

In [Psychological Science](#) (Vol, 20 (12) pp.1437-1442), an interesting article by [Irving Biederman](#), [Xiaomin Yue](#), and [Jules Davidoff](#) entitled: "Representation of Shape in Individuals From a Culture With Minimal Exposure to Regular, Simple Artifacts: Sensitivity to Nonaccidental Versus Metric Properties" freely available [here](#). Abstract below the fold.

Abstract: Many of the phenomena underlying shape recognition can be derived from the greater sensitivity to nonaccidental properties of an image (e.g., whether a contour is straight or curved), which are invariant to orientation in depth, than to the metric properties of an image (e.g., a contour's degree of curvature), which can vary with orientation. What enables this sensitivity? One explanation is that it derives from people's immersion in a manufactured world in which simple, regular shapes distinguished by nonaccidental properties abound (e.g., a can, a brick), and toddlers are encouraged to play with toy shape sorters. This report provides evidence against this explanation. The Himba, a seminomadic people living in a remote region of northwestern Namibia where there is little exposure to regular, simple artifacts, were virtually identical to Western observers in their greater sensitivity to nonaccidental properties than to metric properties of simple shapes.