POLITICAL CORRECTNESS IN ART PERCEPTION

The influence of an artist's political attitude on the perception of his paintings

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Master Thesis

12th of June, 2017

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Abstract

This thesis explores the influence that the political attitude of an artist has on the perception of his paintings in a Western context. Using data gathered through an experiment, I apply a multilevel analysis to demonstrate that a right-wing attitude can have a negative influence on the perception of visual artworks. More precisely, discriminatory attitudes have a negative effect on the appreciation of paintings. Simultaneously, left-wing attitudes have no impact on the perception process, which suggests that left-wing attitudes are perceived as a default attitude for artists. It was further found that the degree and way of influence the attitude has on the viewer remains primarily a matter of cultural capital endowment. Whereas lower cultural capital respondents tend to behave in a politically correct manner, individuals with higher cultural capital draw from a greater pool of artistic background knowledge and are able to use the political attitude of an artist as a tool to enhance their cultural experience. Countering a strong body of opinion believing high cultural capital individuals to explicitly reject intolerant content as a way of symbolic exclusion, no significant outcomes can be detected in that regard. In fact, high cultural capital individuals demonstrate an increased interest in paintings made by artists with intolerant views. Different findings apply to artworks made by renowned artists. Political attitudes of canonised artists have no influence on the perception of their paintings which suggests that the socially constructed status of a creative genius prompts individuals to disregard their political attitudes. Finally, as cognitive dissonance theory suggests, artworks made by artists with the same political attitude as the respondents' are preferred to paintings created by artists with different political inclinations than the respondents'. This behaviour is, however, confined to individuals with lower cultural capital since high cultural capital people do not specifically favour paintings made by an artist with left-wing inclinations.

KEYWORDS: Art perception, context, cultural capital, political attitude, political correctness

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1. Introduction

Coming from a traditionally progressive ideology with innovative character, the art world is known for adhering to liberal, broad-minded and unprejudiced values. Creative minds have been pushing the status quo throughout history and questioned conservative views on the world and its societies for centuries. From a fundamental paradigm shift in the 16th century entailing a change in subject matter from sacred to more secular themes, to the socially challenging and critical paintings of Goya and Gericault after the French Revolution, to modern avant-garde art with its movements and their "never-ending quest for the new" (Benton & DiYanni, 2014, p. 377). This long tradition of progressive thinking and the reflective engagement of artists in socio-political happenings stands in contrast to another major idea in art theory; the creation of *l'art pour l'art*. The idea of creating art for its own sake emerged in the 19th century where art was less and less seen as something solely decorative to demonstrate social status but increasingly as something to enjoy for purely aesthetic reasons without taking morality, religion, history or politics into account. Being able to perceive artworks in this particular way was thought of as a skill, which justified the social position of the bourgeoisie in society (Bourdieu, 1984a) and gave way to artists to produce art for purely aesthetic reasons.

The two introduced streams seem to stand in a paradoxical relation. On the one hand, artists have promoted the progressive character of art over centuries and do not shy away from communicating their personal political attitude, whereas on the other hand this clearly opposes the idea of making art for its own sake and refraining from connecting art to any political context. Both art produced to have a pragmatic function and art that has exclusively been created to serve as a gateway for the aesthetic experience equally have their admirers in society. Whilst some artists back away from publicly sharing their personal and political values others are extremely open when it comes to communicating their political believes even if these contradict the general idea that artists are of liberal character. For example, Georg Baselitz once stated in an interview that he believes that women cannot be extraordinary artists (Beyer & Knöfel, 2013). Resulting in an outcry in the art world, Baselitz is not the only artist who does not exclusively advocate progressive thinking and fully liberal standpoints. Different political attitudes as such could to some be a crucial make-or-break criterion when evaluating artworks especially in times of omnipresent political correctness. It is the question in how far individuals want to be associated with certain artists if their own political and moral values adhere to a different ideology. It has yet to be established whether one would per se reject artworks if aware of the political standpoint of the artist or whether it would still be possible to enjoy his paintings by not letting his political attitude interfere with the perception.

Up to the present day, it has not been assessed to what degree the political attitude of an artist genuinely influences the appreciation for his artworks. Therefore, this research tries to close the knowledge gap in the field of art perception in this regard. In order to research this topic thoroughly, it is necessary to take a closer look at the audience and examine if they perceive art autonomously or if the political inclination of the artist is taken into account and influences their perception process. This results in the overarching research question of *to what extent does the political attitude of the artist influence the perception of*

his paintings. Touching upon the ubiquitous discussion about the autonomy of art, it should be explored if artworks that display no political symbols in themselves can solely be appreciated for aesthetic reasons or if the personal morals of the artist significantly influence this experience. To identify the boundaries of this research, it should be mentioned at this stage that this paper does not aim to investigate in what way political symbols in the visual artwork itself are perceived. The artworks themselves will, therefore, only obtain secondary consideration since the focus is primarily laid on the connection between the attitude of the artist and its impact on the perception of the audience. Furthermore, social background variables of the viewers have to be taken into account in order to be able to determine in what way the degree of familiarity with the art world enables individuals to perceive visual artworks outside political categories and exclusively appreciate artefacts for their formal and stylistic properties.

In order to demonstrate the connection between the personal values of the artist and its influence on the perception of his artistic achievements, an experiment is undertaken selecting a sample consisting of 120 respondents. The data is analysed with a multilevel analysis in order to establish whether the political attitude of the artist causes differences in perception and if this effect differs across various levels of familiarity with the arts. With the outcome of this research, the academic knowledge base in the field of art perception can be enhanced and add to the understanding of sociological processes connected to the perception of visual artworks.

2. Theoretical Framework

At first, focus should be laid on more abstract sociological and philosophical theories about the field of art perception by discussing how background information and context knowledge about an artwork influences the viewer and his/her perception of the artwork. I'd like to introduce the reader to the importance of context when it comes to its influence on the perception of paintings. Starting off with the overarching theory of how background information impacts the perception of art, a discussion on the philosophical ideas about the autonomy of art follows and leads to an investigation of the current state of empirical research regarding the field of influence of context on perception. In the second sub-chapter, I'd like to shift the focus from background information about the artist to the influence that the personal background of the viewer has on his/her perception and examine how Bourdieu's idea of cultural capital affects the individual in this regard. Finally, the chapter rounds up by taking a look at the interrelations between art, politics, and ethics. It is demonstrated how individuals with higher cultural capital tend to have more tolerant world views than people with less cultural capital and in what way ethical concerns can interfere with the aesthetic experience.

2.1. The influence of contextual information about the artwork on its perception

Solso (1994) argues that art is always perceived in context. Context can be the location of the artwork, the peers accompanying the experience as well as the physical composition of the visual field. Further, Freeland (2002) believes that the context in which an artwork is created influences the meaning the work of art and its subject matter represent. In her book *Cognition, Creation, Comprehension* Freeland suggests that the background and upbringing of the artist always influence their subject matter. This implies that if the audience wants to enquire about the meaning of the artwork, one has to look into the biography of the artist and consider the external aspects of an artist's life in order to be able to fully understand his/her artwork. By knowing about the context in which the artwork was produced, the viewer learns to grasp the artwork in a deeper way and is able to derive various meanings from it. Especially in Expression Theory it is commonly agreed that the artwork conveys the feelings and emotions of an artist who decided to communicate these personal moods with the outside world through a specific work of art (Freeland, 2002). Yet, the artist is probably not capable of feeling a certain emotion throughout the entire creation process, which means that the artwork itself is the bearer of, (often unconscious (cf. Freud in Freeland, 2002)) feelings. Additional to feelings, the creator might also express belief systems, such as his political opinions and his own ideas about the world in the realms of his artistic achievements.

Unlike Expression Theory, Cognitive Theory applies a rather pragmatic standpoint and pronounces that art should have a function in society and not be remote nor esoteric (Dewey in Freeland, 2002). Pragmatists are rather concerned with an artwork's effect on the audience and are less focussed on the technique or circumstances of how the artwork was produced. Dewey (2005[1934]) postulates that any

art can create a meaningful experience. At the same time, however, he argues, that in order to fully comprehend an artwork one has to reconstruct the intentions of the artists and in this manner increase one's knowledge about the painting. This means that when looking at an artwork without any additional information about it, the experience itself is likely to be less beneficial and enjoyable for the viewer. In Dewey's opinion, the audience uses art as a way to enhance their perception of the world and therefore art can function as a source of knowledge, similar to science. All in all, both Freeland and Dewey agree on the importance of contextual information about the artwork, but they look at it from different perspectives. Whereas Freeland puts emphasis on the understanding of the preferred meaning (*preferred meaning* as in Hall's Encoding/Decoding model, 1980) of the artwork, Dewey is more concerned about the ramifications context has on the audience and the way the viewer constructs meaning through additional knowledge. Nonetheless, both standpoints put emphasis on the importance of background information on the artist. Especially in Dewey's case it becomes clear that context contributes to the creation of meaning within the audience. Therefore, the political attitude of the artist, as a particular piece of background information, seems highly likely to add to this construction of meaning.

Dewey's idea of the individual using art as a tool for their own personal needs can be taken so far that the artist is merely seen as a supplier of these respective tools. Roland Barthes elaborates on this idea in his essay *The Death of the Author* (1967). The core thesis of his work is that biographic elements of an author of literary publications have less significance than traditionally assumed for interpretation purposes and the construction of meaning is a process solely confined to the reader of a text. Applying Barthes' idea to other forms of art, his perspective is further congruent with Dewey's opinion in a way that art should have a practical function in society and the audience should focus less on the search for the preferred meaning (2005[1934]).

A bit more drastic than Dewey, Bell (2011[1914]) agrees with Barthes' idea in so far that no contextual information regarding the artist should play a substantial role when it comes to the perception of artworks. Bell believes that one should not look behind the art object nor seek any background information about it. This ascribes a rather autonomous status to the field of art and implies that the political attitude of an artist should not have any influence on the audience at all. As one of the major representatives of the formalist stream, Bell argues that aesthetic appreciation is a subjective experience and generally about, what he calls, the "significant form" (p. 263). According to his theory, the attitude of the artist should not impact the aesthetic appreciation since the aesthetic perception is solely about the *form*. By *form,* Bell refers to the lines and colours of a painting, which are combined in a particular way as well as how they stand in relation to each other. The only emotions he deems legitimate to feel when contemplating art, are the ones evoked by this significant form. These forms should not represent everyday life encounters and at the same time, the audience should not link their personal experiences to an artwork. Further, he states, that "in pure aesthetics, we have only to consider our emotions and its object: For the purposes of aesthetics we have no right (…) to pry behind the object into the state of mind of him who made it" (p. 263). Bell's philosophy very much advocates the idea of producing and enjoying art for art's sake and gives it a highly autonomous character. It is, however, highly questionable in

how far an individual is genuinely able to free him/herself from any previous personal experiences or knowledge about the artwork to the extent that Bell demands from the audience and ignore any further information about the artwork and its creator.

Bell further states that "[a]rt is above morals, or all art is moral, works of art are immediate means to good" (2011[1914], p. 265). Bell especially condemns the association of art with politics, which he describes as a "mistake" (p. 265). By stating this, he is referring to artworks from the Futurist movement. This can be seen as a quite contradictory idea. On the one hand, Bell asks the audience initially to bring "nothing from life, no knowledge of its ideas and affairs, no familiarity with its emotions" (2011[1914], p. 266) to be able to genuinely appreciate art. On the other hand, he is not capable of applying this thought to himself, which he demonstrates by disliking paintings from the Futurist movement since the artists' political intentions influence his perception negatively. For instance, in case the viewer is not aware of the context of Futurist paintings and the political connotations they bear, the audience might as well just be able to appreciate these artworks for their depicted lines and colours, which were combined in a particular way or in Bell's terms, its significant form. Eventually, Bells' theory demonstrates that background knowledge about artworks does influence the perception of art, however, in his rather normative approaches he tries to deny that fact.

In order to identify artworks that fit Bell's suggestions concerning the aesthetic experience, he argues that non-representational art is the purest form of art. Built on the idea of uncorrupted art, the so-called Purists reject any art that is symbolic, expressive or representational. This also includes abstract paintings, since abstract art expresses feelings and is therefore non-autonomous, hence opposed by Purists. According to Purist Theory, art is only allowed to have its own properties. Examples of non-symbolic art would either be portraits, still lifes and landscapes paintings. Contradicting the idea of the existence of *pure* art, Goodman (2011[1978]) argues that symbolic meaning can be found in every artwork and it is impossible to create art that does not refer to or symbolise another idea (cf. Derrida, 1976 & Foucault, 2003[1993], on Intertextuality) and can therefore not be pure nor autonomous. Even in the most abstract art, viewers identify familiar forms and relate them to previous experiences (Van Eijck, 2016). Goodman believes that "[w]hoever looks for art without symbols will find none" (2011[1978], p. 441) and, therefore, postulates that art cannot be sovereign since it is never independent of life. Concluding from the discussion in this sub-chapter, it does not seem possible to encounter an artwork that is non-representative nor carries any symbolic meaning. Therefore, no artwork can be created or perceived without the influence of context, thus no artwork can be appreciated entirely autonomous. This idea is also proven by the latest research, which I'd like to discuss in the subsequent paragraphs.

While Dewey's and Bell's theories from the early 20th century were more concerned with the experience of the arts from a philosophical perspective, more recent empirical research shows that the context that an artwork is presented in does indeed affect its spectators. Opposing Temme's (1992) finding of context contributing positively to the general enjoyment of an artwork, Ferguson (2016) argues that background information lowers the participants reported values and perception of enjoyment and

personal connection the viewer has with the artwork. After receiving information about the formal elements of the work, the impact the social nexus had on the piece and a short statement from the artist describing the creation process, participants' response on the enjoyment of the artwork were negatively affected. However, by supplying the respondents with three different pieces of context at the same time, it cannot be established which variable (formal elements, social context or statement from the artist) eventually influenced the perception of the shown artworks in this particular way. Nonetheless, this study confirms the idea that art cannot be perceived entirely autonomous even it does not reveal which kind of context influences the perception in what way.

