

The influence of knowing the artist’s gender on how we perceive art aesthetically



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Introduction

- Empirical aesthetics studies different influences on our aesthetic perception.
- Examples: The level of insight has an effect on art appreciation (Muth et al., 2015). Style-related information and art knowledge affects the appreciation of paintings (Belke et al., 2006).
- Based on the interest on gender influences we wanted to take a look at how the knowledge about the artists gender affects the participants level of aesthetic appreciation of artworks.

Method

Stimuli:

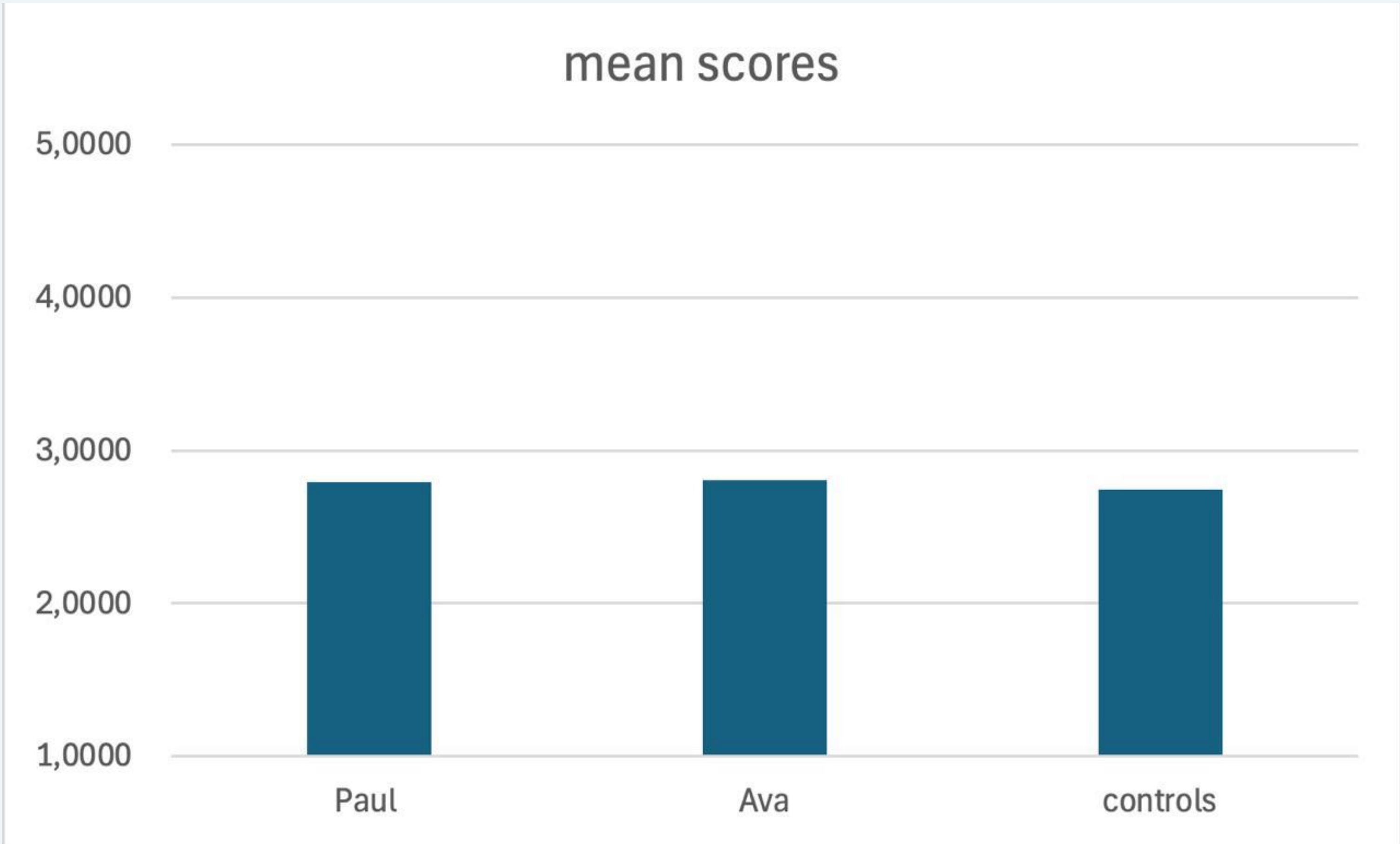
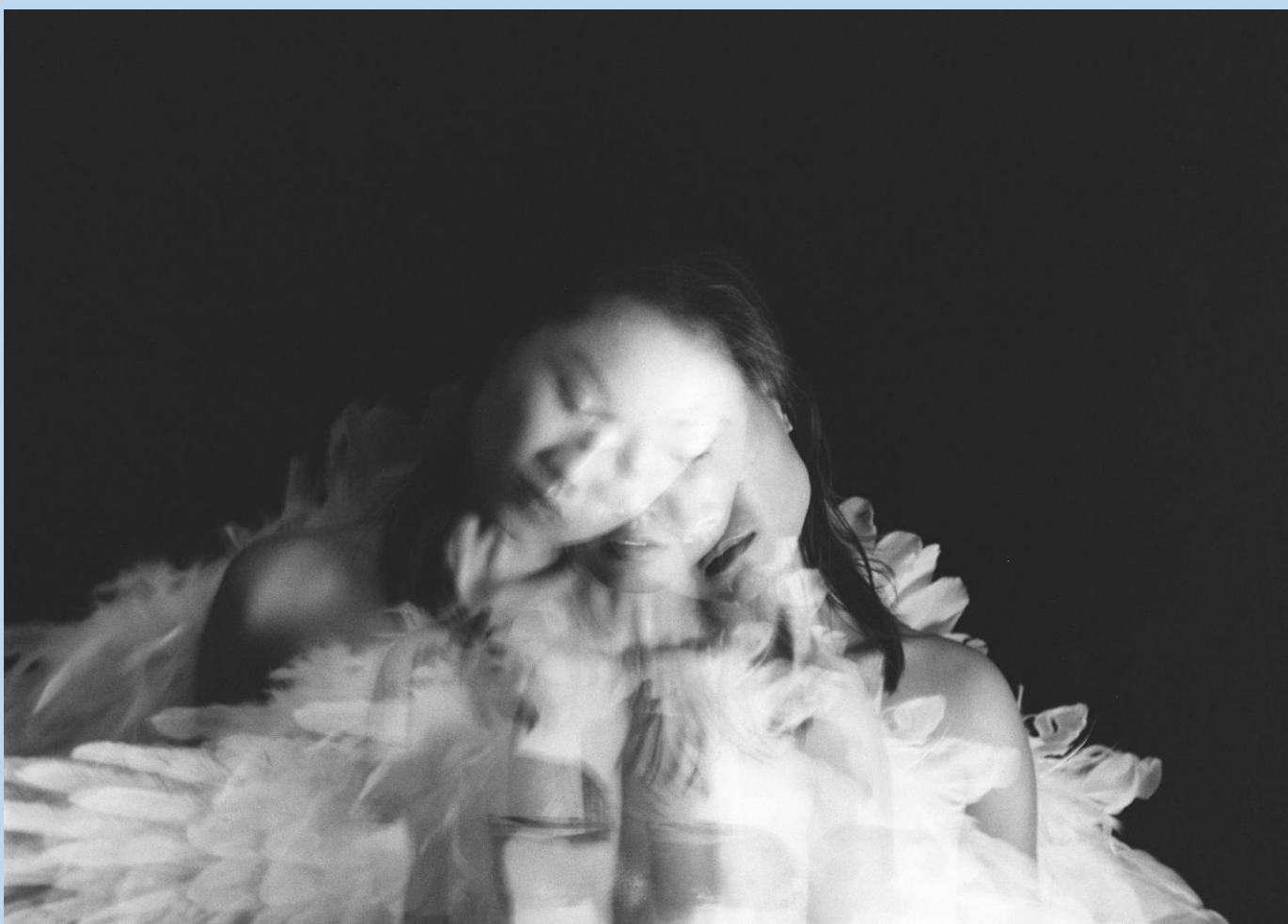
Ten photographs (5 artworks by Shan He (female) and 5 artworks by Holger Rübsam alias Crow (male))

