

Beauty

A. What does “beauty” mean?

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B. How is beauty related to art?

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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

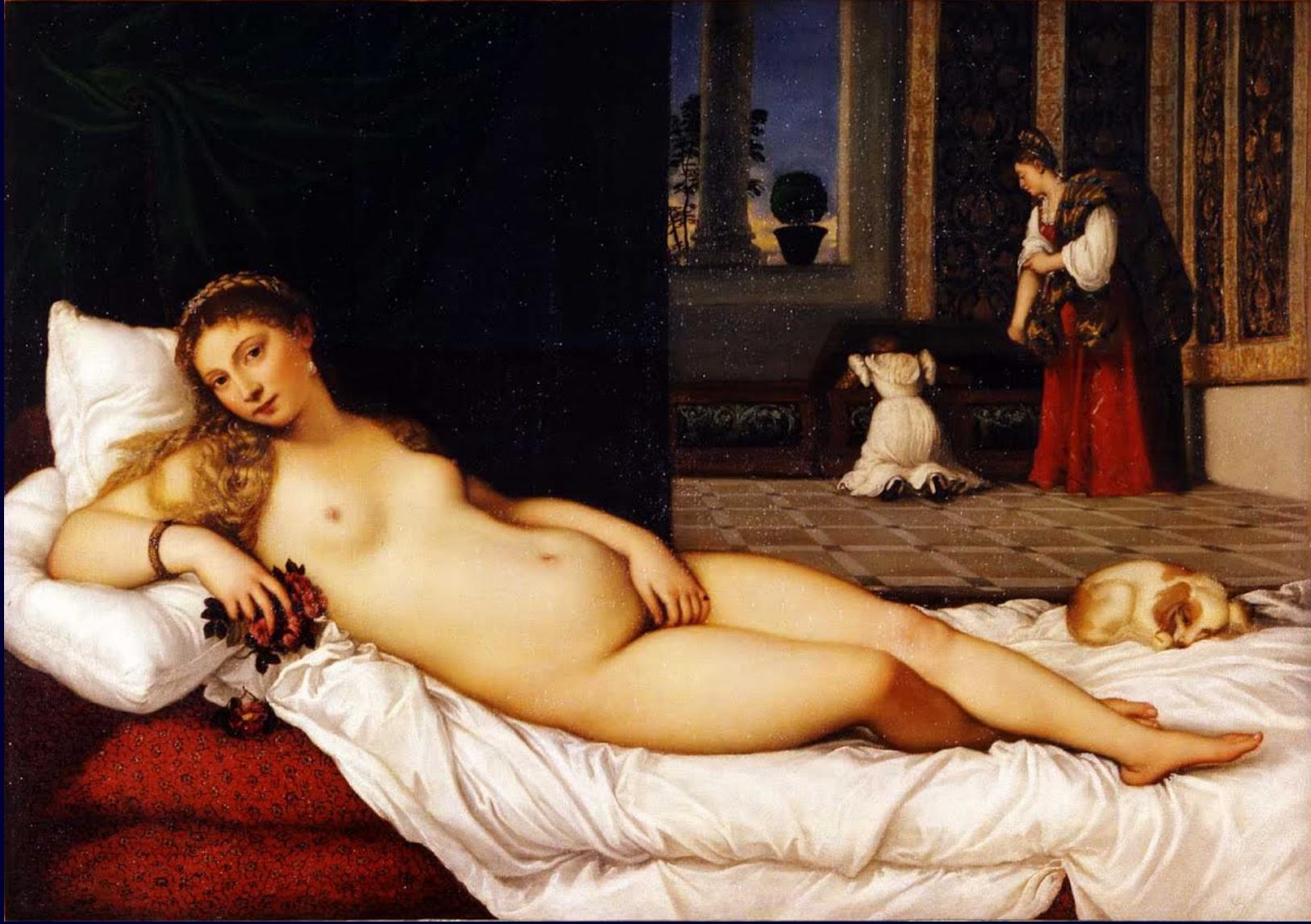
Immanuel Kant (German, ~ 1790)

- . 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.

