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Abstract

Broadly speaking, artworks are accorded a special significance and are recognized as powerful communication tools. In the current research, the authors posit that the “specialness” of artworks may be diminished simply by emphasizing that which is depicted in them. This emphasis results in the artwork being viewed as a mere illustration rather than a work of art. Specifically, the influence of an “artwork as art” is context independent, but the influence of an “artwork as illustration” is context dependent. The authors demonstrate this phenomenon in two experiments, in the context of products associated with artworks. In a third experiment, they further demonstrate that an abstract (concrete) mind-set aligns with the influence of an artwork as art (illustration).

Keywords

art, visual images, aesthetics, construal, concrete, abstract, persuasion

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Art is special. It represents a unique category of human expression in which every known society through the ages has engaged (Dutton, 2009). It has been suggested that a schema for art has developed through the millennia of human evolution and has likely also become reinforced via historical Western associations with high culture (Averill, Stanat, & More, 1998; Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008b). Leaders like the Egyptian pharaohs, Roman emperors, and the popes have used art for various purposes such as encouraging religious beliefs and furthering political agendas. In the current era, the use of art in such promotional endeavors is perhaps more prevalent than ever, with firms, organizations, and individuals relying on this communication tool to influence diverse audiences.

The status of art as a powerful communication tool seems so well established as to be obvious. Perhaps that is why few researchers have questioned whether its capacity to influence viewers is absolute or whether it depends on the lens through which it is viewed. A great deal of prior research has focused on the psychological experience of art (Berlyne, 1971; Silvia, 2005), but not on the circumstances under which its influence might be diminished. This is the focus of the current research. The central thesis is that when (a) the content of the artwork is emphasized or (b) the artwork is viewed at a low (concrete) level of construal (Freitas, Gollwitzer, & Trope, 2004; Vallacher & Wegner, 1989), then the artwork no longer influences viewers via its special status as art. Instead, the work is perceived as an illustration, such that its influence on viewers becomes context dependent.

Consider the following example. Imagine two individuals, X and Y, looking at an ad for a restaurant. The ad features a typical painting by Rubens, depicting what many current viewers would consider somewhat corpulent individuals. X encodes this image as art, and thus he makes inferences about the advertised restaurant based on the artistic quality of the piece, or on the status of the image as art. Conversely, Y encodes the image as an illustration, and thus he infers that the food at this restaurant is unhealthy and fattening. These inferences diverge markedly, and yet they stem from the same image.

The Influence of Artworks on Evaluation

A General Influence of Art

Recent research has established a phenomenon, dubbed the Art Infusion Effect, rooted in the “specialness” of art (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008b). The research demonstrates that art images have a favorable, content-independent influence

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on individuals' evaluations of objects, such as consumer products, associated with the art. This is done by exposing study participants to products associated with artworks via advertising, packaging, or product design. The art images have a favorable influence on product evaluation, irrespective of what is depicted in the images. For instance, in one study each participant was shown a soap dispenser with one of three images on its front face: a positively valenced art image; a positively valenced nonart image, matched for content; or a negatively valenced art image. The influence of both art images (positively and negatively valenced) on product evaluation was equally favorable, whereas the influence of the nonart image was significantly less favorable. The influence of the art images involves a spillover of general, favorable perceptions of art, presumably tied to connotations of high culture, and ultimately to the creativity and skill brought to bear on the production of artworks (Hagtvedt, Hagtvedt, & Patrick, 2008). Indeed, artworks are created to be extraordinary, beyond what is strictly necessary for mundane, functional creations. In connection with consumer products, this translates to perceptions of excellence and even luxury. In other words, artworks are special, regardless of what they depict, and associating an object with an artwork causes viewers to evaluate that object more favorably.

Content and Manner: Two Sources of Influence

The above observations notwithstanding, extant theory suggests that a number of different factors determine how a single stimulus may be perceived and evaluated. Dual-processing accounts (De Neys, 2006; Evans, 2008; Förster & Dannenberg, 2010) suggest that the way in which stimuli are processed can determine the influence that they have. Although the Art Infusion Effect (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008b) appears to be based on an art-is-special heuristic, concrete processing might involve a closer inspection of what an art image actually depicts, thus giving rise to an influence tied to the content of the image. Indeed, we propose that visual art represents a special case in which two sources of influence are tied to two components of the artwork itself: the content (what is depicted) and the manner (how it is depicted).

