



The eyes don't have it after all? Attention is not biased towards faces or eyes

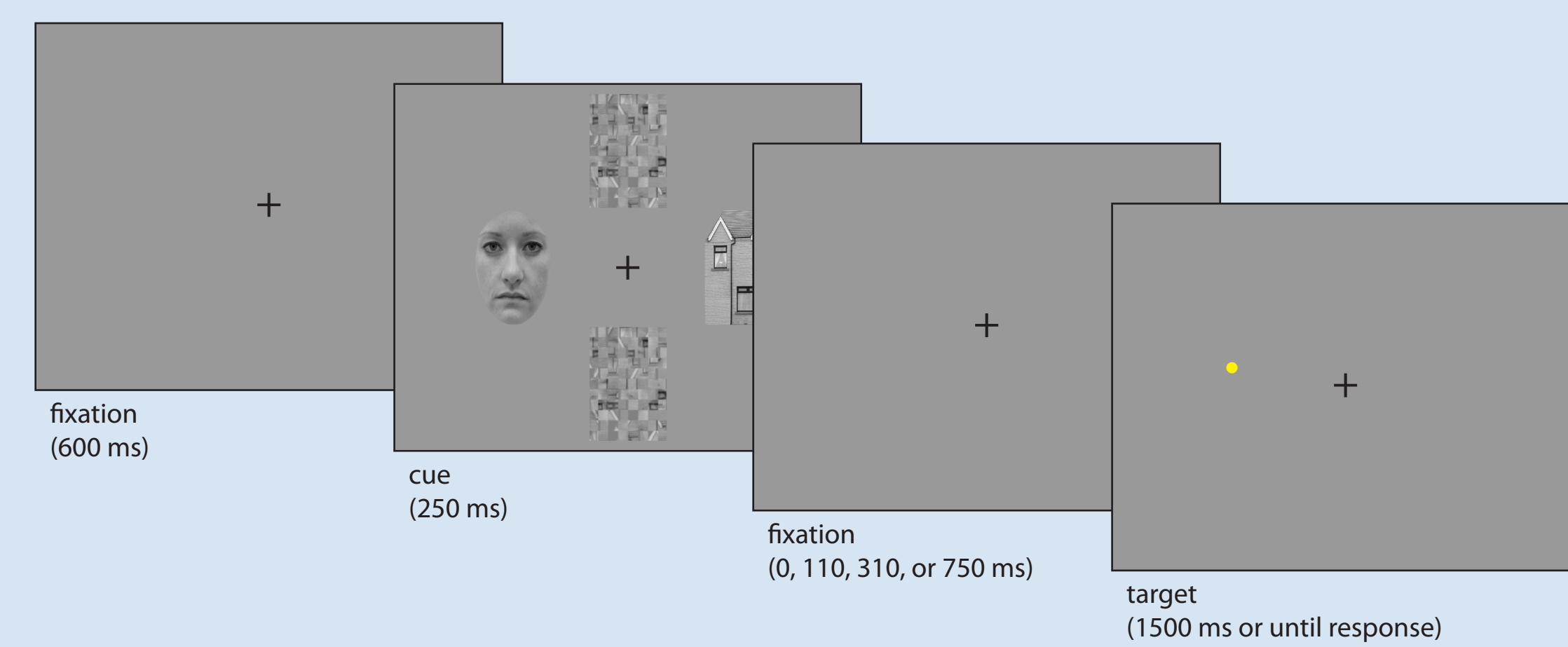
Effie J. Pereira¹, Elina Birmingham², & Jelena Ristic¹

¹ Department of Psychology, McGill University; ² Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University



