

Fourth annual Best Visual Illusions of the Year contest

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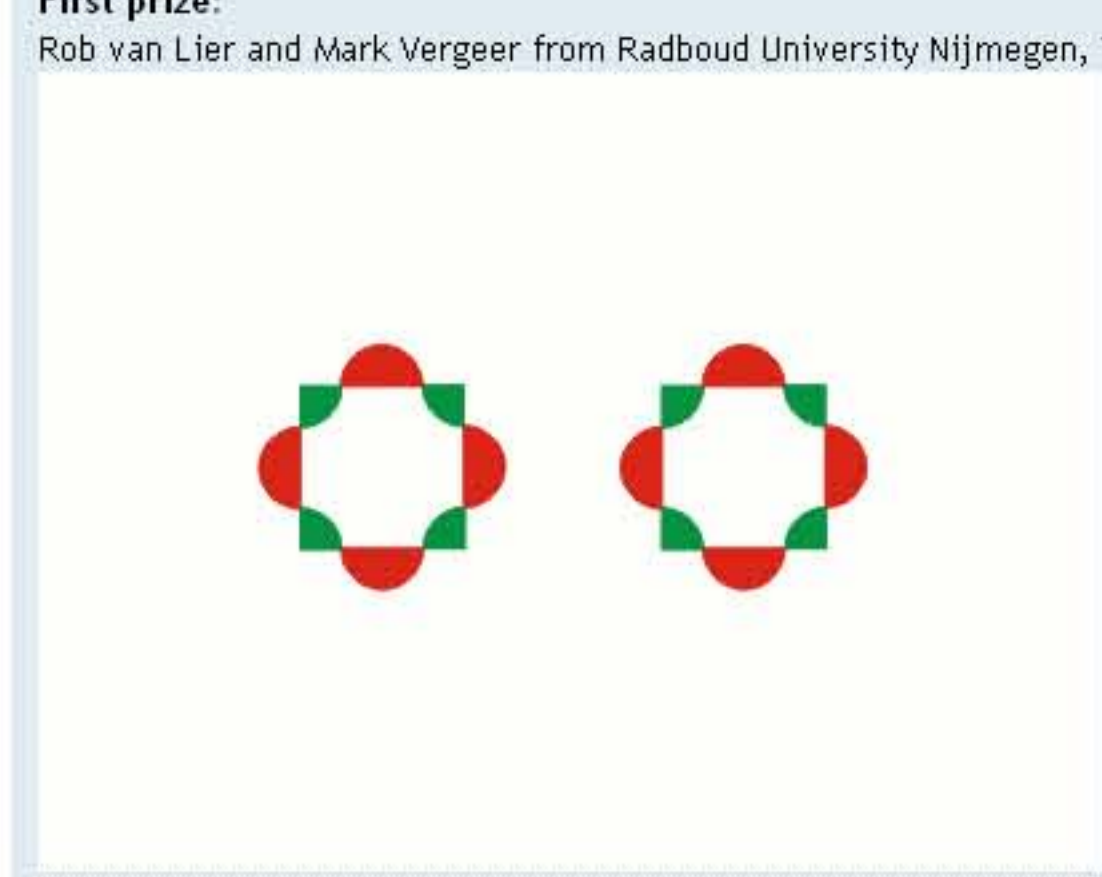
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Fourth annual Best Visual Illusions of the Year contest

D by yy2bggggs on Mon May 12, 2008 8:13 am UTC

The fourth annual Best Visual Illusion of the Year contest results are already out on the neural correlate website (contest was held at 7pm Eastern this past Sunday).

First prize: Rob van Lier and Mark Vergeer from Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands:



The implications of this illusion are pretty cool. The illusion has figures that produce positive afterimages that are dependent on the contours presented after the figures.

Second prize: Rob Jenkins from University of Glasgow, UK:



These two pale eyed ladies stare at you from the monitor, if you're close. Back up a bit, however, and they stare at each other. Common wisdom suggests that we discern where eyes are pointing on a face using the blacks of the pupils; this illusion demonstrates that it's likely not that simple.

Third prize: Thomas Papathomas from Rutgers University, US.

