

Habit and Adaptation: On the Art of Fabian Debora

Recently, art history has been reimagining the story of artistic reception as a story of intentional re-interpretation. Moving away from the story of artistic genius, art historians examine how intentional interpretations and re-configurations of the works of great figures like Botticelli, Poussin, and Michelangelo, might have been the basis of Modern art. However, this recent branch of art history still relies on artistic intention as the foundation for a diachronic history of reception. Moving beyond a history of intention, this paper looks at the works of a contemporary artist, Fabian Debora. He is an artist from East Los Angeles whose styles and iconographies draw, both intentionally and unintentionally, on a wide range of art historical antecedents. Examining reception beyond intention, this paper proposes a new method for discussing the visual cultures of habit and adaptation, intertwining the long histories of the colonial, the urban, the religious, and the sensorium.