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Form and Motion Cues in the Identification and Discrimination of Animals

Both form and motion cues are utilised by our visual systems to make sense of the world around us. One evolutionarily important function of vision is the accurate perception of other animals in our environment. In a series of experiments, the relative roles of static form cues and biological motion cues were investigated in the context of identifying and discriminating animals. Results indicated that even heavily degraded form cues allow for highly efficient identification of animals. Motion cues were shown to allow for discrimination from control displays where no form cues were available. Within an identification task, motion cues were shown to provide additional information under certain conditions, when combined with form cues. In each experiment, participants were tested for their level of fear of spiders, in order to test for any differences in the utilisation of form and motion cues in specific animal phobias. No differences were found between high and low fear groups either for spider identification performance, or for discrimination of spider biological motion from control displays.

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