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## **Abstract patterns and representation: the re-cognition of geometric ornament**

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## Abstract patterns and representation: the re-cognition of geometric ornament

### Propositions

1. Geometric decorative patterns are fundamentally representational. The conditions and constraints of their potential to signify show exactly how representation works (Chapter 3).
2. The research by Izard et al. from 2011 on the Mundurukú, shows that the cross-cultural presence and use of the same type of geometric patterns is not so much the result of evolutionary shaped preferences but results from the presence of a shared human competence to recognize and make representations; a competence based on core knowledge of geometry and number (Chapter 2).
3. The competence to recognize and make geometric patterns as representations is present in humans as a disposition; the meaning of patterns is culturally determined (Chapters 2 and 4).
4. The properties of artefacts do not define whether they are ornaments, but the way in which these properties allow artefacts to function as intermediaries do (Chapter 3).
5. Alberti's metaphor of drawing a surface as 'weaving a web of lines' is more than just a manner of speaking but touches upon the cognitive processes underlying all forms of artefact making and therefore justifies including Alberti's theory in the study of decorative patterns (Chapter 4).
6. Gottfried Semper's theory, which emphasizes manufacturing processes as a sequence of bodily and cognitive events materialized in concrete visual artefacts and patterns, bridges the study of cognition and material culture and should be recognized as the precursor of a cognitive turn in art history (Chapter 5).
7. Cognitive studies on pattern recognition and production are indispensable for an art history that wants to investigate material culture while trying to go beyond the traditional boundaries of artistic disciplines.
8. Allowing art historical knowledge and cultural context into experimental study design will make designing such experiments highly complex, but it is inevitable when one wants to arrive at an empirical explanation of the cognitive processes involved in pattern recognition and production that also does justice to cultural practice.
9. The real interdisciplinary work within interdisciplinary research programs lies in the design of a solid theoretical framework.
10. Both Alberti and Semper's theory, each in their own way, implicitly show that the integration of cognitive competences is embedded in cultural and material history, a

perspective that should be the foundation of a less reductionist approach in cognitive psychology and neuroscience.

11. In the study of the arts the distinction between representational and non-representational should be abandoned.

12. The study by Westphal-Fitch, Huber, Gómez and Fitch published in 2012 is a study about visual puzzle solving rather than 'spontaneous pattern generation'.

13. My late grandfather Karel Christiaan Crucq was probably right when he stated that the relief on the Lara Djonggrang does not represent Dasaratha's cremation but the mourning of the deceased (K.C. Crucq. *Bijdrage tot de kennis van het Balisch doodenritueel*. Diss., C.A. Mees: Santpoort, 1928.).