The content of any image conveys information (DeRosia, 2008), but it is the manner that separates artworks from mere illustrations. After all, anything can be depicted in an artwork, but it is the way in which it is depicted that makes it special (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008b). We therefore posit that the special influence of artworks may be attenuated or eliminated simply by concretizing that which is depicted in them, thereby emphasizing the content rather than the manner. This causes the image to be encoded as a mere illustration, such that the influence of the image now depends on the fit between that which is depicted

in the image and the object associated with the image. We further theorize that the mind-set of the viewer is enough to determine this role of fit. A concrete (abstract) mind-set makes salient the content (manner) of the image and results in context dependence (independence; Trope & Liberman, 2010). This latter notion is expanded on later in the article.

The Scope of Content and Manner

These arguments are based on the assumption that art images indeed involve both content and manner. The former refers to that which is depicted in the image, whereas the latter refers to the structuring of formal qualities, such as colors or shapes, to achieve this depiction. Therefore, purely abstract art is excluded from the argument and is outside the scope of this research, since it is per definition nonrepresentational. In other words, it has no content. Broadly speaking, the argument is valid for any representational or figurative art, but certain limitations apply. Particularly attention-grabbing content, such as extremely violent or disgusting depictions, might feasibly hinder the appreciation of manner. Similarly, if the style distorts the depicted matter to a substantial degree, this may obstruct the encoding of content. Taken to the extreme, stylistic distortions result in an artwork that communicates as an abstract image because the content is no longer intelligible to the viewer.

With the caveat of these limitations, we adopt Hagtvedt and Patrick's (2008b) definition of art as that which is categorized by the viewers as such. After all, it is the viewers' own perceptions that matter here, irrespective of scholarly debates about what does or does not constitute art. Further investigation into the neural underpinnings of the Art Infusion Effect also confirmed that the human brain responds differently to art and nonart images matched for content, with the former activating reward circuitry, notably the ventral striatum, to a larger degree (Lacey et al., 2011). The diversity of artworks utilized in that study suggests that untrained viewers readily distinguish art images from nonart images across a vast variety of styles and time periods, based purely on the presence of artistic manner. Although the notion of manner would appear to exclude purely conceptual works, a discussion of such works is in any case outside the scope of the current research. We selected our art images based on the criterion used by Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008a, 2008b) that they are easily recognized by the viewers as art, as established via pretests. Using the above-described guidelines, the potential pool of artworks arguably encompasses the majority of visual art created throughout history (Tansey & Kleiner, 1996). In the empirics, we further restrict our focus to a classic form of visual art, namely painting.

In the three studies that follow, we demonstrate the differential influence of art images on evaluations of associated products, depending on the salience of content versus

manner. The use of consumer products reflects common, everyday experiences, given the widespread use of art images for marketing purposes of this kind (Hetsroni & Tukachinsky, 2005; Hoffman, 2002).

Study 1

Method and Procedure

A field study was conducted to demonstrate that (a) different art images have a similar influence on the evaluation of products associated with them, regardless of the conceptual fit between the product and the content of the images (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008b), but (b) making the content salient leads to a differential influence on product evaluation. Two wine labels were custom made by a professional graphic artist, featuring one of two paintings by Pierre-Auguste Renoir, either *The Luncheon of the Boating Party* or *Gabrielle and Jean*. Both images were painted in the same style by the same artist, but the content of the former (vs. the latter) was pretested (7-point scale: 1 = *poor fit*, 7 = *good fit*) with 24 undergraduates as having a better fit with the product category ($M = 6.17$, $SD = 1.03$ vs. $M = 1.75$, $SD = 0.97$), $F(1, 22) = 117.49$, $p < .05$. Indeed, the former depicts diners talking and drinking wine, whereas the latter depicts a woman and child playing with toys and thus seems inappropriate for an adult beverage. Two wine bottles were thus used in the study, containing the same wine but with different labels.