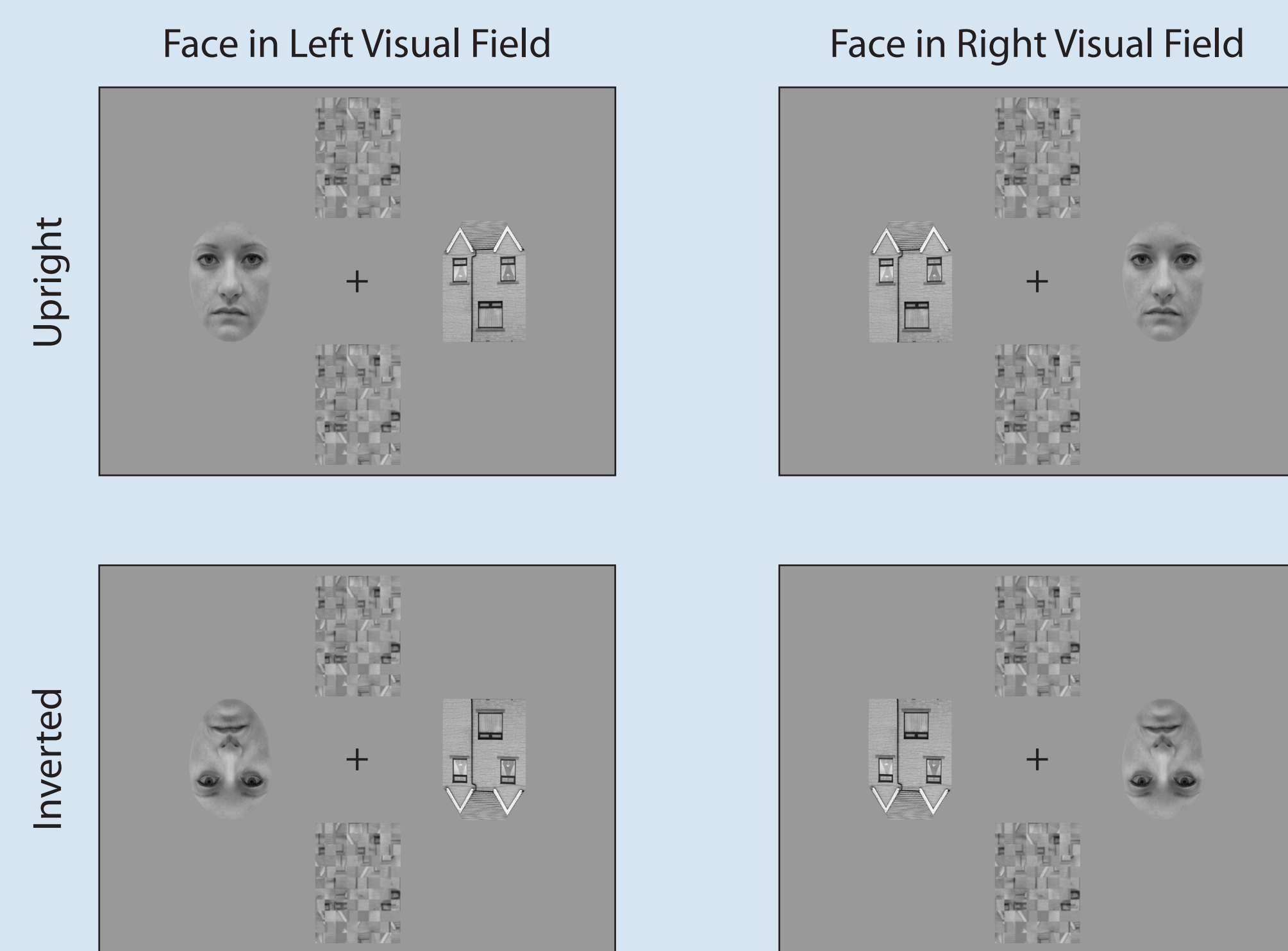
- Social cues (faces, eyes) are thought to exert powerful effects on attention.
- Numerous studies have demonstrated that faces and eyes preferentially attract eye movements in both simple and complex contexts (Birmingham, Bischof, & Kingstone, 2008; Langton et al., 2008; Smilek et al., 2006).
- However, it remains unclear if this oculomotor preference reflects preferential attentional selection, as very few studies have distinguished between eye movements and attention when examining social selection.
- Thus, we investigated whether attention preferentially selects faces and eyes using a modified dot-probe task.

