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Faculty of Psychology

Colloquium lecture by Prof. Stefano Mastandrea

Is Modern Art Beneficial? Engagement Matters

For some time, I have been studying the museum experience in relation to motivation, emotion, and learning across various institutions, including both ancient and modern art museums. More recently, my focus has shifted to exploring how artworks can foster positive emotional responses and promote viewers' psycho-physical well-being.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that engaging with the arts enhances personal well-being, reduces stress, and positively impacts overall health. Additionally, museum visits have been shown to improve subjective health, boost positive affect, and alleviate anxiety and stress on both explicit and implicit levels. In sum, there is strong evidence that engaging with the arts, particularly visiting art museums, benefits emotional well-being and health. However, the underlying mechanisms continue to be debated.

I will present recent studies conducted at a modern art museum examining how different types of artworks—paintings, sculptures, and photographs—varying in style (figurative and abstract) and content (distressing and relaxing) influence well-being and emotions, while also considering different levels of visitor engagement (guided conversation vs. free exploration).

Prof. Stefano Mastandrea

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**This lecture takes place at Liebiggasse 5, 1010 Vienna,
Lecture Hall G 2nd floor and will be streamed.**

Thursday, 6 March, 2025; 3pm

