Generative Beauty SUSAN YELAVICH

AT THE MOMENT WE SEE SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL, WE UNDERGO A RADICAL DECENTERING. WE WILLINGLY CEDE OUR GROUND TO THE THING THAT STANDS BEFORE US.[1]
— Elaine Scarry, **ON BEAUTY AND BEING JUST**

One step inside Ted Muehling's studio and that ground is ceded. We have entered the realm of the beautiful. We leave a bit of our self, and, as Scarry would have it, our selfishness, at the door. Here, stripped of its hubris but not of its magnetism, beauty becomes generous. It makes us generous. We not only want to possess Ted's objects—a pair of opalescent earrings, a butterfly-strewn plate, or an egg-and-dart candlestick—we immediately want to share our discoveries with a friend. We are mirroring the designer himself.

Don Freeman supplies the looking glass. A photographer whose career is marked by the welcome inconstancies of journalistic assignments, his professional relationship with Ted is characterized by an uncommon fidelity. For twenty-five years, Don has photographed the work of a man who shies away from exposure. He brings it out into a world whose vagaries and demands the designer finds distracting. His photographs go far beyond the requirements of quotidian public relations.

Over the years, Freeman's work has become an integral part of Muehling's mise-en-scène, whether it's in Muehling's magical shop in Manhattan or a gallery in Paris or Munich. Soft flesh caught in marble, ethereal whorls of smoke, and sundry blooms and branches are captured by Freeman's camera and developed in the darkroom. And it is this residual sense of transformation—as much if not more than the subjects themselves—that gives Freeman's work its lushness. His photographs are the foil to Muehling's sense of discipline.

ANYTHING IN THE BRAIN-IN-OUR-HEAD THAT APPEARS TO HAVE AN INSTINCTIVE, MAGICAL, OR SUPERNATURAL QUALITY WHATEVER THAT MAY MEAN IS TAUGHT TO IT BY THE SMALL BRAINS IN OUR FINGERS. IN ORDER FOR THE BRAIN-IN-THE HEAD TO KNOW WHAT A STONE IS, THE FINGERS FIRST HAVE TO TOUCH IT, TO FEEL ITS ROUGH SURFACE, ITS WEIGHT AND DENSITY, TO CUT THEMSELVES ON IT.[2]
— José Saramago, **THE CAVE**

DISCIPLINED may seem an odd descriptor of work so redolent of flora and fauna. Stranger yet for a designer like Muehling, whose most apparent trait is his gentleness. But the discipline in question is not that of a virtuoso technician, nor that of a prodigious producer. Instead, it is a matter of concentration, editing, and compression, where the brain-in-the-head is led by the brain-in-the-hand. Thirty years in the studio have honed those hands to a rare state of cognizance. Apart from a few rough scribbles, Ted doesn't draw his designs; his hands shape the forms from which they will ultimately grow.

The brain-in-the-fingers has the power to transmit memories, not just of things fully seen but of things fully sensed. Ted scrutinizes the objects he's gathered from the beaches of Long Island with the same fascination he brought to the things he collected on walks in the woods as a boy. Nature, even its desiccated remains—fossils, skeletons, empty shells, broken branches, is situated in the brain's warehouses and reemerges in succinct yet sensual forms.

Because Muehling's work is organic, it is often misaligned with romanticism—the aesthetic that elevates instinct over reason. Instead, Ted renders the organic newly sensible. Ted can turn a cracked brown tortoise shell into a bowl of light; he can still a ripple of water in the stem of a candlestick. It takes an even greater discipline, a discipline of the ego, to find variety in sameness. Ted knows that the same earring in chrysoprase, agate, or carnelian is altogether different.

That is why Saramago speaks of the brain-in-the-fingers: their synapses don't fire randomly, they respect patterns formed over time. Originality is not a virtue, but a false conceit—one that the designer views warily. It's not that Muehling suffers from false modesty; it's just that he thinks that design is a conversation, not a monologue. His characteristic self-effacement is, in fact, critical to his design process. The brain-in-the-fingers may start the conversation, but the electrical impulses always flow both ways, constantly sparking, and sparked by, memories, including those of a design student.

