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**Is it worth defending the objective aspects of beauty today?  
A few reflections at the intersection of philosophy and neuroaesthetics**

**Abstract:**

W niniejszym artykule próbujemy pogodzić ze sobą, w duchu interdyscyplinarności, kilka odmiennych dróg refleksji nad naturą piękna jako wartości estetycznej. Szczególnego rodzaju wspólnym mianownikiem będzie dla nas krytyczne odniesienie do maksymy *de gustibus non est disputandum*. W pierwszej części tekstu zestawiamy dwie odmiennie metodologicznie próby filozoficznej obrony obiektywnej natury piękna. Przywołujemy książkę *Piękno* zmarłego w tym roku Rogera Scrutona oraz przypominamy kilka głównych tez fenomenologicznej estetyki Romana Ingardena, pamiętając, że w roku 2020 obchodziliśmy pięćdziesiątą rocznicę jego śmierci. W drugiej części tekstu prezentujemy wybrane wątki neuroestetycznych poszukiwań natury piękna i akcentujemy pewne zarzuty stawiane przedstawicielom tego paradygmatu.

Słowa kluczowe: piękno, obiektywność, wartość, mózg, neuroestetyka

Keywords: beauty, objectivity, value, brain, neuroaesthetics

The question whether beauty exists in an object or if it is a product of the human mind is a quandary for both philosophers and neurobiologists. For the former, this dilemma revolves mostly around values and their relative versus ultimate character. The latter focus on evolutionary role of beauty and analyze aesthetic responsiveness as a human instinct. Both of these branches of science are connected by a common goal – to either prove that beauty is objective or provide enough evidence for its relative nature defined only by the phrase *de gustibus non est disputandum*.

In this article, we present a few chosen philosophical and neuroaesthetic theories defending objective beauty. We confront the positive input they offer with their shortcomings and misconceptions. Since the year 2020 has connected two great minds (the 50th anniversary of Roman Ingarden's death has coincided with Roger Scruton's passing on January 12, 2020), we have decided to honor these two philosophers by quoting their thoughts on the matter. The second part of our text presents the neuroaesthetics' attempts to scientifically prove the objective aspects of beauty. We focus on a few studies that divorce human

aesthetic responses from personal preferences in the most convincing way. These researches are strongly defied by critical opinions from both scientific and philosophical world. We conclude our deliberations with a hypothesis that the solution to the objective beauty quandary lies at the crossroads of the philosophical and neuroaesthetic approaches – in a relation between the actual values of the object and the human mind perceiving them.

## 1. Philosophy on objective beauty

### 1.1. Roger Scruton

In many respects, Roger Scruton, an English philosopher (specializing in aesthetics and political philosophy), seems to be a contemporary follower of Plato, as he links beauty with goodness and truth in an extremely strong way. He expresses this standpoint in public professions of belief in the triad of fundamental values<sup>1</sup>.

Author's struggle for the objectivity of beauty stems from the fear of losing the fixed points of reference necessary to defend the permanent, universal and unchanging values that are crucial for the endurance of culture. Scruton is one of those who are clearly afraid of adopting the famous Latin formula *de gustibus non est disputandum*. According to him, this familiar relativism has already made some people disregard judgments of beauty because of their purely subjective nature. "No tastes can be criticized, they argue, since to criticize one taste is simply to give voice to another; hence there is nothing to learn or to teach that could conceivably deserve the name of 'criticism'". Scruton believes that this attitude is responsible for the current 'crisis of humanities'. Without aesthetic judgment, the studies of art, literature, music and architecture are not anchored in tradition and technique that historically gave them a crucial position in general education. "(...) Is there any point in studying our artistic and cultural inheritance, when the judgement of its beauty has no rational grounds?"<sup>2</sup>.

One of the reasons why Scruton's argumentation is not convincing is his specific style of narration. Throughout the book, he speaks from the position of an authority. He seems to accuse all contemporary culture and art of being tasteless and thoughtless. The examples of artworks he gives indicate a rather radical detachment from all manifestations of beauty in modern art, which the author depreciates:

When each year the Turner prize, founded in memory of England's greatest painter, is awarded to yet another bundle of facetious ephemera, is this not proof that there are no standards, that fashion alone dictates who will and who will not be rewarded, and that it is pointless to look for objective principles of taste or a public conception of beautiful? Many people answer yes

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1 Cf., lecture by Roger Scruton, *The Thruth, the Good, the Beautiful*, The Wheatley Institution <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10PG8VZiZaQ> [access: .....].

