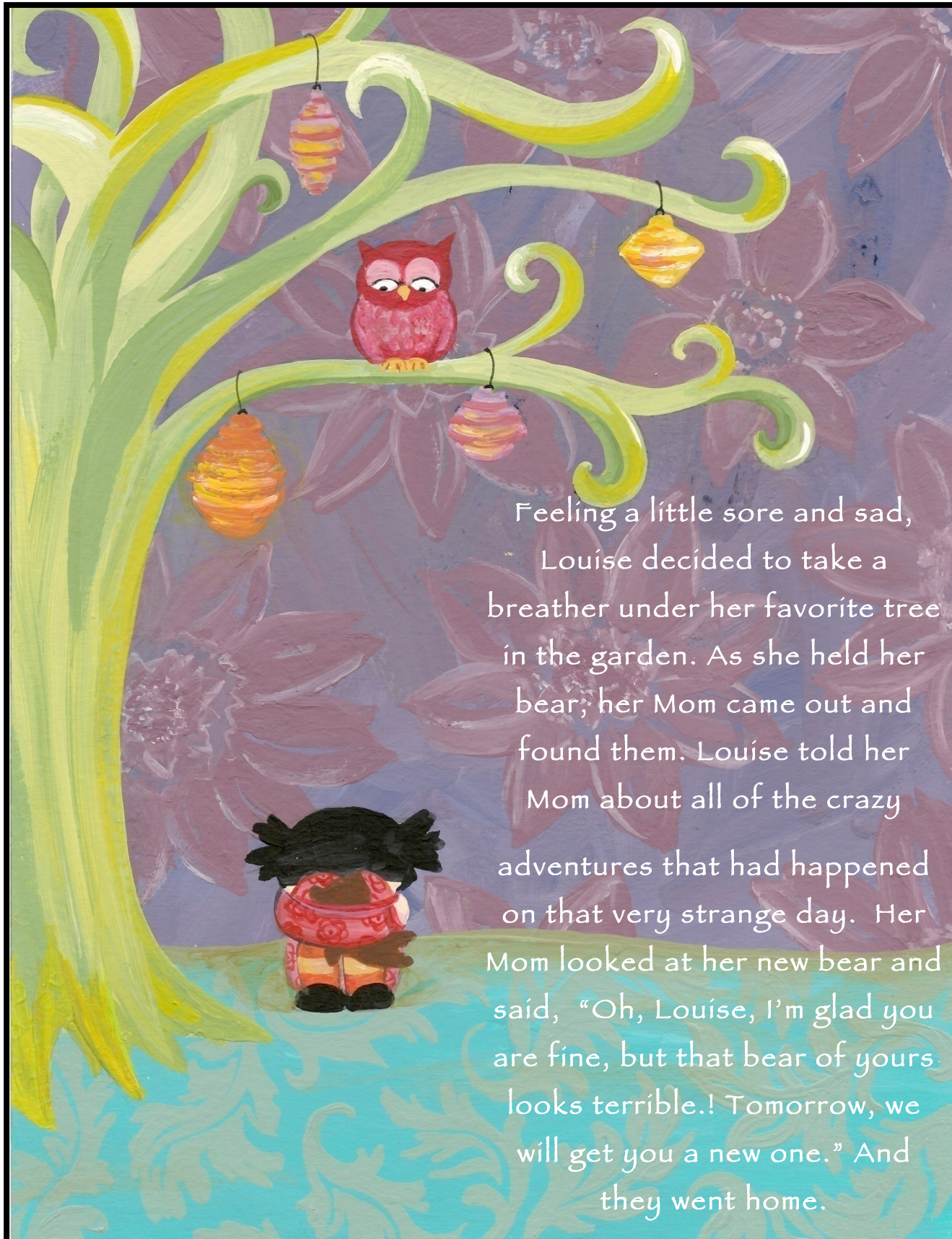
As quick as a flash, that drooling beast grabbed hold of Louise's new bear. Both of them refused to let go, and the tug-of-war match-of-doom began! After three long minutes, Louise won... sort of. She still had most of her bear, except for one very valuable arm.

As she chased Mr. Bones down the hill, the crazy dog dropped her bear's arm and Louise could swear she heard him laughing as he snuck back behind the tree. Creepy dog.

Louise decided she'd better head home quickly before anything else happened to her new friend. She spotted a wagon by the garden next to her house and thought about how fast she and her bear could get home if they rode the wagon like a skateboard. Her big brother was always doing it, and MAN! he could go fast!

But, it turned out, this was not as easy as it looked. As her Grandma would say, Louise went head-over-tea-kettle, and her bear was smushed under the wagon... and minus one eyeball!

