

NEUROAESTHETICS: BEAUTY AND BRAIN
AESTHETIC PERCEPTION ACCORDING TO AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH
BETWEEN NEUROSCIENCES, PSYCHOTHERAPY, PHILOSOFY AND THEOLOGY

March 19th 2016, at SISPI, Milan (Italy), Via C.Menotti 11

The Conference is born from neuroaesthetic research developed by APRA (Ateneo Pontificio Regina Apostolorum - Rome) Neurobioethics Group in collaboration with SISPI (Scuola Internazionale di Specializzazione con la Procedura Immaginativa – Milan, Rome, www.sispi.eu) in 2015-2016.

Beauty and brain, world of values and organic reality. According to Semir Zeki “creativity and imagination are qualities every brain is miraculously provided with and which it variously expresses in its activity. Creativity is the brain’s strategy for overcoming its limits”.

Interdisciplinary approach to perception and artistic sense (neuroaesthetics) is one of the contemporary frontiers that studies relationships between art, neurosciences and psychotherapy. According to Semir Zeki, beauty is in the brain of the beholder and the brain is an artist and the artist is neuroscientist. Art relates to psychotherapy as a useful tool to access deep levels of consciousness. This interdisciplinary conference on neuroaesthetics aims at collecting an integral bioethical vision, embracing, in addition to neuroanatomic and neurophysiological bases of artistic perception, to psychotherapy which employs works of art, the philosophical and theological vision of the sense of beauty, of the beauty the human individual experiences through his constitutive dimensions.

Of particular relevance and interest was the presentation of the characteristics of psychodynamic methodology with Imaginative Experience, in which, starting from a symbolic image communicated verbally by the therapist, the patient commences a narration of what the Self feels, listening to inner voices which are rendered through images which, in turn, are the expression of the meaning they refer to. A recent evolution of the methodology involves employing visual solicitations of Imaginative Experience, drawn from pictorial works, as an alternative to the classically used verbal solicitations, and proves to have an added value for contacting specific psychic nuclei and accessing the deeper levels of consciousness. Language by images is an analogical language and enables to activate a creative imagination, namely a psychic movement which realizes a narration characterized by a high sensorial reviviscence rate, creativity, and aesthetic sense. “The challenge we wish to launch is a research hypothesis which could be further supported by correlation with “ignition” of specific cerebral areas, resulting from fRMN recording in Imaginative Experiences experimentally induced. Exemplificative clinical cases were presented.