

get rid of many things she collected during her long life. A car pulls up, some people get out, and before long they are gathered around one of the oil paintings propped up against the wall. Yes, you agree with them, it does look like a fine example of early American primitivism. But do you tell them that Aunt Darcy copied it from a photograph just a few years earlier?

My inclination, since I am an honest, upright person, would be to tell them. But should you tell them before or after they finish admiring the painting? According to our beer studies, you and Aunt Darcy would be better off keeping the information under wraps until after the examination. I'm not saying that this would entice the visitors to pay thousands of dollars for the painting (even though our beer drinkers preferred our vinegar-laced beer as much when they were told after drinking it as when they were not told at all), but it might get you a higher price for Aunt Darcy's work.

By the way, we also tried a more extreme version of this experiment. We told one of two groups in advance about the vinegar (the "before" condition) and told the second group about the vinegar after they had finished the sampling (the "after" condition). Once the tasting was done, rather than offer them a large glass of their choice, we instead gave them a large cup of unadulterated beer, some vinegar, a dropper, and the recipe for the MIT Brew (two drops of balsamic vinegar per ounce of beer). We wanted to see if people would freely add balsamic vinegar to their beer; if so, how much they would use; and how these outcomes would depend on whether the participants tasted the beer before or after knowing about the vinegar.

What happened? Telling the participants about the vinegar after rather than before they tasted the beer doubled the