

James E. Cutting is professor of psychology at Cornell University, where he has taught since 1980. Before Cornell he taught at Wesleyan and Yale Universities, having gotten his Ph. D. at Yale in 1973 and his B. A. at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1969. In addition to his academic work, in the 1970s he was a professional modern dancer, and at the University of North Carolina he was in many theatrical productions. He has worked in industry at the one-time Atari Sunnyvale Research Laboratory. He was a Fellow of several divisions of the American Psychological Association, including the division of Psychology and the Arts; and is a Charter Fellow of the American Psychological Society, and a member of the College Art Association and the Society for the Cognitive Studies of the Moving Image.

He has two published books and over a hundred scientific articles. He was editor of *Psychological Science* (2003-2006) has served as editor of the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance* (1989-1993) and as associate or consulting editor for several others.

In 1993 he was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship. With it he studied the representation of depth and of space in the art of Paris and surrounding cities in Europe. This fostered active collaborations with researchers in Europe. Over the past two decades he has been actively engaged in research on various aspects of visual perception, exploring the nature of the information used, particularly as it is arrayed in natural motions such as those of, and seen by, a pedestrian walking through a cluttered environment. Since much of his research is focused on everyday perception, since this research uses computer graphics, and since the computer images are irrevocably pictures, he has also been deeply interested in the relation between pictures (as two dimensional objects) and the three-dimensional natural world. Coupled with his interest in motion, this has led him to cinema. Aside from enjoying simply “flicking out,” his academic interest in cinema is as a tool to understand the constraints under which the human visual system evolved. He argues that the vast cultural significance of cinema, and its considerably different structure from what is seen during, say, a stroll through the real world provides insights into the underpinnings of our visual perception. Since we did not evolve to look at cinema, and since it arguably “evolved” to fit what we can digest easily, its structure can suggest what our visual systems did, and did not, evolve to see.