The hollow mask illusion is well known--when viewing the inside portion of a mask, our visual system tries to produce a convex face out of the image rather than the concave portion of the inside. This illusion shows something else interesting by attaching a foreign 3-d object to the mask (a nose ring). When rotating the mask, viewed from the inside, the face appears to rotate in one direction, and the object in the opposite direction.

Other results, about, etc There are plenty of other illusions (all top ten finalist illusions are shown) at the site that you might want to check out: http://illusioncontest.neuralcorrelate.com

Now, before people get into hussy fits and misnomers about optical illusions:

- They are valuable in that they are revealing of how our visual systems work.
• They are exploratory discoveries.
• As such, there's no such thing as what you "are supposed to see"
• Not everyone sees every illusion.

So, please don't write stuff here this year that simply makes me just sneer in disgust at you.

Also, a disclaimer: I'm not a visual researcher in any real sense. I'm also not associated with this contest in any sense.

Finally, on a personal note, I don't see the afterimages in the first illusion.

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Re: Fourth annual Best Visual Illusions of the Year contest

D by Fearbeers71 on Mon May 12, 2008 9:49 am UTC

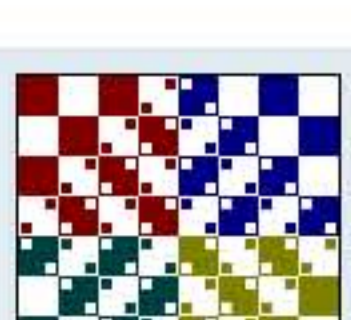
Me neither, and the second "illusion" barely works. I see better stuff than this on the tubes all the time! More like Lamest Visual Illusions of the Year, mirlite?

Re: Fourth annual Best Visual Illusions of the Year contest

D by The Spherical Cow on Mon May 12, 2008 10:10 am UTC

I'm not getting anything either. At first I thought the square and the squiggly thing were the illusions, left behind by the shapes. But once I realised they're not, I'm not seeing anything.

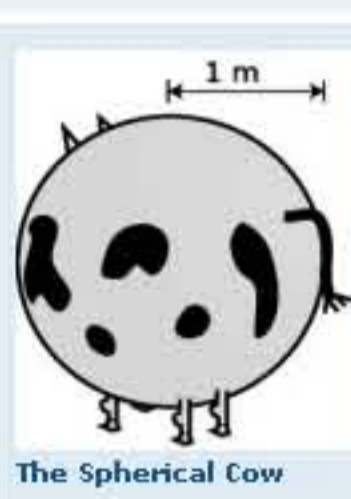
The second one isn't that great either.



yy2bggggs Posts: 1067 Joined: Tue Oct 17, 2006 6:42 am UTC



Fearbeers71 Stormtrooper of sunshine and happiness. Posts: 2149 Joined: Thu Jun 15, 2006 8:22 am UTC



The Spherical Cow Posts: 508 Joined: Wed Oct 17, 2007 9:10 pm UTC Location: Scotland



GhostWolfe Broken wings and scattered feathers Posts: 2002 Joined: Fri May 11, 2007 11:56 am UTC Location: Brisbane

Re: Fourth annual Best Visual Illusions of the Year contest

D by GhostWolfe on Mon May 12, 2008 10:29 am UTC

If the animation ran slower I think I would get after images. Or if it said "here's square, and here's a wiggly shape, now stare at this for a bit "shows the two red and green images", now look at a blank wall or piece of paper". Then it might work.

angell Linguistic Anarchist Darth Fluff Muffin Hamkncs ANGELL IS SERIOUS BUSINESS :-| Felstaff: I glanced over something and just thought, 'wait, what? I should look into this', before a particularly shiny teaspoon on my desk caught my attention.

Re: Fourth annual Best Visual Illusions of the Year contest

D by Fearbeers71 on Mon May 12, 2008 10:35 am UTC

Ah, I see the first one now. Still not great (yes, I get that these are SCEINCE illusions and not awesome illusions, but can't I get a little awesome with my SCEINCE once in a while?).

That site where you stare at something for long enough and it makes black and white pictures look colour or something... Yeah, that site kicks ass.



Fearbeers71 Stormtrooper of sunshine and happiness. Posts: 2149 Joined: Thu Jun 15, 2006 8:22 am UTC

Re: Fourth annual Best Visual Illusions of the Year contest

D by JayDee on Mon May 12, 2008 10:41 am UTC

I see the afterimages on the first. That's pretty neat.