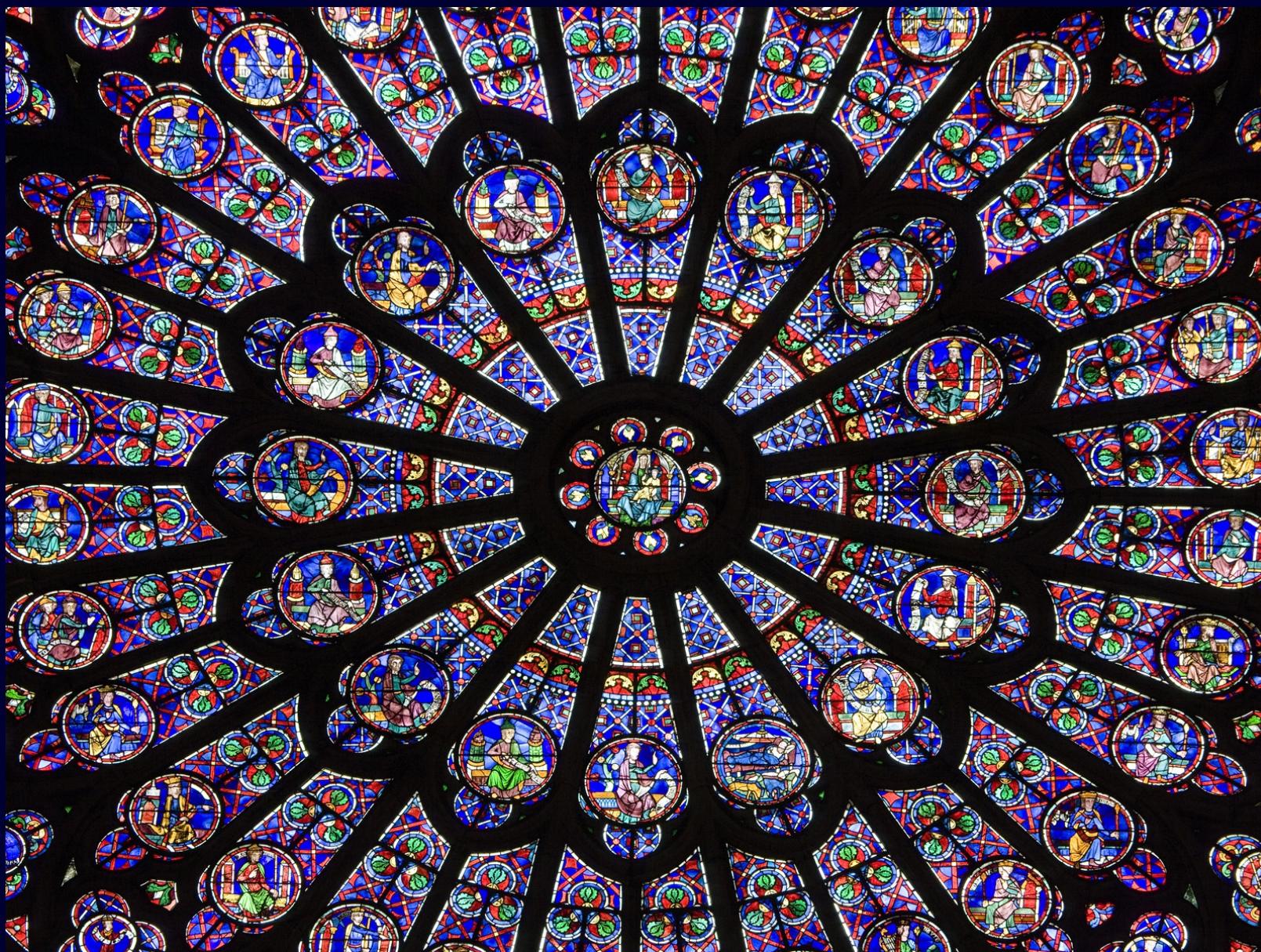


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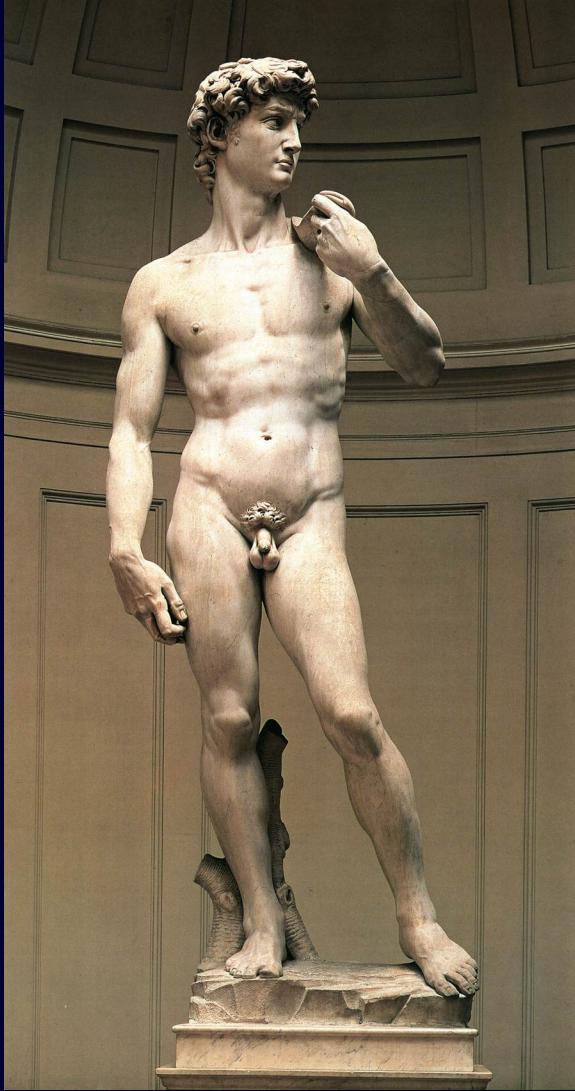
Notre Dame de Paris, French, ~1340



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 Demoiselles d'Avignon, P. Picasso, 1907



