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Preference for paintings is also affected by curvature

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Date created: 2020-06-18 06:30 PM | Last Updated: 2020-07-22 07:13 PM
Category:  Project

Description:

Preference for curvature has been demonstrated using many types of stimuli, but it still remains an open question as to whether curvature plays a relevant role in responses to original artworks. To investigate this, a novel set of paintings was created, consisting of three variations —curved, sharp-angled, and mixed —of the same 16 indeterminate subjects. The present research aimed to differentiate between liking and wanting decisions. We assessed liking both online (Study 1) and in the lab (Study 2, Task2), using respectively a Likert scale and a dichotomous forced choice. Both tasks reported a similar pattern of results, with participants assigning higher ratings to the curved version compared to the sharp-angled version. However, when we measured implicit wanting (Study 2, Task 1), no significant difference was found between the three sets of paintings. When participants were explicitly asked if they wanted to take the paintings home, they showed preference for curved versions (Study 2, Task 3), but not when they were asked to act as a curator and select works for their gallery (Study 2, Task 4). Overall, we showed that curvature can also affect preference for paintings, especially for liking decisions. However, implicit and explicit wanting decisions reported a more diverse set of results, showing the possibility of differentiating between liking and wanting responses to artistically relevant stimuli. We conclude that this theoretical distinction might explain previous conflicting results and set a new line of research in the field of empirical aesthetics.

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