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Invitation to seminar

***Beauty is in the Processing Experience of the Beholder: - A Perceptual Fluency Theory of Aesthetic Preference***

**By Professor Rolf Reber**

Department of Psychosocial Science, University of Bergen

Choices in the experience economy are based on expected returns in terms of the quality of an experience. One important dimension of an experience is its aesthetic quality. I present the hypothesis that aesthetic pleasure is a function of the perceiver's processing dynamics: The more fluently perceivers can process an object, the more positive their aesthetic response. Variables known to influence aesthetic judgments, such as figure-ground contrast, stimulus repetition, symmetry, and prototypicality, lead to concomitant changes in processing fluency. Other variables that influence processing fluency, like visual or semantic priming, similarly increase judgments of aesthetic pleasure.

This proposal provides an integrative framework for the study of aesthetic pleasure and sheds light on the interplay between early preferences versus cultural influences on taste, preferences for both prototypical and abstracted forms, and the relation between beauty and truth. I present several studies that underline the perceptual fluency hypothesis of aesthetic judgment. In conclusion, beauty is grounded in the processing experiences of the perceiver, which are in part a function of stimulus properties, and in part of one's personal history.

**Rolf Reber** is Professor of Cognitive Psychology at the University of Bergen, Norway. His research focuses on effects of subjective experiences in judgmental and learning tasks. In addition, he is editor of POSbase, a database of Powerpoint presentations of psychological studies, at <http://posbase.uib.no/posbase>.

**Time**

Friday March 3  
from 14.00 - 15.30

**Place**

CBS - Kilen  
Lecture Hall KS.71  
Kilevej 14A  
2000 Frederiksberg

**Registration**

No registration is required  
Please feel free to forward this to others who might have an interest in participating

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