

Inhibition of return for eye gaze is determined by context of social interaction

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Gaze directions of others attract our attention by showing both facilitation and inhibition effects. The inhibition effect, called inhibition of return (IOR), is not robust or reliable. This study aims to explore factors that determine the emergence of gaze-induced IOR. In four experiments type of faces (real versus schematic) and number of faces (single versus multiple) were manipulated. Each experiment included 21 participants. Results showed that significant gaze-induced IOR was observed only if the faces were multiple real photographs. This result implies that the context of social interaction contributed to the inhibition mechanism of social attention. The IOR for gaze cues thus is not a reflexive response as that was observed in IOR for spatial cues, rather, is a result of evaluations in social interaction.

*Keywords:* gaze cue, inhibition of return, schematic faces, social attention

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