

# Bedingend und bedingt. Heinrich Wölfflins geometrischer (Post-)Formalismus und das Sehen in der Moderne

## Abstract

This article assesses and contextualizes Heinrich Wölfflin's geometric formalism, a methodological facet of his scholarly work that has received little attention. Drawing on Wölfflin's most important publications as well as on hitherto unknown university and public lectures, the article sheds light on Wölfflin's lifelong interest in using research on form and measurement to investigate the aesthetics of paintings, sculptures, and buildings. In addition, Wölfflin's efforts to pass on his form-analytical approach to his students will be discussed. The broader significance of geometric-formalist observation methods in art history and related fields of knowledge are addressed in order to contextualize Wölfflin's approach and illustrate the solid anchoring and widespread dissemination of this method in the sciences and arts around 1900. The article's core theses are that, on the one hand, form and measurement research represents a post-formalist phenomenon and, on the other, that the method's enduring popularity in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries must be evaluated within the framework of a historical perceptology, in order to understand it as an integral part of the history of perception and aesthetic ideology of modernity.