

Exploring beauty and wonder

14th June 2012, 9.30am – 4.30pm;
Durham Light Infantry Museum

It is increasingly recognised that beauty is an idea that needs, and deserves, recovery and rehabilitation: the same seems true of the idea of wonder. In attempting it, many questions arise. Must the appreciation of beauty or a sense of wonder compete for the same intellectual space as analytic understanding? Can beauty and wonder extend our grasp of, and response to, the world around us? Can they provoke and inform the rational search for explanation? Might we justifiably regard beauty and wonder as transfiguring the world, and as transfiguring ourselves – our experience and our self-experience – as we encounter and reflect upon the world?

Through contributions from the disciplines of mathematics, music, theology, cultural studies and philosophy, this Symposium will explore the parallels (and their limitations) between wonder and beauty, the phenomenology of experiencing them, how they transfigure our world, whether they point beyond the world of experience and reason, and how they support (perhaps, vitally) human flourishing.

Contributors include: John Bissell (Mathematics), Stephen Pattison (Theology, Univ. of Birmingham), Mark McIntosh (Theology), Nicholas Saul (Modern Languages and Culture), Martyn Evans (Philosophy and School of Medicine).

Chair: Sander Gilman (Distinguished Professor of the Arts and Sciences, Emory University).

This one-day Symposium is free (lunch and refreshments available at no charge), but places are limited.

For further information, and to book a place, please contact mail.cmh@durham.ac.uk