In their research paper, *The Artist's Name as a Symbolic Frame*, Berghman and Van Eijck (2015) presented paintings by both established artists and amateurs to a representative sample of the Dutch population, randomly attributing the paintings to either a professional or an amateur. By only changing the artists' name, the source of the change of perception was singled out and can therefore truly account and explain the variation in opinions regarding a painting. The results of this research demonstrate that the same paintings, when credited to a professional artist, received higher appreciation by the audience and were found to be more beautiful as well as original than when ascribed to an amateur. One explanation for this phenomenon could be found in Nathalie Heinich's book *The Glory of Van Gogh* (1997). Heinich studies the notoriety of Van Gogh and examines why certain artists enjoy an elevated status in society. This touches upon Weber's (1968) idea of the charismatic ideology, which describes the power of an individual and his/her ability to set him/herself apart from ordinary (wo)men through the possession of an exceptional set of creative skills. Applied to modern artists, most of them are valued for their unique and innovative contribution to art history (Berghman & Van Eijck, 2015). Bourdieu (1984a), however, would disagree with this viewpoint given his assumption that this special focus on the artist is merely a societal construct, created through the symbolic distinction in a layered society in order to identify boundaries between social classes. The works of art of an artist are admired due to the fact that society celebrates him or her as a creative genius, resulting from the supreme value ascribed to creativity. This raises the question of how far the status of the creative genius justifies the common belief that "anything goes" (Heinich, 2010, p. 8) in the art world. This is especially interesting under the aspect of the involvement of politics since Heinich (2010) further claims that "[…] politically involved art is usually considered 'bad' art […]" (p. 8). With this statement she is referring to avant-garde artists trying to unite aesthetics and politics and thereby raises a twofold issue: On the one hand, perceiving the works of canonised artists in a political context could come across as awry even if the artwork itself was not created for a political purpose. It is the question if the artwork might be already valued less by the viewer simply because of the fact that the painting was encountered in a political context, for instance, when learning about the personal political attitudes of the artist. On the other hand, the political attitude of a creative genius might only play a secondary role in the perception of his painting since charismatic ideology suggests that the artist's exceptional set of creative skills can overshadow his political agenda.

Furthermore, by overtly pronouncing an affiliation to a particular political ideology, some audience members might be affected in a negative way if they disagree with certain ethical and moral

standpoints pertaining to that ideology - unless they are able to overlook this particular piece of contextual information. Self-evidently, this is also possible vice versa; the painting itself is disliked but the artist's views are laudable in the eyes of the viewer. This can be considered a form of cognitive dissonance, a state of discomfort occurring when a person's attitudes, opinions, ideas or beliefs are in conflict and the theory proposes that people are inclined to solve this dissonance by either shifting or rationalizing attitudes and beliefs (Solso, 1994). In this case, it is evoked by perceiving a painting that is liked for its aesthetic attributes but then being confronted with the opposing political attitude of the creator. The viewer might want to resolve this by altering his/her perception.

2.2. The influence of the viewers' personal background on perception

As Solso (1994) argues, although basic visual information is similarly organized by all people, the meaning that is derived from basic forms is different for each individual. The interpretation of artworks varies widely, even amongst art critics. Humans tend to think in certain "schemata" (p. 117) when making sense of the world. These schemata consist of preoccupied ideas about certain objects and juxtapositions. They allow the individual to make inferences about artworks and offer the ability for more profound interpretations and understanding of a painting. For example, if we look at a painting made by Magritte and have enough knowledge of the field of art history to be able to identify Magritte as an artist of the Surrealist movement, we activate our respective Surrealism schemata. Solso goes on to argue that there are individual differences in schemata and the construction of these schemata is mainly based on our individual biographic history.

Similar to Solso's schemata, Bourdieu (1984b) uses the idea of "codes" (p. 8), which are used to understand works of art as meaningful objects. In his work *Outline of a Sociological Theory of Art Perception* (1984b), he demonstrates how lesser educated viewers of the art field require more realistic representations in paintings. Due to their comparably lower (arts) education, they lack the knowledge of specific categories or *codes* used to decipher artworks and, therefore, are not able to understand more complex art. Whereas educated people are "at home with scholarly culture" (p. 3), lesser educated people lack the codes that are needed to derive meaning from more demanding artworks which make them dismiss paintings that they cannot fully grasp as insignificant. According to Bourdieu, these codes can be acquired by non- and institutional training, resulting in a positive correlation between higher (arts) education and the ability to decipher multi-layered artworks. The knowledge of artistic principles enabling an individual to identify a representation through the classification of the stylistic indications depicted, is called "artistic competence" (p. 2). This artistic competence is located in what Bourdieu refers to as the "universe of art" (p. 8). In contrast, the "universe of the everyday" (p. 8) is where lesser educated people draw their codes from. The more knowledge an individual has regarding the arts, the more s/he is able to understand about the field of art. Bourdieu believes that without the acquisition of the right codes, no perception is possible to happen. He shows that higher educated individuals are able to understand art in a better way compared to lower educated people since they have the knowledge to comprehend particular artworks in various ways and from different perspectives. Bourdieu's idea adds to this research in a way

that it claims that greater background knowledge affects the perception of the viewer and therefore it would be interesting to find out in how far this additional – or lack of – knowledge influences the perception of the two different cultural capital groups. In case the complexity of the object exceeds the individual's capability to decipher the artwork due to the lack of appropriate codes, the individual can lose interest in the particular artwork. This phenomenon is psychologically explained by Berlyne, however, at this stage I'd like to mention that even if the field of psychology plays an important role when it comes to providing explanations for certain phenomena concerning the perception of art (see Fechner, Lipps, Arnheim, and Berlyne mentioned in Hagtvedt et. al., 2008) that for this research, focus is primarily put on sociological approaches to examine the topic.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Berghman & Van Eijck (2015) find that both individuals with higher and lower cultural capital appreciate works by canonised professionals (regardless if the works were genuinely made by professionals or just attributed to them) more than works made by (or attributed to) amateur artists. Bourdieu explains this phenomenon of people with higher cultural capital favouring works by recognised artists by the fact that greater acquaintance with the art field improves the skill of an individual to identify symbolic value. Cultural competence will enhance appreciation for art objects that have been made in the realms of a prevailing code. Additionally, people with lesser knowledge of the field usually use additional information, such as the artist's name, to inform their personal opinion (Temme, 1993) when the artwork itself cannot be interpreted with known schemata or codes. For both cases, this means that the name of the artist influences the perception and implies that people with higher cultural competence are not more likely to view art autonomously but overall, differently. Applying these ideas to the case of the political attitude of the artist, it can be expected that individuals with lower cultural capital tend to appreciate paintings made by an artist with an opposing political attitude less. Due to the lack of codes necessary to respond and decipher a painting in a different way, they have to base their perception process on one certain piece of contextual information which serves as the main cue to inform their opinion. Accordingly, people with higher cultural capital should be fairly indifferent towards the political attitude of an artist since they can still identify the symbolic value of and artwork through greater background knowledge of the art world without being dependent on just one cue.

2.3. The interrelations between art, politics, and ethics

Another aspect that is influenced by the amount of cultural capital possessed is someone's general level of tolerance and more specifically openness towards different genres of art. In her research Bryson (1996) shows how people differentiate themselves from others by expressing distaste for certain cultural genres. By classifying what we like and dislike, we also classify ourselves in term of social class (cf. Lizardo & Skiles, 2015; Roose, 2017; Braden & Michael, 2017). Contrary to the ideas of Bourdieu expecting high-status individuals to be culturally exclusive, Bryson finds that people with a higher social status show increased political and cultural tolerance and that they in general draw less symbolic boundaries between different (musical) genres than people with a lower class position and education level. Especially with increasing education, the level of tolerance of political and religious non-conformism increases (Adorno

et. al, 1950; Stouffer, 1955; Davis, 1975), which is the opposite of Bourdieu's high-status exclusiveness. It can be argued that this openness is another way of distinction. By demonstrating a diverse knowledge of different art genres, so-called *cultural omnivores* differentiate themselves from other social strata by demonstrating exactly this variety in taste (Peterson, 1992). Furthermore, if boundaries are drawn, these are primarily drawn to emphasise on their tolerance. For example, especially conservative lower class taste genres such as Country music are rejected by otherwise rather open people from higher social classes (Lizardo & Skiles, 2015). Expressed in simpler terms, this means that more tolerant people are less tolerant towards intolerant people. This principle of symbolic exclusion is used to ethically distinguish oneself from genres with a rather intolerant or conservative audience, since people with a higher level of cultural capital do not want to be associated with, for instance, xenophobic audiences. This shows that morals play a big role when talking about taste and the aesthetic experience of an artwork. It is implied that audience members with higher cultural capital are probably more likely to reject paintings made by artists with a certain right-wing conservative attitude since they usually try to distinguish themselves by renouncing intolerant ideologies. This stands in contradiction to the above addressed theories that propose that high cultural capital people are expected to act indifferent to the political attitude of an artist since they are able to assess an artwork from more perspectives than just a political standpoint.

Skarpenes ([2007], in Skjøtt-Larsen, 2012) goes so far to say that moral ideas about the 'good' and having a tolerant attitude are more appreciated by the very educated than cultural knowledge and socioeconomic success. This implies that especially for symbolic boundary drawing the moral sphere is of particular interest. This is supported by Skjøtt-Larsen's (2012) findings, which demonstrate that politico-moral boundaries are at least as important as cultural boundaries when differentiating oneself from other social positions. Further, Skjøtt-Larsen finds that individuals with high cultural capital are likely to exclude the intolerant, especially when it comes to topics such as discrimination and racism, which indicates a high tolerance towards ethnic minorities. Additionally, they are rather globally oriented and tend to support left-wing political ideologies. On the other hand, people with comparably less cultural capital are not as open to change, rather nationalistic, have traditional opinions about family life as well as the upbringing of children and are inclined to support right-wing populist political parties. These findings suggest that individuals in possession of more cultural capital have a disposition to left-wing, tolerant attitudes and individuals with relatively less cultural capital tend to have a rather right-wing, conservative outlook on the world.

Using the moral and political stances as a demarcation to set oneself apart from other politically different genres has a lot to do with ethics in art. Very often the field of art sociology revolves around the two dimensions of cultural and economic capital. The dimension 'ethics' is frequently overlooked. This is also argued by Stewart (2016), who tries to test if Bourdieu's statement *form over function* is still valid in contemporary society. Weber ([1968] in Stewart, 2016) introduces his idea of value-rational social action, which is a social action opposing traditional rational logic that, according to him, dictates modern life. This social action can be motivated by various personal beliefs and ethical viewpoints. Stewart gives the example of Mike Davis' value-rational criticising the architecture of Dubai from an ethical stance. On the

one hand, Davis sees Dubai's pompous and aesthetically outstanding architecture as a massive achievement for the late modern world, however, at the same time he cannot value the beauty of the architecture since he is aware of how it came about. Davis expresses an ethical concern regarding non-existent labour and environmental regulations that made this unique architecture possible. His ethical stance clashes with his ability to enjoy Dubai's architecture as well as its aesthetic features, which leads to a conflict that cannot be concluded, similar to the effect caused by cognitive dissonance. This conflict of two spheres can also be applied to the visual arts. Again, this supports the idea to test how far the audience of an aesthetically pleasing artwork resolves the conflict between the objective beauty of a painting, the political attitude of the artist, and the overarching value sphere of ethical sensibility.

3. Method & Research Design

The theoretical framework and previous research suggest the overarching research question of *to what extent does the political attitude of an artist influence the perception of his artworks?*. This can be translated to the following, main hypothesis of this thesis:

H₁: The political attitude of an artist influences the perception of his artworks

The theoretical framework has demonstrated that it is highly likely that individuals' perception is impacted by the context of an artwork. Although it is extremely questionable that certain audience members are able to enjoy paintings completely autonomously, theoretical ideas have also illustrated that certain individuals have the means to contemplate art for its own sake; at least to a certain degree, depending on their level of cultural capital. Especially the connection between the ability to perceive art from an autonomous standpoint and the degree of cultural capital possessed, informs the second hypothesis. However, there seems to be a paradox which creates disagreement amongst scholars: As demonstrated in the previous section, Bourdieu (1984b) postulates that individuals with higher cultural competence have a greater knowledge base to draw from when perceiving an artwork and therefore do not have to rely on one particular piece of context to inform their opinion. On the other side, people with lower cultural capital who lack this particular background knowledge are therefore expected to be highly dependent on immediate context information to evaluate an artwork. Therefore, the following hypothesis should be tested in order to answer the sub-question *to what extent does the level of cultural capital impact the degree of influence the political attitude of an artist has on the perception of his paintings*:

H₂: The higher the amount of cultural capital possessed by an individual, the lesser their perception is influenced by the political attitude of the artist.

Contradicting this hypothesis, theory has at the same time demonstrated that individuals of higher cultural competence are believed to be particularly tolerant. As illustrated by Bryson (1996), people with increased cultural capital are expected to be highly tolerant, liberal, and open-minded not only towards certain art genres but also in regards to general worldviews. Furthermore, Skjøtt-Larsen (2012) found that the same group of people is explicitly intolerant towards intolerant content, which is demonstrated by their disallowance of cultural products symbolizing intolerance. This intolerance towards discriminatory content should be reflected in a prominent dissociation from artworks allocable to artists from the far conservative wing. This means that if the previous hypothesis cannot be confirmed, it is of interest to test in what way the political attitude of the artist influences the perception of high cultural capital individuals and examine if Skjøtt-Larsen's claim can be supported with the following hypothesis:

H₃: Individuals in possession of higher cultural capital clearly reject paintings made by an artist with an intolerant attitude.