Sample:

75 voluntary participants (59 females and 16 males, average age: 23,71)

Procedure:

- Three randomised groups: two experimental groups (primed by either a coverstory about a male artist or a female artist) and a control group (no coverstory)
- Participants rated the artworks on standardized likert-scales with questions from the German version of the Art Reception Survey (ARS).
- Art Knowledge Questionnaire (VAIAK) in order to control the variable of art interest and art knowledge
- 3x1 Between-subject-study-design



Results

The analysis revealed that the mean ratings of the artworks were similar across all three groups of participants. A one-way between-subjects ANOVA was used to test for differences between the groups. Those who were primed with a cover story about a male artist, those who were primed with a cover story about a female artist, and those who were not provided with any cover story rated the artworks at comparable levels. The results showed that the ratings were similar between the groups across all six subscales of the ARS test: cognitive stimulation, negative emotionality, expertise, self-reference, artistic quality, and positive attraction.

Conclusion

This study did not find significant results regarding the effect of the artist’s gender on participants’ perceptions of art, which is why no gender bias in the appreciation of photographs was found.

Limitations

- Mainly WEIRD participants
- General like or dislike for this style of photography
- Results limited to black and white photography
- Future research could additionally analyse the effect of the gender of the depicted person in artwork on art appreciation

References

Belke, B., Leder, H., & Augustin, D. (2006). Mastering style. Effects of explicit style-related information, art knowledge and affective state on appreciation of abstract paintings. *Psychology Science*, 48(2), 115.

Muth, C., Hesslinger, V. M., & Carbon, C. C. (2015). The appeal of challenge in the perception of art: How ambiguity, solvability of ambiguity, and the opportunity for insight affect appreciation. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, 9(3), 206.

Check out the artists work: <https://www.shan-heart.com> and <https://www.paintedsongs.com/crow-1/>