2 R. Scruton, *Beauty*, Oxford University Press, 2009, preface, p. X; Scruton's book *Beauty* has recently been translated to Polish: R. Scruton, *Piękno*, przeł. S. Krawczyk i A. Rejniak-Majewska, Uniwersytet Łódzki, 2018.

to those questions, and as a result renounce the attempt to criticize either the taste or the motives of the Turner-prize judges<sup>3</sup>.

Scruton uses quite arbitrary methods to prove the superiority of artworks representing the canon – methods that suggest elitism and a slight feeling of superiority over all insensitive and uneducated readers. Unfortunately, he does not gain an argumentative advantage but only proves his sense of superiority:

In the judgement of beauty the search of objectivity is for valid and heightened forms of human experience – forms in which human life can flower according to its inner need and achieve the kind of fruition that we witness in the *Sistine Chapel* ceiling, in *Parsifal* or in *Hamlet*<sup>4</sup>.

Paradoxically, it seems that the book *Beauty* is an attempt to diminish the importance of an aesthetic experience:

Does this imply that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, that there is no objective property that we recognize and about whose nature and value we can agree? My answer is simply this: everything I have said about the experience of beauty implies that it is rationally founded. It challenges us to find meaning in its object, to make critical comparisons, and to examine our own lives and emotions in the light of what we find<sup>5</sup>.

Scruton's defense of the objectivity of beauty, however passionate and emotional, emphasizes only the rational aspect of it. As a result, his argumentation becomes elitist and negates the seriousness of the sensual or emotional elements of the aesthetic experience.

## 1.2. Roman Ingarden

Roman Ingarden takes a much less ardent position in his defense of objective beauty. As a point of departure for our reflection concerning his phenomenology, let us quote his study *Artistic and Aesthetic Value. The Problem of the Relativity of These Values*:

The relativity of aesthetic value (...) is asserted by the principle *de gustibus non est disputandum*, and by the accompanying claim that something is beautiful, not because it is so in itself, but because it pleases someone. This contention is often understood as an assertion that there is absolutely no beauty that is a determination of an object; rather beauty is only pleasure in something which in itself is entirely neutral as regards the oppositions 'beautiful-ugly'. Those who make this assertion go on to say (...) that, with reference to a particular object, this pleasure occurs one time, but not occur another time, and that one really does not know when it will and when it will not occur, because the occurrence of this pleasure is conditioned not by the object, but exclusively by the viewer, or by viewing itself. This is an exaggerated claim, without any doubt!<sup>6</sup>.

In his works devoted to the value and evaluation of a work of art, Ingarden proves that extreme (subjective) relativism is not a sufficiently justified position. Relativism refers to the fact that aesthetic judgments about the same work

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3 Ibidem.

4 Ibidem, p. 142-143.

5 Ibidem, p. 196-197.

6 R. Ingarden, *Artistic and Aesthetic Value. The Problem of the Relativity of These Values*, in: R. Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, trans. by R. Meyer, Ohio University Press, p. 233.

of art are divergent. Since the work is the same and the opinions expressed about it differ significantly, it proves, in the opinion of radical relativists, that there is total subjectivity and freedom in the sphere of aesthetic preferences and evaluations. Ingarden, however, proposes a distinction between a work of art from its aesthetic concretizations. Viewed in this way, a work of art can be a foundation of a number of various concretizations, which may be equally valuable. Supporters of extreme relativism treat value judgments, which most often concern individual concretizations, as evaluations of the work itself, which gives an appearance of divergent evaluations. In fact, though – following Ingarden's theory – the subjects of assessments are different. If so, there is no real discrepancy in assessments on one subject.

Thus, the practical problem of the incompatibility of aesthetic judgments that troubled Scruton (as well as socially negative consequences of relativism) would be resolved thanks to Ingarden's phenomenology and his theory of aesthetic values. It is not the first time, then, to express the regret that Roman Ingarden's thought has not been sufficiently disseminated among Anglo-Saxon philosophers of art. As Bohdan Dziemidok states:

This [Ingarden's] concept undermines the fairly popular conviction that the proverb *de gustibus non est disputandum* is right, and if it does not lead to the ultimate overcoming of subjectivist relativism in the theory of aesthetic evaluation, it undoubtedly contributes to a significant weakening of its position and limitation (...) Distinguishing a work of art from its individual aesthetic concretizations (...) is one of the greatest achievements of aesthetic thought in the 20th century<sup>7</sup>.

