Loving Beauty

Professor Brian Mooney
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5:30 pm – 7:00 pm
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Charles Darwin University Theatre, Orange 3, Casuarina campus

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Lecture abstract

This paper argues that Beauty is an objective feature of reality and that the dominant view that ‘Beauty is in the eye of the beholder’ is incoherent. Our love of Beauty (like love itself) may be ultimately mysterious, nonetheless loving Beauty involves the desire to understand it. The paper proceeds by first critiquing the central arguments of proponents of the ‘Beauty is in the eye of the beholder’ (subjectivism) position; and then arguing that contemporary aesthetics (particularly in the visual arts) need to re-evaluate artworks in the context of a broad conception of Beauty and to integrate with the notion of natural Beauty. The second half of the paper explores some conditions that may help undergird an objectivist account of beauty. Finally, questions are raised about the role of pleasure, taste and comparative judgments of Beauty in regard to artworks.
Professor Brian Mooney received his doctorate in Philosophy from La Trobe University and his undergraduate and master’s degrees at The Queen’s University of Belfast. He has published more than 60 articles in areas, including Moral Philosophy, Political Philosophy, Philosophy of Religion, Philosophy of Education and the History of Philosophy. His most recent books include Critical and Creative Thinking (McGraw-Hill 2016), Responding to Terrorism: Political, Philosophical and Legal Perspectives (Ashgate, 2008), Thinking Things Through: an Introduction to Analytical Skills (McGraw-Hill, 2009), Understanding Teaching and Learning (St. Andrews Studies in Philosophy and Public Affairs, 2011), Meaning and Morality (Brill, 2012), and Aquinas, Education and the East (Springer, 2013). Professor Mooney became Head of the School of Creative Arts and Humanities at Charles Darwin University in 2014.