CONTENT AND MANNER: AN ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF VISUAL ART ON CONSUMER EVALUATIONS

by

HENRIK HAGTVEDT

(Under the Direction of Vanessa M. Patrick)

ABSTRACT

A visual image is characterized by two key components: 1) content (what is depicted) and 2) manner (how it is depicted). This dissertation proposes that when the content is made salient to consumers, the image is processed analytically as a product-relevant illustration, but when the manner is made salient, the image is processed heuristically as an aesthetic stimulus. Further, these two styles of processing have a differential influence on consumer attitude toward the brand associated with the image depending on a) the contextual fit between the content of the image and the product category of the brand and b) the extent to which consumers perceive the use of the art image to be special versus ordinary. Specifically, this research finds that high (low) contextual fit between the image and the product category results in a more (less) favorable brand attitude in a content-based evaluation but has no effect in a manner-based evaluation. Further, the degree to which the use of the art image is perceived as ordinary moderates the influence of the art image on brand attitude in a manner-based evaluation but has no effect in a content-based evaluation.

With a field study and four experiments, this dissertation investigates these influences of content and manner of art images used in product design and in advertisements. In studies 1-3,
the content of the visual image has a high or low fit with the relevant product category, and content versus manner is made salient. Study 1 is a real-world study in which a content-based (manner-based) evaluation is induced by explicitly highlighting the content (manner) of the visual image to each participant. Studies 2 and 3 are laboratory experiments that induce a content-based versus manner-based evaluation by manipulating the mindset of the respondent to be either concrete or abstract (Study 2) or by manipulating an analytic versus heuristic processing style (Study 3). Across the three studies, high (low) fit between the image content and the product category leads to more (less) favorable brand attitude, but only when the content is made salient or when analytical processing is encouraged. Study 4 further supports, via a manipulation of the availability of cognitive resources, the hypothesized analytic versus heuristic processing for the content and manner of visual images. Study 5 manipulates the degree to which the art images are perceived as ordinary. As theorized, ordinization diminishes the favorable influence of manner, but has no effect on the influence of content, on brand attitude.

INDEX WORDS: Visual images, Art, Aesthetics, Product design, Advertising, Evaluation, Brand attitude, Processing style
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CHAPTER 1

CONTENT VERSUS MANNER

Imagine two consumers looking at an ad for a beach resort. The visual image in the ad is a painting of a woman wearing a hat. One consumer looks at this image and sees a woman wearing a hat, while the other consumer looks at the image and sees a painting. In other words, these two consumers look at the same image, but different aspects of the image are salient to them. The first consumer focuses on the content of the image (what is depicted) while the other consumer focuses on the manner (how it is depicted). What is the difference in the way these consumers view the image? Does this viewpoint impact each consumer’s attitude towards the advertised beach resort? And if so, why and how? Extant theory on visual persuasion does not provide answers to these questions, and thus these issues form the crux of the current research.

To more clearly demonstrate what is meant by content and manner in this dissertation, consider the top visual image in Figure 1. In this photograph, everything that is depicted (in other words, the trees, the grass, the people, the water, and so on) constitutes the content of the image. Then consider the bottom visual image in Figure 1. In this painting, the content of the image is the same as the content of the image above it. However, the manner is different. In other words, how the content of the image is depicted is different. This dissertation focuses only on art images, and thus the manner-based (or content-independent) difference between art images and non-art images is not investigated. (For more on that topic, see Hagtvedt and Patrick 2008a.)
However, the salience of content versus manner is manipulated in the current research. In other words, I isolate the influence stemming from content and the influence stemming from manner and investigate how these two components of an art image differentially influence consumer attitude toward the brand associated with the art image.
FIGURE 1

TWO IMAGES WITH SAME CONTENT BUT WITH DIFFERENT MANNER
Previous literature has discussed the differential processing of verbal versus visual material (Edell and Staelin 1983; Holbrook and Moore 1981; Houston, Childers, and Heckler 1987; see also Malaviya, Kisielius, and Sternthal 1996). However, this distinction is not germane to the focus of the current research, which is the deconstruction of visual images alone. Some research has focused on visual images in advertising and has examined various elements of either the content or manner of these images. This research suggests that the content, or what is depicted in the visual image, is an obvious influence on brand attitude (Childers and Houston 1984; Edell and Staelin 1983; Miniard et al. 1991; Mitchell and Olson 1981). Other research suggests that regardless of what a visual image depicts, the aesthetic qualities of the image has an influence on evaluations of the advertised product (Bloch, Brunel, and Arnold 2003; Charters 2006; Hoegg and Alba 2007; Peracchio and Meyers-Levy 2005). However, there exists no overarching theory or systematic investigation of how the content versus the manner of visual images are processed and of the differential influence they have on brand attitude.

The key objective of this research is to contribute to such an investigation. Specifically, I disentangle and empirically investigate the influences of content and manner in visual images on consumer attitude towards the brand associated with the images. I focus on the roles of these two components in figurative artworks (paintings) that serve as the visual image in product design (Study 1) and in advertisements for consumer products (Studies 2-5). The focus was chosen for three main reasons: first, because of the widespread use of visual art in marketing (Hetsroni and Tukachinsky 2005; Hoffman 2002); second, because the medium facilitates the distinction between content and manner in visual communication; third, because recent research has established a general, content-independent influence of this category of visual images (Hagtvedt and Patrick 2008a).
This research demonstrates that the same image exerts different influences on brand attitude, depending on the salience of content versus manner, and also that different processing mechanisms are relied on for content versus manner. In doing so, this dissertation introduces connections between various literatures pertaining to visuals, aesthetics, imagery, attributes, and dual-processing theories. It also represents a step towards a broader theoretical approach to and a more systematic investigation of the influence of visual images on consumer behavior in the sense that both content and manner are here considered contemporaneously in a visual image.

Research on visual images appears to be fragmented, especially between a faction that emphasizes a relatively spontaneous, effortless reading of visual images and a faction that emphasizes a more cognitively demanding interpretation. I suggest that these factions, rather than operating in opposition to one another, would benefit from integrating their approaches. As the current research demonstrates, either approach may reflect reality, depending on the circumstances.

There are varying degrees of artistic manner (the structuring of formal qualities that result in an aesthetic whole) in all visual images, but it seems reasonable that this manner is especially salient in images explicitly recognized as artworks (Hagtvedt, Hagtvedt, and Patrick 2008; Hagtvedt and Patrick 2008a). In the current research, the influence of manner refers to this general influence, not to descriptive concepts stemming from specific stylistic properties (Meyers-Levy and Peracchio 1992; Peracchio and Meyers-Levy 2005). This latter focus merits a great deal of further attention but is beyond the scope of the current research. Here, the salience of manner simply refers to the salience of the image as an aesthetic stimulus, which may, for instance, stem from the recognition that a given image is a painting, rather than from an emphasis on what that painting depicts. Further, representational rather than abstract art images
were chosen for two main reasons: first, because the latter does not depict discernable content; second, because representational works are more likely than abstract works to be used for marketing purposes (Hetsroni and Tukachinsky 2005; Hoffman 2002). Thus, the current research not only provides general insights into the influence of content versus manner in visual images on brand attitude, but it also extends the findings reported by Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008a) by demonstrating important boundaries for the art infusion effect, a content-independent influence of art images on consumer evaluations of products associated with the images.

Following a literature review and conceptual development section, I present a set of five studies designed to shed light on the influence of content and manner in visual images on brand attitude. Studies 1-3 demonstrate, via the moderating role of contextual fit, that the influence of the visual image on brand attitude depends on the salience of content versus manner, or on the processing style relied on by the consumer. In other words, high (vs. low) contextual fit causes a more (less) favorable brand attitude, but only when the evaluation leading to this attitude is manipulated to be content-based. Otherwise, a manner-based evaluation takes precedence, and images with high or low fit result in equivalent brand attitude. I theorize that this latter influence is tied to the activation of a schema for artistic manner which leads to a favorable evaluation of the brand associated with the visual image (Hagtvedt and Patrick 2008a). I further theorize that a manner-based evaluation entails a heuristic, schematic processing style, rather than the more cognitively demanding analytic processing required for evaluative judgments based on contextual fit. Indeed, Study 4 demonstrates that the processing of content requires extensive cognitive resources while the processing of manner does not. These results support my theorizing that a content-based evaluation requires the inference of specific brand-related information based
on what is depicted, while a manner-based evaluation requires only the general recognition of artistic manner.

