SOme preferences seem almost universal

🡪 easily explIained by evolution

Palmer: we assume that virtually everyone has an aesthetic response to everything they see

Philosophical aesthetics is super old: Kant (

Claiming universal validity: we wanna share things with others (ie rainbow)

Some universals: fragtiles, cureves, symmetry

His work:

Started with **automatic evaluation**

**🡪** you always evaluate everything; abstract symmetry is always evaluated

Affective primers: random and symmetric

🡪 random patterns make people slower to classify positive words

Automatic classicication needs evaluation before

SPN is for regularity

How can you distinguish that the SPN is for regularity or to organic stuff ie flocking?

Impression: member of the rare species among researchers who manage to talk without sounding like a textbook and explain his research in an engaging way.

Honest and transparent about research; he is fantastic at ccalling bullshit on aesthetic emperisism;

Why he stopped doing empirical aesthetics:

Talks about Markovic and aesthetics repute (peak experience, flow; intrusive mindfulness);

Wiliam James: unseen order in the universe🡪 aesthetic rupture might involve

He talks about silly religiosity;

Aesthetic experience as a quasi relgiouse rupture

He says that the lab can evoke aesthetic rapture; so pple study ordinary emotions

Bc correlational and not diagnostic

Favorite quote! Palmer talks about cold evaluations, nothing visceral, not what we really want to study but what we are forced to study

ASK: What is the actual point of scientifically studing aesthetics

“AE occasionally happen but we cant make them happen”🡪 critiques the reductionist approach

AE is rather fragile and relats

DO preferences in 1D predict complex üreferences in 4D

Masking effect; He says if you add a potent stimulus everything that used to matter dowsnt matter anymore

“ the gestalt nightmare is real”🡪 the research rarly translate into useful information for the industry

🡪 preference for the parts don’t predict preference as a whole

Problem of the gestalt method: we are left with nothing to study

Nadal says: there is not such thing as AE; AE is not a natural kind, that category doesn’t exicst in psychology

Nadal and skov go on about the reward system: AE and rewards

The ysay AE emotions don’t exist just ordinary emotions, don’t talk about AE

His counter response: their neuroscience is too simplisticL what makes AE specia`

🡪 context

Lisa feldman Barrett : would agree with him and talks about emotional Gestalt

Giulio Tononi;

Even if we cant measure it yet, it might still neurologically exist;

He thinks skov and nadal are being greedy reductionist;

Big problem is the number of repeated trials you need

What novel and usefull things has aesthetics science tought us?

He seems quite frustrated but passionate about his field

Celebration of AE embodies more

Aeythetic need for information

. He calls it the Gestalt nightmare- preference for parts does not predict prederence of the whole.

In his critique and initial step of leaving the field he published a paper “the gap between Aesthetic science and Aesthetic experience”

This perhaps is the whole crux of aesthetic science and it’s attempt to “bridge the gap”

At the end it still begs the question:

What novel and useful things has empirical aesthetics brought to the table?

In his talk Alexis Makin called out empirical aesthetics “Aesthetic experiences occasionally happen, but we can’t make them happen”. By the later he refers to manipulating stimuli to induce intense, meaningful and hedonic experiences evoked by stimuli. This is the crux of his critique of empirical aesthetics which he calls the Gestalt nightmare.

An aesthetic experience is more than the sum of its parts. Like any statistical model the interaction them may be crucial to its significance. By nature, the scientific method is only able to make meaningful claims about isolated parts of an aesthetic experience, such as individual stimulus properties. However, aesthetic scientists can`t predict multidimensional preferences, because this involves complex interactions of stimulus properties, environment, an individual’s history- the list can go on for a while.

As such, a reductionist approach, as Makin cited Holmes and Zanker (2012) will never be able explain the interactions that influence out aesthetic evaluations. While science has made limited claims of universal preferences, science fails at predicting multidimensional stimuli.