

# Benjamin van Buren

## Curriculum Vitae

*March 2025*

### Contact Information

Department of Psychology  
The New School  
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### Academic Appointments

2019 - present	Assistant Professor The New School, New York, NY
2018 - 2019	Post-doctoral Research Fellow KU Leuven, Belgium (Sponsor: Johan Wagemans)

### Education

2018	Yale University	Ph.D. in Psychology (Advisor: Brian Scholl)
2017	Yale University	M.S. in Psychology
2012	U Penn	B.A. in Cognitive Science and Philosophy

### Selected Awards and Honors

2019	Postdoctoral Travel Fellowship, Academische Stichting Leuven
2018	Finalist, Best Illusion of the Year Contest
2017	Frederick Hilles Fellowship, Yale University
2014	NSF Graduate Research Fellowship

## Publications

van Buren, B., and Scholl, B. J. (2025). The ‘Blindfold Test’: Helping to decide whether an effect reflects visual processing or higher-level judgment. *Attention, Perception & Psychophysics*, 87, 445-457.

Castiello, S., Ongchoco, J. D. K., van Buren, B., Scholl, B. J., & Corlett, P. R. (2024). Paranoid and teleological thinking give rise to distinct social hallucinations in vision. *Communications Psychology*, 2, 117.

Nguyen, H. B., and van Buren, B. (2024). Rotating objects cue spatial attention via the perception of frictive surface contact. *Cognition*, 242, 105655.

Nguyen, H. B., and van Buren, B. (2023). May the Force be against you: Better visual sensitivity to speed changes opposite gravity. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception & Performance*, 49, 1016-1030.

Colombatto, C., van Buren, B., and Scholl, B. J. (2021). Hidden intentions: Visual awareness prioritizes perceived attention even without eyes or faces. *Cognition*, 217, 1-7.

Ritchie, J. B, and van Buren, B. (2020). When scenes look like materials: The reversible figure-ground motif in the paintings of René Magritte. *Art & Perception*, 8, 1-12.

Colombatto, C., van Buren, B., and Scholl, B. J. (2020). Gazing without eyes: A ‘stare in the crowd’ effect induced by simple geometric shapes. *Perception*, 49, 782-792.

Colombatto, C., van Buren, B., and Scholl, B. J. (2019). Intentionally distracting: Working memory is disrupted by the perception of other agents attending to you — even without eye-gaze cues. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 26, 951-957.

van Buren, B., and Scholl, B. J. (2018). Visual illusions as a tool for dissociating seeing from thinking. *Perception*, 47, 999-1001.

van Buren, B., Gao, T., and Scholl, B. J. (2017). What are the underlying units of perceived animacy?: Chasing detection is intrinsically object-based. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 24, 1604-1610.

van Buren, B., and Scholl, B. J. (2017). Minds in motion in memory: Enhanced spatial memory driven by the perceived animacy of simple shapes. *Cognition*, 163, 87-92.

van Buren, B., Uddenberg, S., and Scholl, B. J. (2016). The automaticity of perceiving animacy: Goal-directed motion in simple shapes influences visuomotor behavior even when task-irrelevant. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 23, 797-802.

van Buren, B., Bromberger, B., Potts, D., Miller, B., and Chatterjee, A. (2013). Changes in the painting styles of two artists with Alzheimer's disease. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity & the Arts*, 7, 89-94.

## **Presentations**

Choudhury, S., Nguyen, H. B., & van Buren, B. (2024). The sound of shininess: Crossmodal influence of pitch on the perception of gloss. Talk given at the annual meeting of the *Object Perception and Memory Conference*, 11/21/24, New York, NY.

Nguyen, H. B., & van Buren, B. (2024). Good intentions: Observers prefer viewing moving shapes which look self-propelled and goal-directed. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the *Object Perception and Memory Conference*, 11/21/24, New York, NY.

Ning, J. V., Li, T., Zhang, K. & van Buren, B. (2024). Aesthetic preferences for objects are viewpoint-dependent. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the *Object Perception and Memory Conference*, 11/21/24, New York, NY.

van Buren, B. (2024). Illusions of causality. Invited talk given at the University of Aberdeen's Illusion of the Fortnight talk series, 10/8/24, Aberdeen, Scotland.

Ning, J. V., & van Buren, B. (2024). Forging a head: How external visual elements influence the perception of a shape's facing direction. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the *Cognitive Sciences Society*, 7/26/24, Rotterdam, Netherlands.

van Buren, B. (2024). Perceiving minds in motion. Invited talk given at the *University of Waterloo*, 6/12/24, Waterloo, Ontario.

