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Questions is published annually by the Philosophy Documentation Center with the generous support of its subscribers, the University of Washington Center for Philosophy for Children, the American Philosophical Association, and York College of Pennsylvania. If you would like to receive more information on how to obtain print copies, please contact the Philosophy Documentation Center, P.O. Box 7147, Charlottesville, VA 22906-7147; phone: 800-444-2419 (U.S. and Canada) or 434-220-3300; e-mail: order@pdcnet.org; web: www.pdcnet.org/questions.

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Editor's Note

Welcome to our 2017 issue of *Questions*. This issue is dedicated to the philosophical questions about art, beauty, and aesthetics in general. Canadian educational theorist Kieran Egan has noted that very young children grasp highly abstract binary concepts like good/evil, animal/human and beauty/ugliness. In this issue you will find essays and images created by kindergarteners up through adults grappling with questions such as what is art?, what is the difference between beauty and ugliness?, is artistic talent a gift or a skill to be learned? And how does music convey feelings or ideas? Fourth and fifth grade classes in Seattle had an open discussion about beauty and ugliness and offer us some insightful perspectives on why we perceive some things as beautiful while others as ugly through their artwork. Their art can be used to promote discussion.

The three PLATO Contest winners invite us to consider whether art is defined by intentionality of the artist, the attitude of the art public or "artistic-ness," a synergy between object and viewer. These thoughtful high school students articulate a puzzle that still escapes easy solution: what makes art art?

Other contributions in our issue take us beyond traditional concepts of art and ask us to consider whether we ourselves are works of art. Are we a symphony?, asks one writer. Another reflects on why we devalue good forgeries.

Finally, we step beyond visual art to consider the power of music. Is the power and meaning of music universal or culturally bounded?

We humans are creatures who seek beauty and first and foremost perceive the world around us according to our aesthetic sensibilities. Join our philosophers in this issue to open up new questions, use the essays and images to start a conversation in your classroom, among friends, and within the family.

—Wendy C. Turgeon

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