Blue Nude, H. Matisse, 1907

early 20th century

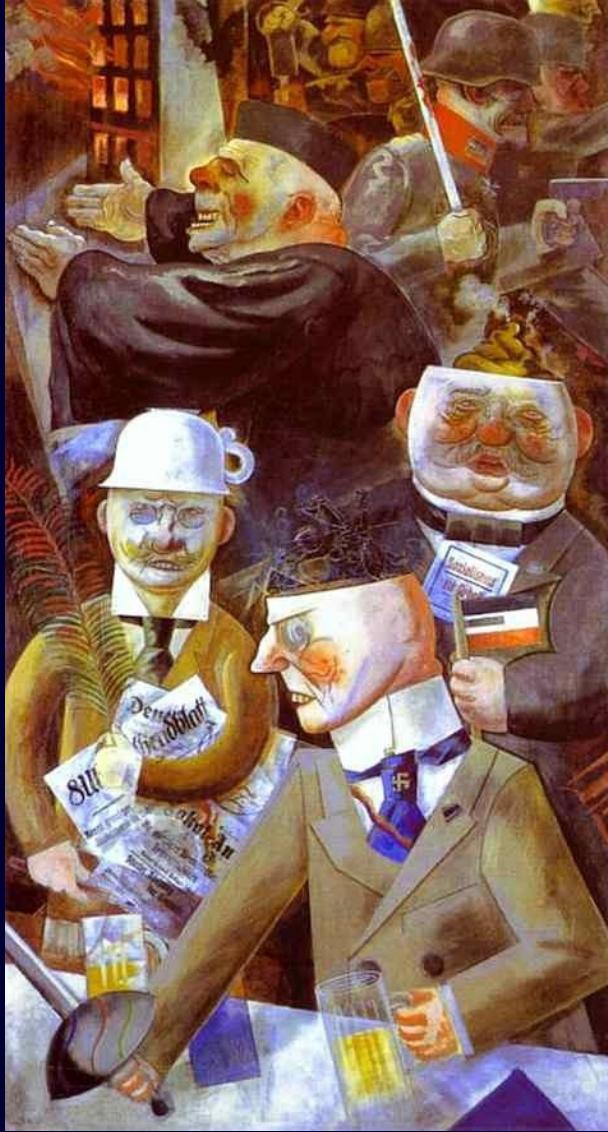
- . World War I
- . artists' reaction to violence, destruction of war
- . Dada → irrational, nonsensical art