We contracted a deal to have the field study conducted on weekdays during happy hour in a bar with a calm ambience and a mixed clientele. The bartender, blind to the purpose of the study, was trained by the authors to administer the study. For each participant, the bartender asked a patron if he or she would be willing to taste a wine that they were considering for the bar. This cover story was used so that patrons would feel free to offer their honest opinion. The bartender then took one of the two wine bottles from behind the counter, and, before pouring the wine, made salient either the content or manner of the image on the wine label. This manipulation was achieved by the bartender glancing at the wine label before pouring the wine, and making one of two seemingly casual comments: either "Ah, this is the one with the people" or "Ah, this is the one with the painting." The former statement was pretested as effective in making salient the content of the visual image (both images feature people), whereas the latter was pretested as effective in making salient the manner (both images are paintings). One of the authors was constantly present, posing as a typical patron of the bar, to observe that the bartender conducted the taste test appropriately for each participant.

A total of 60 adults (34 males, 26 females; ages 21–78; $M_{\text{age}} = 36$) participated in a 2 (fit: high vs. low) \times 2 (salience:

Table 1. Study 1: Product Evaluation

	Salience			
	Content		Manner	
Fit	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
High	5.39	1.32	5.60	1.18
Low	3.29 ^a	1.19	4.88	1.14

^aDifferent from the other three conditions ($p < .05$).

content vs. manner) between-subjects study, in which fit was manipulated with one of two wine labels and salience was manipulated with one of two statements made by the bartender. Participants viewed the wine label and tasted the wine before filling out a short questionnaire. Product evaluation was reported on five 7-point semantic differential scales (unfavorable–favorable, negative–positive, bad–good, unpleasant–pleasant, dislike very much–like very much), later combined in a product evaluation index ($\alpha = .98$).

Results and Discussion

An ANOVA with fit and salience as the independent variables and product evaluation as the dependent variable revealed a main effect of fit, $M_{(\text{high})} = 5.49$, $SD = 1.24$ vs. $M_{(\text{low})} = 4.09$, $SD = 1.40$, $F(1, 56) = 20.10$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .26$, a main effect of salience, $M_{(\text{content})} = 4.37$, $SD = 1.63$ vs. $M_{(\text{manner})} = 5.23$, $SD = 1.20$, $F(1, 56) = 8.21$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .13$, and a fit \times salience interaction, $M_{(\text{high, content})} = 5.39$, $SD = 1.32$ vs. $M_{(\text{low, content})} = 3.29$, $SD = 1.19$ vs. $M_{(\text{high, manner})} = 5.60$, $SD = 1.18$ vs. $M_{(\text{low, manner})} = 4.88$, $SD = 1.14$, $F(1, 56) = 4.79$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$. Contrast analysis revealed significant differences between the low-fit, content salience condition and the other three conditions, but no other differences (see Table 1). Furthermore, there were no differences when gender and age were included as covariates in the analysis.

These results illustrate the theorized influence of content versus manner. In the manner salience condition, evaluations stemming from the low-fit image are equivalent to evaluations stemming from the high-fit image. However, if consumers interpret a visual image as a product-relevant illustration, then a painting of a woman and child playing with toys clearly seems inappropriate for an adult beverage like wine. In the content salience condition, an unfavorable product evaluation results from this image as compared to the image with diners, even though the participants actually tasted the same wine in both conditions. Study 1 revealed that the salience of content versus manner is easily manipulated and may be achieved even by something as unobtrusive as the seemingly casual comment of a bartender.