Ingarden is extremely cautious about deciding how aesthetic value exists. Due to the importance of this issue, the philosopher distinguishes a number of meanings of the terms *subjective* and *objective*. Depending on these meanings, aesthetic values can be classified either as the former or as the latter. For example, they are objective in the sense that they appear in aesthetic objects, but it must be remembered that these objects are not autonomous. They are intentional products of the listener/ viewer/ reader of a work of art. However, if the values in question were sufficiently grounded in the aesthetic object, they would be *objective* also in the sense that expresses their independence in existence from the cognitive acts of the perceiver. At the same time, they would be *subjective* in the sense of their dependence on the acts of the author of the work and the acts of the perceiver, that help to create an aesthetic object in an aesthetic experience.

To put it another way – says Ingarden in the study *The Picture* – What depends on the viewer is only whether, on the foundation of the work of art (picture), he succeeds in concretizing those aesthetically valuable qualities which are potentially determined, or at least permitted, by the content of the work of art (...) If he succeeds in this and also in 'reading' the aesthetic value of the pertinent concretization of the picture, then the values determining this concretization really appertain to the aesthetic object<sup>8</sup>.

7 B. Dziemidok, *Konkretyzacja estetyczna [Aesthetic Concretization]*, in: A. J. Nowak, L. Sosnowski (red.), *Słownik pojęć filozoficznych Romana Ingardena [Dictionary of Roman Ingarden's philosophical concepts]*, Universitas, Kraków 2001, p. 142.

8 R. Ingarden, *Artistic and Aesthetic Value...*, p. 235.

Ultimately, considerations of the objectivity of aesthetic values prevail. The above-mentioned reservations do not refute the fundamental thesis that, according to Ingarden, the aesthetic value (or quality of that value such as beauty, grace, perfection) is not an illusion or a product of someone's mental state.

### 1.3. Conclusions

The philosophical standpoints presented above may be summarized by the following statement. Beauty is in the object. For its full realization, however, it needs a mind that can perceive it, because only the mind has a certain set of beauty patterns. Beauty as a value is thus realized in the relation between a beautiful thing and a mind that is sensitive to beauty. (Note that Roger Scruton would probably say that the mind must 'know' and 'understand' beauty.) This relation is fulfilled precisely in the aesthetic concretization. As we know, these concretizations can be numerous, correct and incorrect. The latter occur when the subject concretizing the work of art does not perceive the values potentially present in it.

## 2. Neuroaesthetics

### 2.1. Assumptions and goals

The crucial role that the mind plays in an aesthetic concretization naturally links an aesthetic experience with the brain. The realization that "beauty is a product of the brain" has led scientists to the conclusion that "correlations between brain activity and experiences of beauty must exist"<sup>9</sup>. At the same time, neuroaesthetics has been hypothesizing that human responsiveness to beauty is a product of evolution and has developed as a factor supporting the survival of our species<sup>10</sup>. As such, there should be an extent to which brain mechanisms underlying an assessment of beauty ought to be common among human beings. If it turned out possible to locate and examine such universalities neuroaestheticians should be able to retrace the beauty reaction back to the stimulus and thereby define the rules of art that ensure an ultimate aesthetic experience<sup>11</sup>.

### 2.2. Subjectivism and attempts to overcome it

From the very beginning neuroaesthetic studies have been struggling with serious obstacles. The most significant one concerns high subjectivism of their findings. Neuroscientists have succeeded at matching certain brain processes (activation of the mOFC – medial orbitofrontal cortex – and reward system

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9 B. R. Conway, A. Rehding, „Neuroaesthetics and the Trouble with Beauty“, *PLoS Biology*, March 2013, vol. 11, issue 3.

10 Ibidem.

11 V. S. Ramachandran, W. Hirstein, "The Science of Art A Neurological Theory of Aesthetic Experience", *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 1999, vol. 6, issue 6-7, p. 16-17.

accompanied with dopamine release<sup>12 13 14</sup>) with an aesthetic experience of examined subjects. Their researches, though, have been based on viewers' individual opinions on the stimuli and as such, they have not provided any information about objective features of a beauty experience.

