**Eye of the Beholder**

**It has been said that art is a tryst, for in the joy of it maker and beholder meet. *(Kojiro Tomita)***

**As my friend Carol stood with her daughter and son-in-law in the hospital nursery, she proclaimed with pride that her first grandchild had her daughter’s eyes, her daughter’s nose, her daughter’s coloring and her daughter’s dimple. Her son-in-law asked, “Doesn’t the baby look anything like me?” Your mother is coming tomorrow,” Carol answered. “Then the baby will look just like you.” *(Laverne H. Pollak, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Great art isn't subjective: Beauty is not strictly in the eye of the beholder, a new study says. Great works of art appear to follow rules of proportion and design that have universal appeal, at least in Western culture. Italian neuroscientists showed images of Classical and Renaissance sculptures by the likes of Michelangelo and da Vinci to 14 volunteers with no artistic training -- some of whom had never been to a museum. Some of the images were altered so that the original proportions of the sculptures were slightly modified. When subjects viewed the pictures of the original sculptures, scans of their brains showed a strong emotional response; they were clearly moved. There was much less response to the sculptures with subtle changes in proportion. "We were very surprised that very small modifications to images of the sculptures led to very strong modifications in brain activity," researcher Giacomo Rizzolatti tells LiveScience.com. He believes that the human brain may have a special attraction to images that demonstrate the "golden ratio," an eye-pleasing proportion of 1-to-0.618 that shows up again and again in art and nature. This ratio can be found in a nautilus shell and spiral galaxies, and in Michelangelo's Pieta and the Pyramids. When the brain sees these magical proportions, Rizzolatti says, it interprets them as evidence of great beauty. *(The Week magazine, December 7, 2007)***

**Both the hummingbird and the vulture fly over our nation’s deserts. All vultures see is rotting meat, because that is what they look for. They thrive on that diet. But hummingbirds ignore the smelly flesh of dead animals. Instead, they look for the colorful blossoms of desert plants. The vultures live on what was. They live on the past. They fill themselves with what is dead and gone. But hummingbirds live on what is. They seek new life. They fill themselves with freshness and life. Each bird finds what it is looking for. We all do. *(Steve Goodier, in Quote)***

**My dining-room table was set with hand-painted china that I'd recently inherited, so I proudly explained its history to an early arrival at my dinner party. “Every place setting bears the design of a different kind of flower,” I said. “No two are alike.” My guest eyed the dishes skeptically. “Well,” she replied, “if you don't say anything, perhaps nobody will notice.” (Dorothy Verhoeven, in Reader's Digest)**

**Someone once told Picasso that he ought to make pictures of things the way they are -- objective pictures. When Picasso said he did not understand, the man produced a picture of his wife from his wallet and said, “There, you see, that is a picture of how she really is.” Picasso looked at it and said, “She's rather small, isn't she? And flat?” Like Picasso, we must see things ourselves. (Jack Kornfield, in Unity magazine)**

**You can’t tell a male pigeon from a female pigeon just by looking at it. But a pigeon can. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Even under identical conditions, most people do not see colors in exactly the same way. (Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts)**

**We make a mistake assessing an election campaign as if we were judging a prize fight -- focusing only on the skills of the contestants and what is happening in the ring. An election more resembles the process at an art auction. To determine whether bidders will prefer a Rembrandt or a Picasso, you need to factor in the taste of the customers -- their beliefs, their values. Indeed, the value of a painting -- or the quality of a candidate -- lies in the eyes of the beholder. (Alan Baron)**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***