Talking about one of his favorite pieces, small slender earrings that could be a pair of gold seeds, Ted says,

IT MAY BE AN INSIGNIFICANT, SIMPLE EARRING, BUT FOR THAT FORM. I ATTRIBUTE THIS TO MY FORMAL TRAINING AT PRATT. SCULPTURE WAS A REAL PART OF THAT DESIGN EDUCATION. YOU CAN GET A LOT OF POWER OUT OF FORM THAT´S A CENTIMETER LONG. YOU CAN GET A LOT OF PRESENCE. YOU DON´T HAVE TO DO A THREE-INCH EARRING. THAT ONE-CENTIMETER PIECE DOES TWO THINGS. IT´S A BIT OF PUNCTUATION IT DRAWS AND IT MIGHT DRAW SOMEONE TOWARDS YOU.

While Muehling's hands are schooled in the art of proportion, Freeman's are conditioned to capture motion. The photographer's hands work fast to keep up with his restless eyes. While Ted's universe is carefully contained, Don's is always expanding. While Ted prefers to stay home with Matts Gustafson, his life partner, and occasionally see longtime friends, Don needs people and travel. He has marked time in cities from Rome to Barcelona, from Prague to Istanbul, and, by nature of his profession, worked with a who's who of editors and subjects for whom tranquility means obscurity. (Ted is the rare exception to the rule.) Ted watches television so his fingers can think; Don is a cineaste, enthralled by the work of silent—or near silent—filmmakers like Eisenstein, Dreyer, Bergman, and Antonioni. Full of nervous energy himself, he admires their restraint and attention to detail, the very same qualities that he values in Ted's work. In return, Ted protects a space for Don's expressive nature.

FOR THE DELECTATION OF HIS MIND AND THE DELIGHT OF HIS EYES, HE HAD DECIDED TO SEEK OUT EVOCATIVE WORKS WHICH WOULD TRANSPORT HIM TO SOME UNFAMILIAR WORLD, POINT THE WAY TO NEW POSSIBILITIES, AND SHAKE UP HIS NERVOUS SYSTEM BY MEANS OF ERUDITE FANCIES.[3]
— J.-K. Huysmans, **AGAINST NATURE**

Of the two men, Freeman is more the romantic. He often speaks of feeling—not the feeling of the hand, but the feeling of beauty. In that respect he bears resemblance to J.-K. Huysmans's character Des Esseintes, who is obsessed with creating an artificial nature that will rival an untouched nature lost to we moderns. But unlike Des Esseintes, who in an extreme act of hubris bejewels a living tortoise to complement the hues in his Persian carpet (and kills the poor beast in the process), Freeman is no cynic. His romanticism, like all romanticisms, is tinged with morbidity, but only tinged. He manages to infuse breath into statuary, stones, and stalks, as if he is trying to

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revive them, repossess their spirits, reanimate their myths. His work has a haunted quality and would have been equally at home in the eighteenth century. Writing about passion in 1737, the Scottish philosopher David Hume might have been describing the effect of Freeman's work:

(IT) IS NOT LIKE A WIND INSTRUMENT, WHICH IN RUNNING OVER ALL THE NOTES, IMMEDIATELY LOSES THE SOUND WHEN BREATH CEASES; BUT RATHER A STRING INSTRUMENT, WHERE AFTER EACH STROKE, THE VIBRATIONS WILL STILL RETAIN SOME SOUND.[4]

— David Hume, **"DISSERTATION ON THE PASSIONS"**

The twenty-first-century Freeman, however, knows that he's creating illusions. Unlike romantic spiritualists who knocked on tables, he doesn't expect his statues to speak. Instead, he asks us to interrogate them. A beneficiary of postmodern permissiveness, Freeman sees history as living with us, not under us. This is where he and Muehling find common, if unstable, ground. They place the same value on the timelessness of history, jumbled chronologies, and confused provenance. But where Freeman excavates history, Muehling obscures it.

Though Muehling's work has the impress of two important teachers, midcentury American modernists Rowena Reed and Gerald Gulotta, he takes pleasure in the possibility that we might wonder if one of his pieces is Etruscan, eighteenth century, nineteenth, or twenty-first. His impeccably pure modern surfaces are subtly contorted into elliptical and faceted geometries that welcome the heresy of narrative. A ladybug alights on the edge of a pale green plate, as if she were at a picnic. A seashell-shaped salt cellar reminds us of the seasoning's watery origins. Pristine porcelain painted with faux cracks makes a joke at the expense of its modernist purity.

Muehling doesn't see the cycles of history in decades or even centuries, but in scales, skeletons, and eggs. These are the fruits and the remains of the myriad creatures whose existence we are only dimly aware of, but without which we cannot survive. By transforming the detritus of the forest and the beach into ornament (verboten in the twentieth century), Ted gently points our attention elsewhere, away from himself and, above all, away from fashion, with its insistence on seasons that don't repeat. Yet Ted has no interest in proselytizing. In fact, his use of ornament, his creation of ornaments, is closer to the ethos of Gianni Vattimo, the Italian philosopher-jurist.