In order to divorce personal preferences from the ultimate aspects of an aesthetic perception, the most recent studies focus on factors that impact the latter. In this way, scientists hope to distil the sheer beauty judgment from the correlating interferences. One of such researches measures the extent to which a beauty judgment is influenced by semantic context of a stimulus. Ulrich Kirk et al. examine subjects' reactions to a set of artworks randomly labeled as being either sourced from a gallery or generated by a computer. The results show that the aesthetic evaluation of the majority of perceivers is significantly higher in the case of the former. This indicates that "prefrontal and orbitofrontal cortices recruited by aesthetic judgments are significantly biased by subjects' prior expectations about the likely hedonic value of stimuli according to their source"<sup>15</sup>. Thus, the status of an artwork and, by extension, the judgment of other viewers significantly influence a personal aesthetic experience.

Another research with a similar approach matches a subjective evaluation of beauty with reactions to symmetry and complexity – as they are commonly believed to intensify an aesthetic experience. The results of the Thomas Jacobsen et al.'s study show that "brain activations during aesthetic judgment cannot be reduced to an assessment of symmetry (...)"<sup>16</sup>, which neurologically overthrows the ancient criteria for beauty. The level of complexity of an object does have an impact on both the assessment of symmetry and the aesthetic judgment but direct intensifying correlations have not been observed<sup>17</sup>.

Next to interfering factors, some studies also examine common aspects of different aesthetic experiences. A research by Tomohiro Ishizu and Semir Zeki compares an evaluation of visual versus auditory stimuli. The project is based on an idea that the neurological similarities between these two processes should mark an ultimate beauty center of the human brain. The results have encouraged Ishizu and Zeki to formulate a brain-based definition of beauty:

We propose that all works that appear beautiful to a subject have a single brain-based characteristic, which is that they have as a correlate of experiencing them a change in strength of activity within the mOFC and, more specifically, within field A1 in it.<sup>18</sup>

12 B. R. Conway, A. Rehdig, op. cit.

13 S. Koelsch et al., "Investigating emotion with music: An fMRI study", *Human Brain Mapping*, Aug. 2005, vol. 27, p. 239-250.

14 A. J. Blood, R. J. Zatorre, "Intensely pleasurable responses to music correlate with activity in brain regions implicated in reward and emotion", *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*, Sept. 2001, vol. 98, issue 20, p. 11818-11823.

15 U. Kirk et al., "Modulation of aesthetic value by semantic context: An fMRI study", *NeuroImage*, Feb. 2009, vol. 44, issue 3, p. 1125-1132.

16 T. Jacobsen et al., "Brain correlates of aesthetic judgment of beauty", *NeuroImage*, Jan. 2009, vol. 29, issue 1, p. 276-285.

17 Ibidem.

18 T. Ishizu, S. Zeki, "Toward A Brain-Based Theory of Beauty", *PLoS One*, Jul. 2011, vol. 6, issue 7.

They emphasize, however, that these findings have an entirely subjective foundation, as the results have been measured in correlation with perceivers' individual assessment of the stimuli. Hence, their proposal "shifts the definition of beauty very much in favor of the perceiving subject and away from the characteristics of the apprehended object and gives added strength to the Latin proverb that *"De gustibus non est disputandum"*"<sup>19</sup>.

### 2.3. Criticism

Despite their attempts at objectivization, neuroaesthetic studies meet with substantial criticism from scientists and aestheticians. In the article "Neuroaesthetics and the Trouble with Beauty", Bevil R. Conway et al. point out that the limitation of an aesthetic experience to one brain region is neither a sufficient explanation of a complex experience evoked by beauty nor a reliable scientific finding. They raise serious doubts as to mOFC being exclusively responsible for the beauty-related processes. They claim that if this assumption were correct, the strokes of mOFC would have a significant impact on an aesthetic assessment. In reality, though, "the (...) evidence suggests they affect self-related systems such as self-evaluation and do not impact a person's ability to experience beauty"<sup>20</sup>. Conversely, strokes of other brain areas sometimes result with an increase of an artistic creativity. "Frontotemporal dementia can produce an acquired obsessiveness that is often linked to enhanced art production, usually of extremely detailed works"<sup>21</sup>. Additionally, strokes of the left hemisphere may lead to artistic hyperexpressiveness<sup>22</sup>. These evidences show that many different regions of the brain participate in aesthetic processes; hence the assessment of beauty may engage much more complex circuits than it has been demonstrated by the neuroaesthetic studies. Conway et al. hypothesize that there may exist a beauty instinct which has developed in an evolutionary way. According to them, it is represented by cognitive-sensory machinery that has adapted to provide a variety of aesthetic experiences – similarly to a language circuitry supporting many different languages. This instinct, though, determines human longing for an aesthetic experience but not the factors that ultimately provide it:

A need to experience beauty may be universal, but the manifestation of what constitutes beauty certainly is not<sup>23</sup>.