The possible effect of the lack of alignment between the personal political mind-set and the political attitude of the artist is, however, expected not to be bound to individuals of higher cultural capital. This is in line with the concept of cognitive dissonance and the quest to solve this dissonance applies to all humans equally regardless of their artistic capital. For example, if the audience member has a strong conservative mentality but is confronted with a painting made by an artist whose personal political inclinations tend to be rather progressive, the question can be raised of how far the individual would shift or rationalize his perception of the painting. To test this theory, the following hypothesis is established:

> **H4**: Having a different political attitude than the artist's results in a decrease of appreciation for the artwork

Furthermore, there is not only a difference in perception depending on the level of cultural capital possessed by an individual but also, as Berghman & Van Eijck (2015) suggest, a difference in appreciation for artworks made by canonised professionals compared to unknown professionals. Canonised artists have set themselves apart from the ordinary by having available a set of exceptional creative skills (cf. charismatic ideology) and are therefore celebrated as creative geniuses. It can be argued that this elevated social status can overshadow personal characteristics such as political attitudes of the artist but on the other hand theory suggests simultaneously that involving politics in art can diminish the appreciation of respective artworks (Heinich, 2010). Therefore, it should be tested if individuals appreciate paintings made by famous artist less when experienced in a political context or if the status of the creative genius is strong enough to surpass this piece of information. This leads to the following, final hypothesis:

> **H5**: The political attitude of a renowned artist influences the perception of his paintings in a negative way.

3.1. Choice of method - The experiment

To test the aforementioned hypotheses and answer the research question, it has to be examined if there is a relation between the political attitude of an artist and a change in perception of his paintings. Any research that explains this cause-and-effect phenomenon is called an experiment (Privitera, 2012). An experiment has to adhere to stringent procedures to guarantee that the possibility of all other potential causes has been minimized or fully removed. The researcher has to control various conditions to single out the specific cause-and-effect relationships amongst variables. To test the suggested hypotheses, I therefore, carried out a within-subjects experiment in which three levels of the independent variable (political attitude of the artist: neutral, right-wing, left-wing) in combination with a painting were presented to the respondents. In this case, the within-subjects design observed respondents across two treatments (left- and right-wing attitudes).

By utilizing an experiment to investigate the research question, it is ensured that other factors that could influence the perception of the audience are minimized. The direct comparison between the treatment group, in which a factor is presented and the control group, where the factor is absent, is possible. The advantage here is that the factor, in this case, the political attitude of the artist, can be isolated and made exclusively responsible for the change of the dependent variable, the perception. This increases internal validity and eliminates irrelevant and confounding variables since the procedure is of artificial nature and circumstances can, therefore, be controlled. In a less artificial and more natural setting, it would not be possible to control other factors as much, which means that the researcher has more control over other variables that might have an impact on the perception of an artwork in an artificial experiment.

Another benefit of an experimental research design is its exceptional reliability. Firstly, this research design is easily replicated due to its simulated setting. Since the factors are controlled, other researchers are able to repeat the experiment and findings can be directly compared to each other. This would hardly be possible if a field experiment was conducted. Secondly, there is a high level of objectivity on the side of the researcher. Since the researcher merely manipulates the variables and therefore has as little interaction with the participants as possible, personal bias and subjective interpretation of outcomes is avoided.

Especially the within-subjects design boosts statistical power. As each subject provides data for all three conditions, the results are characterised by a higher sensitivity towards treatment effects than, for example, a between-subject design with the same amount of observations (Greenwald, 1976).

Despite the considerable benefits of artificial experiments, this research design also bears disadvantages (just like any other research method). As pointed out by Sell & Webster (2007) as well as Bryman (2012), the biggest limitation and criticism to mention is the lack of generalisability. Due to its unique setup, laboratory-like experiments do not imitate real settings nor do they represent a specific empirical population, which reduces their external validity. However, since this research focusses on properties that have been abstracted from natural settings, carrying out an experiment seems well suited (Sell & Webster, 2007). Furthermore, by choosing a within-subjects design, which makes it possible to compare the treatment conditions with the control condition within the individual, statistical power is enhanced and stronger significant effects can be found.

3.2. Set up of the experiment

In total, each respondent saw nine paintings which were accompanied by a brief description about its creator's personal background. These descriptions offer either neutral information or descriptions of the political views (left- or right-wing) of the artist. By supplementing the paintings with neutral information in the control condition, the paintings are invariably accompanied by some amount of text and therefore the presentation format is kept stable. To keep it practicable, different political views are aggregated to two main groups: left-wing and right-wing, which eventually results in three conditions: The control condition (condition 1), consisting of paintings that are accompanied by an unbiased description of the

artist of the painting and the other two treatment conditions comprise of either a right-wing or left-wing description (condition 2 and 3) of the artist. The content of the descriptions was carefully put together and controlled for text features that might influence the participants in an undesired way. The description for the neutral conditions contained politically impartial information about the artist such as his schooling, his motivation to make art, what kind of art he produces or which materials he uses. The politically charged descriptions in the second and third condition were based on issues that are currently part of political party programmes, topics covered in the European Social Survey (Curtice and Bryson, 2003) as well as Heywood's (2015) classification of the characteristics of political preferences. Heywood classifies the left-wing spectrum by the following characteristics: freedom, equality, fraternity, rights, progress, reform, and internationalism and right-wing characteristics entail "notions such as authority, hierarchy, order, duty, tradition, reaction and nationalism" (p. 119). These ideas were complemented by statements about the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community, since political relevance in this regard has increased in the recent years. These three different sources were chosen to get a broad overview of the different political aspects that are prevalent in current society.

In order to be able to test the hypotheses correctly, the broad political context in which the test takes place should be taken into account as this might impact the results. Therefore, it was decided to focus on Western society and only include Western artists in the experiment (especially the three well-known artists from the Western art canon of the Modern Art period: Picasso, Dali and Degas). This made it possible to control the descriptions of the artists by using distinctively Western values instead of country specific features. For example, consider a description such as "Louter attaches great importance to traditional Dutch values such as the idea of rational thinking and individuality, which he believes have produced the greatest art in history." A patriotic Frenchman might be negatively influenced since the focus here lies on "Dutch values". However, rational thinking and individuality are both Western values and therefore could apply to France to a similar degree. Hence, it was decided to keep descriptions on a general Western level: "Louter attaches great importance to traditional Western values such as the idea of rational thinking and individuality, which he believes have produced the greatest art in history." This avoids the problem that some respondents might be negatively affected by a description even if overall the same political view is supported by them. Further, it makes the interpretation of results more straightforward since it is not the question if the painting was appreciated less because the respondent simply didn't like Louter's view in general or because he actually agrees with Louter's opinion but from a French point of view. It was further decided to only include male artists from the Modern Art period to first of all rule out any confounding or moderating effects of gender. Secondly, the romantic idea of the creative genius is a term often used to describe artist from this particular period (Heinich, 2010). Overall, the manipulation of the artist's description was carefully executed with the aim of covering a wide range of left- and right-wing opinions including the following aspects: Religion, gender, traditional values vs. progressive thinking, attitude towards foreigners and other cultures (including thoughts on immigration and integration), economic policies (including market regulations and the degree of involvement of the state in society/economy) and ideas on the individual vs. the collective (see Appendix A for detailed

descriptions and paintings). Current statements regarding the EU/right-wing populism debate and Brexit related statements were avoided in order to keep up a Western/non-Western division without unnecessarily overcomplicating the analysis by diving into current contradictions within Western European politics.

Six of the nine paintings shown to the respondents were made by unknown professionals. By using fairly unknown artists, it is possible to attribute fake political views to artists. Yet, to test hypothesis H_5 (The political attitude of a professional artist influences the perception of his paintings in a negative way), three paintings by famous artists are included, which makes it more difficult to allocate false political views since some respondents might be familiar with the background and personal attitudes of these artists. To avoid this issue, it was decided to choose different aspects of an artist's life and present facts concerning either a politically left- or right-wing oriented statement of the artist. For example, in the case of Picasso, focus is put on different parts of his biography. For the second, right -wing condition, his statement that women are 'doormats' if they are not 'goddesses' is presented. In return, attention is put on his inclination towards communism during the Second World War, which serves as a description for the third, left-wing condition.

The questionnaire was set up in Qualtrics and structured as follows. In the beginning, a brief introductory page was presented to the respondents, stressing the anonymity of their response. Then, a short explanation of the first part of the survey followed. It was explained that during the procedure they will see nine paintings accompanied by a short description of the artist which will be read out to them by the researcher. To obtain valid measurements of the perception, respondents were not aware of being part of an experiment. This was achieved by presenting the questionnaire as being mainly concerned with personal attitudes about art and therefore geared at individual opinion. The respondents were provided with an iPad which was mirrored through an application (x-Mirage) to my laptop. By doing so, I was able to see which of the three scenarios (see below) was presented to the respondent and could read out the corresponding artist descriptions accordingly. It was decided to read the descriptions to the respondents in order to make sure that the contextual information was apprehended before rating the paintings, which is the crucial part of this experiment. Some participants, however, preferred to read the text by themselves due to various reasons (i.a. processing time of a foreign language, feeling of stress when I was 'waiting' for their response). This was permitted and I then observed if the respondent genuinely engaged with the text and at the same time gave me the opportunity to distance myself from the research by not being involved by reading the text out to them.

Each respondent was randomly presented one of the subsequent three scenarios. The scenarios were evenly spread over the whole sample and within the scenarios the paintings were presented in a random order to avoid effects of sequence (Salkind, 2010).

Scenario 1
Painting 1, Picasso, condition 3 (left-wing)
Painting 2, Degas, condition 2 (right-wing)

Paintings 3, Dali, condition 1 (neutral)

Painting 4, Louter, condition 3 (left-wing)

Painting 5, Baselitz, condition 2 (right-wing)

Painting 6, Novak-Zemplinski, condition 1 (neutral)

Painting 7, Franssen, condition 3 (left-wing)

Painting 8, Callaghan, condition 3 (right-wing)

Painting 9, Cianelli, condition 1 (neutral)

Scenario 2

Painting 1, Picasso, condition 2 (right-wing)

Painting 2, Degas, condition 1 (neutral)

Paintings 3, Dali, condition 3 (left-wing)

Painting 4, Louter, condition 2 (right-wing)

Painting 5, Baselitz, condition 1 (neutral)

Painting 6, Novak-Zemplinski, condition 3 (left-wing)

Painting 7, Franssen, condition 2 (right-wing)

Painting 8, Callaghan, condition 1 (neutral)

Painting 9, Cianelli, condition 3 (left-wing)

Scenario 3

Painting 1, Picasso, condition 1 (neutral)

Painting 2, Degas, condition 3 (left-wing)

Paintings 3, Dali, condition 2 (right-wing)

Painting 4, Louter, condition 1 (neutral)

Painting 5, Baselitz, condition 3 (left-wing)

Painting 6, Novak-Zemplinski, condition 2 (right-wing)

Painting 7, Franssen, condition 1 (neutral)

Painting 8, Callaghan, condition 3 (left-wing)

Painting 9, Cianelli, condition 2 (right-wing)

Consequently, there are three versions of the questionnaire, varying in the presentation of combinations regarding artist descriptions and painting. Keeping the within-subjects design in mind, it was ensured that each respondent experiences a famous artist in each of the three different conditions (see combinations of paintings 1 to 3), for example in scenario 1, Picasso in a left-wing condition, Degas in a right-wing condition and Dali in the neutral condition to be able to falsify H_5.

The measurement of respondents' perception of the paintings was operationalized by breaking down the overarching concept of 'appreciation' into five categories that could be evaluated on a Likert-scale by selecting a digit between 1 to 10 (adhering to the established and widely known Dutch grading system)

with 1 being 'Not at all' and 10 'Very much'. The appreciation was measured by presenting the respondents with a sequence of questions (stated in brackets) after each of the nine paintings.

- Liking (How much do you like this painting?)
- Aesthetic (How beautiful do you find this painting?)
- Originality (How original do you find this painting?)
- Interestingness (How interesting do you find this painting?)
- Skilfulness (How skilful do you find this painting?)

These items were chosen since they cover a variety of perception perspectives. Even if a painting is 'liked' by a respondent, 'originality' and 'skilfulness', for instance, could be evaluated from a different stance based on criteria other than the dimension of liking a painting. For example, after reading the description text about the artist, a respondent might not like the painting anymore, however, he or she might still be able to appreciate the artwork on a different level such as 'skilfulness'. In order to measure the general appreciation of a painting, the above mentioned items were merged to create one scale (Cronbach's α = .921), used to indicate the overall perception of the artwork, termed *general perception* in the following chapters.

It was decided to ask the necessary demographic questions after the part containing the stimulus material since question 17 ((dis)agreement with politically charged statements) could make respondents aware of the experiment's political nature, and make it easier for participants to connect the dots between the artists' description and evaluation of his paintings which allows for manipulation. Another benefit resulting from evaluating the paintings first is that in case of survey fatigue the background questions are easier to answer for the respondent instead of drifting off, not taking the artists description into account before rating the painting.

3.3. Operationalization of cultural capital and socio-economic status

After addressing the background variables of gender, age, education and occupational status, respondents general disposition towards the arts was measured on a Likert-scale by presenting eight statements about the art world. These statements are concerned with topics such as public funding for the arts, the arts' added value for society, the role of art in the respondent's personal life and general comfort with the arts. The second four statements are reversed statements of the first four, which helps to increase reliability. Together the items form a scale which can be used in the analysis to make inferences about people who demonstrate a positive disposition towards the arts (Cronbach's α = .660).

Further, to measure the amount of cultural capital possessed by an individual, the respondents were to indicate how often they have engaged in various cultural activities in the past 12 months ranging from zero to five or more times. Therefore, six high cultural and six low cultural activities were chosen to cover a wide range of activities (read literature, visit art museum/gallery, attend the performing arts (opera, theatre or ballet), play an instrument, drawing/painting, listen to classical music/opera for high

cultural activities and watch sports games, attend a pop concert/music festival, watch reality TV, read fiction, go to the cinema and watch a musical for lowbrow activities). From this question a variety of information can be covered which can help to test hypothesis H_2. By combining the highbrow activities *visit an art museum/gallery, attended the performing arts, listened to classical music/opera* and *read literature* in the analysis (Cronbach's α = .686), inferences about respondents who tend to participate in the fine arts and therefore demonstrate a higher amount of cultural capital can be made. Additionally, 'visual art experts' can be identified by using individuals who score comparably high on the *visited an art museum/gallery* scale and function as a predictor in the analysis to see how the political attitudes particularly influence individuals with a high familiarity of the visual art world ($H_{2\,\&\,}H_3$).

