

Beauty

A. What does “beauty” mean?

A. What does “beauty” mean?

B. How is beauty related to art?

A. What does “beauty” mean?

Plato (Greek, ~ 400 B.C.)

- . Beauty ::= our reaction to physical attractiveness of human body
- . Highest form of beauty reaction:
 - = free of sexual desire = desire-less
 - = “Platonic love”

Thomas Aquinas (Italian, Christian, ~ 1250 A.D.)

- . Beauty is...

- a) seeing

- then...

- b) understanding

- harmony/proportion/“correctness”

- . That is, a reflection of God's perfection

Edmund Burke (Irish, ~ 1750)

- . Beauty causes a feeling of calmness, pleasure

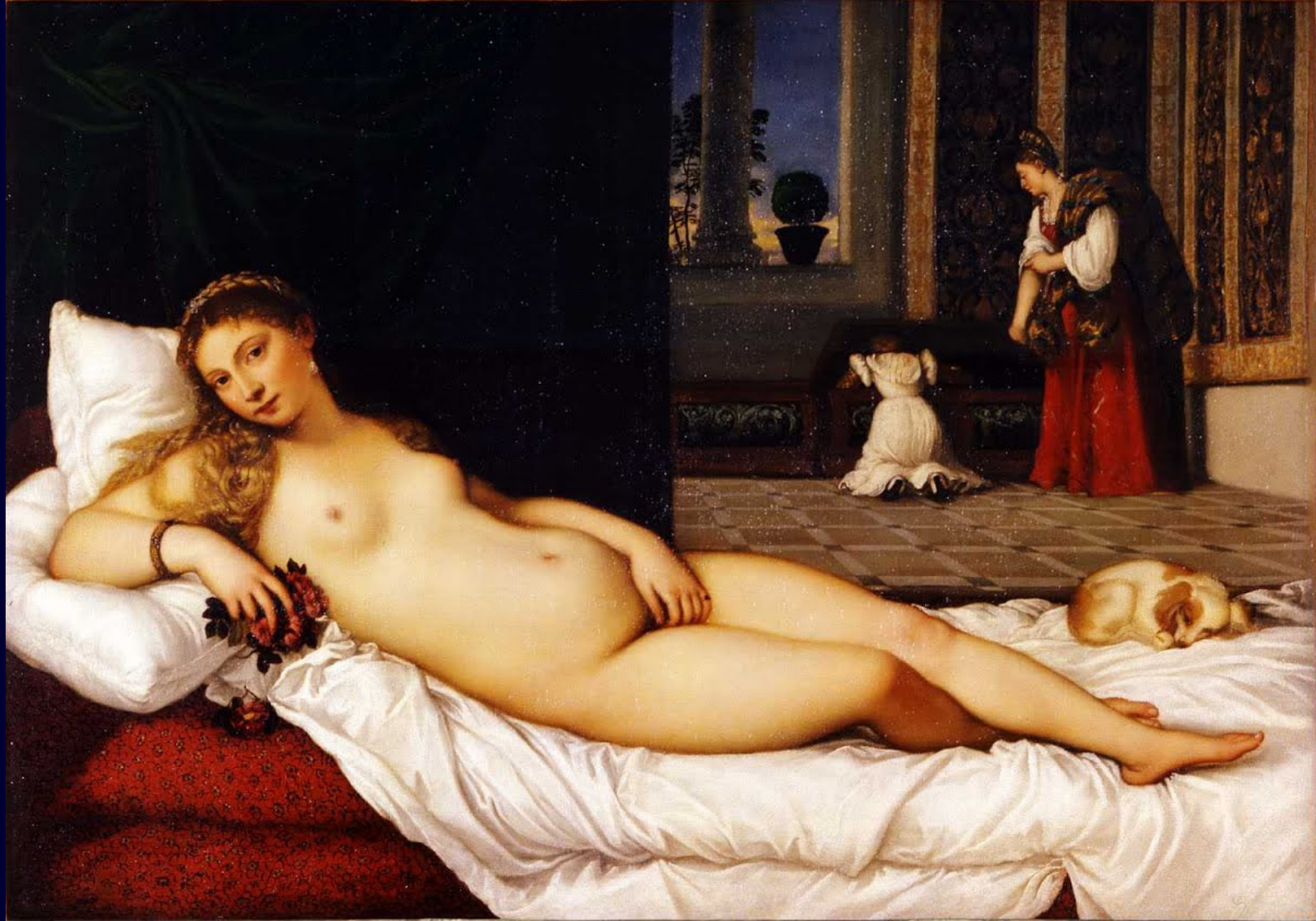
Immanuel Kant (German, ~ 1790)