BEAUTY IS ORNAMENT, IN THE SENSE THAT ITS ESSENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE, THE INTEREST TO WHICH IT RESPONDS, IS THE EXTENSION OF LIFE S WORLD AND THROUGH A PROCESS OF REFERRAL TO OTHER POSSIBLE LIFE WORLDS.[5]

— Gianni Vattimo, **THE TRANSPARENT SOCIETY**

Vattimo is talking about how we might live in a globalized world without succumbing to the sameness of globalization, or, in the case of aesthetics, the homogeneity of modernism. Given Ted's modesty and the scale of his practice, the reference would be grandiose but for the phrase "other possible life worlds." One could argue that any designer worth his or her salt is always engaged with other possibilities, other lives. Most, however, are forced to do it from a distance—the physical and psychological distance that separates designers, clients, and consumers. Ted, on the other hand, finds "other possible life worlds" in the microcosm of the studio and has taken pains to keep his atelier small, despite the inevitable pressures to grow. He has achieved a remarkable level of success and recognition, but his career has always been something to be controlled. "Career" is a public trajectory that is difficult to reconcile with his intensely private pursuit of beauty.

Muehling doesn't dilute his energies in the fray of the marketplace; he conserves them to design. Visibility in multiple outlets has never appealed to him. He would lose the opportunity to shape the environment for his work and to influence how it's perceived. Even his website declines to show any pieces; it invites you to Howard Street to see them firsthand.

REAL GIFT-GIVING HAD ITS HAPPINESS IN IMAGINING THE HAPPINESS OF THE RECEIVER. IT MEANT CHOOSING, SPENDING TIME, GOING OUT OF ONE S WAY, THINKING OF THE OTHER AS A SUBJECT: THE OPPOSITE OF FORGETFULNESS. HARDLY ANYONE IS STILL CAPABLE OF THIS.[6]

— Theodor Adorno, **MINIMA MORALIA**

Muehling is clear about the rationale for his practice. It's not just about keeping his hands involved in the work; it's a matter of how the work comes into being in the first place. Rather than trying to anticipate the desires of customers he can't know, he makes things for his friends. He imagines "the happiness of the receiver." He understands design as a gift.

There is a telling moment in Wim Wenders's film Notebooks on Cities and Clothes when Wenders asks the fashion designer Yohji Yamamoto why he makes clothes. Yohji, the son of a seamstress, says he is driven by the question "Can I help you?" Ted asks, "Can I please you? Can I give you this?" Both motives are equally generous, but Yohji's "you" is anonymous, while Ted's is likely to be a friend, his mother, or his sister. Just the thought of how a particular woman might look wearing his work has been the catalyst for many a first piece. And these pieces live on in multiple iterations, silently seeded by the relationship between maker and muse.

Muehling understands that happiness—his and theirs—flows from a mutual dependency. That is why he can speak of ingratiating himself to the recipients of his gifts, and, at the same time, express justifiable pride in the beauty he adds to his friends' beauty. What might sound redundant is actually reciprocal. Instead of presenting itself as a foreign body or independent decoration, Ted's jewelry complements the line of a neck or the lobe of an ear, and we recognize the compliment. What we cannot glimpse, but for the rare Don Freeman photograph, are the specific anatomies of inspiration: Ted's graces. Gabriella Kiss, a jewelry designer in her own right, and the writer Sarah Verdone have been the most consistent, if invisible, presences in his work. Instead of lending us his, and only his, imprimatur, Ted also offers theirs:

I LOVE TO DELIGHT MY FRIENDS. I WANTED TO GIVE JEWELRY TO SARAH BECAUSE SHE PUTS IT ON AND SHE S SO LOVELY. THAT S VERY SATISFYING. BUT, IN FACT, I ALSO LOVE THAT SHE LOVES IT, AND IT S MY WAY OF EXPRESSING LOVE TO HER. AS BANAL AS THAT SOUNDS, I M A PRETTY RESERVED PERSON, AND FOR ME, IT S A BIG EXPRESSION.[6]

By contrast, Muehling and Freeman share the friendship of buddies, or copains, as Ted puts it. The attraction isn't visceral, as it is with Sarah or Gabriella. Rather, the two men thrive on good-natured teasing, buttressed by trust. And despite the obvious differences in their personalities—Don is as garrulous as Ted is deliberate—they have enormous respect for each other and each other's work. Ted is always confident that Don will see his work the way he sees it. He can also be sure that the photographer will bring his own gift to the process.

