

I am Affected

Affect and Emotion as Aesthetic Intent

Research Question: What determines if an object is aesthetically “happy” or “positive”?
Is this a property of the object or is it fully dependent on the viewer?

Dalayce Nichiporik
FINA 450 Kurtis Lesick
February 6, 2018

Affect me positively...

- It is possible to gravitate toward a set of design choices without fully understanding why.
- By creating work that was enjoyable to me, I was hoping to be able to affect others in the same positive way.
- Generating positive affect and emotion through aesthetic choices.



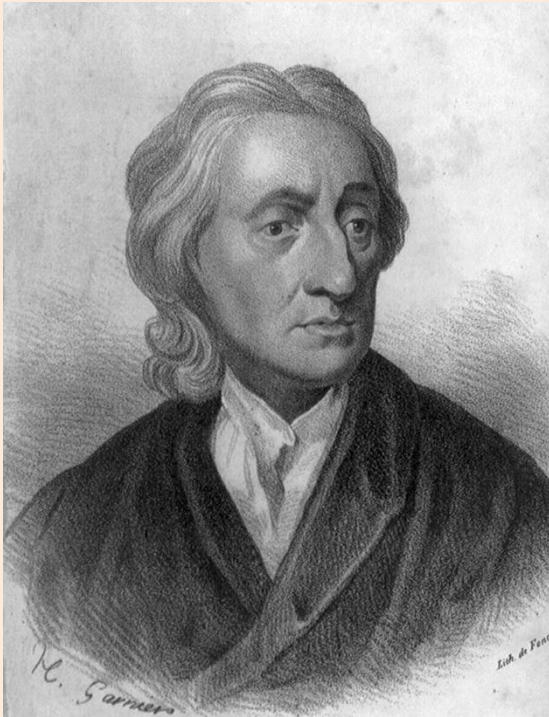
Daybreak, Dalayce Nichiporik, 2015
Acrylic on Canvas
(Bright, colorful, whimsical, positive)

“I want to make happy things,
but I don’t know why!”

-Dalayce Nichiporik, 2018, prior to taking FINA 450

But what does “happy” even mean
and why is it so important?

The Philosophy of Happy...



John Locke (1632-1704)

H. Garnier, Lithograph, undated
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Locke-John-LOC.jpg>

- *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. (1681)

“The necessity of pursuing happiness [is] the foundation of liberty. As therefore the highest perfection of intellectual nature lies in a careful and constant pursuit of true and solid happiness...”

- The ultimate goal of a thinking individual is to achieve their own comfort and happiness.
- Validation for “happiness” as an aesthetic choice.

“The Pursuit of Happiness”

The Happy Home...

- The “pursuit of happiness” includes selecting art and objects that make your space more enjoyable to you.

William Morris, Arts & Crafts Movement

“Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful.”

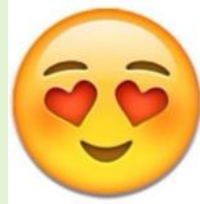
Have nothing in your personal space that doesn't generate positive affect!



Dalayce Nichiporik, *My Living Room*, Feb. 2, 2018

The Science of Happy...

HOW do we decide which objects are happy and which ones are not?



“To be affected by something is to evaluate that thing.” (Ahmed 31)

We evaluate the affect of things based on:

- Our previous experiences and learned behaviors
- Our internal emotional state
- Our physical interaction with the object

These things make up our own personal palate for “tasting” aesthetics.
(John Locke physical taste analogy)

Evaluating Affect: Learned Response

Cognitive psychology of learning and behavior

Operant conditioning:

-Our responses to aesthetic stimuli are trained by whether that aesthetic choice is met with a **positive** or **negative** reinforcement.

(What is positive or negative can vary greatly based on the nature of the person)

-Studied extensively by B.F. Skinner, Pavlov, etc.

Conditioning can be:

- Social – peer consensus
- Cultural - naturalized color palettes
- Economic - status, prestige

Our experiences create a mental landscape with landmarks that guide our responses. (Van Gorp Adams 24)

-similar sentiment to Locke, response based on past experience and knowledge



Evaluating Affect: Internal Emotional State

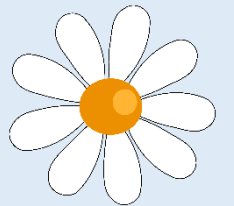


Blue Effervescence Vase, Blown Glass
Dalayce Nichiporik, 2017

What we desire in an aesthetic object is dependent on our own internal emotional state

Anxiety = Calm Boredom = Stimulation

- We are most likely to produce objects that feed into our own personal emotional states in some way
- People who share a similar emotional state will respond the most strongly to the work.
- Objects can also become associated with a strong pre-existing emotional state and their aesthetic value becomes associated with that emotion



Evaluating Affect: Physicality

Physical interaction with craft objects is another method for evaluating the fit of their aesthetic with your body.

- Tactile Appeal
- Emotional Impact of Function

Tactile and functional aesthetics qualities can override the visual both positively and negatively.

i.e.) Beautiful but itchy scarf, comfortable but ugly chair

Disagree with Shaviro that just because you can touch something it loses its aesthetic appeal and becomes merely “functional” (Shaviro 5).

There can be a strong emotional resonance (satisfaction, pleasure) in using an object perfectly suited to its use.