Study 2

Method and Results

A total of 78 undergraduates participated in a lab experiment designed to replicate the results from Study 1, using a different manipulation for the salience of content versus manner. The stimulus was an advertisement for Jai Soaps (a defunct brand, pretested with 12 undergraduates as unknown for our sample population: $M = 2.20$; 1 = *not at all familiar*, 7 = *extremely familiar*) featuring one of two artworks by Jacques Louis David, either a detail of *Madame Recamier* or a detail of *The Intervention of the Sabine Women*. Both images were painted in the same style by the same artist, but the content of the former (vs. the latter) was pretested (7-point scale: 1 = *poor fit*, 7 = *good fit*) with 24 undergraduates as having a better fit with the product category, $M = 5.17$, $SD = 0.94$ vs. $M = 2.75$, $SD = 1.14$, $F(1, 22) = 32.23$, $p < .05$. Indeed, the former displays an elegant young lady relaxing on a luxurious couch, draped in what appears to be soft and clean garments, whereas the latter depicts a warrior in the midst of battle (see the appendix for the stimuli). In the content salience condition, participants were asked to rate the product on relevant product attributes (e.g., soft, smooth, soothing) before filling out the rest of the questionnaire. Participants in the manner salience condition were first asked to report product evaluation. The rationale for this manipulation was that inferences about product attributes must be made from the content of the image, thus causing the image to be viewed as a product-relevant illustration, rather than as a work of art. In the manner salience condition, the question pertaining to product attributes came later in the questionnaire, and thus it could not affect this variable.

The study was thus a 2 (fit: high vs. low) \times 2 (salience: content vs. manner) between-subjects experiment. As a manipulation check for salience, participants reported the degree (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *definitely*) to which they viewed the image as an artwork (referring to the manner in which the image was created) rather than as a specific illustration (what is depicted in the image) about the use of Jai Soaps. Results revealed a successful manipulation, $M_{(\text{content})} = 5.21$, $SD = 1.92$ vs. $M_{(\text{manner})} = 6.02$, $SD = 1.32$, $F(1, 73) = 5.02$, $p < .05$. Product evaluation ($\alpha = .93$) was reported on the same scale as in the previous study. In addition, data were collected for mood, for familiarity with the visual image, and for interest in and knowledge about art. As expected, no differences were found for these variables, and they did not influence the results. Hence, they are not discussed further.

An ANOVA with fit and salience on product evaluation revealed a main effect of fit, $M_{(\text{high})} = 4.56$, $SD = 1.20$ vs. $M_{(\text{low})} = 3.90$, $SD = 1.41$, $F(1, 74) = 7.01$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .09$, and a fit \times salience interaction, $M_{(\text{high, content})} = 4.70$,

Table 2. Study 2: Product Evaluation

Fit	Salience			
	Content		Manner	
	M	SD	M	SD
High	4.70	0.98	4.45	1.37
Low	3.28 ^a	1.12	4.34	1.44

^aDifferent from the other three conditions ($p < .05$).

$SD = 0.98$ vs. $M_{(\text{low, content})} = 3.28$, $SD = 1.12$ vs. $M_{(\text{high, manner})} = 4.45$, $SD = 1.37$ vs. $M_{(\text{low, manner})} = 4.34$, $SD = 1.44$, $F(1, 74) = 5.16$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .07$. There were no other significant effects. Contrast analysis revealed differences only between the condition with low fit and content salience and the other three conditions. There were no differences between the latter three conditions (see Table 2).

Discussion

Studies 1 and 2 demonstrate that when an art image is presented as an illustration, the influence it has on evaluations of the product associated with it depends on its contextual fit with that product. However, when the image is presented as art, contextual fit has no influence on product evaluation. Study 3 was designed to provide evidence for our theorizing that the level at which the viewer construes the visual image (abstract vs. concrete) gives rise to the differential encoding of it as either an illustration or an artwork.

Study 3

Abstract Versus Concrete Processing

In the context of their GLObal versus LOcal processing MOdel, Förster and Dannenberg (2010) review global versus local processing systems and present evidence that real-world variables can elicit either processing style. For instance, abstract versus concrete language can encourage global versus local processing, respectively (Stapel & Semin, 2007). In the current research, we demonstrate a similar finding such that calling attention to the content versus manner of artworks results in differential processing effects (Studies 1 and 2).