Task Sequence

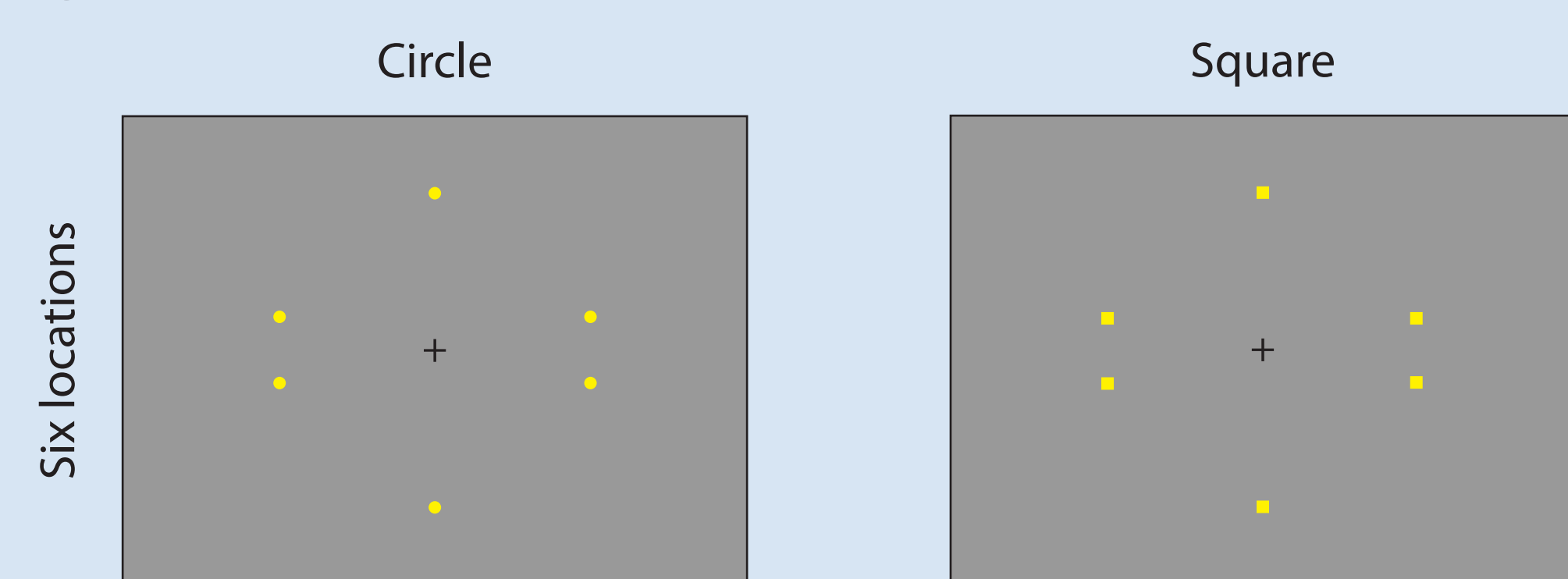


- In Experiment 1, participants were asked to maintain fixation on the central cross (N = 26). In Experiment 2, no fixation instructions were given (N = 26).
- Eye movements were tracked using an SR Research eye tracker at 500Hz.