In order to enquire about the socio-economic environment of the respondent it was avoided to directly ask for respondent's monthly income since this can often turn out to be a rather sensitive topic and result in reluctance to answer this particular question (Turrell in Galobardes & Demarest, 2003). Yet, this demographic indicator is of high interest to the research since the individual's socio-economic position might influence, for instance, the ability to participate in cultural activities (especially for more expensive highbrow products like the opera or classical music events) and with that partly determine the individual's level of cultural capital. Therefore, it was chosen to elude the direct question of indicating the monthly income and approach the topic from a different angle by inquiring about the respondent's current status of employment. By assessing the respondents' present status of employment, it is possible to make distinctions between comparably higher and lower incomes, mainly measured by their amount of management responsibility at the workplace. As DiMaggio & Useem (1978) suggest, a characteristic of the upper middle class is that they are highly likely to occupy managerial positions. Therefore, a division between upper middle class and lower middle class can be established by this question (*An employee with management responsibility* and *self-employed with employees* vs. *an employee without management responsibility* and *self-employed without employees*). The categories *unemployed, stay at home mother/father* and *student* were included for the sake of completeness even if no indications of income can be derived from this. Even if the assumption can be made that students have a comparably lower monthly income, by formulating the question this way it cannot be clearly determined how much they actually have at their disposal, as this can vary due to governmental or parental support. The same applies to individuals out of work and stay at home mothers and fathers.

3.4. The political attitude of the respondent

To determine the respondent's political attitude, it was avoided to let the respondents indicate themselves which political stream they believe they personally identify with. Their self-placement on a left/right scale might be unreliable due to the misapprehension of distinctive political ideologies since some of these can be multidimensional concepts (Bauer et al., 2014). Even if short descriptions would be provided with each political ideology, it is highly unlikely that people categorize themselves, as for example, 'fascist' as they see themselves probably more as conservatives, simply because the connotation of the term 'fascism' is generally highly critical (Hughes, 2003). Instead, a set of 16 statements were presented to respondents.

These statements cover the same aspects of political attitudes that the descriptions in the paintings address and were again informed by current political party programmes, the European Social Survey (Curtice and Bryson, 2003) as well as Heywood's (2015) classification of the characteristics of political preferences. To establish the political attitude of the respondents, they are given the possibility to indicate their personal standpoint on a Likert-scale for each item, once again complemented with two statements regarding the LGBT community. For the analysis, certain statements (see Appendix C) are combined to form a scale (Cronbach's α = .717) which identifies conservative individuals and makes it possible to test if a different political opinion than the artists' influences the perception of the artworks negatively (H4).

3.5. Data collection & sample

In order to test the suggested hypotheses reliably, a sample of 120 respondents was taken. This translates to 120 respondents in each experimental condition and every of the nine paintings was viewed 40 times in each of the three conditions. The responses were collected in form of a one-on-one interview questionnaire. This method of data collection was chosen to ensure that respondents definitely engage with the artist's description and do not just rate the paintings without considering the presented text, which is the central element of this study. Another benefit to an online survey is that the researcher retains control over the sample. Furthermore, respondents are able to ask questions and the researcher can remove ambiguity immediately. Lastly, the probability of reaching various age groups, including the ones that are not as technologically literate, is considerably higher.

To guarantee that the distribution between individuals with high and low cultural capital is as even as possible, data was collected in two different locations. The first being a sports bar in Rotterdam where the average level of cultural capital can be expected to be lower. For the second venue museum Boijmans van Beuningen was chosen to increase the probability of finding respondents with higher cultural capital (see Appendix B for exact date and times). At this stage, it is of importance to mention that the experiment was conducted two weeks prior to the Dutch national elections, which is expected to increase people's sensibility towards political issues due to high media coverage. By the way, these circumstances are not restricted to just The Netherlands, but apply to some extent to Europe in general (ARD-aktuell/tagesschau.de, 2017), because of a couple of fundamental changes in Western politics in the months preceding the period of the Dutch elections. The Dutch elections were one of the first to be held after Britain's decision to leave the European Union and the rise of populist parties in the Netherlands as well as other European countries.

3.6. Analysis of data

To measure the effect that the political attitude of the artist has on the perception of his paintings, the collected data was analysed in IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 24) by regressing the scores of the various perception scales (like, beauty, originality, interestingness and skilfulness) on the three conditions of the experimental manipulations (neutral, right-wing, left-wing). Usually this set up suggests to run a ordinary

least squares regression analysis in order to estimate relationships amongst the variables. However, since one individual respondent evaluated nine different paintings, the observed scores on the appreciation scales cannot be treated as independent form each other. Every observation made within one individual stand in relation, which means that the appreciation scores should not be handled as unrelated observations since that would mean that 1080 observations were made (120 respondents times nine paintings), which is in fact not the case. This implies that classic statistical techniques are not fitting methods of analysis for this experiment since these assume independent observations. Therefore, a model should be used that explains relations of variables more clearly by not treating the observations as independent from each other. For instance, the variable *gender* exists at a person level and at the same time applies to every score made by this respondent on the appreciation scales, which means that all nine paintings viewed by one individual have this particular characteristic of *gender* in common. This implies that the data set is hierarchically structured in two levels:

2nd level: Individuals
1st level: Appreciation scores for individual paintings

In other words, the scores on the appreciation scales are nested within one respondent. The relationships at these two levels of analysis are mathematically and statistically independent and can therefore vary between the aggregated and non-aggregated variables; thus explains why we cannot simply disaggregate the higher level to the first level (Bryk & Raudenbush, 2002).

Furthermore, not only the observed characteristics on the level of the individuals affect the scores on the appreciation scales but also features that were not explicitly measured can have an influence on the rating of paintings. For instance, some people are generally more enthusiastic in the assessment of artworks than others and whereas some people might treat '6' as a rather good evaluation, to others the same number might have less positive connotations, which basically results from a different interpretation of the scales. Whereas for Dutch people anything under 6 might be a bad rating (due to their general grading system in universities and schools, making the cut for 'pass' at 5.5), for British people a 5 or 6 could be an indifferent rating since it's simply half-way between good (10) and bad (1). These different perceptions of scales between individuals could lead to incorrect interpretations of results and has therefore to be filtered out for the analysis (Berghman, 2013).

The same idea of the hierarchical structure equally applies to the paintings. The data is not only hierarchically organized on the level of respondents but scores are also nested on the level of the artworks. Some paintings may receive higher appreciation scores than others (for instance, paintings made by famous artists could receive generally higher evaluations just for the fact that they are well known and acknowledged parts of the Western art canon), which has to be considered in the analysis. In order to be able to disregard these unrelated variances which are correlated to the individual respondents and paintings, the data should not only be treated hierarchically but also with random intercepts. Therefore, the collected data is analysed with a multilevel regression analysis including random intercepts.

Multilevel regression analysis is an alternative method of analysing repeated measures, which takes the interrelations of observations at the aggregated level (respondents and paintings) into account together with the various intercepts. These intercepts, or in other words the overall mean of scores, result from, as explained earlier, different response styles and individual properties ascribed to each of the paintings. By applying random intercepts, the different intercepts on the higher order unit are treated as deviations from the general mean score and can therefore be disregarded for the analysis. And indeed, the estimated covariance parameters of the intercepts for both respondents and paintings do differ significantly from the overall mean scores (unless otherwise stated with the corresponding results), which supports the choice of using a multilevel analysis for this research. A multilevel regression analysis makes it possible to present parameter estimates considering the entire sample. These so-called fixed effects, which are estimated directly and usually serve as the basis for hypothesis testing, consist of the independent variables. At the same time, multilevel regression analysis produces results that are more specific to observations made at the aggregated level, the so-called random effects, which are not directly estimated but summed up in terms of their predicted variance and covariance (in this case, random intercepts). These second level observations can be interpreted as deviations from the fixed parameters and can adopt a different value for each respondent/painting (Nezlek, 2011).

4. Results

A sample of 120 respondents (51.7% male) was taken for the experimental survey. Therefore, 40 responses were observed for each of the three scenarios on the second level of the model, resulting in nine observations for each appreciation scale on the first level. Out of 120 respondents, 25% were 25 and younger, 50% under 30 and 75% younger than 38; overall, ranging from 19 to 74 years of age ($M = 33$, $SD = 10.95$). About half of the participants were of Dutch nationality (51,6%). British (11,7%) and German (8,3%) were the second and third most frequently mentioned nationalities. Most participants obtained a Bachelor degree's (44,2%). Almost one third terminated their education after secondary school (28.3%) and 26.7% hold a Master's or PhD degree. The majority of respondents is currently active as an employee (24.2% with management responsibility, 30.8% without management responsibility), 28.3% are students and 7.5% are self-employed without management responsibility.

4.1. The general influence of an artist's political attitude on the perception of his paintings

In order to test if the political attitude of an artist influences the perception of his artworks, a mixed model with random intercepts was performed in SPSS across the whole sample ($n = 120$), including all paintings in every of the three conditions. This makes it possible to assess if the manipulated conditions affect the scorings on the appreciation scales. To determine the extent of the effect that the various conditions have on the appreciation of the paintings, the main effects of the experimental conditions have to be compared.

The estimated fixed main effects of the second condition predict that people tend to like paintings viewed in a right-wing condition significantly less than paintings seen in a neutral ($\gamma = -.31$, $t = -2.23$, $p=.026$) or left-wing condition ($\gamma = -.31$, $t = -2.22$, $p = .027$). No significant effects were found for paintings experienced in a left-wing condition compared to a neutral condition and all other items on the appreciation scales (beauty, interestingness, originality and skilfulness) also fail to show significance. This means that overall the political attitude of the artist does influence the perception of his paintings in terms of likeability if the artist shares particular ideas of typically right-wing ideologies. Furthermore, the absence of difference in ratings between the left-wing and the neutral condition is rather meaningful. Whereas on the one hand paintings seen in the right-wing condition do receive lower scores for likeability, the left-wing condition has no distinctive influence on the respondent compared to the neutral condition. This leads to the assumption that a left-wing attitude is seen as a quasi-neutral attitude for an artist and is somewhat taken for granted, which could stem from the Romantic era and a long tradition of the arts being inherently progressive. Especially since the avant-garde artists who have made it one of their key tasks to challenge the status quo and push boundaries with their experimental approach to arts, culture and society (Benton&DiYanni, 2014) this notion was established. This particular finding runs like a golden thread through the upcoming analyses in the following chapters, which further supports the idea that a

left-wing attitude for an artist is taken for a default and therefore H_1 (The political attitude of an artist influences the perception of his artworks) cannot be accepted straightforwardly.

4.1.1. Comparison across subjects

In order to have a more direct comparison of the extent to which the conditions affect the perception of the respondents, the treatment conditions were compared to each other for every of the nine paintings across subjects. This might negatively affect statistical power, yet produces highly insightful results since the different pieces of information regarding the artists address various aspects of the left-/right-wing spectrum and can therefore not be directly compared unless each painting receives individual attention. For instance, whereas painting seven addresses a pressing issue of Western politics (Franssen, and his support of Geert Wilders' *Party for Freedom*, which stands for stopping the "Islamisation of the Netherlands", (especially considering the fact that this experiment was undertaken right before the Dutch national elections in which Wilders was predicted as having a high chance of winning (Kooren, 2017)) in its right-wing condition, painting nine describes the artist's belief in the free market which is not a polarising issue of contemporary politics and therefore might not evoke divisive responses when compared to its neutral or left-wing counterparts. To examine these effects accordingly, the data set has to be treated with another approach. Whereas the experiment was initially set up as a within-subjects design, for this purpose conditions have to be compared across individuals and are no longer nested within individuals, hence non-hierarchical. It would still be possible to treat the data hierarchically, nested within the paintings, however, no variance at the overarching level of 'painting' can be detected. Thus, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was carried out to test the effect the conditions have on the appreciation of one particular artwork and if the perception means differ significantly between the three conditions.

As expected, Franssen's painting does evoke differences in perception when comparing the corresponding conditions. Effects were found for the appreciation measurement of originality [$F(2, 117) = 3.22, p = .044$] and further a trend towards significance for the likeability can be detected [$F(2, 117) = 2.61, p = .078$]. In both cases Scheffe's post hoc test indicates that if Franssen's painting is seen in a right-wing condition it is less appreciated than in the corresponding left-wing condition (*originality*, Mdifference $= 1.16, p = .056$; *like* Mdifference $= 1.06, p = .105$). The significantly more adverse response to the right-wing condition could be attributed to the fact that the experiment was carried out right before the Dutch national elections, which were paralleled by a public debate about Geert Wilders and his controversial political stance, including enormous media coverage and a vast polarisation of Dutch society. This implies that current events as the above-mentioned can increase the effect the political attitude of an artist has on the perception of his paintings caused by a general increase of awareness in this regard.

Aside from the significant negative impact Franssen's attention attracting right-wing attitude in the second condition had on the perception of his painting, for the other eight paintings no significant effects could be detected. As mentioned earlier, for this analysis the dataset had to be treated as a between-subjects design, which probably weakened statistical power of the data set and led to this outcome.

4.1.2. Politically discriminatory statements and their influence on the perception of the artworks

These findings imply that different aspects of the political spectrum have a different degree of influence on the perception. This makes sense since theory suggests that individuals with higher cultural capital are expected to be intolerant towards intolerant content (Skjøtt-Larsen, 2012) and therefore undergirds the idea to test if there is a difference in perception when viewing paintings accompanied by a discriminatory right-wing description compared to a non-discriminatory right-wing description or their left-wing and neutral counterparts.

To be able to move forwards with this assumption, paintings accompanied by a discriminatory right-wing content have to be identified:

Painting 1, Picasso: Discriminatory to women

Painting 5, Baselitz: Discriminatory to women

Painting 6, Novak-Zemplinski: Discriminatory to LGBT community

Painting 7, Franssen: Discriminatory to Muslims

(see Appendix A for detailed descriptions)

Since for this procedure the data is again hierarchically structured, a multilevel analysis was carried out to test to what extent discriminatory right-wing descriptions of the artist in particular influence the perception of the artworks. Therefore, the analysis was run only including the above stated paintings to assesses the magnitude of influence the discriminatory attitudes have on the appreciation in comparison to the neutral and left-wing counterparts.