Another concern about neuroaesthetic approach is connected with its tendency to equate art with beauty and pleasure<sup>24</sup>. As Peer F. Bundgaard notices, such a simplification is entirely false. "Nothing justifies characterizing the perception of artworks in terms of the appreciative judgment (or feeling of beauty)

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19 Ibidem.

20 B. R. Conway, A. Rehdig, op. cit.

21 Ibidem.

22 Ibidem.

23 Ibidem.

24 P. F. Bundgaard, "Feeling, meaning, and intentionality – a critique of the neuroaesthetics of beauty", *Phenom. Cogn. Sci.*, 2015, vol. 14, p. 781-801.

the latter may trigger"<sup>25</sup>. Many critically acclaimed works gain the status of art not because of their attractiveness but the ability to shock and move the viewers. This often involves ugly representations of the non-beautiful features of the world and the human nature. Moreover, Bundgaard points out that neuroaesthetics overlooks an intentional part of an aesthetic experience – that is, the art's ability to activate perceptive processes not involved with the sheer beauty versus ugliness judgment<sup>26</sup>. This leads him to an overall condemnation of neuroaesthetics as it "misconceives aesthetic experience (or its phenomenology) and, therefore, looks for the wrong neural correlate (...)"<sup>27</sup>. In Bundgaard's opinion, "[neuroaesthetics] does not contribute to the understanding of art in that it does not capture or try to capture what characterizes artworks as objects or as intentional objects"<sup>28</sup>.

Concerns about neuroaesthetic over-simplifications are also common among aestheticians. Raymond Tallis – an American philosopher and culture critic – accuses "neuroscientism" of achieving the level of *reductio ad absurdum*<sup>29</sup>. He believes that the more scientists detach an assessment of beauty from culture and an individual history of a viewer, the further they depart from the essence of an aesthetic experience. According to Tallis, contact with art should not be narrowed down to a mere interaction of the stimuli with our brains. Such an approach neglects the way in which perceivers' reflections on a piece of art determine its aesthetic impact. "[Artworks] invite us not only to have experiences but to reflect on our experiences; not merely to have visual tingles but to think about what is before us"<sup>30</sup>. At the same time, Tallis strongly condemns subjectivization of beauty in neuroaesthetic researches. In his opinion, the preference-based perspective "casts no light on the specific nature of the objects and experiences of art or the distinctive contribution of individual artists; nor does it offer any basis for the evaluation of art as great, good, or bad"<sup>31</sup>.

#### 2.4. The essence of art

In favor of the artistic merit, Semir Zeki departs for a moment from a sheer experience of beauty and tries to determine the essence of art through a different neurological mechanism. In his article "Art and the Brain", he defines "the function of art as being a search for constancies, which is also one of the most fundamental functions of the brain"<sup>32</sup>. According to him, artists contribute to this goal unconsciously experimenting with neurological reactions of the viewers. This is especially evident in the case of the visual art. "In order to represent the real world, the brain (or the artist) must discount ('sacrifice') a great deal of the information reaching it (or him), information which is not essential to its (or his) aim of representing the true character of objects"<sup>33</sup>. The ability to filtrate and categorize stimuli is a skill acquired by human beings through evolution. It helps our species to remember, learn and quickly react accordingly to the stored

25 Ibidem, p. 788.

26 Ibidem, p. 789.

27 Ibidem.

28 Ibidem.

29 R. Tallis, "The limitations of a neurological approach to art", *The Lancet*, Jul. 2008, vol. 372, issue 9632, p. 19-20.

30 Ibidem.

31 Ibidem.

32 S. Zeki, "Art and the brain", *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, January 1999, vol. 7, p. 80.

33 Ibidem.



data<sup>34</sup>. Since art is directly based on this mechanism, it can be treated both as a product of evolution and a stimulus contributing to a further development of our cognitive processes.