Recent research (Avramova & Stapel, 2008; Förster & Dannenberg, 2010; Friedman, Fishbach, Förster, & Werth, 2003) also points to evidence suggesting that perceptual focus is related to conceptual focus, such that visual focus on a percept might also drive conceptual attention. Notably, however, dual-processing perspectives (Evans, 2008; Förster & Dannenberg, 2010) have not focused on the differential

processing of components of a single object (e.g., a visual image) and the influence this might have on the subsequent evaluation of another object (the product or brand associated with the image). In the current research, we propose that abstract (concrete) processing leads to a focus on the global (specific) information provided by that image, which subsequently influences how an associated object is evaluated.

Abstract mind-sets are associated with higher-level construals and schematic, global processing whereas concrete mind-sets are associated with lower-level construals and attribute-level, local processing with a focus on contextualized features (Liberman & Trope, 1998; Trope & Liberman, 2010; Trope, Liberman, & Wakslak, 2007). In the current context, we suggest that local processing entails a focus on particulars of the image, whereas global processing entails a focus not only on the entirety of the visual image but also on the overall category that the image represents, namely, visual art. Specifically, we argue that a concrete mind-set (pertaining to lower-level construal) is associated with specific product-related information tied to the content of a visual image, whereas an abstract mind-set (pertaining to higher-level construal) is associated with the general, schema-based inferences tied to the manner. Abstract processing thus aligns with the overall perception of the image as an artwork, whereas concrete processing aligns with the specific perception of what is depicted in the image. In sum, an abstract mind-set aligns with the influence of an "artwork as art," whereas a concrete mind-set aligns with the influence of an "artwork as illustration." We thus expect contextual fit between the image content and the associated product to influence the evaluations of consumers with a concrete mind-set, but not of those with an abstract mind-set.

Method and Results

A total of 141 undergraduates participated in a study in which the stimulus was an advertisement for Bellvier Nail Salon (fictitious brand) featuring one of two artworks by a contemporary Norwegian artist, either Her Volcanic Song or Impression. Both images were painted in the same style by the same artist, but the former displays the face of a woman whereas the latter displays the face of a man (see the appendix for the stimuli). The content of the former (vs. the latter) was pretested (7-point scale: 1 = *poor fit*, 7 = *good fit*) with 24 undergraduates as having a better fit with the product category, $M = 5.25$, $SD = 1.42$ vs. $M = 2.17$, $SD = 1.11$, $F(1, 22) = 34.94$, $p < .05$.

At the beginning of the study, participants completed a laddering task adapted from Freitas et al. (2004) in which participants were asked to write down the most important thing they did to keep healthy. Concrete (abstract) mind-set was induced by further asking an additional six questions in

sequence about how (why) participants engaged in this activity. The how (why) questions are related to seeing concrete details (big picture) over the big picture (concrete details) and are reported to induce concrete (abstract) mind-set (Liberman & Trope, 1998; Vallacher & Wegner, 1989). As noted above, concrete (abstract) mind-set is per our theorizing associated with a content-based (manner-based) evaluation. In addition, a control condition was added, in which participants were not subjected to a mind-set manipulation.