Similar to the main effects of the right-wing condition on the whole sample, aligning effects were found for this sub-sample. Paintings that are accompanied by an intolerant description show a tendency towards significance to be less liked than their left-wing counterparts ($\gamma = -.40$, $t = -1.77$, $p = .077$) and their neutral complements ($\gamma = -.40$, $t = -1.77$, $p = .077$). Even if the findings are not entirely significant (most likely again due to weakened statistical power caused by analysing four paintings instead of nine), this tendency supports the claim that in general respondents' perception can be negatively influenced in the dimension of 'like' by (discriminatory) right-wing statements about the creator of the artwork. In general, respondents are more sensitive towards artists with discriminatory attitudes. This implies that people consider a right-wing attitude a matter of freedom of opinion as long as this attitude is not blatantly discriminatory. Additionally, this is supported by the finding that there is no difference in perception when running the analysis excluding the paintings with a discriminatory right-wing description in their second condition (so, only including paintings 2, 3, 4, 8 and 9 in the analyses).

4.2. The influence of the political attitude of the artist on the perception of his paintings and the role of cultural capital

After having examined the main effects that the conditions have on the perception of the paintings, in the next step it is necessary to estimate to what extent these effects can vary when interacting with particular demographic background characteristics of the respondents. Other than the main effect of an independent variable, the effect two explanatory variables can have together on the dependent variable can vary since the effect of one independent variable may depend on the level of another independent variable.

In this section it is examined to what extent the level of cultural capital moderates the effect of the experimental conditions concerning the influence on the perception of the artworks (H_2 and H_3). As mentioned in the method chapter, cultural capital was intended to be measured by various variables such as the level of education, social class, the disposition towards the art world, the intensity and type of cultural participation and the overall familiarity with the visual arts. Therefore, it was tested in what way interaction effects between the conditions and the independent demographic variables affect the perception of the paintings.

4.2.1. The influence of the political attitude of the artist on the perception of low cultural capital individuals

In order to falsify H_2 (The higher the amount of cultural capital possessed by an individual, the lesser their perception is influenced by the political attitude of the artist.) and to predict how people with various cultural capital are affected by political attitudes of artists it is as a first step crucial to identify respondents who display characteristics that are indicative for this prerequisite.

The variable *watchsport* serves as a good indicator for individuals with a comparably low cultural capital since it does not positively correlate with any other legitimate cultural activity, which implies that the more respondents are interested in sports the more they tend to stop participating in high cultural activities. Table 4.2.1. presents an overview of the correlations between the variable *watchsport* and other cultural activities.

Table 4.2.1.
Correlations between watching sports games and other cultural activities

	Watched a sports game	
Read literature	Pearson Correlation	-.237**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	1080
Visited an art museum / gallery	Pearson Correlation	-.248**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	1080
Attended the performing arts	Pearson Correlation	-.180**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	1080
Attended a pop concert / music festival	Pearson Correlation	.097**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	1080
Watched reality TV	Pearson Correlation	.107**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	1080
Read fiction	Pearson Correlation	-.201**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	1080
Played an instrument	Pearson Correlation	.038
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.207
	N	1080
Drawing / Painting	Pearson Correlation	-.184**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	1080
Listened to classical music / opera	Pearson Correlation	-.137**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	1080
Gone to the cinema	Pearson Correlation	-.069*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.024
	N	1080
Watched a musical	Pearson Correlation	.117**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	1080

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**
Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

As table 4.2.1 illustrates, those who watch sports more frequently, are inclined to engage in other non-legitimate cultural activities such as watching musicals ($r = .117, p < .000$) or reality TV ($r = .107, p < .000$). Due to the negative correlations with high cultural activities and the positive correlation with other lowbrow consumption it was decided to use the variable *watchsport* as a proxy for low cultural capital to measure the effect the political attitude of the artists has on the respective.

In general low cultural capital people appreciate paintings seen in a right-wing condition less than their neutral and left-wing counterparts (*general perception*: neutral, $\gamma = -.12$ $t = -1.99$, $p = .047$; left-wing, $\gamma = -.12$, $t = -2.00$, $p = .047$). More specifically they like paintings seen in a right-wing condition less than in the conditions (neutral, $\gamma = -.16$ $t = -2.20$, $p = .028$; left-wing, $\gamma = -.16$ $t = -2.20$, $p = .028$) as well as find them less beautiful (neutral, $\gamma = -.16$ $t = -2.23$, $p = .026$; left-wing, $\gamma = -.15$ $t = -2.17$, $p = .031$). These results confirm the hypothesis that individuals with comparably lower cultural capital do inform their opinion about the artworks by the provided context.

Since the previous chapters have suggested a difference between discriminatory and other (general right-wing) attitudes, I'd like to test how low cultural capital individuals are influenced by intolerant attitudes of artists as opposed to other political ideologies. And indeed, again discriminatory right-wing paintings are less appreciated than their neutral and left-wing counterparts (*general perception:* neutral, $\gamma = -.30$, $t = 3.30$, $p = .001$; left-wing, $\gamma = -.30$, $t = -3.30$, $p = .001$) by people with lower cultural capital. This finding is of great interest since low cultural capital people further appreciate the paintings experienced in a discriminatory right-wing condition significantly less than their neutral and left-wing counterparts for each of the six perception measurements. This is a highly meaningful finding since it clearly demonstrates the negative influence the intolerant right-wing condition has on the perception of the paintings in every way possible. The following tables sum up the corresponding findings:

Table 4.2.2.

Appreciation of low cultural capital individuals for paintings made by an artist with a discriminatory right-wing attitude compared to paintings produced by an artist with no political attitude

Parameter	Estimate (γ)	Std. Error	t	Sig.
Discriminatory right-wing condition * watchsport DV: general perception	-.30	.10	-3.426	.001
Discriminatory right-wing condition * watchsport DV: like	-.30	.11	-2.654	.008
Discriminatory right-wing condition * watchsport DV: beautiful	-.39	.11	-3.728	.000
Discriminatory right-wing condition * watchsport DV: original	-.27	.11	-2.663	.008
Discriminatory right-wing condition * watchsport DV: interesting	-.29	.11	-2.616	.009
Discriminatory right-wing condition * watchsport DV: skilful	-.25	.10	-2.743	.006

a. neutral condition as reference

Table 4.2.3.

Appreciation of low cultural capital individuals for paintings made by an artist
with a discriminatory right-wing attitude compared to paintings produced by an
artist with a left-wing attitude

Parameter	Estimate (γ)	Std. Error	t	Sig.
Discriminatory right-wing condition * watchsport DV: general perception	-.30	.11	-3.295	.001
Discriminatory right-wing condition * watchsport DV: like	-.30	.11	-2.641	.009
Discriminatory right-wing condition * watchsport DV: beautiful	-.39	.11	-3.651	.000
Discriminatory right-wing condition * watchsport DV: original	-.27	.11	-2.530	.012
Discriminatory right-wing condition * watchsport DV: interesting	-.29	.11	-2.530	.012
Discriminatory right-wing condition * watchsport DV: skilful	-.25	.11	-2.546	.012

a. left-wing condition as reference

These results imply that people with lower cultural capital certainly use the descriptions as a substantial aid to inform their opinion about the painting and consider visual artworks made by an artist with a discriminatory right-wing viewpoint on particular political matters as less valuable. This finding supports Bourdieu's (1984) idea that individuals with lower cultural capital lack the knowledge of specific codes, which are used to decipher artworks and are therefore easier influenced by short descriptions about the artist since they have no other source to draw information from than the *universe of the everyday* and therefore behave in a politically correct manner.

Whereas low cultural capital people show a strict reluctance towards paintings made by a discriminatory artist, no effects are found for general, non-discriminatory right-wing attitudes (paintings 2, 3, 4, 8 and 9). Considered more as an opinion rather than something to critically take into account during the perception process, general right-wing attitudes have no impact on the perception of individuals with lower cultural capital.

Overall this leads to the conclusion that at first glance all right-wing attitudes seem to influence low cultural capital individuals negatively, yet, if taking a closer look at different levels of right-wing attitudes, it can be determined this effect is caused by paintings made by discriminatory artists. Especially considering that the significant effects for 'like' and 'beauty' found in the overall analysis of this chapter

are also the strongest in the analyses for the discriminatory artists, further supports this claim. Lower cultural capital individuals lack the artistic background knowledge necessary to still consider artworks made by a discriminatory artist autonomously or from different perspectives. Whereas non-discriminatory attitudes can be overlooked, when encountering paintings made by an intolerant artist this context cannot be viewed as secondary. Intolerant attitudes are considered in the process of informing low cultural capital peoples' opinion about the artwork leading them to reject respective paintings and behave in a politically correct manner.

4.2.2. The influence of the political attitude of the artist on the perception of high cultural capital individuals

In this chapter I would like to once again pay attention to the second hypothesis, however, from a different angle and test if high cultural capital people are influenced by the political attitude of the artist. This can be done by looking at how individuals with higher cultural capital respond to the experimental conditions and see if there are any differences in outcome. At this stage it should be mentioned that all three measures for higher cultural competence correlate positively with level of education and align therefore with theory that suggests this relationship (Bourdieu, 1984) (*educationlevel/highbrowparticipation* $r =$ .255, $p <$ .000; *educationlevel/visitmuseum* $r =$ .231, $p <$ .000; *educationlevel/artsdisposition* $r =$ .206, $p <$ .000). Further, it is striking that when *highbrowparticipation* is used as a predictor in the mixed model, results are near-significant when it comes to its main effects on liking paintings ($\gamma =$ .19, $t =$ 1.92, $p =$ .056). This suggests that individuals who frequently participate in the fine arts and therefore appreciate the arts more in general tend to like paintings more on average as compared to respondents who don't participate in highbrow activities as often. This assumption is reconfirmed by a similar, highly significant finding and not exclusively bound to highbrow participation: individuals who demonstrate a higher disposition towards the arts appreciate artworks more on all levels (*generalperception*, $\gamma =$ .57, $t =$ 4.64, $p <$ .000) than individuals who demonstrate a more negative disposition towards the art world. This clearly reinforces the claim that people who support the arts in general demonstrate a higher appreciation for artworks.

Regarding the interaction effects of the experimental conditions and highbrow involvement, no significant results were found. The same findings apply to levels of education, social class and disposition towards the arts, which means that these predictors in interaction with the political attitude of the artist do not have an impact on the perception of the artist's paintings and suggests that differences in the mentioned background variables do not especially change the influence the political attitude of the artist has on the perception of his paintings.

Since this study is focused on the visual arts, it is of interest to see how people who are familiar with the visual arts in particular are influenced by the political attitude of the artist. Multilevel analysis indicates that paintings seen in a right-wing condition are rated significantly more interesting than in the neutral ($\gamma =$ .18, $t =$ 2.33, $p =$ .020) and left-wing condition ($\gamma =$ .19, $t =$ 2.39, $p =$ .017) by people who tend to go to museums and art galleries more frequently. One explanation for this phenomenon could be

that people who frequently visit museums and galleries are looking for information that sets individual paintings apart from the usual. This 'usual' could be the left-wing attitude of artists which is, as described in the preceding chapter, perceived as a default attitude when it comes to artists and has been encountered multiple times during previous museum visits. This could explain why respondents who are inclined to enjoy the visual arts, display additional interest for paintings seen in a right-wing condition. Having something different than the usual about them might be appealing in a way that fosters curiosity evoked by novelty and maybe even something 'shocking'. As McCrae (2004) states, individuals with character traits associated with general openness (*visitmuseum/conservatism*, $r = -.378$, $p > 000$) display a "need for variety" (p.707), which could explain why frequent museum visitors find paintings made by artists that do not adhere to the classic liberal attitude as more interesting. It seems like frequent museum visitors use the pieces of information about the artist provided almost as a tool to enhance their experience and enrich their interaction with the painting. Rating paintings seen in a right-wing condition more interesting is, however, a unique characteristic of 'museum lovers' that cannot be generalised to all individuals with higher cultural capital and goes exclusively for respondents who are especially familiar with the visual arts. Thus, the second hypothesis cannot be accepted entirely. Even if individuals with comparably lower cultural capital are influenced by the political attitude of the artists as excepted and some individuals with higher cultural capital evaluate the paintings without considering the provided political context, visual art do consider the provided descriptions sensitively. Thus H_2 cannot be accepted.

4.2.3. The influence of an intolerant political attitude of the artist on the perception of high cultural capital individuals

Having examined the general effect that the political attitude of an artist has on the perception of high cultural individuals, this sub-chapter studies how the same group of individuals reacts to explicitly intolerant attitudes. With these results the hypothesis 'individuals in possession of higher cultural capital clearly reject paintings made by an artist with an intolerant attitude' (H_3) can be tested.

Against all expectations, highbrow participants and those who demonstrate a positive stance towards the art world rate paintings seen in a discriminatory condition more interesting than their left-wing and neutral counterparts (*highbrowparticipants/neutral*, $\gamma = .358$, $t = 2.042$, $p = .042$; *highbrowparticipants/left-wing*: $\gamma = .325$, $t = 2.045$, $p = .042$; (*artsdisposition/neutral*: $\gamma = .425$, $t = 2.176$, $p = .030$; *artsdisposition/left-wing*: $\gamma = .461$, $t = 2.184$, $p = .030$). The differences are approaching significance with respondents who frequently visit museums and suggest that they also tend to find paintings accompanied by an intolerant description about the artist more interesting. *(neutral:* $\gamma = .238$, $t = 1.951$, $p = .052$; *left-wing*: $\gamma = .236$, $t = 1.909$, $p = .058$). Surprisingly, no high cultural capital group rates paintings made by an intolerant artist clearly less, which goes against Skjøtt-Larsen's (2012) & Bryson's (1996) theory that high cultural capital individuals are likely to value intolerant content less. This leads to the rejection of H_3. Simultaneously Skjøtt-Larsen further suggests that culturally privileged people support left-wing ideologies, however, in this case left-wing attitudes are not clearly supported by high cultural

capital people, by evaluating respective paintings better on the appreciation scales. This could again result from perceiving a left-wing attitude as a standard for artists and therefore cause no difference in perception compared to a neutral attitude. The findings imply that there is some feature about these discriminatory descriptions that incites high cultural capital respondents' curiosity about the painting when learning that the artist of the artwork takes a discriminatory stance in a political matter.