Fountain, M. Duchamp, 1917



Self-portrait, Egon Schiele, 1912



The Pillars of Society, G. Grosz, 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



MIRAMAX

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?

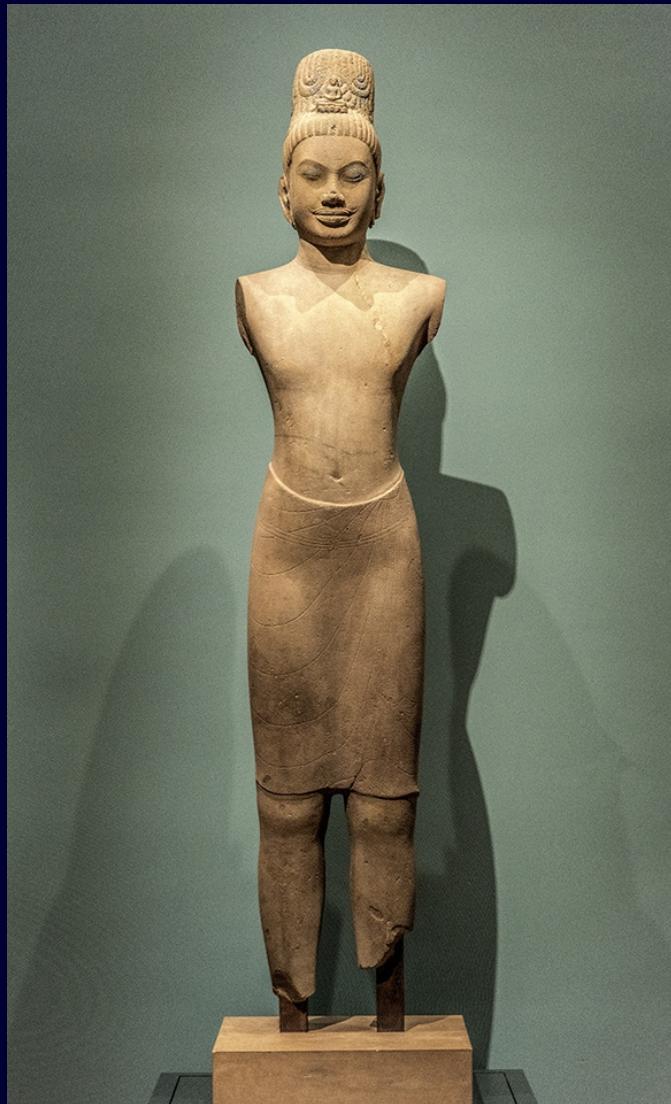
- “breath taking”
- “speechless”
- “jaw dropping”
- “rearrange my molecules”

