Photographic Clarity and Blur Influences Person Perception

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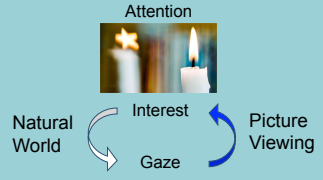
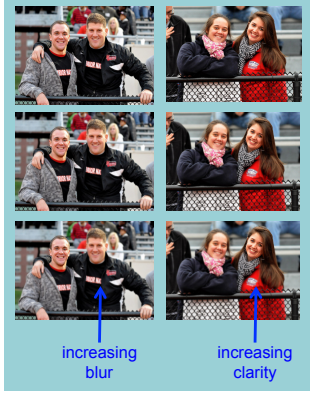
Background

When viewing pictures…
Visual attention is directed implicitly by inverse inference
(Enns & MacDonald, 2013)

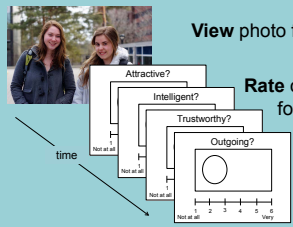
Regions of clarity are fixated sooner and more frequently



Variables

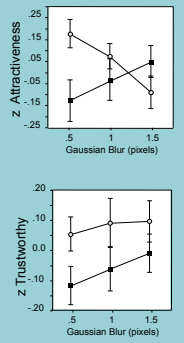


Free Viewing Task



View photo for 7 sec

Rate one person on four dimensions



Subtly blurred faces are more attractive and trustworthy, clear faces are more sociable and intelligent

Implications

Person perception in pictures follows automatic ***inverse inference***, just like visual attention

Not only is physiognomy destiny…

But so is the image!

These results extend this principle to image clarity and blur

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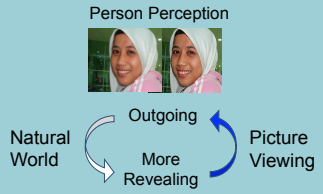
Question

What about person perception?
Does automatic evaluation of a pictured person also follow inverse inference?



Measures

Participants rated individuals in photos on several dimensions:

(1) Attractiveness
(2) Sociability
(3) Trustworthiness
(4) Intelligence

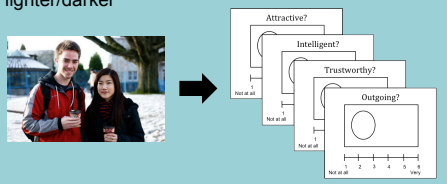
Using bipolar adjectives
(½ positive, ½ negative)

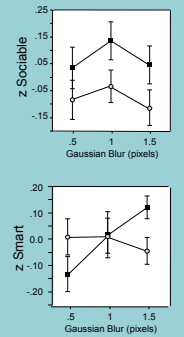
Visual Search Task

Visual search to manipulate attentional selection

Search: Find the person whose skin tone is lighter/darker

Rate: Then evaluate one of the people





Blurred faces are more attractive and trustworthy, clear faces more sociable, *regardless of attentional selection*