4.3. The role of the political attitude of the respondent

Theory regarding cognitive dissonance suggests that having a different political attitude as the artist results in decreased appreciation for his works (H4). In order to test this hypothesis, a mixed model analysis was conducted that analyses the interaction effects of the experimental conditions and the political attitude of the respondents.

On the face of it it looks as if the political mind-set of the respondent is not a characteristic that can be held responsible for a change in perception across various conditions. For example, conservative respondents do not rate paintings experienced in a right-wing condition any better than paintings viewed in the neutral or left-wing condition. Also, as discussed in the previous chapter, high cultural capital individuals who tend to coincide with a left-wing and more progressive orientation (Skjøtt-Larsen, 2012 & cf. Table 4.3.2.), do not particularly prefer paintings made by an artist with a left-wing attitude, which implies that the personal political attitude might not play a role in the perception process.

In addition to this, just like in the previous analyses, it is of interest to test if results might differ for discriminatory right-wing paintings and their neutral and left-wing counterparts. In this regard, no significant effects were found either except for the earlier discussed finding that shows that paintings made by an intolerant artist are found more interesting by people with higher cultural capital. This again supports the claim that the political attitude of the respondent has no impact on the perception process.

Yet, if the perception ratings of non-discriminatory paintings are compared to discriminatory paintings to see if conservative respondents make a difference between different layers of right-wing content, significant differences between the two groups can be observed. In general, conservative people appreciate paintings made by an artist with a discriminatory attitude less than paintings made by non-discriminatory right-wing artists (*generalperception*, $\gamma = -.54$, $t = -3.06$, $p = .002$). This pattern runs across all measures of appreciation, except for the aesthetic dimension, which the following table demonstrates:

Table 4.3.1.

Appreciation of conservative respondents for paintings made by an artist with a discriminatory right-wing attitude

Parameter	Estimate (γ)	Std. Error	t	Sig.
Conservatism * Discriminatory right-wing condition DV: general perception	-.54	.18	-3.055	.002
Conservatism * Discriminatory right-wing condition DV: like	-.48	.22	-2.157	.032
Conservatism * Discriminatory right-wing condition DV: original	-.63	.20	-3.105	.002
Conservatism * Discriminatory right-wing condition DV: interesting	-.73	.23	-3.147	.002
Conservatism * Discriminatory right-wing condition DV: skilful	-.48	.19	-2.565	.011

This gives occasion to test to what extent conservative people are influenced by an artist's right-wing, but non-discriminatory attitude (paintings 2, 3, 4, 8 and 9) compared to a neutral or left-wing attitude. And indeed, paintings made by an artist with a non-discriminatory right-wing attitude are overall appreciated more by conservative people than their left-wing and neutral counterparts (*general perception*, $\gamma = .33$, $t = 2.00$, $p = .047$), which implies that they resolve the cognitive dissonance encountered in the expected way and demonstrate a preference for paintings made by artists with the same political inclinations as long as these are not extreme.

This finding further strengthens the argument that people with lower cultural capital tend to use the provided piece of information about the artist to inform their opinion in a non-autonomous way. In order to be able to make that claim, the level of cultural capital of conservative respondents has to be evaluated, which can be realised by looking at the correlations between conservatism and measurements of cultural capital.

Table 4.3.2.
Correlations between conservatism and measurements of cultural capital

		Conservatism
Level of education	Pearson Correlation	-.115**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	1080
Visited an art museum / gallery	Pearson Correlation	-.378**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	1080
Watched a sports game	Pearson Correlation	.230**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	1080
Disposition towards the arts	Pearson Correlation	-.438**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	1080
Highbrow participation	Pearson Correlation	-.365**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	1080

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.3.2. makes clear that conservative respondents tend to be slightly lower educated ($r = -.12$, $p < .000$), possess comparably lower cultural capital ($r = .230$, $p < .000$) with a reluctance towards the art world in general ($r = -.44$, $p < .000$) and especially towards highbrow activities ($r = -.37$, $p < .000$) such as visiting a museum or an art gallery ($r = -.38$, $p < .000$). This leads to the assumption that the more conservative people tend to be, the less cultural capital they possess compared to more open and tolerant people. This demonstrates again that respondents who tend to have lower cultural capital are highly influenced by the descriptions provided in the experiment, which they in this case use to inform their opinion and resolve the experience of cognitive dissonance by preferring paintings made by an artist who shares their own political view. Again, this is the result of the lack of specific artistic background knowledge to decipher and perceive the artwork from different angles. The results support the idea that people do prefer artworks made by an artist who shares their personal political opinion more than other paintings, which becomes clear by the adjustment of perception when encountering the artwork across the various conditions. This behaviour is, however, confined to people with lower cultural capital, since, as demonstrated earlier on, individuals with higher cultural capital are capable of perceiving artworks made by a discriminatory artist from different perspectives and do not explicitly favour paintings made by artists who support left-wing ideologies. This means that H_4 cannot be straightforwardly accepted since the resolution of cognitive dissonance seems to depend on the individual's level of cultural capital.

4.4. The symbolic importance of the social status of an artist

Another claim emerging from theory is that the status of a creative genius can, on the one hand, overshadow personal characteristics of the artist. On the other hand, some argue that involving politics in art generally produces "bad art" (p. 8, Heinich, 2010). In the following paragraphs the results of testing these two contradictory hypothesis are presented. In the first step it was necessary to recode the nine paintings, making a differentiation between the artworks created by Picasso, Dali and Degas (code 1), and the remaining six as a reference (code 0). The main effects show that paintings made by renowned artists are not rated significantly higher than other paintings except for two cases. The first one being 'skilful', receiving significantly higher scores ($\gamma = 1.34$, $t = 2.26$, $p = .046$), which seems to be a reasonable finding since it appears to be fairly implausible that an individual lacking sufficient artistic skills is selected as part of the Western art canon. The second category being 'originality', which is leaning towards statistical significance ($\gamma = .91$, $t = 1.84$, $p = .092$) and was also expectable since the paintings chosen are known for being ground-breaking innovations of art history. This tendency is congruent with Berghman & Van Eijck's (2015) findings and reinforces their claim that the charismatic ideology certainly legitimises particular artworks and confirms the assumption that the social status of canonised artists does affect the perception of their paintings in a particular way.

In order to further investigate in how far and in what way individuals are influenced by the political attitude of a canonised artists, in the next step the data set is split up into two sub-samples and particular attention is paid to the sub-sample containing the paintings made by famous artists. When looking at the main effects of the conditions, multilevel analysis reveals that in general no substantive difference in ratings for any perception measurement can be found. This means, that the political attitude of a famous artist does not influence the perception of his paintings, which supports the idea that their status of creative genius overshadows certain personal beliefs and values. This finding is further supported when directly comparing the effects the conditions have on the ratings for Picasso's and Baselitz's paintings. Both painters are attributed a discriminatory attitude towards women in their right-wing condition and therefore make this direct comparison possible. Whereas with Baselitz the ANOVA test reveals a tendency towards significance between the conditions on the level of general appreciation [$F(2, 117) = 2.64$, p $= .078$, *generalappreciation M*difference condition 1 and 2 $= .95$, $p = .097$], for Picasso's case the mean scores do not even closely differ from each other. That confirms yet again that the political attitude of a canonised artist does not affect the perception of his paintings.

When assessing to what extent political attitudes of canonised artists affect individuals with different levels of cultural capital it has to be stated that regardless of their familiarity with the arts, no significant differences were found between the conditions for either group. The perception of highbrow participants, individuals who naturally favour the arts and visual art experts does not change across conditions; just as much as people with lower cultural capital do not adapt their appreciation. The only group of people who demonstrates a response in that respect are individuals belonging to the upper middle class. Upper middle class respondents find paintings made by canonised artists seen in both treatment conditions less beautiful than when encountered in the neutral condition (left-wing condition, =

-1.03, t = -1.97, p = .051; right-wing, = -1.05, t = -2.02, p = .045; Even if this is of no substantial importance, for the sake of completeness it should be mentioned that for this analysis the random intercepts for the level of painting are non-significant, p = .251), which suggests that a political context can take away from the aesthetic experience. At this stage it is to mention that high status people who are expected to have the economic capital to be spent on rather expensive cultural products (such as classical music or upscale performances) do not have an overproportioned level of cultural capital. No correlation was found between the upper middle class and highbrow participation (r = .050, p = .449) and only a slightly positive correlation in regards to the frequency of visiting an art gallery or museum (r = .132, p = .046). The same applies to their general disposition towards the arts (r = .132, p = .071), which suggests that members of higher social classes are, even if having a relatively higher income at their disposal, not very likely to frequently participate in the fine arts and therefore are in possession of comparatively less cultural capital. Whereas upper middle class individuals find paintings of famous artist less beautiful when perceived in any political context, the same does not apply for paintings made by unknown professionals. This could be due to the fact that as soon as something mundane is filtered into the perception process of art made by a creative genius, parts of the elevated status of the creator is taken away contributes negatively to the experience. All other perception measures for individuals of the upper middle class adhere to the overall pattern and show no significant differences in rating for paintings across the three experimental conditions. Finding no significant difference in this regard implies that Heinich's (2010) claim about all politically involved art being perceived as "bad" (p. 8) cannot be confirmed with this experiment. Even if the artworks presented were not political themselves, by revealing political details about the artist to the audience, a political context is in some way constructed. Therefore, it can be claimed that the concept of charismatic ideology plays a dominant role when perceiving artworks by famous artists who have been ascribed the status of 'creative genius' by society and lead to the rejection of H_5.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The analysis has shown that the political attitude of the artist does influence the perception of his paintings in various ways. Political context is used by certain respondents to inform their opinion about the artwork and develop a more meaningful understanding, which serves as a steppingstone for a general evaluation of the artwork. Yet, this formation of opinion seems to be no autonomous process in most cases and is influenced by numerous criteria. This leads to the conclusion that the answer to the research question of *to what extent does the political attitude of the artist influence the perception of his paintings* is of multiple layers and has to be evaluated from different stances.

Overall the experiment has established that on the one hand a left-wing attitude of an artist is somewhat taken for granted by the audience and is perceived in the same way as no political attitude. This is the result of a unique historical development within the Western art world. Creative thinking involves exploring new ideas and therefore requires to some extent a progressive mind-set, which opposes Heywood's (2015) characteristics of the right-wing spectrum such as order and traditionalism and favours left-wing properties like progress and reform. Rooted in the ideas of Romanticism, artists are often believed to be utopians and emotional dreamers imagining the world as it could/should be. This Romantic notion had a very strong influence on various art forms, especially the visual arts, and its legacy can be felt up until to date (Benton & DiYanni, 2014). Romantic artists are characterised as open to change, broadly progressive thinking as well as order challenging and refuting traditional conventions, which all constitute core values of the liberal left-wing spectrum. This notion has led to only a few individuals of the art world having openly conservative standpoints and especially Modern artists are renowned for not adhering to traditional lifestyles. Thinking of, for instance, Salvador Dali's flamboyance and extravagance, his personal presentation to the public epitomises the idea of alterity, neglecting any conventional lifestyle. Examples like this have contributed to the manifestation of the perception of the art world being rather forward-thinking and liberal; challenging the status quo. Consequential, people perceive a left-wing/liberal attitude as the standard mind-set for artists since the art world has always leaned left and its broadminded thinking is an undeniable virtue of the basic framework of the field.

On the other hand, having a right-wing attitude as an artist influences the perception of paintings negatively. Especially salient when confronted with an artist's discriminatory right-wing views, the negative influence on the perception is striking. Furthermore, viewers seem to be particularly sensitive towards issues of current public attention, which tend to draw special attention and polarize society as Franssen's painting in its right-wing condition has shown. Confronting the respondents with a supportive stance towards Geert Wilder's *Party of Freedom* provoked expressive reactions most likely caused by the vast media coverage the topic received during the time of the experiment; two weeks prior to the Dutch national election. The results demonstrate that, as Freeland (2002) suggests, context does provide deeper meaning, however, it does not always enhance the experience. Whereas Dewey generalises the idea of context, these findings show that certain pieces of information can take away from the viewers' experience, which is in this case a (discriminatory) right-wing attitude of the artist. Furthermore, by disliking artworks made by an artist who is affiliated to an (intolerant) right-wing ideology, individuals classify themselves and

demonstrate a clear demarcation between them, the artwork and its creator (Lizardo & Skiles, 2015; Roose, 2017; Braden, 2017), which is, however, no special characteristic of individuals with higher cultural capital as theory suggests.

There is furthermore a difference in what way certain individuals are influenced by the political attitude of the artist depending principally on their level of cultural capital. Even if both cultural capital groups do not differentiate between a left-wing attitude and a neutral standpoint, there are substantial variations in what way especially intolerant attitudes influence their perception of paintings. Individuals with a lower level of cultural capital have shown to really consider the provided information about the artists in their evaluation of the painting and base their opinion on the presented context. Low cultural capital individuals are prejudiced in a way that makes them evaluate the paintings in a politically correct manner. This makes sense if one considers that the idea of behaving and expressing oneself in politically correct fashion has intruded a wide range of our everyday life realms such as the media as well as the education system and science (Lea, 2010, Schulz, 1993 & Bethell, 2005). Even if some sociologists and philosophers have recently proposed an antithesis to the moralities of acting politically correct (cf. Žižek arguing that political correctness is "Modern Totalitarianism" (in Jones, 2015, para. 2)), most individuals still adhere to the omnipresent principles of politically correct behaviour. Hence, if one lacks other sources to base an opinion on, it makes sense to pick up on provided cues to evaluate paintings accordingly.