Cue Conditions

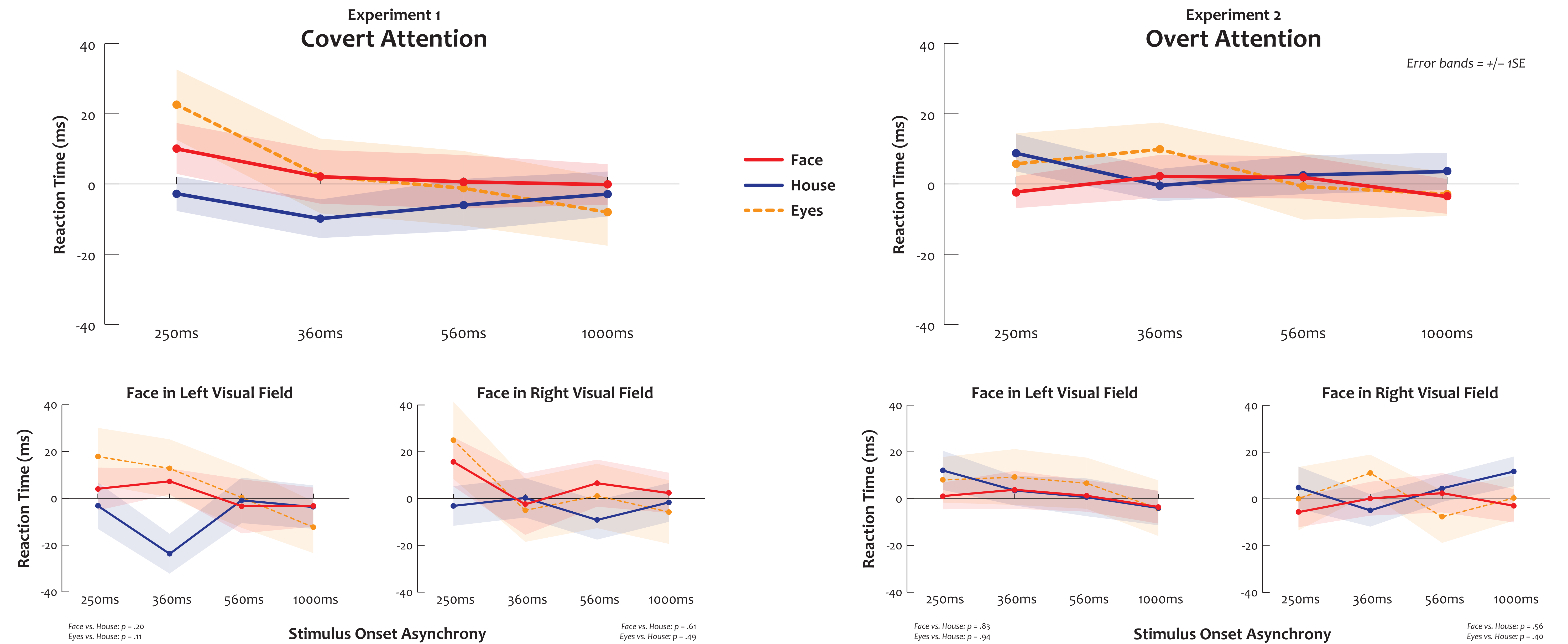


Target Conditions



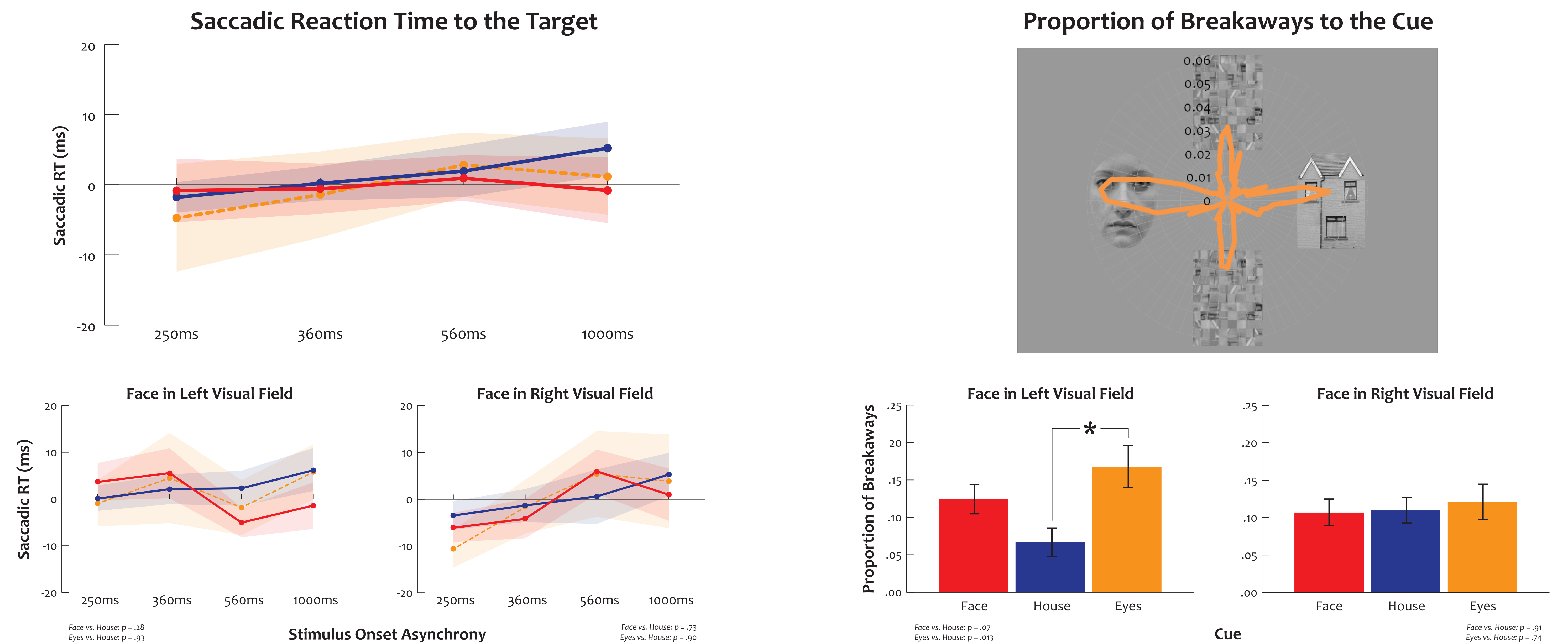
- Baselined scores were calculated by subtracting Upright scores from Inverted scores.

Do faces / eyes attract attention?



- No attentional bias was found towards faces or eyes.

Do faces / eyes drive oculomotor preference?



- No oculomotor bias was found towards faces or eyes.
- Reliable increase in fixation breakaways towards eyes.

- Our findings suggest that oculomotor preference and not attentional bias appears to account for selection of social cues, challenging the prevalent notion that faces and eyes preferentially and spontaneously capture attention.



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