

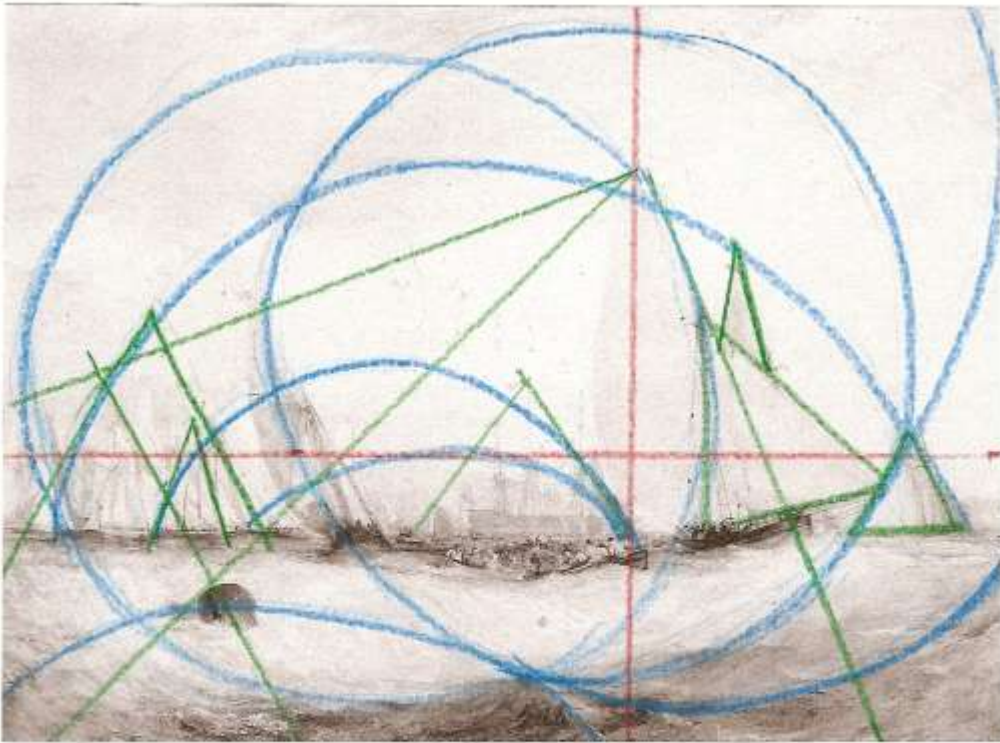
# “I don’t know anything about art but I know what I like.”

This conflictive and most often stated response to viewing art becomes a puzzling question. With such professed lack of knowledge of art and its creative process, how can one be certain or even have a response feeling of like or dislike? The statement suggest there is something at work beyond the conscious cognition of obtaining a reasoned explanation for liking or disliking a work of art. It suggests a level of knowing and understanding beyond reasoning. It suggests a silent voice and unknown source of knowledge from within the viewer.

To find this unknown source of knowledge I will start at the source of the sensory input, the eyes. The eye simply sees everything whether you are a visual artist or a casual viewer of art. The visual informational input to the brain is identically the same. The viewer and artist have access to the same inputted information. The difference in cognitive awareness of the artist verses the viewer is that the artist has a higher level of visual intelligence, which is a more extensive awareness of right hemisphere knowledge and function. In short the artist has a better conscious understanding of what they see but the viewer has the same unconscious knowledge of what they see. According to color theorist and artists Josef Albers and Johannes Ittens the eye seeks a harmony, a visual balance. Where balance/harmony does not exist the mind creates one. Along the same lines as balance is completion, which Daniel Dennett in his *book Consciousness Explained* uses studies that illustrate the brains ability complete suggested shapes and patterns as well as complete unfinished complex images. These activities and assimilation of information occur below the level of consciousness in the more visual, spacial right hemisphere of the brain. The right hemisphere is coconscious and can send this information to the conscious only, analytical, speech centered left hemisphere. The dominant left hemisphere, according to Thomas Caramagno in his book *The Flight of the Mind*, is completely unaware of the right hemispheres existence so it receives the inputted information/knowledge that the right sends but is unaware of the source of this new knowledge it now has to profess whether it likes or dislikes what it sees. So the viewer is responding to subliminal imagery of the substructure that is built on whole, complete geometric forms. The harmony and completeness of these structures transfers the sense of completeness and harmony to the viewer when looking at the work of art even though the viewer is consciously unaware of their existence. They are still seen, processed and understood at an unconscious level. That is why the artist must construct a work of art for both hemispheres of the mind. The geometrical/mathematical substructure for the right hemisphere and well crafted technically proficient execution of the subject objects that will be seen by the left hemisphere.



Nicolas Poussin  
Landscape with Orpheus and Eurydice



J. M. W. Turner  
East Cowes Castle, the Regatta Beating to Windward