Nguyen, H. B., and van Buren, B. (2024). A machine-learning-powered visual tour guide for attentional disorders. Talk given at the annual meeting of the XR Accessibility Symposium, 6/7/2024, New York, NY.

Nguyen, H. B., & van Buren, B. (2024). 'Attentional transplants' cause recipients to like images similarly to donors: Evidence for inter-observer commonalities in how attention drives preferences. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the *Vision Sciences Society*, 5/21/24, St.

Pete Beach, FL. [Abstract published in *Journal of Vision*, 24(10), 654, <https://jov.arvojournals.org/article.aspx?articleid=2801073>.]

Choudhury, S., Nguyen, H. B., & van Buren, B. (2024). The sound of shininess: Crossmodal influence of pitch on the perception of gloss. Talk given at the annual meeting of the *Vision Sciences Society*, 5/20/24, St. Pete Beach, FL. [Abstract published in *Journal of Vision*, 24(10), 1496, <https://jov.arvojournals.org/article.aspx?articleid=2801608>.]

Dunin, D., Ongchoco, J. D. K., & van Buren, B. (2024). Perceived age is distorted in visual memory: A phenomenon of “forward” and “backward” aging for faces. Talk given at the annual meeting of the *Vision Sciences Society*, 5/18/24, St. Pete Beach, FL. [Abstract published in *Journal of Vision*, 24(10), 606, <https://jov.arvojournals.org/article.aspx?articleid=2801117>.]

Ning, J. N., & van Buren, B. (2024). Forging a head: How internal axes and external visual elements determine a shape’s perceived facing direction. Talk given at the annual meeting of the *Vision Sciences Society*, 5/18/24, St. Pete Beach, FL. [Abstract published in *Journal of Vision*, 24(10), 763, <https://jov.arvojournals.org/article.aspx?articleid=2800970>.]

Nguyen, H. B., & van Buren, B. (2024). Look where you’re going!: Elongated shapes are preferred when they update their orientation to remain aligned with their heading. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the *International Association of Empirical Aesthetics*, 5/9/24, Palma, Spain.

Nguyen, H. B., and van Buren, B. (2024). ‘Attentional transplants’ for industrial applications. Poster presented at the annual meeting of International Workshop on eXtended Reality, IEEE, 3/16/2024, Orlando, FL.

Nguyen, H. B., & van Buren, B. (2023). ‘Attentional transplants’ cause recipients to like images similarly to donors. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the *Object Perception and Memory Conference*, 11/16/23, San Francisco, CA.

Ning, J. V., & van Buren, B. (2023). Forging a head: How external visual elements influence the perception of a shape’s facing direction. Talk given at the annual meeting of the *Object Perception and Memory Conference*, 11/16/23, San Francisco, CA.

Macklin, C., & van Buren, B. (2023). What games teach us about the appreciation of visual artworks. Talk given at the annual meeting of the *Visual Science of Art Conference*, 8/26/23, Cyprus, Greece.

Matelsky, L., Nguyen, H. B., Macklin, C., & van Buren, B. (2023). The face of mischief: A facial expression signaling play aggression. Talk given at the annual meeting of the *Visual Science of Art Conference*, 8/26/23, Cyprus, Greece.

Zhang, K., Huang, J., & van Buren, B. (2023). The automaticity of seeing in: Pictorial depth cues influence judgments of surrounding spatial relationships even when task-irrelevant. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the *Visual Science of Art Conference*, 8/26/23, Cyprus, Greece.

Nguyen, H. B., & van Buren, B. (2023). Attentional transplants cause recipients to like images similarly to donors. Talk given at the annual meeting of the *Visual Science of Art Conference*, 8/25/23, Cyprus, Greece.

Nguyen, H. B., & van Buren, B. (2023). That's just how I roll!: Predicting and remembering objects' locations via the perception of frictive surface contact. Talk given at the annual meeting of the *Vision Sciences Society*, 5/20/23, St. Pete Beach, FL. [Abstract published in *Journal of Vision*, 23(9), 4716, <https://jov.arvojournals.org/article.aspx?articleid=2791781>.]

Matelsky, L., Nguyen, H. B., Macklin, C., & van Buren, B. (2023). The face of mischief: A stereotyped signal of norm violation within a Magic Circle. Talk given at the annual meeting of the *Vision Sciences Society*, 5/20/23, St. Pete Beach, FL. [Abstract published in *Journal of Vision*, 23(9), 5968, <https://jov.arvojournals.org/article.aspx?articleid=2792329>.]