One is an after image of the square, the other of the blob. I see the opposite shape to the outline that is being shown.

If I go to the other side of the room (uni computer lab, that's a fair way away) the two ladies are looking at each other. Near or far, she looks like there is something wrong with her eyes.

"I WANT TO BELIEVE" The Mighty Thesaurus wrote: Believe that everything can and must be joked about. Amen, brother.



JayDee Posts: 2414 Joined: Sat Nov 10, 2007 3:13 am UTC Location: Newcastle, AU

Re: Fourth annual Best Visual Illusions of the Year contest

D by Vaniver on Mon May 12, 2008 9:24 pm UTC

yy2bggggs wrote: These two pale eyed ladies stare at you from the monitor, if you're close. Back up a bit, however, and they stare at each other. Common wisdom suggests that we discern where eyes are pointing on a face using the blacks of the pupils; this illusion demonstrates that it's likely not that simple.

I'm not sure I agree. The lighting on the two is rather different, and seems to be such that the shadow will make a false pupil.

The two right eyes (her left), next to each other:

The two faces, flipped:

Now they clearly stare away from each other.

If anything, this demonstrates that we do use the pupils (and the irises, which are normally not whitish) - it's just when you make the pupil pale and put a false pupil next to it in a reasonable place, your eyes get fooled.

The Website wrote: How do we tell where other people are looking? Conventional wisdom says the dark parts of their eyes give it away. But the Ghostly Gaze illusion reveals a more subtle process. From a distance, the sisters seem to stare at each other, but as you come closer, they turn their eyes to you. "Some people find the effect quite disturbing", said psychologist Dr. Rob Jenkins at the University of Glasgow, who devised the illusion. "Eye contact is extremely important in social settings. This illusion tells us that details like the outline of the iris can override larger patches of darkness." Their explanation is a bit more sensible, but again I don't see how this disproves conventional wisdom. Yes, the outline of the iris is the dominant factor when it's visible - but that doesn't mean we don't use the dark parts to tell when the pupil is pointed.

Last edited by Vaniver on Mon May 12, 2008 6:02 pm UTC, edited 1 time in total.

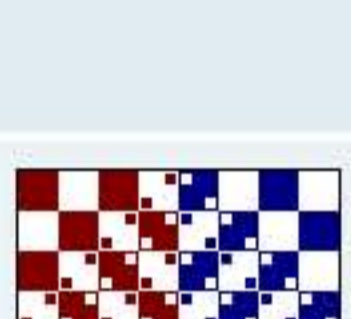
Trying to "build community" by downplaying the individual is like trying to chart galaxies by disregarding the stars. -- Wayne Dunn

Re: Fourth annual Best Visual Illusions of the Year contest

D by yy2bggggs on Mon May 12, 2008 5:37 pm UTC

Vaniver wrote: The lighting on the two is rather different, and seems to be such that the shadow will make a false pupil. I disagree with your assessment, because I just plain don't see this false pupil. I do, however, see a change in eye shape as I move back, which could be a partial explanation. It can't be the full explanation, because the left eye on the girl on the right seems to be facing left as well, but I don't see a shape change in that eye.

FYI, I now see the first illusion (better lighting?)



yy2bggggs Posts: 1067 Joined: Tue Oct 17, 2006 6:42 am UTC

Re: Fourth annual Best Visual Illusions of the Year contest

D by Vaniver on Mon May 12, 2008 9:56 pm UTC

yy2bggggs wrote: I disagree with your assessment, because I just plain don't see this false pupil. I do, however, see a change in eye shape as I move back, which could be a partial explanation. It can't be the full explanation, because the left eye on the girl on the right seems to be facing left as well, but I don't see a shape change in that eye.

Trying to "build community" by downplaying the individual is like trying to chart galaxies by disregarding the stars. -- Wayne Dunn

Re: Fourth annual Best Visual Illusions of the Year contest

D by yy2bggggs on Tue May 13, 2008 5:36 am UTC

Vaniver: I'm not disagreeing with the shadows being different. I'm disagreeing with the false pupil.