- . Our judgment of beauty is...
 - . A) “Disinterested”
 - . We seek/desire nothing from it
 - . (recall: Platonic love)
 - . B) “Universal”
 - . there is only one universal standard

B. How is beauty related to art?

pre-18th century

- . Beauty was not a necessary part of art
- . Artwork could be and frequently was beautiful...



Venus, Titian, 1538

- . Beauty was not necessary in art

- . Arthur Danto (American, ~2000):

- . Beauty served a social function

- . Beauty was the “bait”

- ...to get us into the cathedral

- ...to get us to look at the monument

- ...to admire our leaders

- ...to admire the heroes

- ...to understand our history/culture

- ...etc



Parthenon, Greek, ~ 400 B.C.



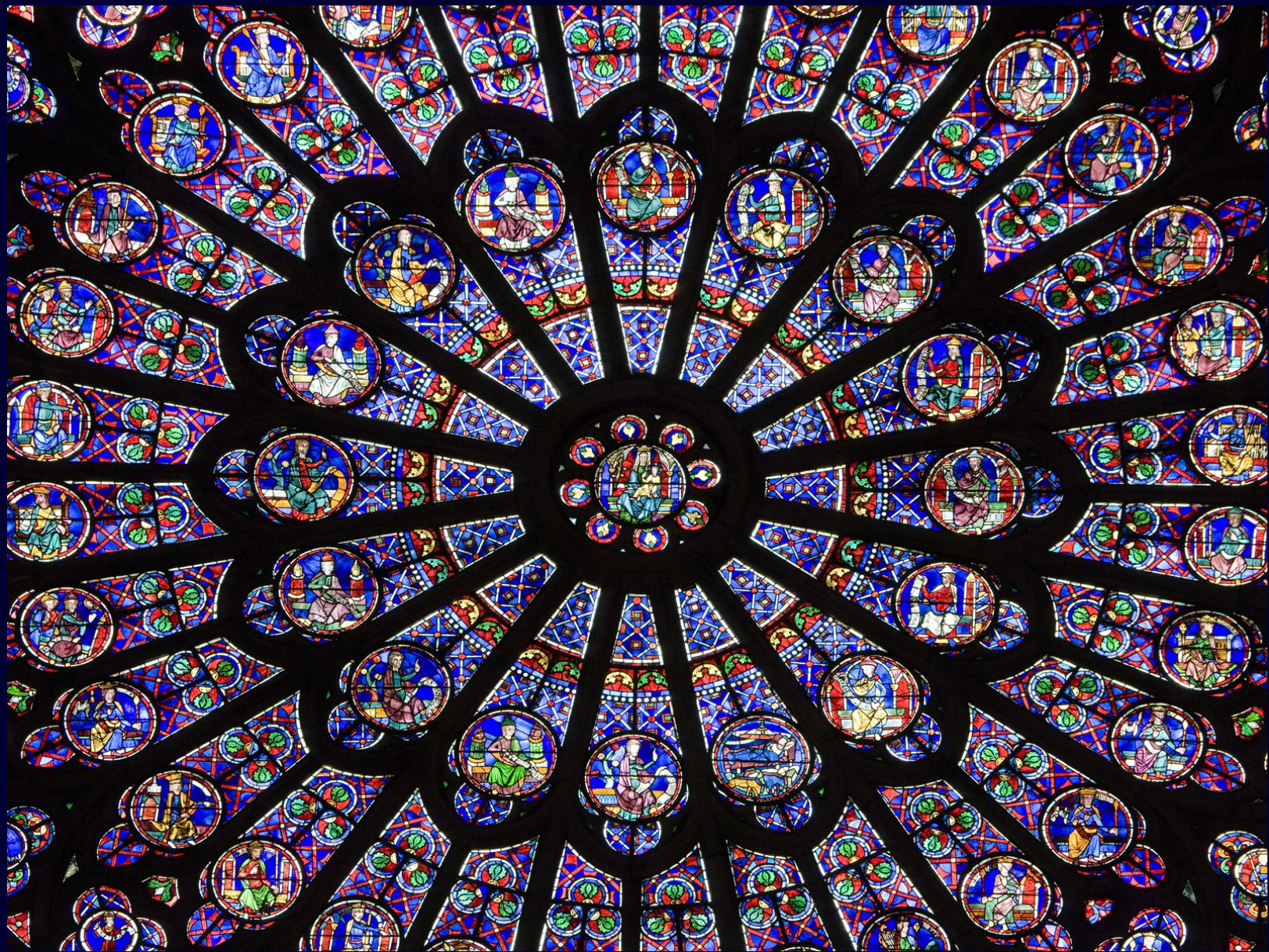
Sculptural frieze from the *Parthenon*, Greek, ~ 400 B.C



