



Canine Reactions to the *Mona Lisa*

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We performed an experiment in which dogs were exposed to photographs of Leonardo DaVinci's painting the *Mona Lisa*.

This is a preliminary report. Further details will appear in a series of monographs and books.

Background to the Study

This builds on work we conducted more than a decade ago, which we reported in our study entitled "Feline Reactions to Bearded Men"¹ and then followed up in a series of other experiments, only some of which we have described in subsequent publications.

Our work was inspired in part by the work of Ciccone, Norquist and others, which we cite in our original publication. Norquist, with whom we are acquainted but not associated, has independently pursued a line of research involving one breed of cats.² Norquist's work has received public attention recently not because of his research per se, but because it was funded at levels unobtainable by most researchers.

Our Study

Our study involved 200 dogs. These were of several breeds: rat terrier, miniature dachshund, and mastiff, and mixes of the three.



The experiment was conducted over a period of eight months. During that time, each dog was exposed repeatedly to photographs of the painting.

The dogs viewed the photographs under two different experimental conditions: (A) in a well-lighted room; and (B) in total darkness. For the dark room portions of the experiment, we were able to infer the dogs' reactions by examining the condition of the photograph after the dog had reacted to it.

Our results can be summarized as follows: All dogs displayed a physical reaction to the photographs. The physical reactions can be categorized as follows: licking; or chewing; or both. The results were identical, as best we could tell, whether the room was lighted or entirely dark.

Conclusion

We conclude that dogs are not indifferent to photographs of the Mona Lisa.

References

1. "Feline Reactions to Bearded Men," Catherine Maloney, Sarah J. Lichtblau, Nadya Karpook, Carolyn Chou, and Anthony Arena-DeRosa, *Journal of Irreproducible Results*, vol. 36, no. 3, May/June 1991, pp. 16-8.

For a reprint see <http://www.improbable.com/airchives/classical/cat/cat.html>.

2. "Feline Reactions to Obese Cats," G. Norquist, *Annals of Improbable Research*, vol. 10, no. 7, 2004, pp. 42-9.