I've experimented with this by placing a pixel ruler (units 4 pixels across) underneath the figures, and using a transparent box to draw lines from the face to the ruler, from 22° away and 60° away (using help to read off the 60° measurements).

The measurements are as follows:

22°: Eye corners: 17,26; 41,50; 91,99,5; 115,123

60°: Eye corners: 17,26; 42,50; 91,99, 116,124

22°: Pupil edges: 21,22; 44,46; 94,96, 118,119

60°: Pupil edges: 21,24; 44,47; 94,96, 118,119

So the pupils appear in the same location, though the ones on the left tend to widen. I.e., they are the same pupil. The whites of the eyes shift slightly as well.

But the most noticeable aspect is that at 60°, the girl on the left not only seems to look far towards the right, her scurf rim seems pegged against the corner of the eye. The scurf rims on the girl on the right don't seem to do much at all (in the left eye looks squarely centered, in the right eye it's hard to make out the iris, though oddly the eye corners are still somewhat discernible).

To me it seems the effect has much more to do with the scurf rim than the pupil.



yy2bggggs Posts: 1067 Joined: Tue Oct 17, 2006 6:42 am UTC

Re: Fourth annual Best Visual Illusions of the Year contest

D by Vaniver on Tue May 13, 2008 4:55 pm UTC

yy2bggggs wrote: Vaniver: I'm not disagreeing with the shadows being different. I'm disagreeing with the false pupil. Perhaps I'm being unclear; once you're a certain distance from the face, the shadows are interpreted as the pupils/irises (it's a dark, roundish spot on/near the eye) because the real pupil/irises are nearly indistinguishable from the rest of the eye. That's what I'm calling a false pupil.

Trying to "build community" by downplaying the individual is like trying to chart galaxies by disregarding the stars. -- Wayne Dunn

Re: Fourth annual Best Visual Illusions of the Year contest

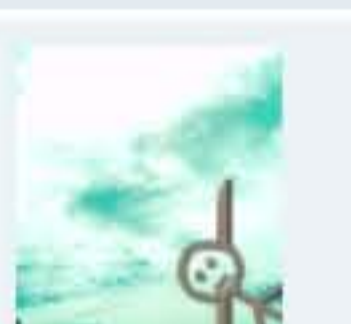
D by Ended on Wed May 14, 2008 5:56 pm UTC

I didn't see the first one at first, but now I do it's really awesome.

Spoiler: [Show]

"Euler is seriously the most "gangsta" mathematician ever." - 3.14159265...

Spoiler: [Show]



Ended Posts: 511 Joined: Fri Apr 20, 2007 3:27 pm UTC

Re: Fourth annual Best Visual Illusions of the Year contest

D by 4=5 on Thu May 15, 2008 1:28 am UTC

yes but I still see the other colors outside it, and it's too fast for my eyes to get adjusted

not work safe, view at your own risk

Spoiler: [Show]

22/7 said "I have a penis. Now reread the above."



4=5 Posts: 1446 Joined: Sat Apr 28, 2007 3:02 am UTC Location: Washington, home of steampunk

Re: Fourth annual Best Visual Illusions of the Year contest

D by hermaj on Thu May 15, 2008 1:38 am UTC

I stared at the first one for ages, but the only thing I got was three of the image instead of two.



hermaj Yes! Teigan, you may have a title! Posts: 4746 Joined: Sun Oct 15, 2006 10:37 am UTC Location: Sydney, Australia

Re: Fourth annual Best Visual Illusions of the Year contest

D by headprogrammingcar on Thu May 15, 2008 10:40 pm UTC

Vaniver wrote: yy2bggggs wrote: Vaniver: I'm not disagreeing with the shadows being different. I'm disagreeing with the false pupil. Perhaps I'm being unclear; once you're a certain distance from the face, the shadows are interpreted as the pupils/irises (it's a dark, roundish spot on/near the eye) because the real pupil/irises are nearly indistinguishable from the rest of the eye. That's what I'm calling a false pupil.