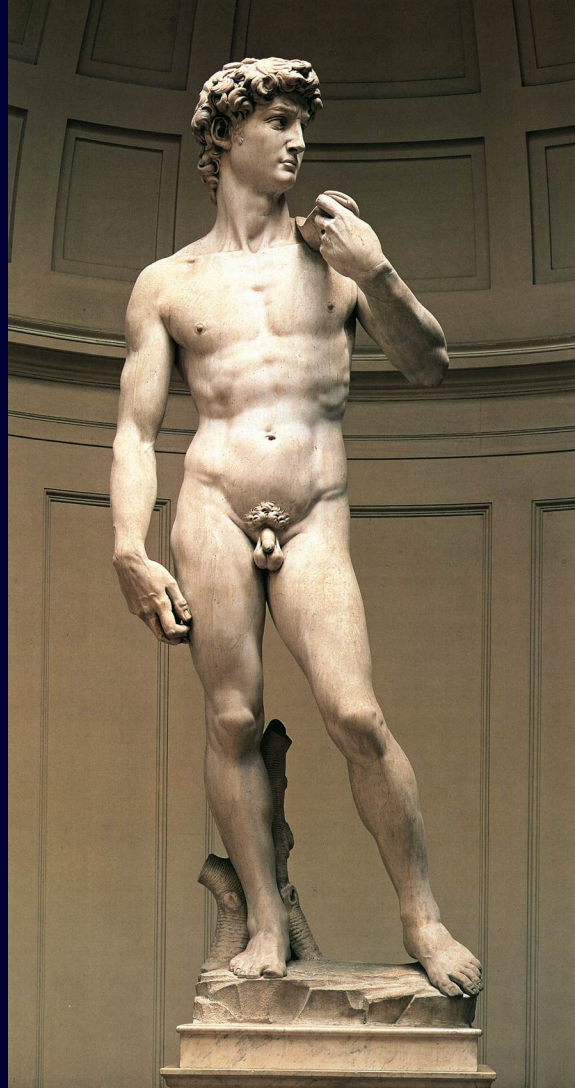
Notre Dame de Paris, French, ~ 1340



interior of Notre Dame de Paris



"Rose" window, stained glass, Notre Dame de Paris,



David, Michelangelo, ~ 1500



David

. Or...

...the other way around?

. Humans want/need beauty

. History, religion, mythology, etc were...

...an excuse to have beauty in art?



Venus and Adonis, N. Poussin, 1624

18th century

- . Alexander Baumgarten (German, ~1740)
 - . Coined the term “aesthetics”
 - = study of good artistic taste/judgment where...