Zhang, K., Huang, J., & van Buren, B. (2023). The automaticity of seeing in: Pictorial depth cues influence judgments of surrounding spatial relationships even when task-irrelevant. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the *Vision Sciences Society*, 5/20/23, St. Pete Beach, FL.

van Buren, B. (2023). Design for attention. Invited talk given at the *Usability and Innovation* workshop at IUAV University of Venice, 4/18/23, Venice, Italy.

Nguyen, H. B., & van Buren, B. (2022). Rotating objects cue spatial attention via the perception of frictive surface contact. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the *Object Perception and Memory Conference*, 11/17/22, Boston, MA.

van Buren, B. (2022). Perceptual leverage points for design. Invited talk given at the *Gestalt Approach for Design Research* workshop at IUAV University of Venice, 10/10/22, Venice, Italy.

van Buren, B., & Macklin, C. (2022). Knowledge structures our perception of virtual worlds. Joint talk given at workshop on *Perception in Games and Virtual Worlds*, 9/2/22, Athens, Greece.

Ning, J. V., & van Buren, B. (2022). Thinking outside the box in the study of visual preferences: External elements determine 'goodness' judgments for a dot within a square frame. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the *International Association of Empirical Aesthetics*, 8/31/22, Philadelphia, PA.

Nguyen, H. B., & van Buren, B. (2022). Rotating objects cue spatial attention via the perception of frictive surface contact. Talk given at the annual meeting of the *European Conference on Visual Perception*, 8/31/22, virtual, Nijmegen, NL. [Abstract published in *Perception*, 51(IS), 1-207, <https://docta.ucm.es/rest/api/core/bitstreams/e03dad59-5826-47f9-98b0-6b6ead785f94/content>.]

Nguyen, H. B., & van Buren, B. (2022). May the Force be against you: Better sensitivity to speed changes that appear self-propelled. Talk given at the annual meeting of the *Cognitive Sciences Society*, 7/30/22, virtual, Toronto, CA.

Ning, J. V., & van Buren, B. (2022). Thinking outside the box in the study of visual preferences: External elements determine ‘goodness’ judgments for a dot within a square frame. Talk given at the annual meeting of the *Vision Sciences Society*, 5/17/22, St. Pete Beach, FL. [Abstract published in *Journal of Vision*, 22(14), 4233, <https://jov.arvojournals.org/article.aspx?articleid=2784816>.]

Nguyen, H. B., & van Buren, B. (2022). Objects that look heavier look larger. Talk given at the annual meeting of the *Vision Sciences Society*, 5/14/22, St. Pete Beach, FL. [Abstract published in *Journal of Vision*, 22(14), 4394, <https://jov.arvojournals.org/article.aspx?articleid=2785138>.]

van Buren, B. (2022). Perceiving minds in motion. Invited talk given at Hunter College, 3/18/22, New York.

van Buren, B., Ritchie, J. B., Lefèvre, P., & Wagemans, J. (2021). What do visual narratives teach us about psychological event representations? Talk given at the annual meeting of the *Psychonomic Society*, 11/5/21, Virtual. Co-organizer of overall symposium, ‘Beyond the Button Press: Studying the Mind through Drawings’.

Nguyen, H. B., & van Buren, B. (2021). May the Force be against you: Better sensitivity to speed changes that appear self-propelled. Talk given at the annual meeting of the *Object Perception and Memory Conference*, 11/4/21, Virtual. **\*\*Winner of Best Talk Award.\*\***

van Buren, B., Ongchoco, J. K., & Scholl, B. J. (2021). Sensation and imagery combine to create hybrid object representations. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the *European Conference for Visual Perception*, 8/24/21, Virtual.

Colombatto, C., Chen, Y-C, van Buren, B., & Scholl, B. J. (2021). From eyes to minds: Perceiving perception, and attending to attention? Talk given at the annual meeting of the *Society for Philosophy and Psychology*, 6/30/21, Virtual.

van Buren, B., Ritchie, J. B., Lefèvre, P., & Wagemans, J. (2020). Event representations omit stretches of time. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the *Vision Sciences Society*, 6/19/20, Virtual. [Abstract published in *Journal of Vision*, 20(11), 1536, <https://jov.arvojournals.org/article.aspx?articleid=2771257>.]