Freeman captures the repose and balance at the heart of all of Muehling's work. Yet he also gives the sense that these are animate forms. He creates a taut frame for the objects, then diffuses the self-consciousness of the composition with light. Just as Ted is level-tempered, Don's tonal range is marked by close values. This is where Don's personal work and his commissions from Muehling begin to converge. How else to make sense of his immaculate images of Ted's porcelain and his smoky, lambent photographs of Pompeii? True, the shop on Howard Street makes no pretence that they are one and the same. The postcards that greet Ted's visitors divide themselves into objects and atmosphere. But look carefully at the documentary images and notice the warmth of the shadows. They almost anchor the earrings, the vases, the cups, and the pitchers. Almost. The fact is, they help them float.

SOMETIMES I´LL SEE SOMETHING ON THE BEACH, LIKE A COLLECTION OF MUSSELS TIED TOGETHER WITH SEAWEED. AND, IF I CAN´T BRING IT BACK, I´LL TAKE A PICTURE. PEOPLE BRING HIM GIFTS ALL THE TIME.

— Don Freeman

Both men are drawn to the ocean—a body of water we see as a whole that is constantly breaking apart. Where Ted sees what the ocean washes up, Don sees a succession of waves. But it is the nature of friendship to shift our vision sideways. So the photographer and the designer are watchful for things the other values. They've worked together for so long now that they can view the world through each other's eyes.

As with his friendships, Muehling is highly selective in his professional collaborations, of which there have been only three of significant scale: Steuben in Corning, New York; Nymphenburg Porcelain in Munich; and Lobmeyr in Vienna. Each company gave him the time that he needed to familiarize himself with their craftsmen, their studios, and their protocols. There were no preconceptions about the number or types of pieces to be produced, only the expectation that he would bring a new perspective to their materials, and, with luck, new audiences to their companies. Instead of pressure, they offered him play.

Given the popular wisdom that an injection of contemporary design is the business equivalent of HGH, one might have expected a reversal of corporate sensibilities in the outcome of the collaborations. But, in each case, Ted began by focusing on the companies' material traditions. At Nymphenburg, he immersed himself in the mysteries of eighteenth-century porcelain; at Steuben, in the possibilities of crystal, a seventeenth-century refinement of glass; at Lobmeyr, in the delicate art of hand-engraved glass.

Muehling had made only occasional forays into the medium of porcelain before 1997, when he went to Munich with Matts Gustafson for a show of his paintings. By chance, he wandered into a Konditorei and found a porcelain statue of Diana standing amid the pastries. Like the huntress herself, he was stopped in his tracks. Until then, Muehling had had no idea how articulate porcelain could be. Later, at the exhibition opening, Ted met Baron Egbert von Maltzahn, the managing director of the porcelain manufactory that had molded the goddess. Von Maltzahn invited him to tour the factory and opened a new chapter of work that would take Ted two years to complete.

Muehling was welcomed into Nymphenburg's inner sanctums—its plaster rooms, its mold-making workshops, its kilns, and its collection of eighteenth-century chinoiserie, created by company's brilliant chief sculptor, Franz Anton Bustelli (1723 1763). Tutored in the processes that yield the particular delicacy of Nymphenburg's hard-paste porcelain, Ted became privy to a closed world: in the eighteenth century, European princes and kings all but imprisoned their master craftsmen after they had finally unlocked the formula the Chinese had guarded for over a millennium. Even today, the recipe for the Nymphenburg clay body remains an industrial secret.

Knowing the ingredients, however, was the least of Ted's concerns. It was how they reacted in the ferocious temperatures of the kiln that would determine which of his ideas would emerge intact. (There is not only a real possibility of breakage, but a predictable shrinkage of as much as 17 percent.) Yet, despite the risks, Nymphenburg placed no restrictions on Muehling. Instead, they openly indulged his experiments.

The yield is a revealing portrait of Muehling at midcareer. The disciplined classicist didn't disappoint: his egg vases, milk pitchers, and cups were a natural extension of his jewelry's graceful vocabulary. But the exposure to Bustelli's rococo sensibility seems to have freed Muehling to indulge the romantic side of his nature. Or, more accurately, it revealed the spectrum between the two unstable poles—poles that we characterize as classicism and romanticism in our shorthand for difference. The dessert plates from Nymphenburg correct the record. Attracted to the congestion of decoration that was cherished in the eighteenth century, Muehling made a compromise for the twenty-first. He appropriated and isolated individual motifs. In effect, he used them as diacriticals to inflect the simplest of plates with a bit of their florid past.