However, the link between this recognition and a favorable brand attitude depends on the degree to which the artistic manner is perceived as special, and in Study 5 I demonstrate the boundary condition of “ordinization.” In other words, the capacity of the art image to favorably influence brand attitude relies on the perception of that image as extraordinary. Thus, if the art image is perceived as more ordinary, rather than as special or extraordinary, then this influence should be attenuated. In the current research, if an art image has been caused to be perceived as ordinary, then ordinization is said to be high. If the art imaged is perceived as special, then ordinization is said to be low. One of the ways in which an art image can be ordinized, that is, made to be perceived as more ordinary, is by highlighting the frequent use of such images in marketing efforts. For a conceptual framework of this research, see Figure 1.

This dissertation thus demonstrates that the same image exerts different influences on brand attitude, depending on the salience of content versus manner, and also that different processing mechanisms are relied on for content versus manner. The fact that the same image may differentially influence brand attitude also complicates the managerial use of visual images in marketing efforts. The current dissertation provides some straightforward but important insights to aid such use. First, while the influence of content is arguably an obvious consideration, this research emphasizes the importance of manner, especially in cognitively demanding situations. Indeed, since manner is less sensitive to contextual fit, it may be relied upon across a wide variety of circumstances. Further, while content may be most useful in conveying specific information about product attributes, manner may be useful to convey a general favorable impression of a brand. Also, since the manner-based evaluation is sensitive to
ordinization, managers may benefit from relying on a manner appeal where this appeal will stand out rather than follow other similar appeals. For instance, rather than relying on the manner appeal of artistic or high culture images in advertising contexts such as those magazines in which many similar ads are to be found, it may perhaps be more effective to place those types of ads in magazines in which they seem different and special rather than ordinary. The studies discussed in this dissertation also provide some guidance for how a content-based versus manner-based evaluation may be facilitated.

The chapters in this dissertation are structured so as to provide the theoretical and managerial contribution as clearly and concisely as possible. Chapter 2 provides a literature review and conceptual development that informs my theorizing pertaining to the processing of content and manner and to the moderating role of contextual fit. Chapter 3 presents the empirical section with a set of five studies. The first three studies are designed to investigate the moderating role of contextual fit as well as to give preliminary evidence of different processing mechanisms for content and manner. Next, Study 4 provides further evidence for the differential processing of content versus manner, and Study 5 investigates the moderating role of ordinization. Chapter 4 provides a general discussion. This discussion summarizes theoretical and managerial contributions of the dissertation, as well as limitations and directions for future research. Some of these future directions are linked to the approaches to the study of art, aesthetics, and visual images discussed in Chapter 2, on the following pages.
FIGURE 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

This chapter begins with a general discussion of art and aesthetics. I then discuss some relevant literature pertaining to the study of visual images.

Artworks as Aesthetic Stimuli

As noted by Hagtvedt, Hagtvedt, and Patrick (2008), the nature of art has been a topic of philosophical interest since the days of the ancient Greeks. Since then, a great deal of research has made much progress towards a psychological understanding of art perception and aesthetic appreciation (Funch, 1997). Perception refers to the process of making sense of the world around us, and it involves the acquisition, interpretation, selection, and organization of sensory information. Although perception depends on a host of physiological (e.g., age, health, hunger) and social (e.g., cultural differences, social roles, self-concept) factors, the perception of “art itself is a cultural universal” (Dutton, 2002).

Anteceding the notion of art as a distinct category was merely a perceived difference between nature and human activity, and the modern distinction between “art” and “craft” was throughout much of history virtually nonexistent (Hauser, 1999). During the middle ages, painting and sculpture were taught in artisans’ guilds, music was often categorized along with
math, and poetry was grouped with rhetoric and grammar. It was not until the mid-eighteenth century that Abbé Batteux presented a separate classification of fine arts consisting of music, poetry, painting, sculpture, and dance (Shrum, 1996). A distinguishing mark of these disciplines was that they had pleasure rather than utility as the main goal, and their classification as the fine arts were disseminated throughout Europe.

Today this notion of art as a special category of human activity, with unique influences on viewers, still remains among researchers in various disciplines. However, it seems doubtful whether scholars will ever agree on a definition for this category. For example, Wartenberg (2006) discusses twenty-nine different perspectives on what does or does not constitute art. He draws on philosophical viewpoints describing art as “imitation” (Plato), “redemption” (Nietzsche), or “the communication of feeling” (Tolstoy), to more recent views of art as “fetish” (Adrian Piper) or “virtual” (Douglas Davis).

Recent research in consumer behavior has defined art from the viewers’ perspective: that art is that which is categorized by the viewers as such (Hagtvedt and Patrick 2008a). In a descriptive survey conducted by these authors, participants were given a sorting task and asked to distinguish art images from non-art images and to describe why they considered certain images to be art and others to be non-art. Various artworks, ranging from Renaissance to modern works, were used as stimuli. Respondents consistently asserted the expressiveness of art images (“emotion”, “expression”) and the centrality of the manner of creation of an artwork (“talent”, “creativity and skill”, “I couldn’t do it”), while making a statement without this manner (“symbol…not creativity and skill”) is not enough to constitute art. Based on these self-reports, on a review of art history (e.g., Tansey and Kleiner, 1996), and on their own experience and research, Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008a; Hagtvedt, Hagtvedt, and Patrick 2008) suggest that
artworks may be identified as works perceived as embodying human expression, in which a perceived main feature of the work is the manner of its creation and/or execution rather than just a concept, idea, or message underlying it or conveyed by it, and in which this manner is not primarily driven by any other contrived function or utility. Other works typically depend on a context, such as being placed in a gallery, for their impact. However, the above notion of art is particularly relevant for the current research, in which reproductions of artworks are shown in the context of consumer products rather than in galleries and museums.

Whichever context the art is viewed in, much previous research on art perception and visual aesthetics has focused on specific aspects of aesthetic judgments such as the appeal of certain constellations of facial lineaments depicted in portraiture, or the appeal of certain colors in connection with certain shapes (Pickford, 1972). According to Funch (1997), Fechner, Lipps, Arnheim, and Berlyne deserve special mention for their contributions towards the development of art appreciation as a field of study.

Fechner (1871) paved the way for psychological aesthetics as an independent discipline with his proposal to supplement philosophical speculations with empirical observation. In this view, formal judgments of beauty and harmony should be measured rather than just postulated or deduced from philosophical concepts. Lipps’ (1906) empathy theory contributed to this trend, with the suggestion that aesthetic appreciation is experienced as belonging to the work of art rather than to the observer. This idea also implies that emotions, which necessarily belong to the individual experiencing them, should influence the cognition of attributes of an artwork. Some researchers have even argued that observers must be emotionally primed to look for categories before they are able to perceive them (Damasio, 1994). Therefore, attributes of an artwork
underlying its aesthetic or intellectual appeal may be perceived as belonging to the artwork itself, but the experience of these attributes is partially shaped by emotions elicited in the viewer.

Arnheim (1974) also places emphasis on cognition in perception and creativity, and he develops an understanding of the mind as primarily visual in regards to art. He defines perception as the experiencing of “visual forces,” and he places dynamic perception, rather than mere mechanical recording of visual elements, at the root of aesthetic experience. Berlyne (1971) expands on such notions and discusses novel interpretations of measurable responses to art objects. Indeed, modern treatment of experimental aesthetics may be said to begin with Berlyne, a treatment which in many ways supplants Fechner’s approach to art appreciation. In the psychobiological framework of Berlyne, aesthetic pleasure is tied to changes in level of arousal, and motivational factors such as novelty, surprise, and complexity replace formal beauty or harmony as the fundamental basis of psychophysical aesthetics.

