

## **“Motivated Visual Perception: Seeing What We Want to See”**

People assume that their visual experiences accurately reflect reality. Research in our lab questions this supposition. Instead, we argue that motivational forces color the perceptual representations that reach perceivers’ awareness. Data suggest that higher-order social motivations originally considered relevant to the domain of social thought—motives such as wishful thinking, cognitive dissonance, and desires—bias visual perception. We discuss these results with respect to goal pursuit, self-regulation, and extend them into the domain of political group membership and voting behavior. This work adds to an ongoing debate regarding theories of how the mind works and advocates for a highly interactive relationship between cognition and perception.