

Recognizing Without Seeing

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Facial expressions and body language are among the most powerful forms of nonverbal communication, and can reveal a great deal about emotion. Beatrice de Gelder [investigates](#) the neuroscience of automatic, nonconscious responses we have to the unspoken, emotional cues we observe in others. De Gelder pioneered the neuroscience of body language and has conducted innovative studies in a number of areas, including face recognition and emotional body expressions. In a landmark experiment, she and her colleagues showed that, when exposed to pictures of faces showing strong emotions, people with visual impairment make the same involuntary facial movements as people with normal sight. Blind people, for instance, smile in response to an image of a happy person, even though they can't see the picture. De Gelder's prolific line of research on nonconscious perception has fueled new perspectives on emotion deficits in schizophrenia and autism.