An alternative to Berlyne’s psychobiological framework is the prototypicality model of aesthetic experience, put forward by Martindale et al. (1990). According to their model, preference for an artwork is determined by that work’s perceived typicality rather than by its collative features. As Silvia (2005) argues, however, this model shares many of the arousal model’s limitations, and it does not appear adequately nuanced to capture the complexity of aesthetic experience. This is also true of a model of aesthetic emotions according to which ease of processing causes viewers to deem an artwork beautiful (Reber, Schwartz, and Winkielman, 2004). A more nuanced approach to experimental aesthetics is that of appraisal theory (Silvia, 2005a, 2005b). In this approach, artworks are viewed as affecting emotions via their influence on appraisals. This approach diverges from the Berlyne tradition, in which aesthetic response is tied to objective features of the art object itself (Cupchik, 1988). In an approach that similarly ties the
aesthetic response to the viewer, Hagtvedt, Hagtvedt, and Patrick (2008) emphasize how emotions inform cognitive evaluations. In this way, the approach nonetheless diverges from appraisal theory. For instance, a viewer might deem an object fascinating in part because of the excitement or thrill felt upon viewing it, irrespective of whether this thrill has yet been explained by a conscious appraisal. This approach is supported by neuropsychological evidence suggesting that preliminary affective responses precede cognition (Damasio, 1994; LeDoux, 1996).

Indeed, much of the above section draws heavily on Hagtvedt, Hagtvedt, and Patrick (2008), with some passages reproduced close to verbatim, since that paper was initially intended to form part of this dissertation. Extending this research on the perception and evaluation of art images, Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008a) spearhead the experimental investigation of art images used in marketing efforts. These authors demonstrate the art infusion effect, a general, favorable influence of art images on consumer evaluations of products associated with the art images. In related research, Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008b) also demonstrate a favorable influence of art images on the extendibility of brands associated with the images. This research is restricted to artworks as a special category of visual images, but it also contributes to the broader literature on visual images in general by providing insight into how consumers extract information from this type of images as well as how this information influences consumer evaluations of products and brands.

Images as Information

Art images constitute a specific type of visual images, and as such some literature pertaining to visual images in general is also germane to the current topic. In the literature on
visual images, there are two approaches that appear to be in conflict with each other: one that emphasizes relatively effortless processing and one that emphasizes a more cognitively demanding processing. I suggest that these approaches are not necessarily in contradiction to each other.

Previous literature has established the importance of visual stimuli for consumer behavior. Two thirds of all stimuli reach the brain through the visual system (Kosslyn et al. 1990). Indeed, there is a general consensus that most human meaning is shared nonverbally (Zaltman 1997), and thus nonverbal communication arguably has a more pervasive influence on consumer behavior than does even verbal communication. For instance, Mehrabian (1971) reports that only 7% of the meaning in any message is contained in verbal language (cited in Zaltman 1997). In light of these findings, it seems clear that consumer behavior research would benefit substantially from a better understanding of visual communication, and art images constitute one type of such communication.

It is relatively well established that visual images have an influence on brand evaluations, but it is less clear how this influence is exerted (DeRosia 2008). A great deal of research appears to be based at least partially on the assumption of a relatively effortless comprehension of nonverbal ad elements (Childers and Houston 1984; Edell and Staelin 1983; Hagtvedt and Patrick 2008a, 2008b; Miniard et al. 1991; Mitchell and Olson 1981). For instance, Mitchell and Olson (1981) discuss brand attitudes arising from a classical conditioning effect using a valenced visual image, rather than from a more elaborate interpretation of the image. Miniard et al. (1991) investigate the influence of affect-laden pictures that are, they argue, devoid of product-relevant information on brand attitudes. Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008a, 2008b) acknowledge that the content of a visual image is a source of interpretable information, but they nonetheless
demonstrate that art images have a general influence on consumer evaluations, regardless of the specific content of the images. Further, previous research has demonstrated that perceptual fluency in itself results in enhanced consumer judgments (Reber, Winkielman, and Schwarz 1998). In recent research, Brasel and Gips (2008) also find that even fast-forwarded TV commercials containing extensive central brand information can positively affect brand attitude, behavioral intent, and choice behavior.

Other research has emphasized the cognitive processing and interpretation of nonverbal ad elements, relying on theoretical domains such as semiotics and rhetoric to explain how consumers extract information from a visual image (Larsen, Luna, and Peracchio 2004; McQuarrie and Mick 1999; McQuarrie and Phillips 2005; Scott 1994; Scott and Vargas 2007). Semiotics refers to the communication of information via “signs” that combine to form a meaningful “text,” the interpretation of which includes the decoding of these signs according to culturally based decoding rules (DeRosia 2008; Noth 1990). A sign may be iconic and thus have a physical resemblance to its meaning (e.g., a photograph of the advertised product). Otherwise it may be symbolic and thus relate to its meaning by arbitrary convention. This type of sign is not an obvious, physical representation of its meaning, which is also often context-dependent.

The perspective of rhetoric also involves the active interpretation of meaning on the part of the consumer. Rhetorical figures (e.g., metaphors) tend to rely on stylistic elements rather than explicit message arguments. In her call for a theory of visual rhetoric, Scott (1994) discusses several limitations inherent in previous research approaches and makes a case against what is referred to as copy theory, that is, the argument that pictures resemble reality. She emphasizes the omission of manner in previous research, observing the apparent “belief that style has no impact of its own, that the object pictured overrides the manner of picturing” (Scott 1994, 258).
Mechanical elements studies are noted as an attempt to investigate visual style, but these studies focus on specific graphic elements such as font type, and thus they do not represent a comprehensive treatment of manner in visual images.

Thus, extant literature on visual images includes two seemingly opposed approaches: one that emphasizes spontaneous, effortless processing and one that emphasizes a more cognitively demanding interpretation of specific meaning. In the current research, however, I propose that these approaches are not necessarily in opposition to each other. One reason for this is that the processing and influence of a visual image depends on the component of the image that is salient to the consumer. As noted above, visual images are characterized by two key components: content (what is depicted) and manner (how it is depicted). I theorize that when content is salient, the image is processed analytically as a product-relevant illustration, but when manner is salient, the image is processed heuristically as an aesthetic stimulus. High (low) contextual fit results in more (less) favorable brand attitude for a content-based evaluation but has no effect on a manner-based evaluation. Conversely, ordinization results in more (less) favorable brand attitude for a manner-based evaluation but has no effect on a content-based evaluation. This boundary condition for the influence of manner is discussed in further detail in chapters 3 and 4.

Content and Manner: Processing the Two Sources of Influence

Previous research suggests that the content of a visual image conveys specific information that is interpretable by the viewer (Childers and Houston 1984; DeRosia 2008; Miniard et al. 1991; Scott 1994; Scott and Vargas 2007). While a visual image may be more eye-catching than verbal text, and may perhaps even distract a consumer from an intended ad claim,
the image can itself convey information about, for instance, one or more product attributes (Edell and Staelin 1983; Houston, Childers, and Heckler 1987). Scott (1994) refers to an ad for Clinique, devoid of headline or copy, where the cosmetics are submerged in a glass of icy soda water. A consumer might, for instance, interpret this image as conveying that Clinique’s cosmetics are refreshing like a glass of soda water on a hot summer day. Houston, Childers, and Heckler (1987) argue that a visual image also may establish an expectation about the verbal content of an ad. It seems reasonable that such an expectation must, at least to some degree, be based on an analytic interpretation of the visual image. Miniard et al. (1991) demonstrate that the impact of affect-laden visual images devoid of product-relevant information declines as involvement increases, while involvement exerts the opposite effect for product-relevant images. This finding suggests that effortful processing is required for the product-relevant content of visual images. The above observations lead me to theorize that the reading of image content in the current context tends to entail a resource-intensive form of analytic processing.

Conversely, while different stylistic properties may carry specific meaning for viewers (Meyers-Levy and Peracchio 1992; Peracchio and Meyers-Levy 2005) and may also be interpreted in various ways, depending on the context (Scott 1994), I expect that manner, as it is used in the current research, involves a heuristic form of processing. Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008a) demonstrate the art infusion effect as a favorable, content-independent influence of art images on consumer evaluations of products associated with the images, based on general connotations tied to a schema for art. These authors do not investigate the relationship between content and manner, or how the salience of these components differentially influences consumer evaluations, but given that the art infusion effect is content-independent, it seems reasonable that it is the presence of recognizable artistic manner that triggers the art schema. Further, given that
The recognition of artistic manner does not rely on a piecemeal analysis of specific information, but rather on a holistic assessment of abstract, aesthetic qualities, the influence of manner should be based on a heuristic, rather than analytic, form of processing. In sum, I theorize that a content-based evaluation entails a more resource-demanding, analytic style of processing while a manner-based evaluation entails a less resource-demanding, heuristic style of processing (Evans 2008). Formally stated:

**H1:** Different process mechanisms underlie a content-based evaluation versus a manner-based evaluation. The content of an art image associated with a consumer product is processed analytically while the manner of an art image associated with a consumer product is processed heuristically.