“Aesthetic judgment” = “perceiving/ understanding beauty in art”

- . That is...

Aesthetics is all about beauty

- . Beauty became a necessary part of art

- . If it was not beautiful,...
 - ...it could not be art

- . If it was not *about* beauty,...
 - ...it could not be art



The Happy Lovers, Fragonard, 1765



Diane the Huntress, Houdon, 1782



James Christie, Gainsborough, 1778



Princess Albert de Broglie , Ingres, 1853

early 20th century – Modernism

- . Revolt against beauty
- . Arthur Danto's phrase: “*the Abuse of Beauty*”



Les Femmes d'Alger (O Version O), P. Picasso, 1935



Blue Nude, H. Matisse, 1907

early 20th century

- . World War I
- . artists' reaction to violence, destruction of war
- . Dada → irrational, nonsensical art



Fountain, M. Duchamp, 1917



Self-portrait, Egon Schiele, 1912



The Pillars of Society, G. Groz, 1926

Contemporary?



A Thousand Years, Damien Hirst, 1990



The Prodigal Son, Damien Hirst, 1994



Baby, Ron Mueck, 2003



Sisters Under the Skin, Sally Hewett, 2004?



Nefertiti, Egypt, ~2015



Homer Simpson



Red & Stimpy



No Country for Old Men, 2007

Revival of interest in Beauty in art?

Peter Schjeldahl (critic, *New Yorker* magazine)

Experiences of extreme beauty

- feelings of awe, wonder
 - “stopped in my tracks”
 - almost religious, sacred

Extreme beauty changes our mindset

- “rearranges my molecules”

May involve unfamiliar styles, ideas

Changes how I think, how I understand

- is cognitive

Arthur Danto (critic, philosopher, professor)

Beauty in art

should be appropriate to content of that art

=> Not all art should be beautiful

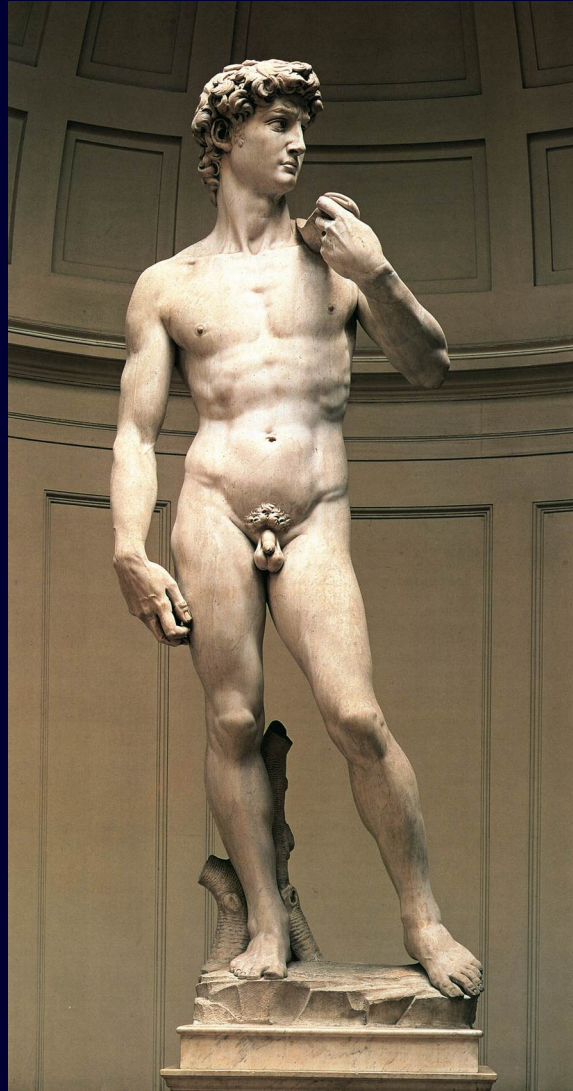
Beauty in your work?

Personal experiences of extreme beauty?

