

Aesthetic value depends on perceived authenticity

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Does authenticity matter?

People prefer art that they believe to be an original over what they believe is a reproduction or computer-generated [1-4]. Studies have often attributed this preference to an “authenticity” effect [2-4], but without assessing perceived authenticity. Moreover, value and status of fakes is still under debate in the art world [5].

“Authenticity is invaluable.” [Jim Jarmusch, film director]

Three online experiments: Does perceived authenticity influence beauty judgment?

	Exp. 1: Live music videos 5 live music videos Top 1-3 & 50-51 on billboard charts	Exp. 2: Diamond earrings 6 images of diamond earrings obtained from Tiffany's	Exp. 3: Models in ads 6 German advertisements 3 motifs half male/female
A: “Fake” object	Rate beauty of music video itself in live vs. lip-synced version	Rate earrings' beauty with real vs. imitation diamonds	Rate model's beauty with vs. without cosmetic surgery
B: “Fake” medium	Rate lead singer's beauty in live vs. lip-synced version	Rate earrings' beauty in retouched vs untouched image	Rate model's beauty in retouched vs. untouched image

We here manipulate fakeness in stimulus descriptions and assess perceived beauty and authenticity of the stimulus.

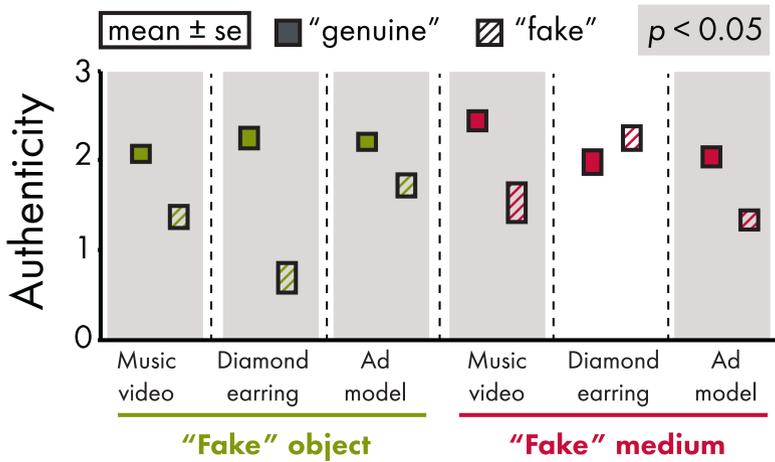
A: We manipulate fakeness of the object, telling participants that the object they rate is fake or genuine.

B: We manipulate fakeness of the medium, telling participants that the medium of the object they rate is fake or genuine.

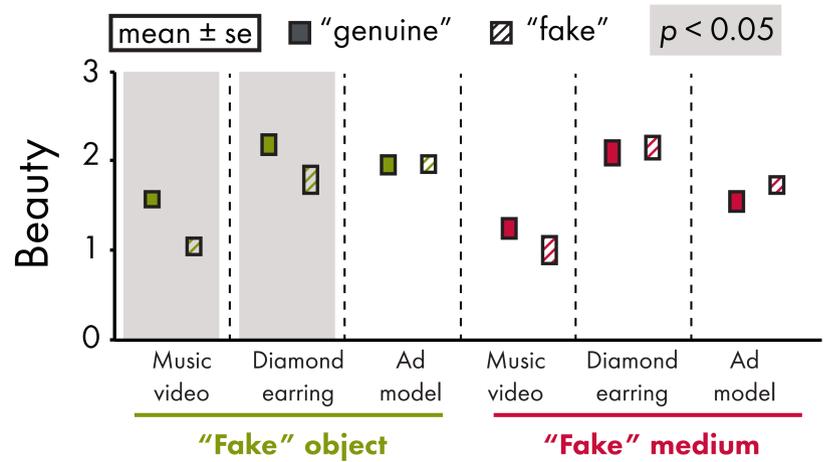
Procedure



Authenticity: Fakes seem less authentic.

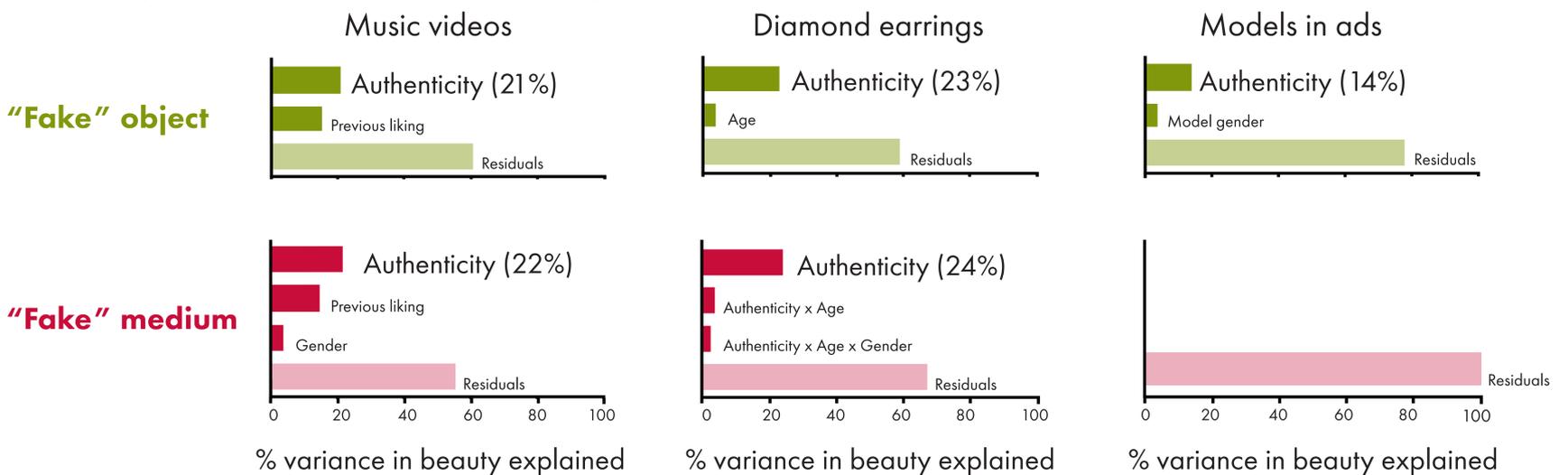


Beauty: Art fakes seem less beautiful.



Authenticity explains the most variance in beauty in every stimulus.

After stepwise model selection based on AIC-criterion, the only consistent predictor for beauty ratings across studies and manipulations was perceived authenticity.



If the art object is fake, it is perceived to be less beautiful.

Music videos and diamond earrings are perceived as less beautiful if they are described as fakes. Fakeness does not affect judgments of human beauty.

Beauty is predicted by perceived authenticity.

Greater authenticity consistently predicts greater beauty ratings for all stimuli – art and people.

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