

# 141 Optical Illusions & Visual Phenomena

by Michael Bach

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## Optical illusions don't "trick the eye" nor "fool the brain", nor reveal that "our brain sucks", ... but are fascinating!

They also teach us about our visual perception, and its limitations. My selection emphasises beauty and interactive experiments; I also attempt explanations of the underlying visual mechanisms where possible.

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»Optical illusion« sounds derogative, as if exposing a malfunction of the visual system. Rather, I view these phenomena as highlighting particular good adaptations of our visual system to experience with *standard* viewing situations. These experiences are based on normal visual experiences, and thus under unusual contexts can lead to inappropriate interpretations of a visual scene (= "Bayesian interpretation of perception").

If you are not a vision scientist, you might find my explanations too highbrow. That is not on purpose, but vision research simply is not trivial, like any science. So, if the explanations seem gibberish, simply enjoy the phenomena 😊.

More here: [Bach & Poloschek \(2006\) Optical Illusions Primer \(PDF\)](#); on the programming: [Bach \(2014, PDF\)](#).

### Can optical illusions reveal something about my personality?

No. The web is full of claims that your personality (right- or left brain dominated, intro- vs. extroverted, stressed or not, or whatever) can be deduced from your ability to see some given illusion. However, there is no reliable scientific data that suggests this. That's just click-baiting