M. O'Rourke's?

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

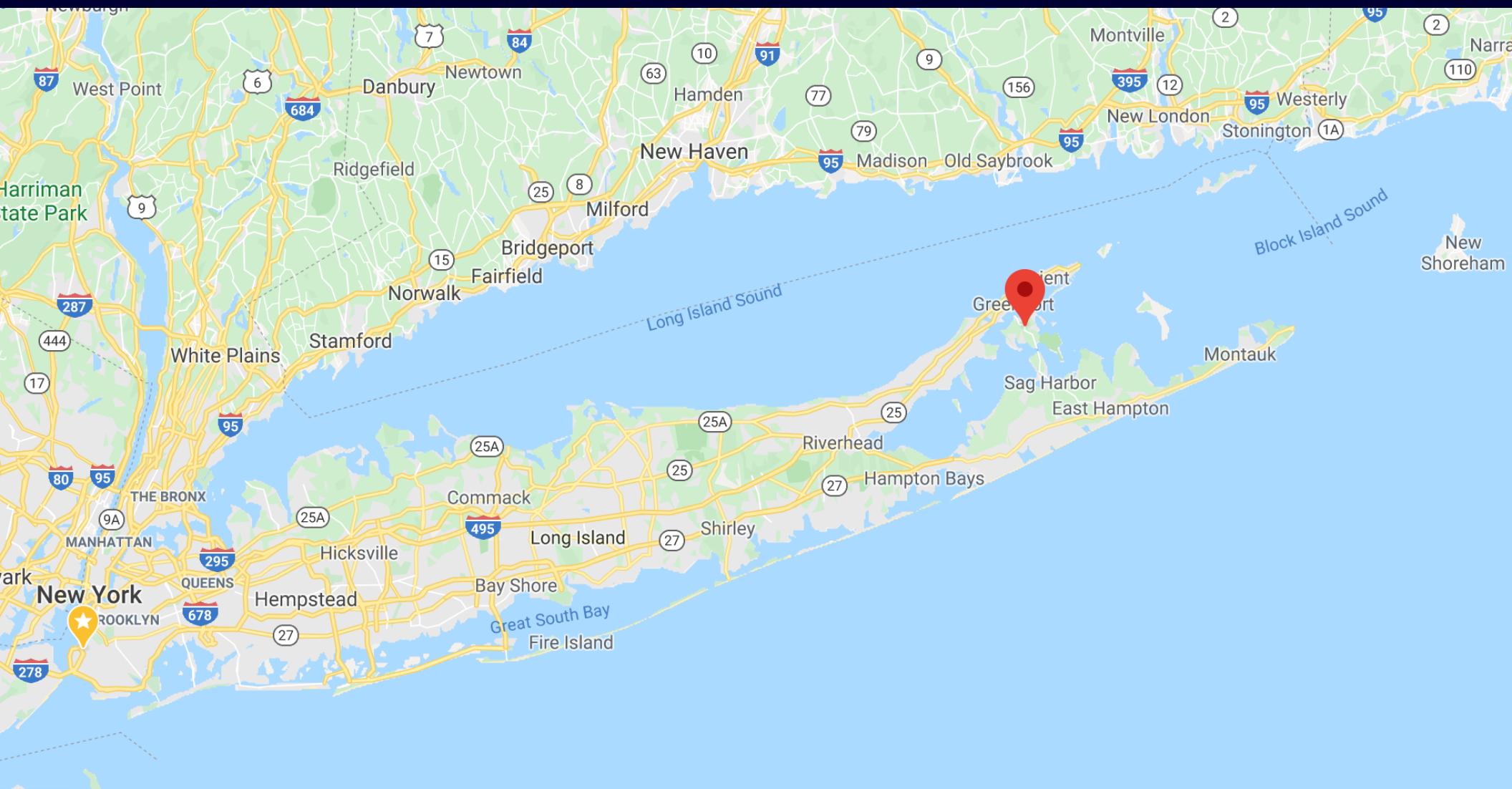


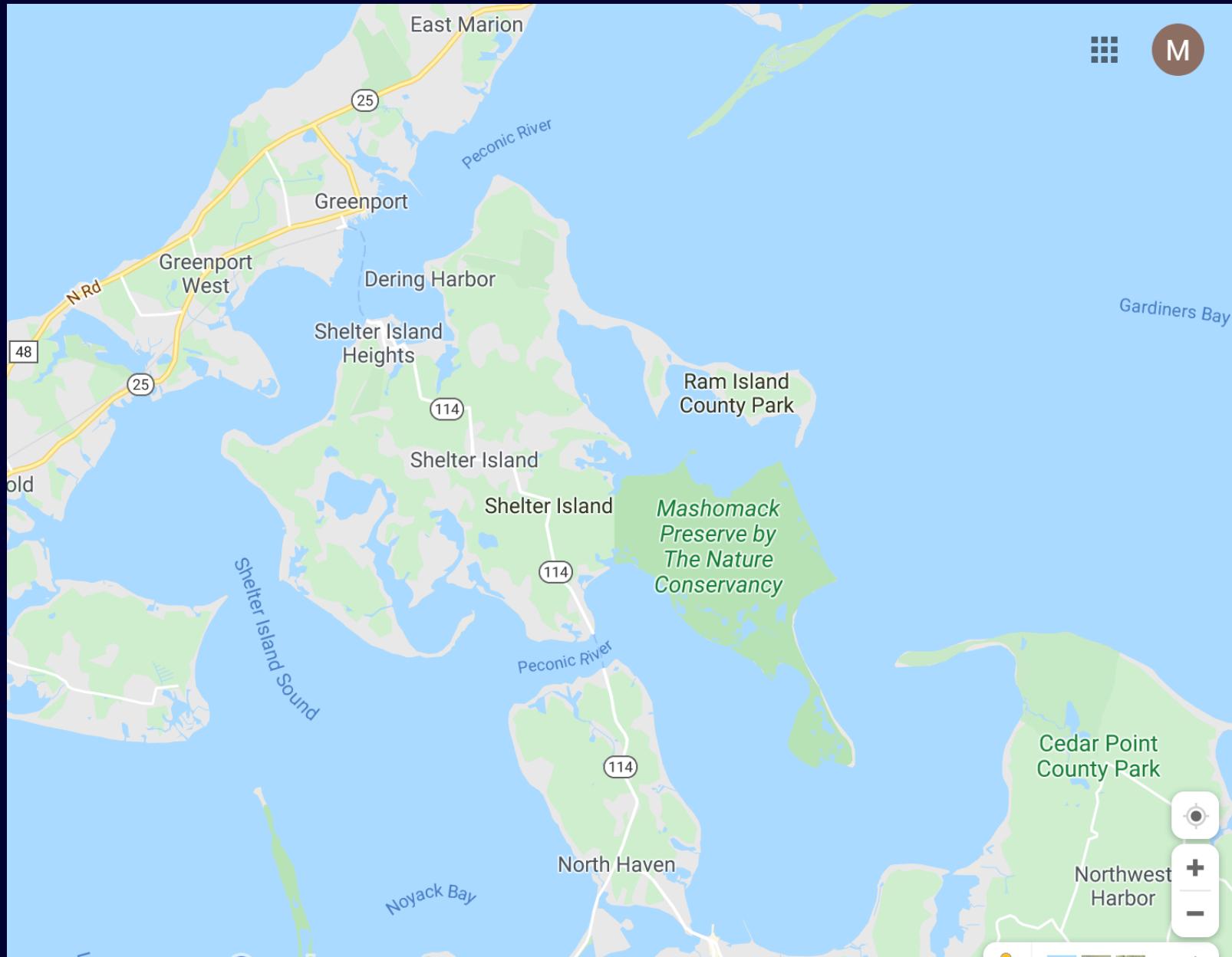
~30 years old, art student, Philadelphia



Avalokiteshvara, Thailand, early 8th century AD

~45 years old, Shelter Island, dusk





Your personal experiences

of extreme beauty?