The art's search for constancies encourages Zeki to translate Plato's Ideal and Hegel's Concept to a neurological language. According to Plato, every object has its ideal representation and art attempts to portray it. Hegel, on the other hand, claims that the Ideal is in fact a representation of the Concept "derived from ephemeral sense data"<sup>35</sup>. Zeki combines both of these theories and equates both the Ideal and the Concept with "the brain's stored memory record of all the views of all the objects that it has seen"<sup>36</sup>. From this point of view, beauty can be understood as a blueprint created by the human brain. The processing capacities of a given mind (determined biologically) together with all the acquired data would predispose an individual to a certain aesthetic perception. Thus, the evaluation of beauty might be universal for all human beings only to an extent to which they would share the same experiences and biological features. As such, pragmatically speaking, the ultimate perception of beauty does not seem possible.

## 2.5. Defense of objective beauty: a scientific tribute to Scruton and Ingarden

The belief in objective beauty is not entirely abandoned by all scientists. David Deutsch – a British physicist at the University of Oxford – strongly advocates its existence. He hypothesizes that beauty has both a subjective and objective form. The former is the reason for the preferential differences between subsequent individuals while the latter is an indisputable law of nature. Deutsch agrees that human beings experience the world only through their perception but according to him, this fact does not mean that the objective truths do not exist outside of our brains. He treats human senses and cognitive processes as means that either interfere with our recognition of these truths or grant us access to them<sup>37</sup>. In other words, Deutsch does not agree with the neuroaesthetics' assumption that beauty does not exist without the brain<sup>38</sup> but rather supports the notion shared by Scruton and Ingarden that the human rational and/or sensual mind is capable of both correct and incorrect recognition of the values existing in the object.

## 2.6. Conclusions

Taking into account all the above findings and critical arguments, we may conclude that the first two decades of neuroaesthetic studies have brought both insightful and disappointing results. During this time, we have undoubtedly deepened our understanding of neurobiological processes connected with subjective perception of beauty. We have learned that human aesthetic reactions are flexible and get influenced by other factors (such as semantical

34 R. Jourdain, *Music, The Brain and Ecstasy*, HarperCollins Publishers, New York 1997, p. 54.

35 S. Zeki, op. cit., p. 82.

36 Ibidem, p. 83.

37 D. Deutsch in an interview by K. L. Sainani, "Objective Beauty", *Nature*, Macmillan Publishers Limited, October 2015, vol. 526, p. 16.

38 B. R. Conway, A. Rehding, op. cit.

context, symmetry and complexity of an object or an internal state of a subject). Neuroaesthetic studies have proved that the beauty intuition is most likely inherent to our species; thus an ability to experience various aesthetic reactions has developed in human beings throughout evolution. These findings, however, exhaust the objective conclusions delivered by neuroaesthetics. Its oversimplifications, scientifically disputable results, neglect for artistic merits and equating aesthetic experience with pleasure have won this branch of science a questionable reputation. Quoting Tallis, „[its attitude] would seem to leave out everything that is of interest in art and so discredit neuroaesthetics”<sup>39</sup>. Such an opinion may sound too extreme to the enthusiasts of neuroaesthetics. Nevertheless, it has become clear during the past two decades that unless this field of science radically changes its approach it will not be able to contribute to the solution of the objective-beauty quandary.

### 3. Final thoughts

Having presented all the above philosophical and neuroaesthetic arguments, let us confront the main question of this article one last time. Is it worth defending the objective aspects of beauty today? We do not attempt to provide an ultimate answer to this predicament. The perceptive differences among viewers/ readers/ listeners of art are a crucial obstacle preventing both philosophers and neurobiologists from proving the objective existence of beauty. Recent attempts of neuroaesthetics to scientifically solve this quandary have, so far, failed. Philosophical ideas proposed by Scruton and Ingarden defend the existence of objective beauty outside of the human brain. At the same time, both of these thinkers emphasize the crucial role that the human mind plays in an aesthetic evaluation. Thus, we may state that philosophy along with neuroaesthetics agree that beauty cannot fully exist without human perception. The main difference between these two approaches is that neuroaesthetics ties perception solely with the brain while philosophy connects it with the mind. The latter adds such aspects as cultural, historical and moral conditioning of an individual to the mere activation of certain neurological areas. All things considered, the question about the objective beauty remains open. If we were to find the answers to it today, though, it would most likely be at the intersection of philosophy and neuroaesthetics.

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