

Monika JOVANOVIĆ

*Seeing Paintings as They Are:  
Cognitivity of Expressive Aesthetic Qualities*

In this talk I will try to examine the boundaries of cognitivity when it comes to aesthetic qualities – whether experiencing expressive aesthetic properties is a matter of knowledge; can we say that visual objects really possess aesthetic qualities or, rather, that we merely perceive them as if that were the case; whether aesthetic qualities can truly/falsefully be ascribed to visual objects. Approaching these questions epistemologically, I will begin with Frank Sibley's conception of taste as sensitivity of aesthetic discrimination. For him, taste is a cognitive faculty resembling senses in some respects: considering that use of aesthetic terms is not governed by rules, we have to *perceive* that some painting is, say, garish or delicate, that it lacks balance, etc., just as we have to *see* that some color patch is yellow or green. Moreover, Sibley states that there is an autonomous field of aesthetic qualities which supervenes on non-aesthetic properties (colors, shapes) and cannot be reduced to them. I will argue that ascribing aesthetic qualities (even expressive visual qualities) cannot be as direct as Sibley believes, but requires various kinds of knowledge. Nevertheless, as I will argue, it does not put objectivity of aesthetic qualities into question.

**Monika JOVANOVIĆ** has been for the past three years an assistant at the Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade University. Her courses ranged from Ethics, Aesthetics to Philosophy and Methodology of Science. She is currently working on her PhD thesis that is centered on Frank Sibley's aesthetics, and primarily poses questions of aesthetic concepts, objectivity of aesthetic properties and aesthetic judgements, as well as aesthetic evaluation. She seeks to answer these questions employing, among other things, various epistemological conceptions – mainly those that pertain to perception. She has published three philosophical papers (two in Serbian and one in English). E-mail:



mojovano@f.bg.ac.rs.