

Who is your favorite painter, sculptor or visual artist?

Nicolas de Stael.

Who is your favorite writer or poet?

Detective or crime fiction. Baudelaire. And my daughter.

Who is your favorite musician or composer?

Chopin and Bach. And Mika.

What is your favorite quality in an art piece?

In painting, I prefer the visual over the verbal or conceptual language. I love subtle changes of colors, and complex structures. I also appreciate graphic novels where it is about the combination of both languages.

What is your primary background?

Multidisciplinary: medical and scientific. I am a neurologist, and my PhD is in immunology. I worked on multiple sclerosis for 20 years. I also did some artificial intelligence during my master in science.

Why are you interested in neuroesthetics?

I learned a third language (visual language) when I became a painter. As a painter and a neurologist, neuroesthetics came to me naturally.

If you were not yourself, who would you be?

A philosophical hermit thinking all day. Or Robin Williams because he was so funny.

Do you consider yourself an artist?

Yes I am a painter.

What is your favorite color?

Cobalt violet, next to a pale tonal lemon yellow.

What has been the most significant contribution to the field of neuroesthetics in the past 20 years?

The development of neuroscience and neuroimaging, and the bridging between disciplines. Semir Zeki was instrumental.

What has been the most significant contribution to the field of neuroesthetics in history?

The understanding by impressionists that you can paint colors instead of painting something, the creation of cubism (Cezanne), and the dialogue between representation and abstraction (De Stael). Also, the realization that images are not only viewed but processed, integrated, and perceived (Gestalt).

How will neuroesthetics look like in 50 years?

Truly multidisciplinary! Painters have a lot to gain from understanding how their brain functions, and neuroscientists could make huge progresses by really listening to what artists have to share.

What is your present state of mind?

I would like to go back to my studio and paint, asap.

What is your favorite motto?

It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see (Henry David Thoreau)

3 extra questions related to the International Conference on Neuroesthetics

What did you enjoy the most at the 11th International Conference on Neuroesthetics?

The multidisciplinary aspect. Especially the philosophical, archaeological and anthropological perspectives. I wish there were more artists.

What would be your dream-overarching theme for the next international Conference on Neuroesthetics?

Ethics and meaning in visual arts.

What do you think of joint presentations (multidisciplinary) for the next international Conference on Neuroesthetics?

That's the way to go!

This is part of a series of posts on the 11th International Conference on Neuroesthetics (September 2014). Phillip answered the Proust Questionnaire on Neuroesthetique.