The Moderating Role of Contextual Fit

In general, information perceived to be relevant to the issue at hand is likely to affect evaluations (Meyers-Levy and Malaviya 1999). If the content of a visual image is made salient, it seems reasonable that it will be viewed as relevant information about the product associated with the image, and therefore a low fit between the image content and the product category should have an adverse effect on product or brand evaluations (Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989). However, I theorize that manner represents a separate and distinct source of influence on brand attitude. In line with the above arguments, a manner-based evaluation entails the consumer’s reliance on a heuristic style of processing to form an evaluative judgment, such that fit between the image content and the product category should not affect brand attitude. This argument does
not suggest that the consumer experiences impaired vision or for some reason no longer sees the incongruence, but rather that the consumer no longer relies on the analytic processing needed for this incongruence to affect brand attitude. Thus, I expect that if the content of the image is made salient, or the consumer is encouraged to process analytically, then high (low) contextual fit leads to more (less) favorable brand attitude. Otherwise, the high-fit and low-fit images have an equal influence on brand attitude. Formally stated:

**H2:** An art image associated with a consumer product causes more (less) favorable brand attitude if the content of the art image has a high (low) fit with the product category, but only if the evaluation is content-based. With a manner-based evaluation, art images with high versus low fit with the product category lead to equivalent brand attitude.

Overview of the Empirical Section

Five studies are presented to investigate the influence of an art image on brand attitude in connection with the salience of content versus manner. In study 1, the focal image is presented as part of product design (wine label). In studies 2-5, the focal image is presented in an ad. The participants are made aware that the image forms part of an ad, but they are not made aware of any specific context (such as type of magazine) in which the ad is featured. Participants are also not made aware of why they are participating in these experiments, other than that it is a part of academic research. In studies 1-3, the content of the visual image has a high or low fit with the relevant product category, and content versus manner is made salient. Study 1 is a real-world
study in which a content-based (manner-based) evaluation is induced by explicitly highlighting the content (manner) of the visual image to each participant. Studies 2 and 3 are laboratory experiments that induce a content-based versus manner-based evaluation by manipulating the mindset of the respondent to be either concrete or abstract (Study 2) or by manipulating an analytic versus heuristic processing style (Study 3). Across the three studies, high (low) fit between the image content and the product category leads to more (less) favorable brand attitude, but only when the content is made salient or when analytical processing is encouraged. Study 4 is designed to investigate the processing mechanism underlying the differential influence of content versus manner on brand attitude. In this study, I manipulate the availability of cognitive resources via a cognitive load manipulation and demonstrate that a content-based (manner-based) evaluation requires (does not require) extensive cognitive resources, thus lending further support to the hypothesized analytic versus heuristic processing for the content and manner of visual images. In Study 5, I manipulate the degree to which the art images are perceived as ordinary. Ordinization diminishes the favorable influence of manner, but has no effect on the influence of content, on brand attitude.
Study 1: A Field Study Demonstrating the Moderating Role of Contextual Fit

A field study was conducted to investigate hypothesis 2 in a real-world environment. The stimulus chosen was wine labels, given the widespread use of visual images in this context. Two wine labels were custom made by a professional graphic artist, featuring one of two paintings by Pierre-Auguste Renoir, either The Luncheon of the Boating Party (see Figure 2) or Gabrielle and Jean (see Figure 3). Both images are painted in the same style by the same artist, but the content of the former (vs. the latter) was pretested (seven-point scale: 1 = poor fit, 7 = good fit) with 24 undergraduates as having a better fit with the product category ($M = 6.17$ vs. $M = 1.75$, $F(1, 22) = 117.49, p < .05$). Indeed, the former depicts merry diners talking and drinking wine, while the latter depicts a woman and a child playing with toys. The brand of wine chosen was based on the advice of three bartenders that this brand would be unknown among the sample population. (The name of the brand is removed from this text and from the figures to avoid any possible copyright issues.) Two wine bottles were thus used in the study, containing the same wine but with different labels.

I contracted a deal to have the field study conducted on weekdays during happy hour in a somewhat upscale bar with a calm ambience and a mixed clientele. The bartender, blind to the
purpose of the study, was trained by me to administer the study. For each participant, the bartender asked a patron if he or she would be willing to taste a wine that they were considering for the bar. This cover story was used so that patrons would feel free to offer their honest opinion. The bartender then took one of the two wine bottles from behind the counter, and, before pouring the wine, made salient either the content or manner of the image on the wine label. This manipulation was achieved by the bartender glancing at the wine label before pouring the wine, and making one of two seemingly casual comments: either “Ah, this is the one with the people” or “Ah, this is the one with the painting.” The former statement was pretested as effective in making salient the content of the visual image (both images feature people), while the latter was pretested as effective in making salient the manner (both images are paintings). I was constantly present, posing as a typical patron of the bar, to observe that the bartender conducted the taste test appropriately for each participant.

Sixty adults (ages 21 – 78; $M_{\text{age}} = 36$; 57% male) participated in a 2 (fit: high vs. low) x 2 (salience: content vs. manner) between-subjects study, in which fit was manipulated with one of two wine labels and salience was manipulated with one of two statements made by the bartender. Participants viewed the wine label and tasted the wine before filling out a short questionnaire. Brand attitude was reported on five seven-point semantic differential scales (unfavorable – favorable; negative – positive; bad – good; unpleasant – pleasant; dislike very much – like very much), later combined in a brand attitude index ($\alpha = .98$).
Results and Discussion

An ANOVA with fit and salience as the independent variables and brand attitude as the dependent variable revealed a main effect of fit ($M_{\text{high}} = 5.49$ vs. $M_{\text{low}} = 4.09$, $F(1, 56) = 20.10$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .26$), a main effect of salience ($M_{\text{content}} = 4.37$ vs. $M_{\text{manner}} = 5.23$, $F(1, 56) = 8.21$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .13$), and a fit x salience interaction ($F(1, 56) = 4.79$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$). Please see Table 1 for means. Contrast analysis revealed significant differences between the low-fit, content-salient condition and the other three conditions, but no other differences. Further, there were no differences when gender and age were included as covariates in the analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1</th>
<th>BRAND ATTITUDE MEANS FOR STUDY 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salience</td>
<td>High Fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>5.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manner</td>
<td>5.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These results support hypothesis 2 and provide some preliminary support for hypothesis 1. If making content salient leads consumers to interpret a visual image as a product-relevant illustration, then a painting of a woman and child playing with toys seems inappropriate for a product like wine, and an unfavorable brand attitude results from this image as compared to the image with diners. However, if making manner salient leads to a heuristic, manner-based evaluation, then the consumers no longer rely on the analytic processing needed for the fit considerations to affect brand attitude, and the images should have an equal influence on brand attitude. Clearly, the consumer still sees the obvious incongruence, but a slight shift in salience of content versus manner of the image nonetheless decides the influence of the image on brand attitude. Study 1 revealed that the manipulation of this salience may be achieved by something as unobtrusive as the seemingly casual comment of a bartender. In Study 2, I replicate these results in a controlled setting, using a mindset manipulation rather than an explicit manipulation of salience.
FIGURE 3

STIMULUS WITH HIGH-FIT ART IMAGE FOR STUDY 1
FIGURE 4

STIMULUS WITH LOW-FIT ART IMAGE FOR STUDY 1
Study 2: A Replication with a Mindset Manipulation

Study 2 induces a content-based versus manner-based evaluation by manipulating the respondents’ mindset to be either concrete or abstract before proceeding with the questionnaire. The rationale for this manipulation is that a concrete mindset (pertaining to lower-level, detailed construal) is associated with specific brand-related information tied to the content of a visual image, while an abstract mindset (pertaining to higher-level, holistic construal) is associated with the general, schema-based inferences tied to the manner. Indeed, extant research suggests that a concrete mindset is linked to analytic, attribute-level processing while an abstract mindset is linked to schematic, conceptual processing (Labroo and Patrick 2008; Peterman 1997; Trope, Liberman, and Wakslak 2007). Thus, a consumer with a concrete mindset tends to rely on specific, attribute-based information, while a consumer with an abstract mindset tends to rely on general connotations or schema-based heuristics, when forming an evaluation. Further, heuristic processing is often relied on rather than the more effortful analytic or attribute-based processing (Baumgartner 1993; De Neys 2006), and previous research gives some indication that a manner-based evaluation may indeed be the default consumer response to exposure to an art image (Hagtvedt and Patrick 2008a). A control condition in which the influence of participants’ default mindset could be assessed was included in this study to test this notion.

