The assignment of figure and ground for a given visual display can dramatically alter the shape that human observers perceive. For example, depending on the figure/ground assignment in the image shown here, one sees either a head-on view of a woman, or two profiles. Baylis and Driver report a neural correlate of this effect: neurons in inferior temporal cortex of behaving monkeys respond to components of visual shape only when they are perceived as figure rather than ground. Shape analysis thus seems to be intertwined with figure/ground segregation. Cover image copyright 2001, created by Roger Shepard, reprinted with permission from his book Mind Sights, W H Freeman, 1990. See pages 857 and 937.
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