- . “breath taking”
- . “speechless”
- . “jaw dropping”
- . “rearrange my molecules”

M. O'Rourke's?

20 years old, first trip to Europe, Florence, Michelangelo's *David*

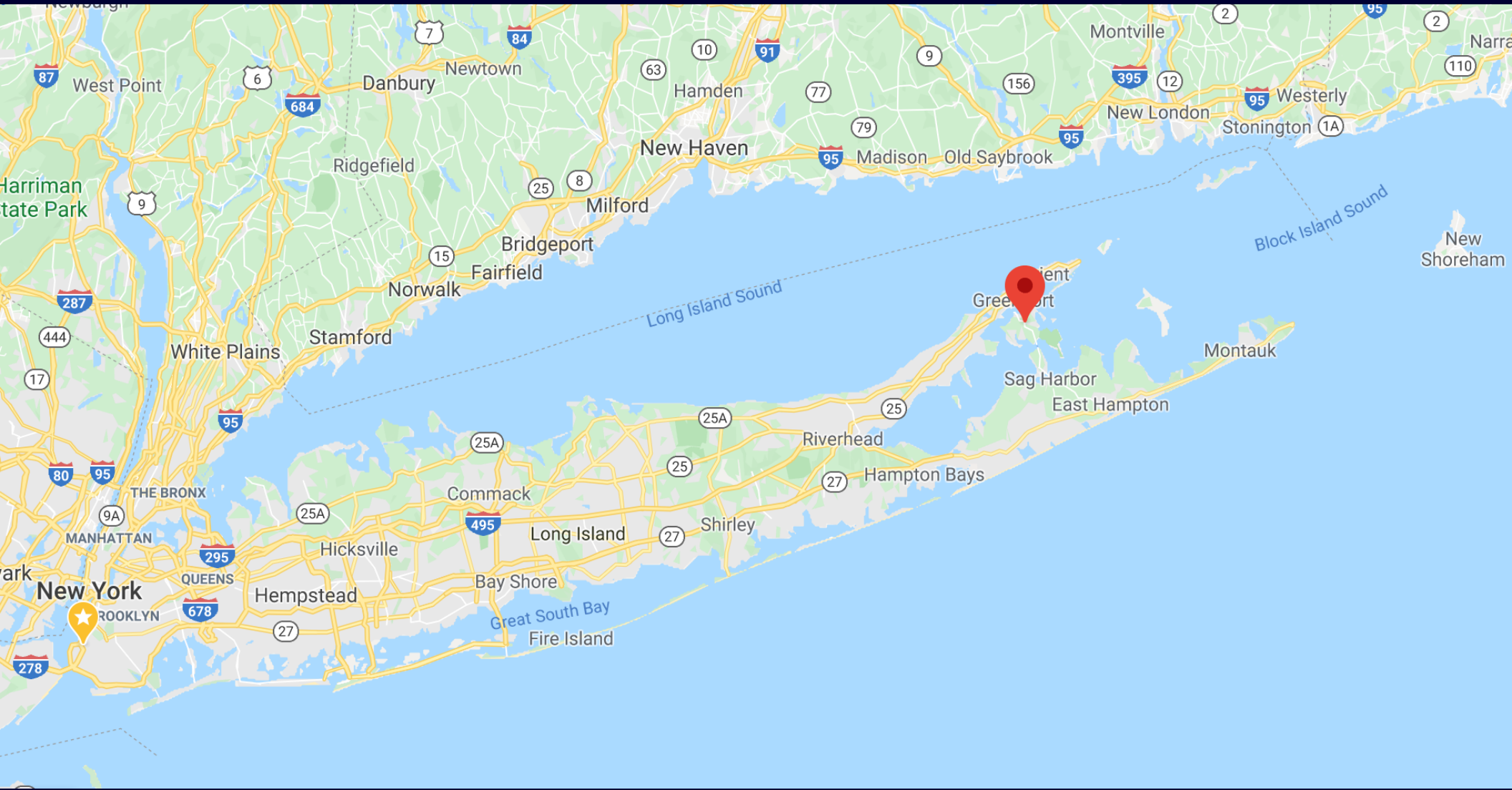