Method and Results

One hundred and forty-one undergraduates participated in a study where the stimulus was an advertisement for Bellvier Nail Salon (fictitious brand) featuring one of two artworks by a
contemporary Norwegian artist, either Her Volcanic Song (see Figure 4) or Impression (see Figure 5). Both images were painted in the same style by the same artist, but the former displays the face of a woman, while the latter displays the face of a man. The content of the former (vs. the latter) was pretested (seven-point scale: 1 = poor fit, 7 = good fit) with 24 undergraduates as having a better fit with the product category (M = 5.25 vs. M = 2.17, F(1, 22) = 34.94, p < .05).

At the beginning of the study, participants completed a laddering task adapted from Freitas, Gollwitzer, and Trope (2004) in which participants were asked to write down the most important thing they did to keep healthy. Concrete (abstract) mindset was induced by further asking an additional six questions in sequence about how (why) participants engaged in this activity. The how (why) questions are related to seeing concrete details (big picture) over the big picture (concrete details) and are reported to induce concrete (abstract) mindset (Liberman and Trope 1998; Vallacher and Wegner 1989). As noted above, concrete (abstract) mindset is per my theorizing associated with a content-based (manner-based) evaluation. Additionally, a control condition was added, in which participants were not subjected to a mindset manipulation.

The study was thus a 2 (fit: high vs. low) x 3 (mindset: concrete vs. abstract vs. no instructions control) between-subjects experiment. Participants reported brand attitude (α = .95) on the same scale as in Study 1. As a manipulation check for mindset, participants were asked an open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire: “What does the image in the ad convey about Bellvier Nail Salon?” Two independent coders subsequently coded these data for inferences based on the content versus the manner of the visual image and assigned one point for each reference to content and one point for each reference to manner, resulting in 85% intercoder reliability. A mindset index was created by subtracting the content scores from the manner scores, and an ANOVA with fit and mindset on the mindset index revealed a successful
manipulation of mindset ($M_{\text{concrete}} = .25$ vs. $M_{\text{abstract}} = .68$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = .65$, $F(2, 136) = 3.66, p < .05$). No other effects were significant. This result also suggests, as expected, that the image was encoded, in the control condition as well as in the abstract condition, as an aesthetic stimulus rather than as a product relevant illustration, thus leading to a manner-based evaluation. Additionally, data were collected for mood, for perception of the visual image as an artwork, for familiarity with the image, and for interest in and knowledge about art. As expected, no differences were found for these variables, and they did not influence the results. Hence, they are not discussed further. However, a two-way ANOVA on brand attitude revealed the expected fit $\times$ mindset interaction ($F(2, 135) = 4.44, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$). Please see Table 2 for means. Contrast analysis revealed a significant difference between the low-fit, concrete mindset condition and the high-fit, concrete mindset condition. No other effects were significant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mindset</th>
<th>High Fit</th>
<th>Low Fit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concrete</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>3.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>3.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

The results of Study 2 replicated those of Study 1 in a controlled laboratory experiment in which the basis of evaluation was manipulated with a concrete versus abstract mindset. In other words, there were significant differences between the high- and low-fit conditions in the concrete mindset condition, but not in the abstract mindset condition. This manipulation is interesting from a theoretical point of view, because it supports my theorizing that a content-based evaluation relies on lower-order, analytic processing while a manner-based evaluation relies on a higher-order, schematic processing style. Additionally, a control condition (default mindset) was incorporated, which led to the same results as did the abstract mindset manipulation. This supports the notion that the manner-based evaluation constitutes the default response to exposure to an art image in the current context. Study 3 was designed to replicate the results from Studies 1 and 2 using a different manipulation for a content-based versus manner-based evaluation.
FIGURE 5

STIMULUS WITH HIGH-FIT ART IMAGE FOR STUDY 2
FIGURE 6

STIMULUS WITH LOW-FIT ART IMAGE FOR STUDY 2
Study 3: A Replication with Attribute-Based Processing

It has been demonstrated that heuristic processing is often relied on rather than the more effortful analytic or attribute-based processing (Baumgartner 1993; De Neys 2006), suggesting that the influence stemming from manner, as it is conceptualized here, may constitute the default influence in the current context. This notion was further supported in Study 2. However, sometimes consumers are motivated to look for more detailed or specific information about a product. For instance, for one reason or another they may need or want to consider specific product attributes. Indeed, highlighting the attributes of an advertised product should cause consumers to look for evidence that informs them about these attributes, rather than relying on schema-based heuristics (Mantel and Kardes 1999). In Study 3, participants in the analytic processing/content salience condition were therefore asked questions about specific product attributes before completing the questionnaire. The rationale for the manipulation was that participants would have to rely on the image to infer the properties of the product and thereby utilize the analytic, content-based route of evaluation. Participants in the heuristic processing/manner salience condition were not asked these questions before completing the questionnaire. Additionally, images with a different manner (non-art photographs) were included in this study. The influence stemming from differences in manner has been demonstrated in previous research (Hagtvedt and Patrick 2008a) and is not the focus of the current research. However, based on that research I would expect the non-art images to cause less favorable brand attitude, and this replication of that research was added to this experiment to bolster my argument otherwise based on null effects in the manner salience condition. Further, based on my theorizing the processing manipulation should increase the influence of contextual fit in the
analytic processing condition, leading to more (less) favorable brand attitude for the high (low) fit non-art image, in the same way that it is expected to do so for the art images.

Method and Results

One hundred and ninety-eight undergraduates participated in a study where the stimulus was an advertisement for Jai beauty soaps (a defunct brand, pretested with 12 undergraduates as unknown for my sample population: M = 2.20; 1 = not at all familiar, 7 = extremely familiar) featuring one of two artworks by Jacques Louis David (either a detail of Madame Recamier (see Figure 6) or a detail of The Intervention of the Sabine Women (see Figure 7)) or one of two photographs with the same content as the art images (see Figures 8 and 9). Both art images reflect a classical heritage and were painted in the same style by the same artist, but the content of the former (vs. the latter) was pretested (seven-point scale: 1 = poor fit, 7 = good fit) with 24 undergraduates as having a better fit with the product category (M = 5.17 vs. M = 2.75, F(1, 22) = 32.23, p < .05). Indeed, the former displays an elegant young woman relaxing on a couch, draped in what appears to be soft and clean garments, while the latter depicts a soldier in the midst of battle. The content of one photograph was the same as the painting of the woman, and the content of the other photograph was the same as the painting of the soldier. In line with Hagtvedt and Patrick’s (2008a) procedure, these photographs were identified as non-art images. Before completing the questionnaire, participants in the analytic processing condition were asked to rate the product on relevant product attributes (gentle, delicate, soft, smooth, silky, relaxing, and soothing). Participants in the heuristic processing condition were not given these instructions before completing the questionnaire.
The study was thus a 2 (fit: high vs. low) x 2 (processing: analytic vs. heuristic) x 2 (manner: art vs. non-art) between-subjects experiment. Brand attitude ($\alpha = .93$) was reported on the same scale as in the previous studies. Additionally, data were collected for mood, for familiarity with the visual image, and for interest in and knowledge about art. As expected, no differences were found for these variables, and they did not influence the results. Hence, they are not discussed further. As a manipulation check for manner, an ANOVA with fit, processing, and manner on perception of the visual image as an artwork revealed the expected main effect of manner ($M_{\text{art}} = 5.95$ vs. $M_{\text{non-art}} = 2.77$, $F(1, 191) = 198.13$, $p < .05$).