Ted also knew that he had to make the porcelain figures he found so engaging palatable to audiences who might otherwise find them cloying. To reanimate Nymphenburg's figures, Ted opted for the coarser surface of bisque—the natural state of porcelain before it is glazed. Likewise, when it came time to exhibit the work, Don Freeman underscored the time shift with his own play of scale, magnifying the five-inch marvels to fully human proportions. Freeman's monumental images—muted and toned in the darkroom—made these energetic figures, once designed to dance on the table, relevant for a new century caught up in its own whorl of flux.

Founded in 1903, Steuben is a much younger American company, but, as with Nymphenburg's porcelain, little has changed in the way the company's glass is crafted. Its flawless lead crystal glass has always been hand-blown, hand-cut, and hand-polished. That, and an invitation to see what he could do with glass, as a prelude to any formal agreement, enticed Muehling to the factory in upstate New York in 2002. Two days in their studios working with the company's best glass blowers dispelled any lingering reservations and led to a relationship that continues today.

The reservations were real. Muehling had never blown glass himself; he'd realized long ago that it would take years to develop even a modicum of skill. But he did have some experience with the medium in the past—enough to know it was difficult, if not impossible, to make thin lead glass. He would have to put aside any ideas of replicating his signature delicacy. But the flawlessness of Steuben's glass, combined with the chance to experiment before committing, made the prospect of stretching his range something he couldn't refuse. Plus, as Steuben's executives had no way of knowing, they were tapping into a treasured childhood memory: every Christmas, Ted's father brought him to Manhattan, where the glittering curiosities displayed in Steuben's (former) Fifth Avenue store window made a lasting impression.

Trained as an industrial designer, Ted found the Steuben factory comfortably familiar. Awed by the hot room where the blowing takes place, it was the cold room for cutting and polishing where he felt most at home. Ultimately, the cold room is where the brain-in-hands takes over. Molten glass is unpredictable, but cooled glass can be controlled, albeit with magnitudes of patience and endurance he had never quite witnessed before. But, in truth, the brain-in-the-hands insinuated itself from the beginning. Ted found that the best way to talk to the

blowers about the pieces that he envisioned was to make them out of Sculpey—a polymer clay with a rubbery viscosity that is remarkably close to the consistency of lead glass. The models became Ted's translators.

Muehling knew he had one sure-fire way of ensuring that his work would have the requisite elegance: the time-honored tack of lifting a circular shape and letting it gently fold in on itself to make an elegant oval bowl. It would be beautiful, but it would be turning a blind eye to the full potential of the cold room craftmen's ability to facet and sculpt. It was the shape itself that supplied the answer: it was uncannily like the tortoise shells he collected. The resulting glass Tortoise Shell yielded another epiphany. After the facets had been cut and almost completely polished, Ted decided to keep the matte, satin finish. It was the first piece Steuben had ever kept in this state (though it would be repeated in Muehling's Bamboo vase), and, according to Muehling, it is far more difficult to achieve than the usual clear finish. When glass is made completely transparent, it is actually easier to smooth any rough edges and conceal any infinitesimal flaws: they can continue to be polished away. But if the process is halted to keep a satin finish, the polishers must achieve the same perfection without the benefit of further erasure.

The first Tortoise Shells also provided the impetus for the glassware. The same facet pattern used on the bowls proved to be an economical way to reduce the weight of the highball and champagne glasses and also confer a unique character. They look like they grew out of ice. Freeman, who spent days with Muehling at Steuben, capitalized on the illusion by shooting them on a piece of black glass he found in the studio. Don's photographs convey the gravity of the glass. But by keeping their reflections in the frame, he creates a paradox. The rock solid glass appears to be as ephemeral as frozen water.

The opportunity to work with Lobmeyr was a happy confluence of circumstances that grew out of Muehling's work with both Nymphenburg and Steuben. Captivated by the possibilities of glass, Ted was still in quest of a company that could realize his desire for thinness in the medium. His colleagues at Nymphenburg introduced him to the Rath cousins--Andreas, Johannes and Leonid--the directors of Lobmeyr and descendants of the family that founded the company in 1823. (Lobmeyr is best known for producting the glasswork of Wiener Werkstätte designer Josef Hoffmann.)