Whereas for people with comparably lower cultural capital political correctness seems to be the driving force that determines the perception, individuals with higher artistic competence take a special approach to react to intolerant political context. Experienced highbrow consumers display the capability to use discriminatory right-wing attitudes that do not adhere to the historically progressive character of the arts in a way that it enhances their cultural experience. The increased interest that they demonstrate in the respective paintings rather than categorically rejecting them aligns with Bourdieusian theory, which claims that individuals with high cultural capital can perceive artworks from a more autonomous standpoint since they are able to view a painting from different perspectives. As outlined earlier, according to Bourdieu (1984b), individuals who display a high familiarity with the arts can draw from previous experience in the artistic field, which means that they are able to perceive artworks outside political categories and/or are able to use context in different ways than simply behaving politically correct. This finding further implies at the same time that theory regarding higher cultural capital individuals being unequivocally intolerant towards intolerant content is surprisingly not reflected in this experiment. Paintings made by an intolerant artist were not rated explicitly less on the other appreciation scales compared to their left-wing or neutral counterparts by culturally privileged people. This stands in contrast to Bryson's (1996) theory that higher educated people with an advanced level of cultural capital draw explicit symbolic boundaries towards intolerant content to emphasise their own tolerance and further implies that her claim about symbolical exclusion within the genres of music cannot be fully translated to the realm of visual art. Furthermore, a similar claim pronounced by Skjøtt-Larsen (2012), finding that the culturally privileged try to reinforce their own tolerance by excluding intolerant individuals cannot be sustained by the results of this

experiment. I'd like to reiterate that I believe that this is due to the fact that high cultural capital people have sufficient knowledge about the art world available to draw from in order to avoid the dependence on one specific piece of information to inform their entire opinion of an artwork. Their knowledge suffices to appreciate the artwork for its formal and stylistic properties rather than classifying it on the basis of the artist's political attitude. Especially due to their comparably large background knowledge about the (visual) arts, they find paintings made by a discriminatory artist more interesting since an intolerant attitude is something rather unusual in the art world that arouses their inquisitiveness and nurtures their need for variety (McCrae, 2004).

Another aspect that has to be addressed is the role that cognitive dissonance plays for this topic. As the findings have shown, there is a definite connection between the political attitude of the respondents and their perception of paintings in the different conditions. Conservative respondents have demonstrated a preference for paintings made by artists with similar conservative views, as long as these views are not overtly discriminatory. This shows that the concept of cognitive dissonance figures prominently in this context. Albeit inclined towards more conservative, however not discriminatory, ideologies, analysis in regards to the level of cultural capital of conservatives have shown that they most likely lack the required knowledge necessary to resolve the experienced dissonance in a different way other than neglecting paintings made by artists with left-wing views. Therefore, they are highly influenced by the presented biographical text about the artists and use it as a main source to inform their opinion which they act upon. Again, cultural capital seems to be the mainspring of how the political attitude of the artist influences the perception of his paintings.

Lastly, the elevated social status of certain artists influences the effect their political attitude has on the perception of their paintings. First of all, Heinich's statement that all politically involved art is perceived as "bad" (2010, p. 8) cannot be confirmed and it was proven that the special social status creative geniuses are granted can overshadow their political mind-set. This finding aligns with Weber's idea of charismatic ideology and sustains the hypothesis that societies constructed perception of canonised artists can prompt individuals to disregard certain aspects of the creator's persona. Even if this applies to individuals of both cultural capital levels equally, different interpretations for this outcome are possible. Respondents who are familiar with the arts can base their judgement on more than just a short piece of information about the artist, especially when the painting was made by a famous artist whose work is well-known to the individual. Therefore, the political attitude of the artist can be neglected as something secondary and the opinion can be based on previous encounters with the artists' work. On the other hand, if people lack this familiarity with the arts, they are still aware that these famous artists are important parts of the Western art canon. Hence, they can identify the symbolic importance of the presented paintings by the name of the artist and use it as a cue to form their opinion, also neglecting the presented context as secondary information.

This research tried to contribute to the knowledge gap in the field of art perception by assessing in what way the political attitude of the artist influences the perception of his paintings. Various claims about the

influence of context were examined in further detail. For example, Ferguson's claim (2016) that in general, context has a negative effect on the perception of artworks countering Temme's (1992) assertion that context overall benefits the enjoyment of an artwork, can be specified by the outcomes of this experiment. Overall, the results connect the two previously conducted researches in a way that this experiment bridges the gap between the two by demonstrating how political context can influence the perception on various levels. Additionally, the reader gets a better understanding of the factors that contribute to a change in perception when experiencing artworks in a political context. Yet, I am fully aware that the connection between politics and art in a European framework is of special nature and culturally biased. As previously discussed, the relationship between artists of the Western art canon and Western society is a unique and multifaceted phenomenon, which is even more complicated when intertwined with the historical development of political ideologies in Europe. It was demonstrated that there is no clear cut between the perception of left-wing and general right-wing attitudes. The boundaries between the two might come across as blurry, mainly caused by established European parties positioning themselves around the political centre having avoided extreme viewpoints for decades (James, 2017; Karnitschnig & Molin, 2014). It seems to be more important for individuals to act politically correct in a way that no difference between general left- and right-wing attitudes are made, but discriminatory viewpoints are explicitly condemned. Whereas in Europe the prevailing ideology of the art world has been left-wing and traditionally bears the stamp of progressive thinking, it has become more important to distance oneself from intolerant content rather than labelling all conservative viewpoints as something thoroughly undesirable. This anti-discrimination notion derives from decades of striving for equality in Northern America and Europe. As a product of the Enlightenment, anti-discrimination movements have culminated in the 2000s, for example, with The Netherlands legalising same-sex marriage, the founding of Germany's Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency and gender-equity laws throughout the entire Western world. These and other similar transformations in society mark the peak of a long-term development in regards to defending the interests of minorities. The art world is not exempt from this Zeitgeist of explicit tolerance towards others and the pursuit of equality for minorities, which is reflected in the results of the experiment and chiefly applies to a Western context. Therefore, the results of this experiment are not entirely transferable to other cultures and it has to be tested in how far the findings apply to different cultural contexts.

Furthermore, the dataset sometimes suffered from weakened statistical power due to the fact that for certain analyses the set had to be split up into smaller samples. For instance, the analysis suggested that discriminatory right-wing attitudes can have a negative effect on the perception of paintings. Yet, the right-wing condition only consisted of four paintings accompanied by artists with explicitly intolerant attitudes, which led to fewer observations and to effects that indeed leant towards statistical significance, however, never confirmed the discussed assumption entirely. Therefore, I suggest to carry out the experiment only including, for example, discriminatory attitudes to be able to first of all definitely determine which types of intolerant attitudes exactly have what effect on the audience' perception. Secondly, only unknown professionals should be included in the experiment since the results of this

research suggest that the ascribed status of being a creative genius overshadow the political attitude of canonised artists, which is a factor that should be controlled for.

As mentioned earlier, the analysis has further shown that people with higher cultural capital do not explicitly reject paintings made by discriminatory artists. This finding contrasts a strong body of opinion suggesting that culturally privileged individuals are vastly opposed to intolerant content, which is used as a symbolic demarcation to emphasise on their own tolerance. Since mainly research in the field of music has been done in this regard, it is of interest to find out why culturally privileged individuals reject certain musical genres connected to a lower educated and intolerant audience, however, do not apply the same rules of distinction to the field of visual arts. This seeming contrast could firstly be unravelled by looking at the different motivations for consuming the two genres. Whereas the consumption of visual art is mainly motivated by self-education purposes, music on the other hand is used for "mood repair" (Miu et al., 2015, para. 1) through emotional release and connected to everyday situations. Juxtaposing these two motivations from this perspective it makes sense that an emotionally charged topic like discrimination finds higher resonance in a cultural field that is linked to everyday emotions by the audience. Additionally, the field of music gives more room for distinction since entire genres can represent certain viewpoints and attract a likeminded audience (cf. for instance, country music in DiMaggio & Peterson, 1975). A singular visual artist does not attract a wholly intolerant audience only because of his discriminatory attitude which is not even reflected in his artistic practice. Therefore, distinction in this regard appears neither to be sensible nor reasonable in the realm of visual arts. The field of music seems to serves as a more accurate platform on a larger scale to express and emphasise on one's tolerance. It seems more logical to demonstrate particular dislike for musical genres connected to intolerance than to reject all works of a singular artist simply because one does not agree with a fragment of his persona. To corroborate this assumption, I suggest to carry out a set of in-depth interviews to gain a deeper understanding of why culturally privileged people tend to make this distinction within the field of music, yet do not apply the same rules for the the visual arts.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Experiment

Dear respondents,

My name is Lisa-Marie and I'm currently a student at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. This study is conducted for my final thesis which is concerned with personal attitudes about art and therefore I'm interested in your individual opinion. Answering the questions will take approximately 10 minutes of your time. There are no right or wrong answers as I am only interested in your own thoughts.

Your response to this survey will be processed anonymously and will only be used for scientific research purposes. This information will not be shared or used for commercial or marketing purposes. At any stage during the research, you retain the right of stopping your participation and have your answers deleted. If you agree to these conditions, please select 'I agree' below. If not please select 'I disagree', which will automatically end your participation.

I really appreciate your participation in this survey. Thank you very much for taking the time.

0 I agree
0 I disagree

Please have a look at the following paintings and give your opinion by answering the questions. For each artwork you will receive some additional information, which can help you to form an opinion.

1. Les Demoiselles d'Avignon by Pablo Picasso

<u>Neutral condition</u>

Picasso was a Spanish artist who mainly focused on painting, drawing, and sculpting. Mostly famous for co-founding the Cubist movement, Picasso is nowadays one of the most renowned artists in the world.

<u>Right-wing condition</u>

Picasso was a Spanish artist who mainly focused on painting, drawing, and sculpting. Mostly famous for co-founding the Cubist movement, Picasso was also known for his delicate relationship with women. Women were to him either 'goddesses' or 'doormats' and in general 'machines for suffering.' He is nowadays one of the most renowned artists in the world.
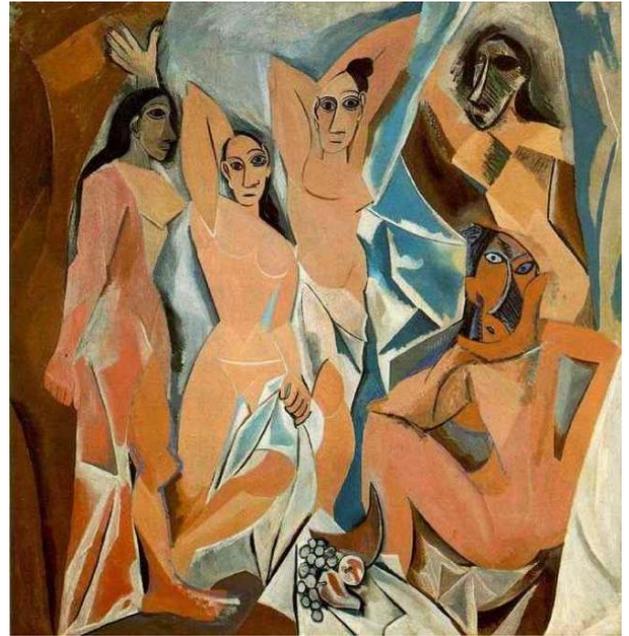
<u>Left-wing condition</u>

Picasso was a Spanish artist who mainly focused on painting, drawing, and sculpting. Mostly famous for co-founding the Cubist movement, Picasso's is also known for joining the French Communist party in 1944, which he also supported with generous financial donations. About communism he once said: "I came to communism without the slightest hesitation, since ultimately, I had always been with it." He is nowadays one of the most renowned artists in the world.

	Not at all									Very much
How much do you like this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How beautiful do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How original do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How interesting do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How skilful do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2. *The Dance Class* by Edgar Degas

Neutral condition

Degas was a French artist famous for his paintings, sculptures, prints and drawings. He is considered one of the founders of the Impressionist movement and began to paint early in life. By the time he graduated secondary school in 1853, he had already turned his room into an artist's studio and was engaging regularly in artistic projects.

Right-wing condition

Degas was a French artist famous for his paintings, sculptures, prints and drawings. He is considered one of the founders of the Impressionist movement and otherwise known for his profoundly conservative opinions. He had especially little approval for scientific developments, such as the telephone, which was a technological revolution at the time.

Left-wing condition

Degas was a French artist famous for his paintings, sculptures, prints and drawings. He is considered one of the founders of the Impressionist movement and otherwise known for his profoundly progressive thinking, especially concerning scientific developments, such as the telephone, which was a technological revolution at the time.

	Not at all									Very much
How much do you like this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How beautiful do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How original do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How interesting do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How skilful do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3. *The Persistence of Memory* by Salvador Dali

Neutral condition

Dali was a Spanish artist mainly famous for his bizarre and surrealist paintings. He also explored the fields of film, sculpture, and photography. His best-known work, *The Persistence of Memory*, was completed in August 1931 and is currently on display at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.
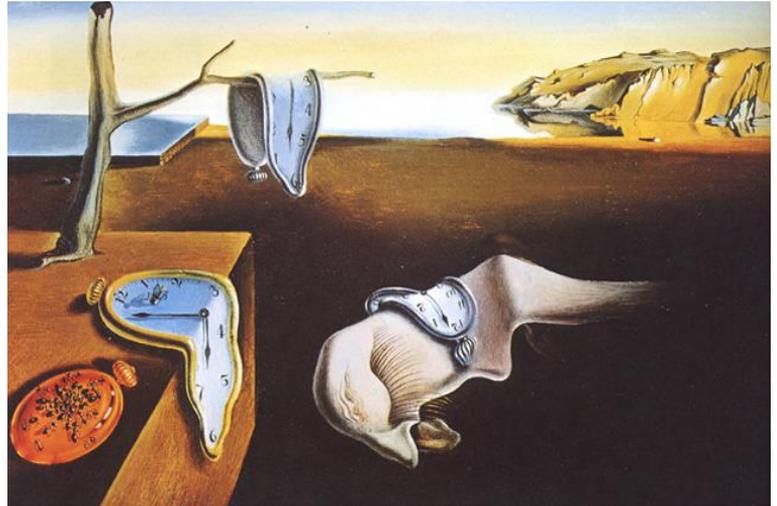
Right-wing condition

Dali was an artist who mainly focused on bizarre and surrealist painting, sculpture, film, and photography. Besides being one of the most famous Spanish painters, Dali also counts as one of the major defenders of the Franco dictatorship in the art world. His best-known work, *The Persistence of Memory*, was completed in August 1931 and is currently on display at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

Left-wing condition

Dali was a Spanish artist who mainly focused on bizarre and surrealist painting, sculpture, film, and photography. In his adolescent years, he embraced the ideas of a new social order. After the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, Dali fled and later aligned himself to the leftist democrats who were fighting the aristocratic conservative group led by General Francisco Franco. His best-known work, *The Persistence of Memory*, was completed in August 1931 and is currently on display at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

	Not at all									Very much
How much do you like this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How beautiful do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How original do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How interesting do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How skilful do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4. *Little Paper Planes* by Bas Louter

<u>Neutral condition</u>

Louter is a New York-based Dutch artist mostly known for his rather abstract paintings. He engages in a wide range of art forms and primarily expresses himself in collage-based works on paper and painting on canvas.