An ANOVA with fit, processing, and manner on brand attitude revealed a main effect of fit ($M_{\text{high}} = 4.29$ vs. $M_{\text{low}} = 3.51$, $F(1, 190) = 18.92$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .09$), a main effect of manner ($M_{\text{art}} = 4.35$ vs. $M_{\text{non-art}} = 3.64$, $F(1, 190) = 16.68$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$), a fit x processing interaction ($M_{\text{high, analytic}} = 4.69$ vs. $M_{\text{low, analytic}} = 3.22$ vs. $M_{\text{high, heuristic}} = 3.86$ vs. $M_{\text{low, heuristic}} = 3.76$, $F(1, 190) = 15.60$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$), and a processing x manner interaction ($M_{\text{analytic, art}} = 4.03$ vs. $M_{\text{analytic, non-art}} = 4.02$ vs. $M_{\text{heuristic, art}} = 4.60$ vs. $M_{\text{heuristic, non-art}} = 3.22$, $F(1, 190) = 14.39$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .07$). See Table 3 for means. Contrast analysis reveals, consistent with the art infusion effect, that in the heuristic processing condition the two art images lead to significantly more favorable brand attitude than do the two non-art images, regardless of fit between the content of the image and the advertised product category. However, in the analytic processing condition both the art image and the non-art image with the high-fit content (relaxing woman) lead to a significantly more favorable brand attitude than do either image with low-fit content (soldier).
TABLE 3
BRAND ATTITUDE MEANS FOR STUDY 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Processing Style</th>
<th>High Fit</th>
<th>Low Fit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Non-Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytic</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>4.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heuristic</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

The results of Study 3 replicate the results of the previous two studies. Additionally, Study 3 incorporates a condition with different manner, to contemporaneously demonstrate differences in the heuristic processing/manner salience condition. In this condition, results revealed significant differences between the art images and the non-art images, regardless of fit. However, in the analytic processing/content salience condition, results revealed significant differences between the high-fit and the low-fit images, regardless of manner (art vs. non-art). This further supports the notion that analytic (heuristic) processing is relied on for a content-based (manner-based) evaluation, and it further demonstrates the moderating role of contextual fit in the content-based evaluation but not in the manner-based evaluation. Notably, it also demonstrates an important boundary condition for the art infusion effect (Hagtvedt and Patrick 2008a). While art images have a content-independent influence on brand attitude, bringing
considerations of product attributes to the attention of the consumer shifts the basis for evaluation over to the content.

To determine more conclusively the processes underlying the content-based versus manner-based evaluation, I manipulate the availability of cognitive resources in Study 4. Specifically, I expect that while extensive cognitive resources are needed for an analytic, content-based evaluation, this is not the case for a heuristic, manner-based evaluation.
FIGURE 7

STIMULUS WITH HIGH-FIT ART IMAGE FOR STUDY 3
FIGURE 8

STIMULUS WITH LOW-FIT ART IMAGE FOR STUDY 3
FIGURE 9

STIMULUS WITH HIGH-FIT NON-ART IMAGE FOR STUDY 3
FIGURE 10

STIMULUS WITH LOW-FIT NON-ART IMAGE FOR STUDY 3
Study 4: Demonstrating the Differential Reliance on Cognitive Resources for the Processing of Content versus Manner

A great deal of extant research introduces dual-processing accounts in various domains (Chaiken and Maheswaran 1994; Evans 2008; Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann 1983), but there is much confusion as to how these different accounts map onto each other. While it has been suggested that there may be two architecturally and evolutionarily distinct cognitive systems underlying these accounts, it seems unreasonable to infer that human thought processes fit so neatly into two discrete systems (Evans 2008). Indeed, Evans (2008, 270) asserts that “close inspection of the evidence suggests that generic dual-system theory is currently oversimplified and misleading” and instead suggests that “type 2 processes are those that require access to a single, capacity-limited central working memory resource, while type 1 processes do not require such access.” Based on this, evidence of differences in reliance on working memory capacity would provide additional insight into the underlying process involved in the influence of content versus manner in visual images on brand attitude. The analytic processing of content in the current context should be disrupted by concurrent working memory load, while the heuristic processing of manner should not be thus disrupted.

Method and Procedure

One hundred and sixty-two undergraduates participated in a study where the stimulus was an advertisement for the Meyers Center, a fictitious fitness center, featuring a detail of the painting Napoleon on the Imperial Throne by Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres (see Figure 10).
The content of the visual image was pretested with 24 undergraduates as having low fit with a fitness center ($M = 2.08$). Indeed, it depicts Napoleon sitting on a throne, fully draped in thick, luxuriant robes, and is thus not suggestive of exercise. Therefore, I expect that the salience of the content (manner) of this image should lead to less (more) favorable brand attitude, but that the unfavorable influence of content would be disrupted by the unavailability of cognitive resources (high cognitive load). In other words, I would expect that participants in the content salience condition who have available cognitive resources (low cognitive load) would process the incongruence of the content and thus would report significantly lower brand attitude than the other participants.

Before viewing the ad or beginning the questionnaire, participants were asked to spend a few moments memorizing either a seven-digit (3072338) or two-digit (25) number. They were asked to keep the number constantly in mind while filling out the questionnaire and were told that they would be asked to report the number later in the questionnaire. This manipulation ties up cognitive capacity in the high-load condition (Patrick, MacInnis, and Park 2007) and was therefore expected to lead to significant differences between the high-load and low-load condition for participants for whom content was salient, but not for participants for whom manner was salient. The salience manipulation was achieved by asking participants to consider the content (what is depicted) versus the manner (how it is depicted) of the visual image. The study was a 2 (salience: content vs. manner) x 2 (cognitive load: high vs. low) between-subjects experiment. Participants reported brand attitude ($\alpha = .92$) on the same scale as in the previous studies. Data were collected for mood, for perception of the visual image as an artwork, and for interest in and knowledge about art. As expected, no differences were found for these variables, and they did not influence the results. Hence, they are not discussed further. As a manipulation
check for cognitive load, participants reported on seven-point scales how hard, stressful, and effortful it was to answer the questions on the questionnaire while remembering the seven-digit (two-digit) number. These measures were later combined in a load index ($\alpha = .91$). The same manipulation check as in Study 2 was conducted for salience (intercoder reliability = 90%).

Results and Discussion

The results revealed a successful load manipulation. An ANOVA with salience and cognitive load as the independent variables and the load index as the dependent variable revealed a main effect of load ($M_{(high)} = 2.42$ vs. $M_{(low)} = 1.30$, $F(1, 158) = 39.42, p < .05$). No other effects were significant. A similar ANOVA on the salience index revealed a successful manipulation of salience ($M_{(content)} = -.24$ vs. $M_{(manner)} = .06$, $F(1, 158) = 4.73, p < .05$). A similar ANOVA on the brand attitude index revealed a main effect of salience ($M_{(content)} = 3.27$ vs. $M_{(manner)} = 3.87$, $F(1, 157) = 23.50, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .13$), a main effect of cognitive load ($M_{(high)} = 3.92$ vs. $M_{(low)} = 3.15$, $F(1, 157) = 33.28, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .18$), and a salience x cognitive load interaction ($F(1, 157) = 7.56, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$). See Table 4 for means. Contrast analysis revealed, as expected, significant differences between the content salience, low-load condition and the other three conditions, but no other differences.
TABLE 4
BRAND ATTITUDE MEANS FOR STUDY 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High Load</th>
<th>Low Load</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>2.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manner</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results support hypothesis 1, with the notion of a relatively effortless, heuristic processing of manner, and a more effortful, analytic processing of the content of a visual image. Thus, the results also provide additional support to the notion that manner represents the default influence on brand attitude in the current context. After all, processes that require little or no conscious attention and utilize minimal resources occur more consistently over time and constitute the default set of reactions to most occasions (Bargh and Chartrand 2000).