The study was thus a 2 (fit: high vs. low) \times 3 (mind-set: concrete vs. abstract vs. no instructions control) between-subjects experiment. Participants reported brand evaluation ($\alpha = .95$) on the same scale as in the previous study. As a manipulation check for mind-set, participants were asked an open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire: "What does the image in the ad convey about Bellvier Nail Salon?" Two independent coders subsequently coded these data for inferences based on the content versus the manner of the visual image and assigned one point for each reference to content and one for each reference to manner, resulting in 85% intercoder reliability. A mind-set index was created by subtracting the content scores from the manner scores, and an ANOVA with fit and mind-set on the mind-set index revealed a successful manipulation of mind-set, $M_{(\text{concrete})} = 0.25$ vs. $M_{(\text{abstract})} = 0.68$ vs. $M_{(\text{control})} = 0.65$, $F(2, 136) = 3.66$, $p < .05$. No other effects were significant. This result also suggests, as expected, that the image was encoded, in the control condition as well as in the abstract condition, as an aesthetic stimulus rather than as a product relevant illustration, thus leading to a manner-based evaluation. In addition, data were collected for mood, for familiarity with the image, and for interest in and knowledge about art. As expected, no differences were found for these variables, and they did not influence the results. Hence, they are not discussed further. However, a two-way ANOVA on brand evaluation revealed the expected fit \times mind-set interaction, $M_{(\text{high, concrete})} = 4.39$, $SD = 0.76$ vs. $M_{(\text{low, concrete})} = 3.22$, $SD = 0.98$ vs. $M_{(\text{high, abstract})} = 3.84$, $SD = 1.14$ vs. $M_{(\text{low, abstract})} = 4.11$, $SD = 1.46$ vs. $M_{(\text{high, control})} = 3.97$, $SD = 1.26$ vs. $M_{(\text{low, control})} = 3.84$, $SD = 1.02$, $F(2, 135) = 4.44$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$. No other effects were significant. As expected, contrast analysis revealed a significant difference between the low-fit, concrete mind-set condition and the high-fit, concrete mind-set condition. There were no other differences (see Table 3).

General Discussion

In this research, we propose that visual art represents a special category of objects in which two sources of influence are tied to two components of the artwork: the content (what is depicted) and the manner (how it is depicted). With

Table 3. Study 3: Product Evaluation

Fit	Mind-Set					
	Concrete		Abstract		Control	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
High	4.39	0.76	3.84	1.14	3.97	1.26
Low	3.22 ^a	0.98	4.11	1.46	3.84	1.02

^aDifferent from the high-fit, concrete mind-set condition ($p < .05$).

three studies, we demonstrate that the “specialness” of artworks may be diminished simply by contextualizing them (Studies 1 and 2) or causing them to be processed concretely (Study 3). In other words, an emphasis on what is depicted causes the works to be viewed as mere illustrations rather than as pieces of art. The influence of an “artwork as art” is context independent, but the influence of an “artwork as illustration” is context dependent. Furthermore, we theorize that a concrete mind-set gives rise to the salience of content and to the encoding of the artwork as a context relevant illustration, whereas an abstract mind-set gives rise to the salience of manner and to the encoding of the artwork as art. This, in turn, influences what the artwork communicates to viewers.

Visual Components: Content and Manner

With this research, we provide insights into visual art as a potent but underinvestigated source of influence on viewers. Indeed, art represents a unique but ubiquitous category of human behavior. Some prior research has investigated how artworks influence viewers (Berlyne, 1971; Masuda, Gonzales, Kwan, & Nisbett, 2008; Silvia, 2005), but this has typically not focused on the aspects of the artworks that underlie different influences or the circumstances under which different influences arise from the same artwork. The current research is based on the assumption that the general perceived specialness of artworks is tied to what we call artistic manner. This manner reflects the creativity and skill dedicated to the creation of the artwork. In every single known human society throughout the ages and across the globe, people have engaged in this behavior when they want to depict something, whatever that may be, in an extraordinary way (Dissanayake, 1995; Dutton, 2009). As extant research demonstrates, an art image and a nonart image can depict virtually identical content; hence, it is not the content but the manner that distinguishes these two types of images from one another (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008b; Lacey et al., 2011). Nonetheless, this notion remains a highly contentious issue, especially in the art world (Robertson & McDaniel, 2010). For instance,

the display of works labeled conceptual art in many galleries and museums implies that manner need not even be a necessary consideration in artworks. Furthermore, although the vast majority of artworks, across both geographical areas and historical time periods, do appear to exhibit readily discernible artistic manner (Tansey & Kleiner, 1996), there is no self-evident reason to assume that the salience of such manner may be readily manipulated to engender favorable evaluations of objects associated with the artworks. It is also far from obvious that one may eliminate this favorable influence of manner simply by shifting the viewer’s focus to the content of the image. After all, both content and manner are simultaneously present in the art image. Indeed, given that manner constitutes the formal building blocks with which content is depicted, it is impossible to fully disentangle one from the other in any representational image. This is true whether the image be a neoclassical piece that dazzles viewers with sheer realism and technical virtuosity, a modern piece that intrigues with raw, wild brush strokes, or a commonplace image without evident note. Therefore, the current research contributes not only to a deeper understanding of how art images communicate in everyday contexts such as advertising or product design but also to philosophy of art and to a fundamental understanding of the components that comprise art images.