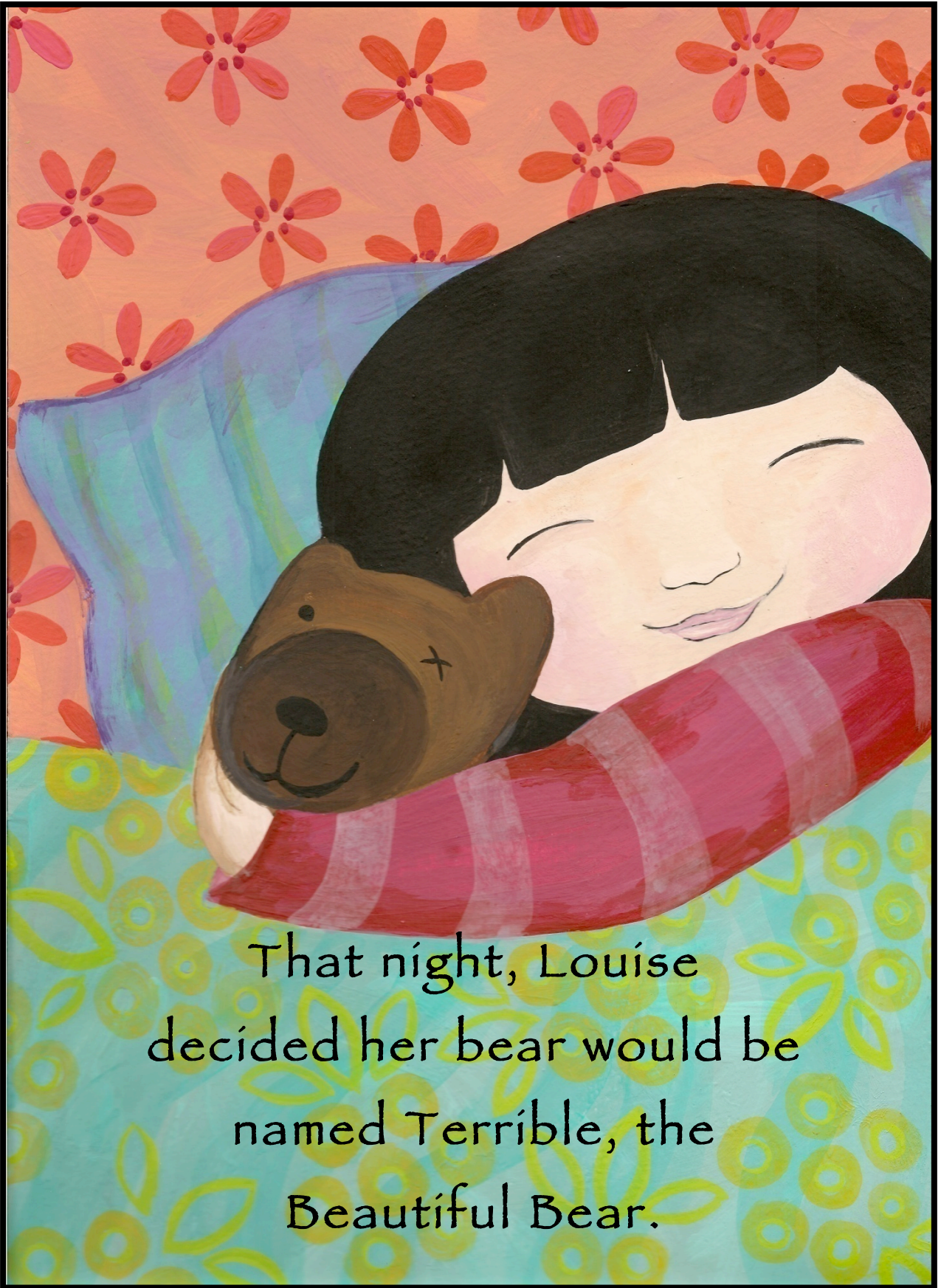




Feeling a little sore and sad,
Louise decided to take a
breather under her favorite tree
in the garden. As she held her
bear, her Mom came out and
found them. Louise told her
Mom about all of the crazy
adventures that had happened
on that very strange day. Her
Mom looked at her new bear and
said, "Oh, Louise, I'm glad you
are fine, but that bear of yours
looks terrible.! Tomorrow, we
will get you a new one." And
they went home.

That night, Louise thought about having a brand new bear with brand new clothes, and wings, and jewels, and shoes. Then she looked down at her bear with the missing arm and eyeball, and the missing wings, and missing sparkly shoes, and missing golden jewels and crown.

For some reason, Louise decided right then that she didn't want a new bear.



That night, Louise
decided her bear would be
named Terrible, the
Beautiful Bear.

Questions for children about understanding Difficult Beauty

- Why did Louise think the bear was so beautiful in the beginning of the story?
- What happened to the bear to make it “not so pretty”?
- Why did Louise think her bear was beautiful in the end?
- What is the difference between easy beauty and difficult beauty?
- How can the way we FEEL about something make it more beautiful?
- How can the way we feel about something make it less beautiful?
- Can something ugly to some people still be beautiful to others? Why?
- Do you have something you think is beautiful that someone else might not?

- Why did Louise think the bear was so beautiful in the beginning of the story?
(It was clean and new, it had fancy clothes, it wore her favorite color, and the like.)
- What happened to the bear to make it “not so pretty”?
(Its clothes were ruined, it got dirty, the dog tore its arm off.)
- Why did Lucy think her bear was beautiful in the end?
(It had been with her through all of the hard experiences, it was still her friend.)
- What is the difference between easy beauty and difficult beauty?
(Most people can appreciate beauty, while terrible or difficult beauty is harder to like. Terrible beauty requires more understanding and openness.)
- How can the way we FEEL about something make it more beautiful?
(If we like it, or appreciate and understand something, then it can help us connect and appreciate its inner beauty.)
- How can the way we feel about something make it less beautiful?
(If we do not like something, then it can become less beautiful based on our inner feelings of distaste.)
- Can something ugly to some people still be beautiful to others? Why?
(Yes, people have different experiences and tastes that influence their judgments, both positive and negative.)
- Can you think of something only you think is beautiful?

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