

Here is a Black Swan: the social tags in our faces

Face perception research has long shown that people overly rely on first impressions, even though these are often inaccurate. People often look a part (e.g., a criminal; a smart person) which they are not. We show two situations in which first impressions can be accurate: in the cases of first names and brands that matter to consumers. In both cases, we show that external observers of target faces can accurately infer, above chance level, the targets' actual first name and perfume brand. We further show that facial stereotypes exist and that the reason for these effects is that consumers live up to their first name and the brands they are loyal to, by conforming to these facial stereotypes. We discuss the theoretical, practical and, most critically, the ethical implications of this work.