Art Images, Associated Objects, and Contextual Considerations

Art images are used as a tool in various types of communication. The current research provides insights into how artworks influence the perception of other associated objects. The use of consumer products in this research reflects common, everyday experiences, given the prevalent use of artworks for marketing purposes of this kind (Hetsroni & Tukachinsky, 2005). Indeed, reproductions of art images reach more people more often through advertising than through any other medium (Hoffman, 2002). However, without an adequate understanding of the various influences that such images have, the resulting consumer response is uncertain. As the current research shows, not only may the same image be perceived differently by different consumers, but it may even be perceived differently by the same consumer, depending on the circumstances. This clearly complicates the strategic use of art images in marketing efforts.

Some specific, practical implications may be gleaned from the current research. Although it is arguably of obvious importance to consider the content of the visual image and the brand-related information communicated by that content, this research indicates that the less obvious consideration of manner may be at least as important. In cognitively

demanding situations, such as cluttered retail environments, or in connection with TV, magazines, or urban street advertising, where innumerable visuals bombard consumers and compete for their attention, a manner-based evaluation becomes all the more important, since it relies on an art-is-special heuristic rather than the detail-oriented processing of content. Furthermore, the manner-based evaluation is less sensitive to contextual fit, and thus it may be relied on across a wide variety of circumstances. Notably, although manner may be useful to convey a general favorable impression of a brand, content may be more useful to convey specific information about product attributes.

Future research may expand on the current findings by investigating the influence of artworks on the perception and evaluation of other types of products than the ones used here. Hagtvedt and Patrick's (2008a, 2008b) research indicates that the favorable influence of artworks extends not only to high end products but also to lower end products such as ordinary soap dispensers, bathroom fittings, and dinnerware. However, it seems likely that a number of products have valued connotations that would be diluted by an association with fine art. For instance, products that promote an image of ruggedness may not benefit from this association. Even more interestingly, such products might benefit from an association with an offensive art image, but only if connotations of sophistication and exclusivity tied to artistic manner are avoided. Future research might also investigate whether the effects of art are different in categories other than consumer products. For instance, would art images on the walls of banks, hospitals, and schools influence perceptions of these institutions, their mission, and their personnel in a manner similar to the one demonstrated in the current research? Furthermore, the effects of the context in which the art is presented may depend on a number of other variables, ranging from general ambience to the viewer's mood (Avramova, Stapel, & Lerouge, 2010). Indeed, a variable such as mood may also be influenced by the art image being viewed, thus complicating the relationship between the image and the context in which it appears. Mood may also be primed by variables such as ambience, and semantic primes could arise from the context (Henderson & Wakslak, 2010; Storbeck & Robinson, 2004), which in turn might influence how the image is interpreted. Future research may disentangle a number of factors, not captured by the basic notions presented and supported in the current research, involved in the influence of art images on associated objects.

The Role of Style Elements

Another issue pertains to the possible influences stemming from stylistic differences in artistic manner. Although

extant research indicates that viewers are typically able to recognize artistic manner *per se*, despite a vast variety of stylistic differences (Lacey et al., 2011), it seems likely that such stylistic differences could nonetheless result in specific influences on viewers. Future research may investigate the influence of specific style elements, such as brush strokes, textures, or color use, perhaps in combination with specific elements of content, on viewers' perceptions and evaluations of both the artworks and associated objects. For instance, the influence of Frank Auerbach's impasto is likely to differ from that of Leonardo da Vinci's glazing, even if they both painted the same portrait. Furthermore, the question arises as to whether a concrete mind-set encourages only a focus on content or if it might also draw attention to specific style elements. Such deconstruction seems especially likely for viewers who work as artists or otherwise have much experience in art appreciation, so perhaps individual differences play a role in this regard. Similarly, content may also trigger various associations and suggest interpretations that go beyond that which is literally depicted. Future research may uncover elements of content that are likely to lead to broader and more allegorical thinking, perhaps in combination with specific style elements, as well as investigate the role that processing style might play in this influence.