<u>Right-wing condition</u>

Louter is a New York-based Dutch artist mostly known for his rather abstract paintings. He engages in a wide range of practices and primarily expresses himself in collage-based works on paper and painting on canvas. Louter attaches great importance to traditional Western values such as the idea of a rational thinking and individuality. He believes that these values are superior to non-Western values and that artists from his culture have produced the greatest art in history.

<u>Left-wing condition</u>

Louter is a New York-based Dutch artist mostly known for his rather abstract paintings. He engages in a wide range of practices and primarily expresses himself in collage-based works on paper and painting on canvas. Louter attaches great importance to having an international background and gets inspiration from different cultures around the world. He believes that artists from different parts of the world should collaborate in order to produce high quality artwork

	Not at all									Very much
How much do you like this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How beautiful do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How original do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How interesting do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How skilful do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

5. *Der Brückechor* by Georg Baselitz

Neutral condition

Baselitz is a German painter, who became
famous in the 1970s for his upside-down images.
Baselitz discovered the arts for himself at the
ages of 14 when he started to paint portraits, still
lifes and landscapes.

Right-wing condition

Baselitz is a German painter, who became famous in the 1970s for his upside-down images. In the
contemporary art world his statement "women don't paint very well" is controversially discussed. In
general, Baselitz is known for his conservative approach to social life and his idea that men and women
have separate functions in society.

Left-wing condition

Baselitz is a German painter, who became famous in the 1970s for his upside-down images. He is seen as
a revolutionary artist who is a great supporter of equal rights for women, which he has campaigned for
extensively at demonstrations in the past.

	Not at all									Very much
How much do you like this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How beautiful do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How original do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How interesting do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How skilful do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

6. *Navis Pneumaticus Series* by Maksymilian Novak-Zemplinski

Neutral condition

Novak-Zemplinski was born and raised in Poland. He was creative from a young age, sketching in charcoals and painting in watercolour he used art as a way to escape reality.
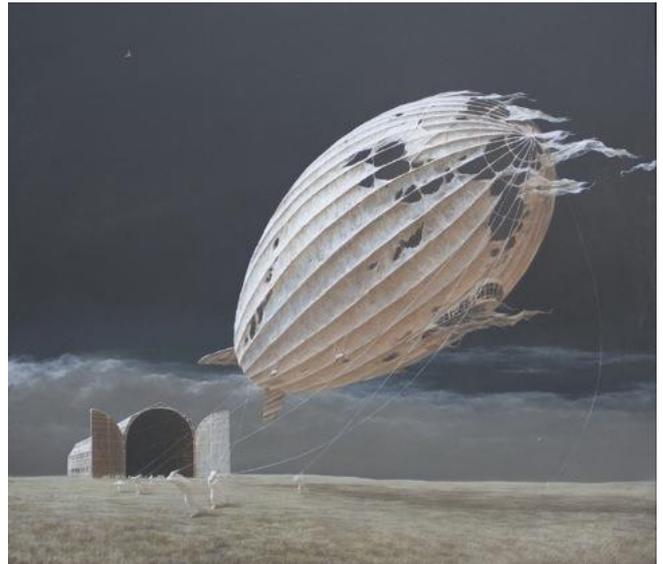
Right-wing condition

Novak-Zemplinski was born and raised in Poland. He was creative from a young age, sketching in charcoals and painting in watercolour he used art as a way to escape reality. Besides being an artist, Novak-Zemplinski also actively supports the Polish People's Party in their fight against same-sex marriage.

Left-wing condition

Novak-Zemplinski was born and raised in Poland. He was creative from a young age, sketching in charcoals and painting in watercolour he used art as a way to escape reality. Besides being an artist, Novak- Zemplinksi engages in equal rights for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender community in Poland, where same-sex marriage is constitutionally banned.

	Not at all									Very much
How much do you like this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How beautiful do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How original do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How interesting do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How skilful do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7. *Waterfall* by Mattijn Franssen

<u>Neutral condition</u>

Franssen is a Dutch artist who creates fantasy landscapes with castles, mountains, and creatures. He has been drawing since his early childhood and discovered oil painting for himself in 2014.

<u>Right-wing condition</u>

Franssen is a Dutch artist who creates fantasy landscapes with castles, mountains, and creatures. In his leisure time, Franssen is highly engaged in activities supporting Geert Wilder's *Party for Freedom*, which stands for stopping the "Islamisation of the Netherlands" by ending immigration from Muslim countries.

<u>Left-wing condition</u>

Franssen is a Dutch artist who creates fantasy landscapes with castles, mountains, and creatures. Aside from art, Franssen is highly engaged in social activities for refugees and endeavours to keep the welcoming culture for foreigners in the Netherlands alive. He is of the opinion that a multicultural society makes life more stimulating.

|	Not at all									Very much
How much do you like this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How beautiful do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How original do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How interesting do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How skilful do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

8. *Snow Blues* by George Callaghan

Neutral condition

Callaghan is an Irish graphic artist and painter who recently graduated from The National College of Art & Design in Dublin. He uses all kinds of different techniques and materials as well as various media, including sculpture, photography, video and installation.

Right-wing condition

Callaghan is an Irish graphic artist and painter who recently graduated from The National College of Art & Design in Dublin. Callaghan grew up in a religious environment and as a result prides himself on his strong Catholic values. As Ireland becomes more secular he has had his religious views challenged. During his time in art college, he experienced disdain from his more liberal follow artists. However, in spite of these difficulties, Callaghan has always been loyal to the Catholic Chruch.
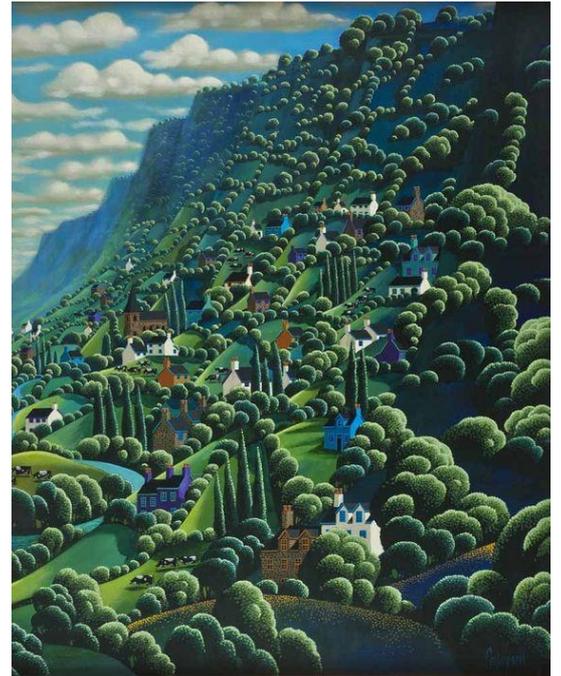
Left-wing condition

Callaghan is an Irish graphic artist and painter who recently graduated from The National College of Art & Design in Dublin. In response to the conservative nature of the Catholic Irish society, Callaghan has been a strong promoter of liberal values. Callaghan aspires to see a more progressive Ireland. This was evident in 2015 when Callaghan campaigned widely during the controversial referendum on same-sex marriage.

	Not at all									Very much
How much do you like this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How beautiful do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How original do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How interesting do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How skilful do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

9. Aurora by Jaison Cianelli

Neutral condition

Cianelli is a self-taught American artist, who has always had a passion for the arts. After graduation high school, Cianelli became actively involved in the visual arts and specialized in abstract paintings using acrylic and oil paint.

Right-wing condition

Cianelli is a self-taught American artist, who has always had a passion for the arts. He has strong personal beliefs and intensely supports values like individualism and social distinctiveness. Due to the nature of the system of the free market, which ensures social and economic fairness for everyone, Cianelli believes that each person in granted equal chances to succeed in life and is ultimately in control of their own destiny in life.

Left-wing condition

Cianelli is a self-taught American artist, who has always had a passion for the arts. This is seen in his high level of engagement in social activities that help the poor. Furthermore, he accuses the free market system as being the main source of societal inequality today. As a result, Cianelli believes that if people work together and the collective is put above the individual, great things can be achieved by humanity.

	Not at all									Very much
How much do you like this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How beautiful do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How original do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How interesting do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How skilful do you find this painting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

10. Please state your gender.

0 Male

0 Female

0 Other

11. In what year were you born?

_____

12. What is your nationality?

_____

13. What is the highest degree in education you have obtained?

0 No schooling completed

0 Elementary Education

0 Secondary Education

0 Bachelor's Degree

0 Master's / PhD degree

14. Are you currently...

(If you are retired, choose the option that applied to you before retirement)

0 An employee with management responsibility

0 An employee without management responsibility

0 Self-employed with employees

0 Self-employed without employees

0 Unemployed

0 A stay at home mother/father

0 A student

0 Retired

15. Below you will find a number of statements. Please read them carefully and indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
It is important to support the arts with public funding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The arts contribute positively to society	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Art does not play a significant role in my life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel like the arts are in general a very pretentious sector	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The arts should get subsidies from the government	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Arts education for children should only play a secondary role in schools	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is important to regularly engage in creative activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel comfortable in museums	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

16. How many times in the past 12 months have you done the following things?

Read literature	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more times
Visited an art museum /gallery	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more times
Watched a sports game	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more times
Attended the performing arts (opera, theatre or ballet)	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more times
Attended a pop concert/ music festival	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more times
Watched reality TV	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more times
Read fiction	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more times
Played an instrument	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more times
Drawing/Painting	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more times
Listened to classical music / opera	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more times
Gone to the cinema	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more times
Watch a musical	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more times

17. Below you will find a number of statements. Please read them carefully and indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
Shared religious belief is an important part of our society	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
New technologies (like social media) undermine our social relationships	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Whether people are successful or not is entirely up to themselves	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gay couples should not be allowed to raise children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
People should respect national symbols like the queen, the flag or the national anthem	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Some control over the content of films and magazines is necessary to uphold moral standards	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Western societies and their values are superior to non-Western cultures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Young people today don't have enough respect for traditional values	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There is no place for organized religion in government	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
We should make use of any technology, if it benefits us	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Nobody should go hungry, even if they don't work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The wealthy should pay a larger proportion of their income to taxes than the poor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Immigrants should be able to preserve their own cultural identity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
We should maintain the right to free expression, even if some people use it to create trouble	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gay couples should have the same rights as heterosexual couples	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Young people are the bearers of positive societal progress	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Participants would see one of the following scenarios:

Scenario 1

Picasso left-wing condition

Degas right-wing condition

Dali neutral condition

Louter left-wing condition

Baselitz right-wing condition

Novak-Zemplinski neutral condition

Franssen left-wing condition

Callaghan right-wing condition

Cianelli neutral condition

Scenario 2

Picasso right-wing condition

Degas neutral condition

Dali left-wing condition

Louter right-wing condition

Baselitz neutral condition

Novak-Zemplinski left-wing condition

Franssen right-wing condition

Callaghan neutral condition

Cianelli left-wing condition

Scenario 3

Picasso neutral condition

Degas left-wing condition

Dali right-wing condition

Louter neutral condition

Baselitz left-wing condition

Novak-Zemplinski right-wing condition

Franssen neutral condition

Callaghan left-wing condition

Cianelli right-wing condition

Appendix B – Exact description of the conditions of the experiment

The experiment took place right before the Dutch elections. This makes people extra aware of their political opinions and also less suspicious when asked about their views.

Data was collected at the following locations and times:

05.03.2017, Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 11:00 – 14:00

05.03.2017, Paddy Murphy's Irish Pub, Rotterdam, 14:30 – 19:00

06.03.2017, Erasmus University Campus Woudestein, Rotterdam, 15:00 – 17:00

06.03.2017, Paddy Murphy's Irish Pub, Rotterdam, 19:30 – 21:00

07.03.2017, Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, 14:30 – 15:00

07.03.2017, Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 15:00 – 17:00

07.03.2017, Paddy Murphy's Irish Pub, Rotterdam, 18:00 – 21:00

08.03.2017, Erasmus University Campus Woudestein, Rotterdam, 13:00 – 16:00

08.03.2017, Paddy Murphy's Irish Pub, Rotterdam, 17:00 – 20:00

10.03.2017, Paddy Murphy's Irish Pub, Rotterdam, 17:00 – 20:00

12.03.2017, Paddy Murphy's Irish Pub, Rotterdam, 15:00 – 20:00

13.03.2017, Paddy Murphy's Irish Pub, Rotterdam, 19:30 – 22:00

Appendix C – Exact description of the recoded variables

- *highbrowparticipation*: In order to identify the variables for this new variable a principal component analysis (orthogonal (varimax) rotation) was executed including the highbrow activities used in the survey (*visit an art museum/gallery, attended the performing arts, listened to classical music/opera, read literature*) which identified one component with a Cronbach's α of .686.

- *conservatives*: To detect respondents with a rather conservative mind-set, a principal component analysis (orthogonal (varimax) rotation) was executed including the following politically charged statements used in question 17: *New technologies (like social media) undermine our social relationships, shared religious belief is an important part of our society, people should respect national symbols, Western societies and their values are superior to non-Western cultures, some control over the content of films/magazines is necessary to uphold moral standards, young people today don't have enough respect for traditional values, gay couples should not be allowed to raise children, gay couples should have the same rights as heterosexual couples_reverse, immigrants should be able to preserve their own cultural identity_reverse*. The scale is of moderate reliability with a Cronbach's α of .717.

- *artdisposition*: In order to measure the respondents overall disposition towards the arts a principal component analysis (orthogonal (varimax) rotation) was run including the following statements from question 14: *Art does not play a significant role in my live_reverse, Art plays only a secondary role in my life_reverse, It's important to support the arts with public funding, The arts contribute positively to society, It's important to engage in creative activities, I feel comfortable in museums*. The scale has good reliability with a Cronbach's α of .816.