van Buren, B. (2019). Experimental methods for distinguishing seeing from thinking. Invited talk given at University of Pennsylvania, 10/23/19, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

van Buren, B. (2019). Perceiving minds in motion: The nature of perceived animacy. Invited talk given at University of Pennsylvania, 10/22/19, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Ritchie, J. B., & van Buren, B. (2019). When scenes look like materials: The reversible figure-ground motif in the paintings of René Magritte. Talk given at the annual meeting of the *Visual Science of Art Conference*, 8/23/19, Leuven, Belgium.

van Buren, B. (2019). Perceived intentionality as a Gestalt phenomenon: Grouping and global motion processing determine whether we see ‘chasing’ in simple shapes. Talk given at the annual meeting of the *Belgian Association for Psychological Science*, 5/14/19, Liège, Belgium.

van Buren, B., Ritchie, J. B., Lefèvre, P., & Wagemans, J. (2019). Drawing attention: Analysis of comics reveals capacity limits on event representations. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Concepts, Actions, and Objects workshop, 5/4/19, Rovereto, Italy.

van Buren, B. (2019). Perceiving minds in motion: The nature of perceived animacy. Invited talk given at Université Catholique de Louvain, 2/28/19, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium.

van Buren, B., & Scholl, B. J. (2018). Who's chasing whom?: Changing background motion reverses impressions of chasing in perceived animacy. Talk given at the annual meeting of the *European Conference for Visual Perception*, 8/29/18, Trieste, Italy.

van Buren, B. (2018). Ownership of expressive properties. Talk given at the annual meeting of the *Visual Science of Art Conference*, 8/24/18, Trieste, Italy.

van Buren, B., & Scholl, B. J. (2018). The 'Blindfold Test' for deciding whether an effect reflects visual processing or higher-level judgment. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the *Vision Sciences Society*, 5/20/18, St. Pete Beach, FL. [Abstract published in *Journal of Vision*, 18(10), 56, <http://jov.arvojournals.org/18/10/56/> .]

van Buren, B. (2018). Empirical methods for studying aesthetic experience. Talk given at Albertus Magnus College, 3/19/18, New Haven, CT.

van Buren, B., & Scholl, B. J. (2017). The 'Blindfold Test' for deciding whether an effect reflects visual processing or higher-level judgment. Talk given at the annual meeting of the *Society for Philosophy and Psychology*, 6/30/17, Baltimore, MD.

Colombatto, C., van Buren, B., & Scholl, B. J. (2017). 'Mind Contact': Might eye-gaze effects really reflect more general phenomena of perceived attention and intention? Poster presented at the annual meeting of the *Vision Sciences Society*, 5/20/17, St. Pete Beach, FL. [Abstract published in *Journal of Vision*, 17(10), 60, <http://jov.arvojournals.org/17/10/60/> .]

van Buren, B., & Scholl, B. J. (2017). Who's chasing whom?: Changing background motion reverses impressions of chasing in perceived animacy. Talk given at the annual meeting of the *Vision Sciences Society*, 5/20/17, St. Pete Beach, FL. [Abstract published in *Journal of Vision*, 17(10), 214, <http://jov.arvojournals.org/17/10/214/> .]

van Buren, B., & Scholl, B. J. (2016). Minds in motion in memory: Enhanced spatial memory driven by the perceived animacy of simple shapes. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the *Association for Psychological Science*, 5/27/16, Chicago, IL.

van Buren, B., Gao, T., & Scholl, B. J. (2016). What are the underlying units of perceived animacy?: Chasing detection is intrinsically object-based. Talk given at the annual meeting of the *Vision Sciences Society*, 5/15/16, St. Pete Beach, FL. [Abstract published in *Journal of Vision*, 16(12), 394, <http://jov.arvojournals.org/16/12/394/> .]

van Buren, B., Uddenberg, S., & Scholl, B. J. (2015). The automaticity of perceiving animacy: Goal-directed motion in simple shapes influences visuomotor behavior even when task-irrelevant. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the *Vision Sciences Society*, 5/19/15, St. Pete Beach, FL. [Abstract published in *Journal of Vision*, 15(12), 1187, <http://jov.arvojournals.org/content/15/12/1187/>]

van Buren, B., & Scholl, B. J. (2014). Perceived animacy influences other forms of visual processing. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the *Vision Sciences Society*, 5/20/14, St. Pete Beach, FL. [Abstract published in *Journal of Vision*, 14(10), 1023, <http://jov.arvojournals.org/content/14/10/1023>]

van Buren, B. (2011). Modeling the functional development of human visual motion area MT+. Paper given at the annual meeting of the *International Conference on Natural Computation*, 7/26/11, Shanghai, China.