I will use terms used in digital imaging because I don't know the actual terms. The changing factor in the illusion is distance. When the distance is increased, the object is smaller. The "resolution" of the human eye is pretty low (some monitors are already more pixel-dense). At increased distances, the eye stops seeing the actual picture and starts interpolating information from a "thumbnaill". The lost information makes the shadow (larger than the pupil itself) easier to see than the pupil, causing the confusion. For example, looking at the earth from space, the east coast of the US looks green, even though it has heavily developed cities over the whole area. You can't see the individual cities until you move closer.

They refer to themselves in the plural third person. Who are they?



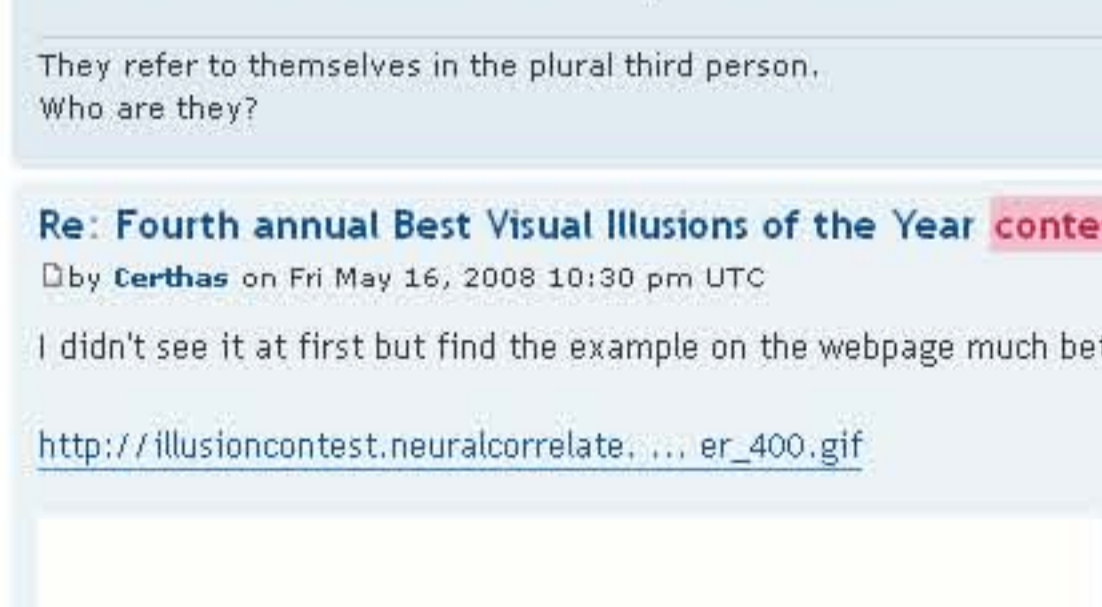
headprogrammingcar Posts: 94 Joined: Mon Oct 22, 2007 5:28 pm UTC

Re: Fourth annual Best Visual Illusions of the Year contest

D by Certhas on Fri May 16, 2008 10:30 pm UTC

I didn't see it at first but find the example on the webpage much better:

http://illusioncontest.neuralcorrelate...er_400.gif



Stare at the point in the middle, what happens is that the first outline gets filled with a different colour than the second.

But for full effect by the presentation:

http://illusioncontest.neuralcorrelate...tation.ppt

After that (if you get the effect) you'll understand why it won first prize. Completely amazing, worth going to the very end.

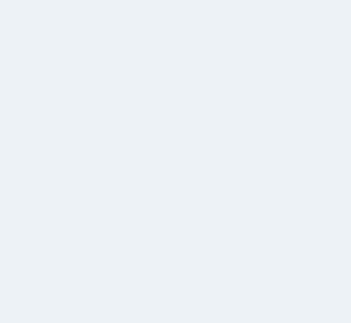
"I conclude that all is well," says Edipus, and that remark is sacred. - Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus

Re: Fourth annual Best Visual Illusions of the Year contest

D by Wanderingcowboy on Sat May 17, 2008 9:16 am UTC

Certhas' post helped me a lot in getting that first one. It actually is pretty cool now that I can see it. Awesome Power Point by the way!

Bandall on a skateboard? <- This is my smiley. There are many like it, but this one is mine. My smiley is my best friend. It is my life. Without me, my smiley is useless. Without my smiley I am useless.



Wanderingcowboy Posts: 192 Joined: Tue May 06, 2008 9:11 am UTC Location: Australia for study abroad