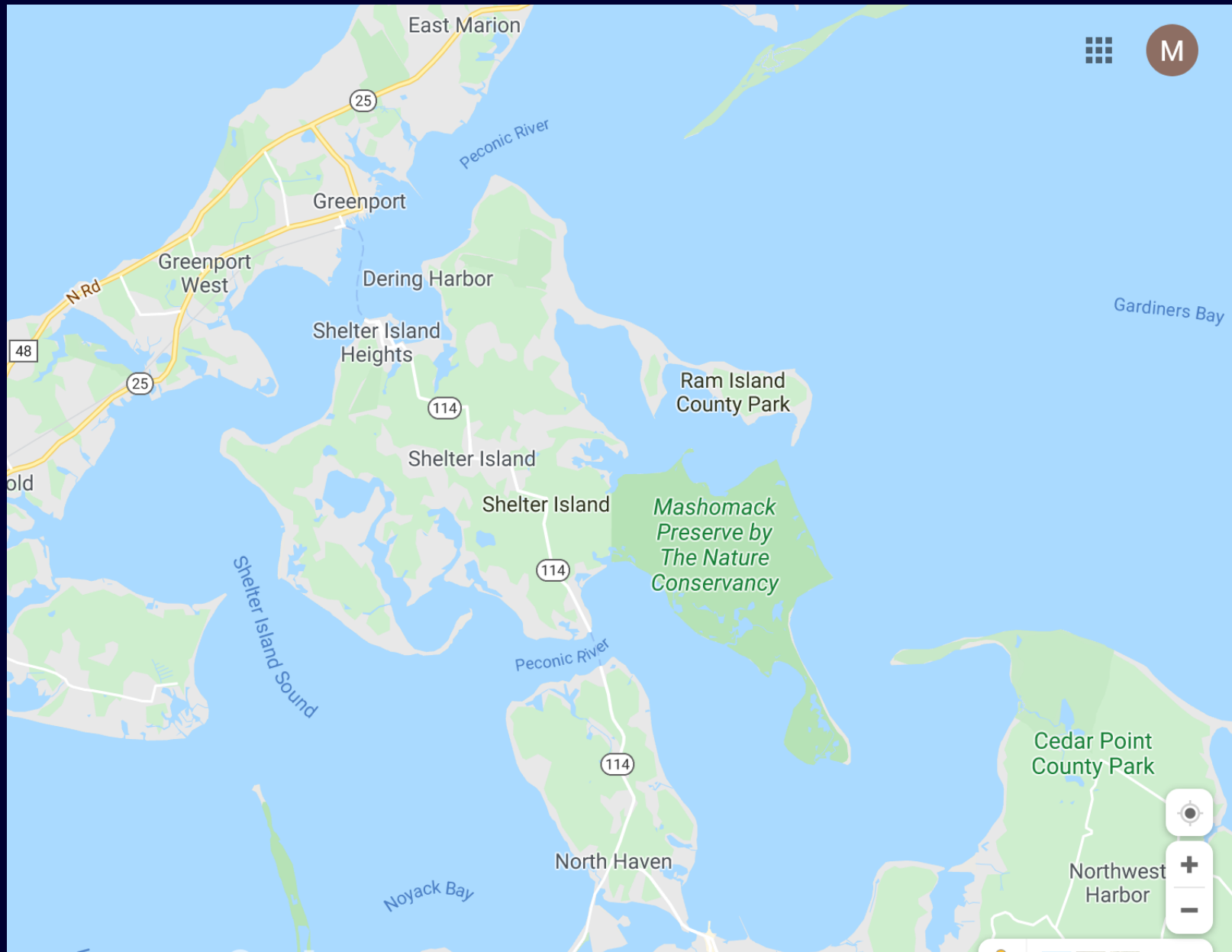
~30 years old, art student, Philadelphia



Avalokiteshvara, Thailand, early 8th century AD

~45 years old, Shelter Island, dusk





Your personal experiences
of extreme beauty?