van Buren, B., Bromberger, B., Potts, D., Miller, B., & Chatterjee, A. (2010). Patterns of change in the painting styles of artists with Alzheimer's disease. Talk given at the biannual meeting of the *International Association for Empirical Aesthetics*, 8/28/10, Dresden, Germany. \*\*Winner of Robert Frances Award for Most Outstanding Student Research Contribution.\*\*

## Professional Activities

### Selected Ad Hoc Reviewing

#### Journals

*Art & Perception*

*Cognition*

*Emotion*

*Frontiers in Psychology*

*i-Perception*

*JEP: General*

*Memory & Cognition*

*Perception*

*Philosophical Psychology*

*Psychological Research*

*Psych of Aesthetics, Creativity, & the Arts*

*Review of Philosophy and Psychology*

*Royal Society Open Science*

*Scientific Reports*

*Vision*

*Visual Cognition*

#### Conferences

*Cognitive Sciences Society*

*Human Factors & Ergonomics Society*

*Society for Philosophy & Psychology*

*Visual Science of Art Conference*

### Miscellaneous



- Editorial Board, *Cognition* (2025–)
- Organizing Committee, Visual Science of Art Conference (2023–2025)
- Chair of Organizing Committee, Visual Science of Art Conference (2023)
- Thesis Examiner, University of Pennsylvania Visual Studies Program (2023)
- Symposium Organizer (with J. Brendan Ritchie), ‘Beyond the button press: Studying the mind through drawings’, Psychonomics Society Meeting (2021)
- Organizing Committee, European Conference on Visual Perception (2019)

## **Doctoral Student Advising**

Deidre Dunin (current)

Research : Face perception

Honors : VSS Travel Award (2024)

Zsuzsanna Lakatos (current)

Research : Music perception

Loren Matelsky (current)

Research : Social perception

Honors : VSS Travel Award (2022);

Hong Nguyen (current)

Research : Intuitive physics; Event perception, Motion perception

Honors : OPAM Best Talk and Prof. Dev. Awards (2021); VSS Travel Award (2022, 2024)

Jiangxue Ning (current)

Research : Shape perception; Visual preferences

Honors : OPAM Prof. Dev. Award (2023); VSS Travel Award (2022), NSSR Student Travel Award (2021)

## **M.A. Student Advising**

Silas Choudhury (current)

Research : Perception of materials; Consumer psychology

Marina Pace (current)

Research : Perceptual organization, Perception of causality

Mariah Woodruff (M.A., 2021; now at IBM)

Research : Shape perception; Interaction design

## **Undergraduate Student Advising**

June Huang & Kexuan Zhang

Research : Joint project studying the perception of pictorial depth in Renaissance & traditional Chinese paintings

William Hsu

Research : Thesis project applying principles of visual shape perception to typographic design

## **Courses Taught**

### **Graduate**

- *Advanced Topics in Visual Cognition*
- *Perception in Virtual Worlds: Experiments in Design and Psychology* (studio course on game design and psychology research, with Prof. Colleen Macklin)
- *Social Perception*
- *Visual Perception & Cognition*

### **Undergraduate**

- *Fundamentals of Visual Perception*
- *The Psychology of Aesthetics & Design*
- *Dean's Honor Symposium (faculty mentor, Spring 2022)*

## **University and Departmental Service**

### **Speaking**

“Limits of LLMs” (w/ Zed Adams), Lang College Faculty Retreat	(Spring, 2025)
Junior Faculty Panelist, NSSR Faculty Retreat	(Fall, 2024)
Guest Lecturer, <i>Applied Psychology and Design</i>	(Fall, 2024)
Guest Lecturer, <i>Fund. of Cognitive Neuroscience</i>	(2021-2023)
Guest Lecturer, <i>Applied Psychology and Design</i>	(Fall, 2023)
Faculty Speaker, NSSR Orientation	(Spring, 2022)

## **Committees**

New School University Curriculum Committee	(2025-pres)
Applied Psychology & Human Centered Design MA Committee	(2019-pres)
Lang Academic Curriculum Committee	(2022-2024)
Faculty Search Committee, Psychology	(Fall, 2024)
Faculty Search Committee, Psychology	(Fall, 2022)
Faculty Search Committee, Psychology	(Fall, 2021)
Academic Excellence Committee	(2020-2022)
Faculty Search Committee, Psychology	(Fall, 2019)