## High-level vision



Jesse Gomez Spring 2025







Courtesy the Wandell Lab



## Object recognition begins in visual cortex



## Increasingly complex representations along ventral stream













VTC ventral temporal cortex





Gross et al. 1969; 1979





#### The "localizer" approach in visual cognitive neuroscience



## fMRI used to 'localize' specialized brain regions



Weiner & Grill-Spector 2012 TICS



## Testing the causality of ventral neural representations



Hermes et al., 2010 J. Neurosci. Methods

## Testing the causality of ventral neural representations

fMRI ECoG mFus IOG pFus pFus 10G anterior Polar IOG erior angle pFus medial ante faces Signal-to-noise ratio faces > nonfaces limbs  $\oplus$ Ð cars 3 t-value 11 houses 0.2 3.8 7.5 11.2

Parvizi et al., 2012 J. Neurosci.

#### ECoG enables causal manipulation through brain stimulation



Parvizi et al., 2012 J. Neurosci.



#### Category-selectivity for faces, words, bodies, places, numbers















## High-level visual neurons pool input from many neurons



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#### pRFs are also prevalent in high-level visual regions



Gomez et al., 2018ab

**Bodies/Limbs** 

#### pRF mapping reveals retinotopy is a fundamental encoding principle





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Sub 20



Le, Witthoft, Ben-Shachar, Wandell 2016

VWFA (pOTS-chars)

#### Visual field coverage is stable from childhood to adulthood in early maps





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Gomez et al., Nature Comm. 2018

#### pRF coverage develops differently across hemispheres in face/word regions



Gomez et al., Nature Comm. 2018

#### Developmental increases in pRF coverage of the face and word regions



Gomez et al., Nature Comm. 2018

## Spatial pooling increases the invariance of responses



# Ascending the face network reveals increasingly invariant representations

Freiwald & Tsao 2010 Science



1 cm

ML

MF

M1

# Computationally, the ventral stream "untangles" representations of objects

Freiwald, Tsao, Livingstone 2009 NatNeuro











DiCarlo & Cox 2007 TICS

High dimensional neural representation of two faces in V1 will be very similar



Neuronal tuning to object features in IT ensures a distinct population of activity to faces of different identities







Iris size

## Lateral object complex: extracting form



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Grill-Spector et al. 1998; Mendola et al 1999; Kastner et al 1999; Kourtzi et al 2001

## Patient DF: a lesion resulting in bilateral LOC loss



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Goodale, Milner et al. 1991 Nature

#### Patient DF's lesion led to the "two visual streams"





Ungerleider & Mishkin 1982; Pitcher & Ungerleider 2021

#### Multiple object-recognition processing streams?



Lateral stream may be involved in processing the dynamic aspects of a stimulus (how it moves, its actions, etc).

> pSTS is more activated by movies of dynamically moving faces compared to static faces, and together with multiple body/limb-selective ROIs, surrounds motion-selective region hMT+



Watson & Buxbaum 2014

## Patient PS: damage to the IOG-face region



Bruno Rossion's Lab, see also Weiner et al. 2016

## Visual word-form area (VWFA): a module for reading text



#### Visual word-form area: a module for reading text





McCandliss et al. 2003; Wandell & Yeatman 2013; Wandell & Le 2017

#### The VWFA is experience-dependent



Deheane et al. 2010

#### The "Fusiform face area" really a network, shows development



Kanwisher et al. 1997; Weiner & Grill-Spector 2012; Gauthier et al. 2000

Golarai et al. 2007, 2009

## Atypical development of high-level visual cortex





van Kooten et al., 2008

Corbett et al 2009; Humphreys et al., 2008

Developmental prosopagnosia: faceblindness from a lack of spatial pooling?



**Chuck Close** 



#### Some dyslexias may result from a high-level visual deficit



Kubota et al. 2019

#### Retinotopic connections combine with viewing biases to shape function







## What if you grew up learning a new visual category?





#### Will extensive experience with Pokémon result in selectivity?



#### 11 Experts (played 100s of hours between 5-8yo)

11 Novices (never played the game)

**6 runs of localizer** (fixation, performing oddball detection task, ~22 minutes of data)



#### Early Pokémon experience results in category-selective cortex

Pokémon > all

Align individual subjects with **cortexbased alignment** to FreeSurfer cortical surface





Gomez et al., 2019

## "What you see is what you get", Livingstone & Arcaro



#### Retinotopic connections combine with viewing biases to shape function





#### ...but is that the whole story?





#### Limb-selective cortex has peripheral pRFs that defy the eccentricity hypothesis



#### Unless we expand the eccentricity hypothesis to include a second gradient



## Ventro-lateral prefrontal cortex: visual working memory?



LOTC VTC VLPFC

VLPFC

OB



WM