Though the firm has its own engraving workshops in Vienna, Lobmeyr uses subcontractors for glassblowing. So in 2004, Ted spent a week in a glass factory in the Czech Republic, where he worked intensely to prototype roughly 25 pieces of glassware. (He attributes the rapid pace to the ability of the craftsmen to generate blowing molds within hours.) These gestated for two years as Ted and his partners at Lobmeyr patiently and painstakingly distilled the group down to seven core pieces: a carafe, a decanter, and six glasses, for schnapps, wine, water, beer, brandy, and highballs, respectively.

Once selected, they were variously painted and engraved with a precision that is almost other-worldly. In addition to the familiar menagerie of insects, Muehling added new motifs that provide a touch of the uncanny: Butterflies and fish, rendered in translucent paint, swim around the perimeters of some glasses, while others reveal a tiny eyeball at the bottom after the beverage has been drained. (The latter idea was drawn from an early nineteenth-century conceit of painting an eye onto a pin to watch over a partner.) For those who prefer more abstract reminders of their presence, Muehling also created his own alphabet of attenuated, calligraphic letter forms for monograms, inspired by seventeenth-century Dutch glass design. Select pieces in the series will also be produced in color; but unlike most colored glass, which is glazed on the outside, Lobmeyr's color is embedded in the molten glass before it is blown. The results are more saturated and rare.

Much is made these days of "artificial nature," the natural world cordoned off into parks, paved over by highways, and overwhelmed by people. Climate change alone makes the idea of authentic nature as obsolete as Jean-Jacques Rousseau's state of nature, a theoretical golden age of men unfettered by civilization. Yet, even in its compromised condition, nature refuses to deny us gifts, and Muehling and Freeman aren't about to turn them away. They may be salvaging souvenirs of lost worlds, but the souvenir itself is a very powerful idea. Muehling is one of the rare designers whose work can match its hold. Not because his work might mark a special occasion, the way a diamond ring announces an engagement, but because every piece he creates carries a palpable sense of its origins.

Elaine Scarry, whose words introduced this essay, argues that beauty may be the most powerful environmental advocate we have. The philosopher-critic found that even though most people live in places where they can't enjoy the sight of a red-tailed hawk, see a field of wildflowers, or visit a crystal-lined grotto, they thought it important that others could see them. Even those individually skeptical of beauty said they would like future generations to view us, collectively, as "beauty-loving."[7]

PEOPLE WISH THERE TO BE BEAUTY EVEN WHEN THEIR OWN SELF-INTEREST IS NOT SERVED BY IT; OR PERHAPS MORE ACCURATELY, PEOPLE SEEM TO INTUIT THAT THEIR OWN SELF-INTEREST IS SERVED BY DISTANT PEOPLES HAVING THE BENEFIT OF BEAUTY.[8]

— Elaine Scarry, ON BEAUTY AND BEING JUST

Generous self-interest distinguishes the artist from the narcissist. At the same time, the word self mitigates against any conformity of style. While Freeman's work often broaches the elegiac, it extracts a resilient beauty from Muehling. Muehling's work has the benefit of being tangibly present. He can count on a piece of blue chalcedony or clear crystal to catch the reflections of time for him. Moreover, he understands that while beauty is quite literally sensational, involving sight and touch, beauty is also a matter of experience. His work is the trigger for its perception and its pleasure: beauty not owned but shared.

Notes

1 Elaine Scarry, ON BEAUTY AND BEING JUST (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 111 112.

2 José Saramago, THE CAVE (A CAVERNA, 2000), trans. Margaret Jull Costa (New York: Harcourt, 2002), p. 67.

3 J.-K. Huysmans, AGAINST NATURE (À REBOURS, 1903), trans. Robert Baldick (Hammondsworth: Penguin Books, 1959), p. 63.

4 David Hume, "DISSERTATION ON THE PASSIONS" (1737), WORKS (1854), IV, in William Jackson Bate, FROM CLASS TO ROMANTIC: PREMISES OF TASTE IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1946), p. 191.

5 Gianni Vattimo, THE TRANSPARENT SOCIETY (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), p. 72.

6 This quote is excerpted from a translation of Adorno's MINIMA MORALIA, Aphorism 21, by Dennis Redmond, available at: http://www.efn.org/~dredmond/MinimaMoralia.html (accessed January 8, 2008). The original

7 German text is published in Theodor W. Adorno, COLLECTED WORKS, vol. 4 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1989).

8 Scarry, p. 118.

9 Ibid., p. 123.