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Podcast Interview with John Vogel

The Relationships Between Science, Art, and the Brain

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Episode Notes: Since 1992, Dr. Anjan Chatterjee, professor at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, has been investigating the brain “on art,” with positions spanning the clinical, academic, and editorial worlds of neurology. His 2013 book *The Aesthetic Brain: How We Evolved to Desire Beauty and Enjoy Art* (Oxford University Press) is a foray into the young field of neuroaesthetics, which began forming in the early 2000s.

In 2018 he founded the Penn Center for Neuroaesthetics, and in 2021, Oxford published *Brain, Beauty, and Art: Essays Bringing Neuroaesthetics into Focus*, co-edited with his colleague Eileen Cardillo, associate director of the Penn Center for Neuroaesthetics. While Chatterjee’s work is largely focused on visual art, *Brain, Beauty, and Art* also covers landmark papers in several other areas of neuroaesthetics such as music, literature, dance, and architecture.

Shortly after *Brain, Beauty, and Art* was published, I interviewed Chatterjee for my project *Perfect Recognition*, which focuses on intense aesthetic experiences and the role of art in our personal lives, as well as society at large.

A video excerpt of this interview was published in last year’s issue along with one of his essays from *Brain, Beauty and Art*. While the video excerpt focused on funding for the arts and Chatterjee’s personal experience with photography, this podcast episode covers his upbringing, his path towards science and photography, and the functionality of the

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brain in deriving pleasure from art. From school-age art instruction in India, to the awe he felt in Gaudi's Basilica in Barcelona, Chatterjee explains his fascination with art and architecture and how "engaging in the visual world" can affect the brain. — *John Vogel*

Don't miss the video interview, "[Author Talk: Anjan Chatterjee](#) [9]," and excerpt, "[Beautiful People in the Brain of the Beholder](#) [10]," from our Spring / Fall 2022 issue.



Episode Information

- "Beautiful People in the Brain of the Beholder" *Brain, Beauty, and Art: Essays Bringing Neuroaesthetics into Focus* edited by Anjan Chatterjee and Eileen Cardillo (Oxford Press, 2021).
- [Hilma af Klint Foundation website](#) [11].
- "[History of the Basílica](#)" [12] from *Sagrada Familia Basilica-Barcelona* website.
- "[Vermeer's Paintings in Scale](#)" [13] from *Essential Vermeer* website.
- [Chuck Close's website](#) [14].

Art Information

- "[Photographing an Icon](#) [15]" © Anjan Chatterjee; used my permission.

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