

# When judging art, men and women stand apart

October 9 2014

---



A study by Michigan State University marketing scholar Stephanie Mangus and colleagues suggests men and women evaluate art very differently. Credit: Michigan State University

The sexes show stark differences in how they evaluate art, finds a new study co-authored by a Michigan State University marketing scholar.

Men seem to focus more on the artist's background and [authenticity](#), while women pay more [attention](#) to the art itself.

The study, which appears in the journal *Psychology & Marketing*, is the first to investigate how important an artist's "brand" is to average consumers when they appraise art. Turns out, that personal brand is very important, a finding that has implications for the \$64 billion art market and other product industries such as food and fashion.

"All consumers in the study, but especially men, evaluated art with a strong emphasis on how motivated and passionate the artist was," said Stephanie Mangus, assistant professor in MSU's Broad College of Business. "So if you're an artist or if you're managing an artist, developing that human brand – getting the message across that you're authentic – becomes essential."

Mangus and her fellow researchers had 518 people look at two unfamiliar paintings with made-up biographies of the artist. Some participants read a bio that characterized the artist as authentic – in other words, a lifelong painter who creates unique work. Others read a bio that characterized the artist as an ordinary painter who took up the craft only recently.

When the artist was characterized as authentic, participants had a much more favorable impression of both the artist and the artwork. Participants indicated they were more willing to buy that artist's painting and to pay a higher price for it.

Men were much more likely to use the artist's brand as a deciding factor when evaluating art. Mangus said this jibes with past research that indicates men tend to use factors that are known to them (in this case, the artist's brand) when making a decision.

Women also took the artist's authenticity into account, but a bigger factor for them was the artwork itself. "Women are more willing to go through a complicated process of actually evaluating the artwork,"

Mangus said, "whereas [men](#) may say, 'This guy's a great artist, so I'll buy his art.'"

While the art market has grown steadily for the past 10 years – outperforming the equities market during that time – there's a dearth of research on how consumers are actually determining the worth of artwork, Mangus said.

Knowing that the artist's brand plays a major role in consumers' evaluation may help art dealers better set their prices. The findings can also help consumers make decisions on which art they buy.

"For the average person trying to purchase [art](#), knowing something about the artist – and knowing that the [artist](#) is authentic – can reduce the risk of buying a worthless piece," Mangus said.

The findings likely extend to other product industries in which a creator is highly involved and visible. These include the clothing, shoe, jewelry and restaurant and food industries.

"While designers and chefs oftentimes operate in the background, this research suggests that more emphatically communicating their passion and commitment to their craft could significantly benefit that brand's image and sales," the study says.

Provided by Michigan State University

Citation: When judging art, men and women stand apart (2014, October 9) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-10-art-men-women.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is

provided for information purposes only.