

Department of Psychology

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Art Making and Cognitive Function

This project estimated the cognitive consequences of exposure to art practice. Existing literature suggests that artists exhibit better spatial ability, detect symmetry faster, and determine aesthetic order with greater ease than those who have no personal history of art making. Prior investigations have aimed to characterize artistic cognition, but have not adequately calibrated the relation of artists' cognitive functions and normal function. A method that is blind to artistic identity was used to provide an estimate of 1) sensitivity to the dimensions of good form in design, 2) judgment of aesthetic properties of graphic depictions, and 3) personal history of artistic practice. The results revealed a positive relation between art practice and aesthetic judgment, an inverse relation between art practice and sensitivity to good design, and a difference between self-identified artists and others in the strength of the relation.