Orientation Preferences for Photographed Objects: Effects of Handedness and Object Type

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Abstract: Previous research suggests that individuals show orientation preferences when perceiving or judging pictures of objects. Such preferences are typically attributed to cerebral lateralization effects. However, a laterality account cannot explain differences in orientation preferences for different types of objects. In the present study of aesthetic preference, 60 right-handed and 30 left-handed English-speaking participants were asked to photograph six different objects—-iron, car, rhinoceros, airplane, teapot, and statue bust—-in what they thought was the most aesthetically pleasing orientation. The objects were selected to differ in their implied motion, graspability, and animacy. Across handedness groups, an overall rightward facing preference was found for objects with implied motion and for animate objects; only one item (teapot) showed a differential effect of handedness ($X2 = 5.383$, $p = .020$). Planned analyses will investigate more carefully the degree of object orientation in relation to handedness and stimulus type (implied motion vs. graspable vs. animate).