Metro (UK)

December 7, 2011 Wednesday   
Edition 1;   
Ireland

**Real art catches eye of the** **brain**  
**BYLINE:** Lauren Turner  
  
**SECTION:** NEWS; Pg. 13  
  
**LENGTH:** 174 words

WHEN it comes to art, only the real deal will do, according to a study into fake paintings.

Academics found the brain responds differently to artwork depending on whether it is said to be authentic, or merely a good imitation.

The findings show that reaction to art is 'not rational' as the viewer reacts to what they are told about a piece of work - regardless of whether it truly is genuine.

The research, which appears in the Frontiers in Human Neuroscience journal, saw 14 people placed in a brain scanner and shown images of Rembrandt portraits, some of which were authentic and some of which were convincing fakes created by different artists.

While their brain signals showed they could not differentiate between the real and fake work, the response altered significantly depending on whether they were told it was a genuine Rembrandt or not.

Oxford University Professor of Physiology Andrew Parker, the study's senior author, said: 'Our findings support the idea that when we make aesthetic judgments, we are subject to a variety of influences.'

The Daily Telegraph (London)

December 7, 2011 Wednesday   
Edition 2;   
National Edition

**True colours: we only love art if we're told to**  
**BYLINE:** Richard Alleyne  
  
**SECTION:** NEWS; Pg. 3  
  
**LENGTH:** 427 words

MANY of us like to think that our deep appreciation of great art demonstrates sophisticated and refined tastes, although others have long had their suspicions to the contrary.

Now the pretentiousness of art lovers who say they are moved by the talent of great painters has been laid bare by a study suggesting that we like paintings only if we are told they are by an Old Master.

Most of us are just as impressed by fakes, so long as they are presented as the real thing, said researchers.

The experiment suggests that people rarely make their own decisions about art and that appreciation is strongly linked to the accompanying information, rather than an objective judgment.

It adds weight to the concept of the emperor's new clothes, as well as supporting Private Eye's satirical view of art lovers in Pseuds Corner as pretentious bores.

The researchers from Oxford University found that reactions to art are "not rational" because viewers are influenced by what they are told about a piece of work, regardless of whether it is genuine.

In the study, 14 people were attached to a brain scanner and shown 50 "Rembrandt" portraits, some of which were authentic and some of which were convincing fakes.

While their brain signals showed they could not differentiate between the real and fake work, their response altered significantly depending on whether they were told it was a genuine Rembrandt or not.

Prof Martin Kemp, Emeritus Professor of the History of Art at Oxford University, said: "Ourfindings support what art historians, critics and the general public have long believed - that it is always better to think we are seeing the genuine article.

"Our study shows that the way we view art is not rational, that even when we cannot distinguish between two works, the knowledge that one was painted by a renowned artist makes us respond to it very differently.

"The fact that people travel to galleries around the world to see an original painting suggests that this conclusion is reasonable."

When volunteers were told a work was genuine, it activated a response in the area of their brains associated with reward and pleasure, researchers found.

But being told a painting was not by Rembrandt triggered a variety of responses in parts of the brain linked to trying to understand.

Those taking part said they found themselves studying paintings in these cases, trying to establish why they were not considered genuine.

The findings are published in the Frontiers in Human Neuroscience journal.

MATT 'That reminds me, keep the receipt when you buy me a Christmas present'