

Gaze mechanics

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When we want to find out whether we can trust someone, we look into her or his eyes. Mutual gazing is known to increase the emotional relation between two persons, feelings of familiarity, of trust, but also of hostility. But, what exactly are we processing when we are looking into one others eyes?

Based on research on eye movements and pupillometry, I will present arguments that the mechanisms summarized as so-called near triad play a major role in mutual gazing. For this, I will present work concerning pupil dilation, accommodation, and binocular coordination. Respective studies suggest that such eye movements affect the processing of the light already early during visual intake. This seems to be especially important for processing stimuli out of focus. Based on recently published data, I will suggest how the mechanics of gaze may provide us with a framework helping to understand human visual perception, and especially the interplay between emotional and cognitive factors in vision.