Twisty Bottle and Cups, Blown Glass
Dalayce Nichiporik, 2018

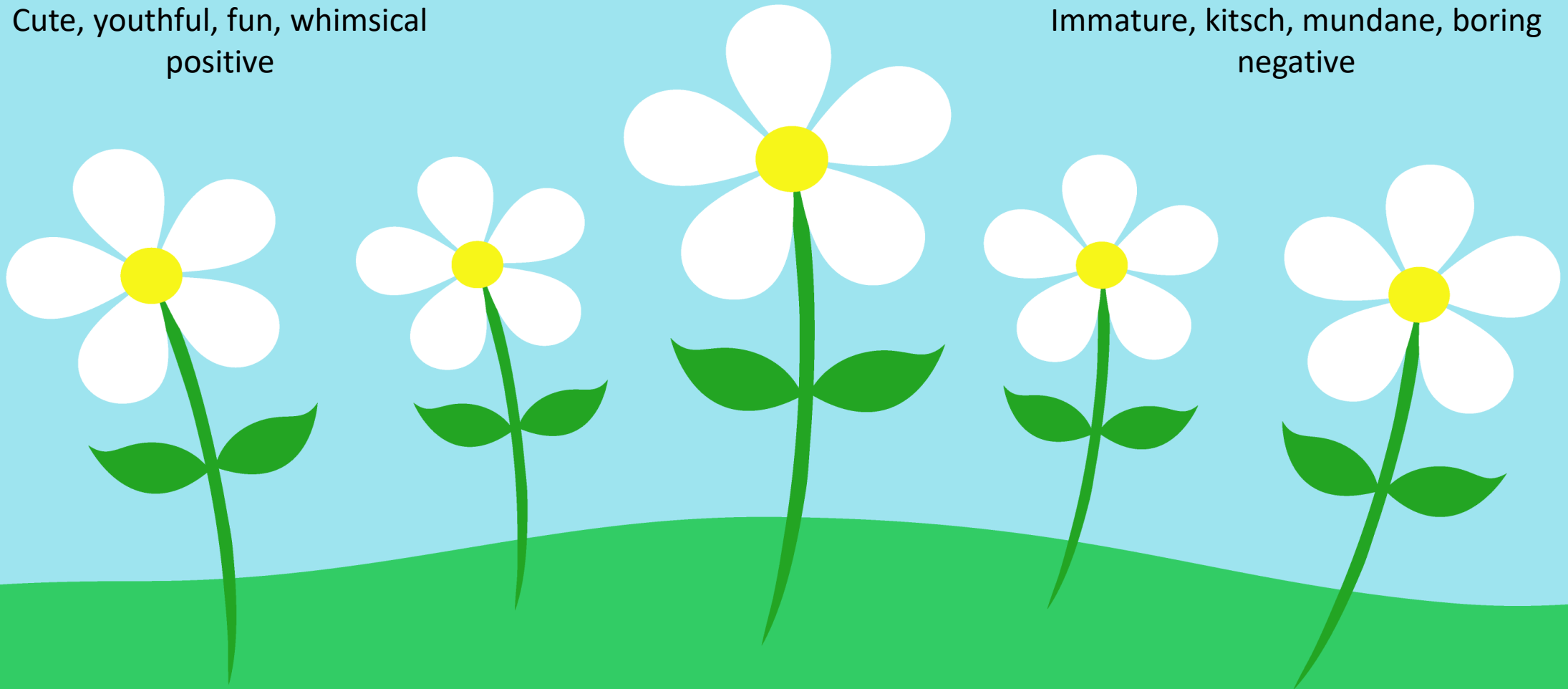
-Volume of bottle matches volume of cups
-Twisted surface -feels- good in the hand

Coming up Daisies...

A Quick Case Study

Cute, youthful, fun, whimsical
positive

Immature, kitsch, mundane, boring
negative



What will affect you positively is a function of your previous experience,
your physical interaction and your existing emotional state.

The Human Brain...



<https://www.dreamstime.com/royalty-free-stock-image-thinking-process-head-brain-gears-progress-concept-human-image35086406>

Based on Sarah Ahmed's evaluation theory of emotional response to objects and the VanGorp/Adams idea of a pre-existing mental landscape:

Aesthetic emotional response is pre-conscious as opposed to pre-cognitive.

- We can not escape the speed at which the human brain can access our vast lifetime library of stored information.
- How we respond to individual aesthetic stimuli is not fixed and changes as our cognitive experience (knowledge, evaluation) changes (Shaviro 12).

Going Forward...

- I want to work with more awareness and intent to generate positive affect
- I want to create objects that people are excited to use that have a feeling of luxury
- I want to create happy functional objects that add to people's pursuit of happiness



Pastel Bottle Collection, Blown Glass
Dalayce Nichiporik, 2018

“I want to make
beautiful things, even
if nobody cares.”

Saul Bass (1920-1996)



Blue Bottle Collection, Blown Glass
Dalayce Nichiporik, 2018

Happy Nostalgia...



Rose Chintz Pitcher, Blown Glass
Dalayce Nichiporik, 2018

Currently working with 1950's wallpaper and textiles inspirations for surface decoration.

Perhaps a misplaced nostalgia for a happier time in much the same way that Morris was nostalgic for medieval times.

Playing with the taboo concept of the overtly decorative (post-post-modern?)

Art Nouveau sensibility in the creation of beauty in function.

I want to create 'elevated' functional objects that feel special and enhance the user's experience positively. i.e.) Use the good china



<https://www.starletvintage.co.uk/hr-9857-hearts-and-roses-london-pink-floral-chintz-1950s-vintage-retro-flared-summer-dress.html>

Peace, Love and... Flowers



Unrest in the Forest, Fused glass, Metal
Dalayce Nichiporik, 2017

Much of my work centers around images of flowers and/or color.

Worth investigating the resonance with 1960's Flower Power Peace movement brought up by Laura.



<https://ubloom.com/blog/2016/11/14/flower-power-ever/>



Floral Bottles, Blown Glass
Dalayce Nichiporik, 2017

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