Indeed, the results of the current research also appear to indicate that the salience of manner acts as a buffer against negative influences stemming from contextual incongruities. This fits well with Hagtvedt and Patrick’s (2008a) finding regarding the favorable influence of visual art and also broadens the understanding of that phenomenon. However, I also theorize in the current research that the manner-based influence is not impervious to dilution. I argue that the favorable influence of artistic manner is tied to an “art is special” heuristic. It seems reasonable that this influence could therefore be disrupted by “ordinizing” the use of art.
FIGURE 11

STIMULUS FOR STUDY 4
Study 5: The Moderating Role of Ordination

Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry (1989) discuss a fundamental distinction between what is regarded as sacred or extraordinary and what is regarded as profane or ordinary. In the context of consumer behavior, the sacred or extraordinary is not restricted to religious sentiments. Artworks constitute an example of objects that are revered and considered sacred. Dissanayake (1995) argues that the drive to create artworks has evolved in the human species in connection with religious ritual and the desire to make something special, as if extraordinary creation enables us to reach beyond a rudimentary grasp of mundane existence. In line with these authors, Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008a) argue that the art infusion effect relies on the recognition of an art image as special or extraordinary. Therefore, ordinization (causing the artistic manner to be perceived as ordinary or mundane) should interfere with the art infusion effect, leading to diminished consumer evaluations of the brand associated with the image. Notably, this should only be the case for a manner-based evaluation. A content-based evaluation should be unaffected by this ordinization, because the art infusion effect is not tied to the content of the image.

**H3:** An art image associated with a consumer product causes less (more) favorable brand attitude if the art image is ordinized to a high (low) degree, but only if the evaluation is manner-based. With a content-based evaluation, art images lead to equivalent brand attitude, regardless of ordinization.
Method and Results

One hundred and three undergraduates participated in a study designed to investigate the role of ordinization in the influence of art images on brand attitude. The sacredness or specialness of products noted above (Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989; Dissanayake 1995; Hagtvedt and Patrick 2008a) is typically viewed as arising over an extended period of time, but that does not imply that this specialness cannot be counteracted within a brief time period.

Participants in Study 5 were given a small booklet with three consumer product advertisements featuring art images. The target product to evaluate was either in the first or last ad in the sequence, the rationale being that in the latter case the previously viewed ads featuring art images would highlight the frequent use of art images for marketing purposes and thus ordinize the art image in the target ad. The target ad was an ad for Savine Dinnerware (fictitious brand), featuring the painting A Sunday on La Grande Jatte by Georges Seurat (see Figure 11).

Participants were instructed to focus either on the content or the manner of the image in the ad. The study was a 2 (ordinization: high vs. low) x 2 (salience: content vs. manner) between-subjects experiment. Participants reported brand attitude ($\alpha = .95$) on the same scale as in the previous studies. As a manipulation check for salience, participants reported which aspect of the image they focused on (1 = manner, 7 = content). An ANOVA with ordinization and salience on this measure revealed a successful manipulation of salience ($M_{\text{content}} = 4.93$ vs. $M_{\text{manner}} = 3.39$, $F(1, 98) = 20.73$, $p < .05$). As a manipulation check for ordinization, participants reported the extent to which they agreed that the image made the ad special (1 = not at all, 7 = definitely). A similar ANOVA revealed the expected main effect of ordinization ($M_{\text{high}} = 4.22$ vs. $M_{\text{low}} = 4.81$, $F(1, 99) = 4.52$, $p < .05$). Additionally, data were collected for mood, for
perception of the visual image as an artwork, for familiarity with the image, and for interest in and knowledge about art. As expected, no differences were found for these variables, and they are not discussed further. However, a two-way ANOVA on brand attitude revealed the expected ordinization x salience interaction \( (F(1, 99) = 5.81, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .06) \). See Table 5 for means. Contrast analysis revealed a significant difference only between the two manner salience conditions. This supports hypothesis 3, demonstrating that ordinization moderates the influence of manner, but does not affect the influence of content, on brand attitude. A main effect of ordinization was also noted \( (M_{\text{high}} = 5.20 \text{ vs. } M_{\text{low}} = 5.56, F(1, 99) = 5.24, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .05) \).

### TABLE 5

**BRAND ATTITUDE MEANS FOR STUDY 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salience</th>
<th>High Ordinization</th>
<th>Low Ordinization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>5.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manner</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>5.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Post-Study

To validate further the notion of ordinization, a post-study was run with a different manipulation. In this study, 58 participants were randomly assigned to a high or low ordinization condition. In the high ordinization condition, participants were asked to briefly write their thoughts about the use of art in marketing before filling out the questionnaire. In the low ordinization condition, participants did not perform this task. The rationale for this manipulation was that elaboration on this use of art would make it seem more ordinary. All participants then viewed an advertisement for Prince Spaghetti Sauce, featuring the Mona Lisa by Leonardo da Vinci. An ANOVA revealed the expected effect of ordinization on brand attitude ($M_{\text{high}} = 4.09$ vs. $M_{\text{low}} = 4.92$, $F(1, 56) = 7.48$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .12$), lending additional support to the notion that ordinizing the art image dilutes its favorable influence on brand attitude.
Savine Dinnerware...
...a matter of taste.

FIGURE 12

STIMULUS WITH TARGET AD FOR STUDY 5
CHAPTER 4

THEORETICAL AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Visual images are characterized by their content and manner. Understanding how these two components influence consumer evaluations is of vital concern for marketing theoreticians and managers. The current research represents an initial attempt to disentangle systematically the influence that visual images have on brand evaluations, given the salience of content versus manner, and to illuminate the underlying process. With a set of five studies I show that the same visual image has different influences on brand attitude, depending on shifts in salience between content and manner. This shift may come about, for instance, from the casual comment of another person (Study 1), or from a shift in mindset (Study 2) or processing style (Study 3), or from written instructions (Studies 4 and 5). I demonstrate that content is processed via a cognitively intensive, analytic route while manner is processed via a less cognitively demanding, heuristic route. Further, contextual fit moderates a content-based brand evaluation but has no effect on a manner-based evaluation. Conversely, ordinization moderates a manner-based evaluation but has no effect on a content-based evaluation.

Given that the studies manipulate the salience of content versus manner in different ways, these studies also shed light on how these foci may be induced in the marketplace. While, for instance, the copy in an ad may result in an explicit manipulation of content versus manner, other situational and personality variables might also induce either focus. For instance, if an abstract
mindset cues a manner-based evaluation, then people who have a chronic abstract mindset (Vallacher and Wegner 1989) or those in a positive mood and more prone to abstract processing (Labroo and Patrick 2008) are also likely to engage in a manner-based evaluation. Similarly, holistic processing is aligned with manner-based processing, thus Easterners (interdependent cultures) are more likely than Westerners (independent cultures) to engage in a manner-based processing of visual images (Monga and John 2007). Conversely, in situations where specific product attributes are being considered, consumers are more likely to make content-based evaluations. The investigation of additional factors that induce a content-based versus manner-based evaluation is an interesting avenue for future research.

Theoretical Contributions

The current research demonstrates that the same image differentially influences brand attitude, depending on the salience of content versus manner, and also that different processing mechanisms are relied on for content versus manner. In doing so, I introduce connections between various literatures pertaining to visuals, aesthetics, imagery, attributes, and dual-processing theories. Indeed, dual-processing theories have been investigated in connection with a variety of areas, such as the verbal versus visual elements of advertisements, but such previous research does not focus on the deconstruction of the visual images themselves. Further, recent research (Evans 2008) has emphasized the importance of elucidating different dual-processing perspectives, and such perspectives have typically not been focused on the differential processing of components of one object (the image) and the influence this has on the evaluation of a different object (the product or brand associated with the image).
Current societal and marketplace trends are making the theoretical and managerial importance of this focus increasingly evident. Consumers rely on the visual system for two thirds of stimulus input to the brain (Kosslyn et al. 1990), and they are constantly bombarded with visual images via the internet, TV, magazines, billboards, and so on. Further, products like the iPhone reflect in their design and operation the importance of visual appeal, visual communication, and intuitive visual interfaces in the current marketplace. Marketing scholars are exhibiting an increasing awareness of the importance of visual appeals, leading to a growing trend towards emphasizing areas such as aesthetics and product design (Bloch 1995; Bloch, Brunel, and Arnold 2003; Charters 2006; Chitturi, Raghunathan, and Mahajan 2008; Dahl, Chattopadhyay, and Gorn 1999; Hoegg and Alba 2007).