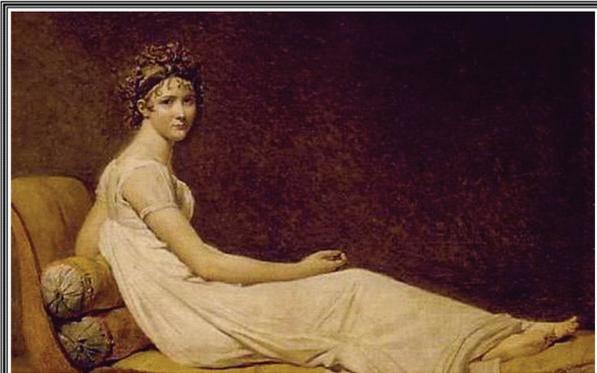
Beyond Art Images

It should further be noted that the current perspective of content and manner may be extended to other types of visual images than the ones utilized here. For instance, cartoons could depict any imaginable content, but the manner of cartoons might have its own particular influence on consumer perceptions and judgments. Indeed, the relevance of the current research extends beyond the realm of visual images as well. A classic category of art images, namely, representational paintings, was used in this research, because this facilitated the distinction between content and manner. However, content and manner are arguably present in any visual image, and indeed in any aesthetic object that also expresses, via its form, some type of function and/or symbolism. For instance, a car may have a general, aesthetic appeal based on manner, but it may also have specific, recognizable elements that signal speed, power, fun, fuel efficiency, environmental friendliness, or the like because the elements that communicate such specific properties are shaped to emulate forms found in nature. The influences of content and manner in objects other than visual images constitute an interesting avenue for future research.

Appendix

Stimuli for Studies 2–3

High-Fit Stimulus for Study 2



JAI SOAPS

Modern soaps with a classical heritage

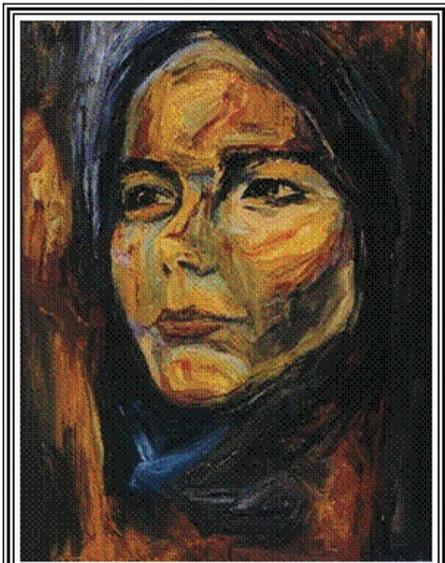
Low-Fit Stimulus for Study 2



JAI SOAPS

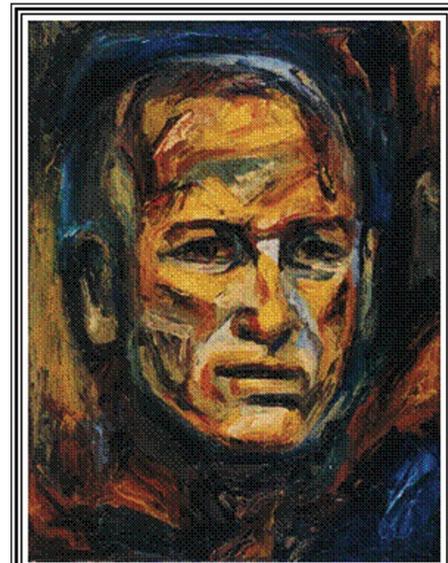
Modern soaps with a classical heritage

High-Fit Stimulus for Study 3



Bellvier Nail Salon

Low-Fit Stimulus for Study 3



Bellvier Nail Salon

Authors' Note

This research is based on the first author's dissertation, chaired by the second author.

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