

EVA SPECKER

Originally from the Netherlands, Eva Specker completed her Research Masters Degree at the University of Amsterdam. During this time she had the pleasure to work with Dr. Pablo Tinio at Montclair State University. From there she pursued a PhD at the University of Vienna with Dr. Helmut Leder, working in an interdisciplinary collaboration between psychology (EVA-lab) and art history (CReA-lab). During this time she mainly was concerned with translating art historical ideas into testable hypotheses as well as pursuing her other research interests which include how we measure things we're interested in in art research (such as art knowledge or art interest, for which she developed and validated a questionnaire), how art can move us emotionally (which will be the topic of her talk), and how the museum context can influence and enhance our aesthetic experiences (doing multiple field studies in for example, the Albertina Museum, the Belvedere Museum, and the Venice Biennale). In 2019 she received the Frank Barron Award from APA Division 10: Society for the Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, & the Arts.

The emotional power of art: how art can move us, confuses us, and bring us to tears

In my talk I will talk about how engagements with the arts as a museum visitor and art viewer can affect us emotionally. I will review work that focuses on the emotional aspect of our aesthetic experiences. In short how art can move us, confuse us, and bring us to tears. After a general discussion of emotional experiences with art I will go on to talk about how differences between people can influence our emotional experiences with art, for example: why do art experts enjoy negative or even ugly art? Finally, I will provide an outlook of future directions investigating how art can influence our emotional lives especially focusing on a recent ongoing project that assesses how art can influence our daily emotional lives. In this project we follow a group of people who report how they feel each day over a 20-day period as well as how much they engage with the arts in that time.