Importantly, the current research represents a step towards a broader theoretical approach to and a more systematic investigation of the influence of visual images on consumer behavior in the sense that both content and manner are here considered contemporaneously in a visual image. Research on visual images might currently appear to be fragmented, notably between a faction that emphasizes a relatively spontaneous, effortless reading of visual images and a faction that emphasizes a more cognitively demanding interpretation. I assert that these factions, rather than operating in opposition to one another, would benefit from integrating their approaches. As the current research demonstrates, either approach may reflect reality, depending on the circumstances. Therefore, uncovering the circumstances that lead to different ways of reading and interpreting visual images seems like a viable direction for future research.

A great deal of prior research has also investigated the influence of congruence/fit on consumer perceptions and evaluations (Ahluwalia 2008; Bottomley and Holden 2001; Leclerc, Schmitt, and Dubé 1994; Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989). However, these investigations have
typically been focused on the fit between a specific product and a parent brand or general product category, or on the presence or absence of incongruities in general. The current research differs from the extant literature not only in the investigation of fit between the product category and the content of an associated visual image, but in the investigation of how the salience of visual components interacts with the influence of this fit on brand attitude.

Managerial Implications

There is a widespread use of visual images in, for instance, product design and advertising. However, without an adequate understanding of the various influences that such visual images have, the use of these images may lead to suboptimal consumer response. As the current research shows, not only may the same visual image be viewed differently by different consumers, but it may even be viewed differently by the same consumer, depending on the circumstances. This clearly complicates the strategic use of visual images in marketing efforts.

Some specific insights may be gleaned from the current research to aid managers in their use of visual images. First, although it is arguably of obvious importance to consider the content of the visual image and the brand-related information communicated by that content, the current research indicates that the less obvious consideration of manner may be at least as important. In cognitively demanding situations, a manner-based evaluation becomes all the more important, since it relies on available cognitive resources to a lesser extent. Further, the manner-based evaluation is less sensitive to contextual fit, and thus it may be relied on across a wide variety of circumstances. Managers can also purposefully facilitate the content-based or manner-based influence of the visual image. For instance, they can explicitly highlight the content or the
manner of the image, or they can add to or subtract from the cognitive load experienced by the consumer. Importantly, while manner may be useful to convey a general favorable impression of a brand, content may be more useful to convey specific information about product attributes.

Thus, if a manager aims, for instance, to influence consumer choices or stimulate variety seeking based on specific sensory attributes versus overall brand assessment (Inman 2001), the current research indicates that highlighting the content versus the manner of promotional images may facilitate such efforts. Additionally, the manner-based influence is in the current research demonstrated to be sensitive to ordinization. Therefore, it may behoove managers to rely on a manner appeal where this appeal will stand out rather than follow other similar appeals. For instance, rather than relying on the manner appeal of artistic or high culture images in magazines in which many similar ads are to be found, it may perhaps be more effective to place those types of ads in magazines in which they seem different and special rather than ordinary.

Notably, the findings of the current dissertation represent only some initial insights into the influences of content and manner, and it should be noted that managerial recommendations are limited by the preliminary nature of these insights. There may be many other factors to consider, some of which are noted in the below section.

Limitations and Future Research

An observation that should be noted about the current research is that reproductions, rather than originals, are utilized. If consumers are, for instance, wandering through a museum, it seems likely that they will process the images differently than when viewing them in the context of the current research. Previous research has demonstrated a “pictorial sameness” for the
viewing of originals and reproductions of artworks (Locher, Smith, and Smith 1999), but the focus on reproductions should nonetheless be noted as a limitation of the current research. It should also be noted that the studies of this dissertation are based on single exposure to the images. It is thus possible that repeated exposures to these images would lead to different results than the ones uncovered here. Further, the brand attitude measured in this dissertation is based on a single exposure. Thus, it is difficult to compare this attitude to one arising from longtime exposure to advertising and perhaps actual experience with the brand’s products.

Another limitation is rooted in the above observation that visual images are complex. Indeed, it is not possible to conduct realistic experiments with visual images and completely avoid confounds. However, this is a minor concern here, given the focus of this research. When I manipulate content, I do not, nor do I need to, specify what must change in the content. All I need to show is that the content is different, and then measure whether the two images have the same influence on brand attitude. In regards to manner, I here investigate the general influence of artistic manner, and therefore specific style is not a concern. It is enough that the visual images used are recognized by the participants as artworks to the same extent. As an additional precaution, for each experiment where I used two artworks, I used artworks painted in the same style by the same artist.

However, this focus on the general influence of artistic manner constitutes a limitation in itself. The current research represents an initial investigation of the differential influence of content versus manner on brand attitude, and thus it makes sense to focus on general influences first, but specific stylistic influences remain as an important topic for future research. Some previous research has already focused on the influence of such properties in visual images (Peracchio and Meyers-Levy 2005), and this focus merits a great deal of further attention, also in
combination with differences in salience. For instance, future research might investigate whether a focus on manner in general will enhance or subdue the influence of specific stylistic elements. Also, a focus on specific stylistic elements might enhance or subdue the influence of content or manner in the general sense. Further, while the current research indicates that viewers will spontaneously discern artistic manner in general, other research has indicated that this may not be the case for descriptive concepts conferred by specific stylistic properties (Peracchio and Meyers-Levy 2005). Future research should investigate the role of perceived artistic manner in general and the role of specific stylistic properties, as well as the interaction of these two influences, while varying circumstances such as availability of cognitive resources. It should also be noted that there may be different types of cognitive resources, and thus also different ways of restricting cognitive resources. An investigation of possible differences between, for instance, cognitive resources involved in verbal processing and visual processing could contribute not only to the marketing literature but also to the psychology literature.

An additional consideration is the role of less cognitively demanding content-based influences, apparent in affect-laden images (Miniard et al. 1991). These were not investigated in the current research, where mood effects did not play a role. However, they nonetheless constitute an exception to the general theory proposed here. Further, the role of affect involved in the processing of persuasive pictorial messages (Brown, Homer, and Inman 1998; Raghunathan and Trope 2002) and in the trade-offs between different visual appeals (Chitturi, Raghunathan, and Mahajan 2007) remain areas for further research.

Future research should also investigate the role of product type in regards to manner-based evaluation. For instance, certain product categories may be incongruent, not only with certain stylistic properties, but even with artistic manner in general. Indeed, while the current
research focused on fit between image content and product category, incongruence concerning
the manner is a rich area for further investigation. Previous research has also identified different
dimensions of incongruence (Heckler and Childers 1992), and future research may investigate
the influence of different types of image incongruities on variables such as ad recall or product
and brand evaluations, as well as on variables like consumer creativity (Dahl and Moreau 2007).

In general, while the current research helps to clarify differences in influence of a visual
image on brand attitude stemming from the salience of content versus manner, a great deal of
future research is necessary to comprehensively map out the influences of visual images on
consumer evaluations. It seems clear that there are both manner-based and content-based
influences that may be associated with different processing mechanisms and that may be
differentially moderated by circumstances or individual differences. As a general goal, it would
greatly benefit future research on visual images if scholars with different approaches work
towards the common goal of creating a comprehensive framework to understand the influence of
visual images on consumer behavior. Previous research has done much to provide a rich and
solid fundament, and the current research has provided a necessary step to extend this research,
but a great deal of future research is necessary to continue this endeavor. Given that it is difficult
to overestimate the importance of visual images in marketing, this is a focus that should be given
increased consideration in the marketing literature.

Finally, it should be noted that the relevance of the current research extends beyond the
realm of visual images. Manner and content are arguably present in any aesthetic object that also
expresses, via its form, some type of function and/or symbolism. For instance, a car may have a
general, aesthetic appeal based on manner, but it may also have specific, recognizable elements
that signal speed, power, fun, fuel efficiency, environmental friendliness, or the like, because the
elements that communicate such specific properties are shaped to emulate forms found in nature. Understanding the influences of content and manner in products other than visual images constitutes an important avenue for future research.
REFERENCES


