

## Can movement be depicted?

Clotilde Calabi and Nick Young – University of Milan

It is natural to describe many pictures as *of* movement. For example, Remington's *Dismounted: The Fourth Troopers Moving the Led Horses* and Richter's *Woman Descending the Staircase*. Indeed, 'still life' is the label we give to pictures of objects which are still, suggesting that a large class of pictures are of things which *are not*). How should this "of" be understood? Do these paintings *depict* movement or merely represent it? Denying that movement can be depicted is undesirable as it would seem to entail that pictures we would naturally describe as of movement are in fact of static objects in unstable positions: Remington did not paint a galloping horse but a horse balanced precariously on two legs, a photo does not depict an gymnast as jumping, but as suspended in mid-air. On the other hand, it is natural to conceive of pictures as *static*, as freeze frames which can be contrasted with the films ("moving pictures").

Drawing on Hopkins' resemblance account of depiction and theories of amodal perception, we suggest that depiction of movement on a static canvas is comparable to the depiction of three-dimensional objects on a two-dimensional surface. On Hopkins' account, seeing some part of a surface as depicting some three-dimensional object is to see that part resembling the object in outline shape. On our account, seeing some part of a canvas as depicting some object in motion is to see that part as resembling that object in motion.

---