



# 计算机视觉表征与识别

## Chapter 5: Edges

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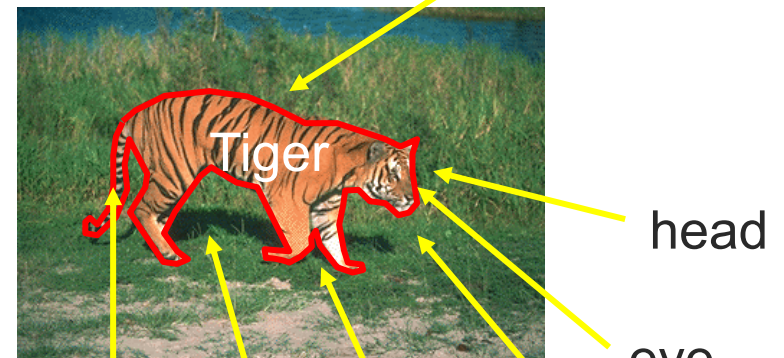
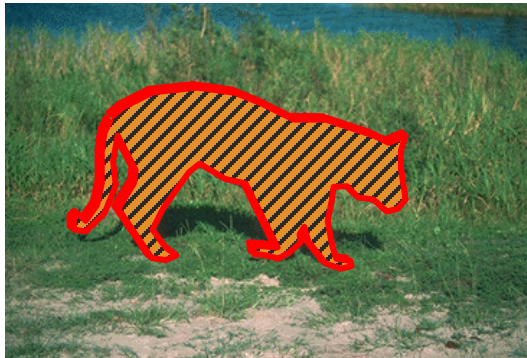
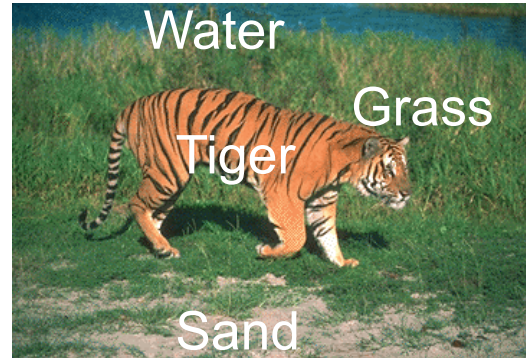
# Today's class



- Introduction to edge detection.
- Gradients and edges.
- Canny edge detector.
- Object contour.
- Pb edge detector.
- Recent advances in edge detection.
- Straight line detection



# From Pixels to Perception



**Mid-level operations of Segmentation and Grouping**

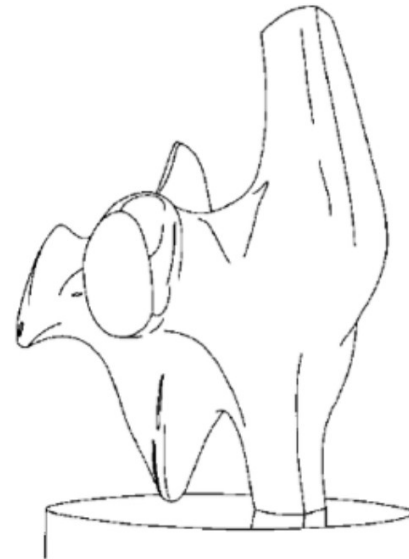
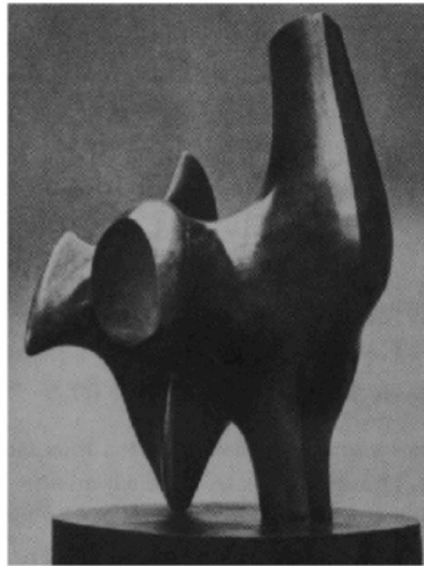
shadow



# First problem: edge detection



- Goal: compute something like a line drawing of a scene





# Issues



- No precise problem formulation
- Much harder than it seems to be
- **Edge detectors** usually work by detecting “big changes” in image intensity
- **Boundary** is contour in the image plane that represents a change in pixel ownership from object or surface to another.



# Edge detection



- **Goal:** map image from 2d array of pixels to a set of curves or line segments or contours.

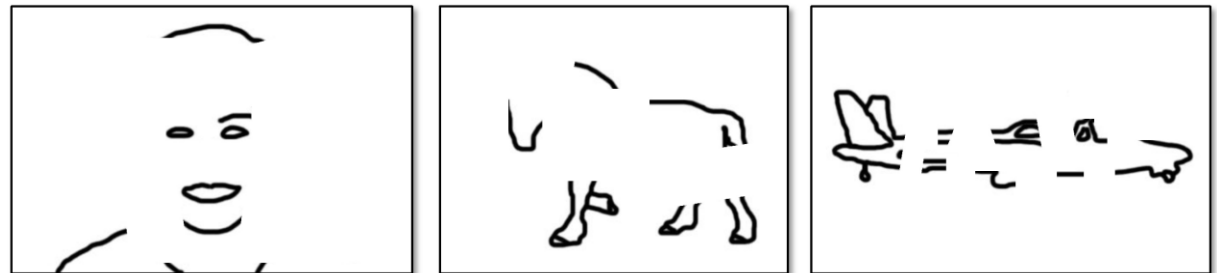


Figure from J. Shotton et al., PAMI 2007

- **Main idea:** look for strong gradients, post-process

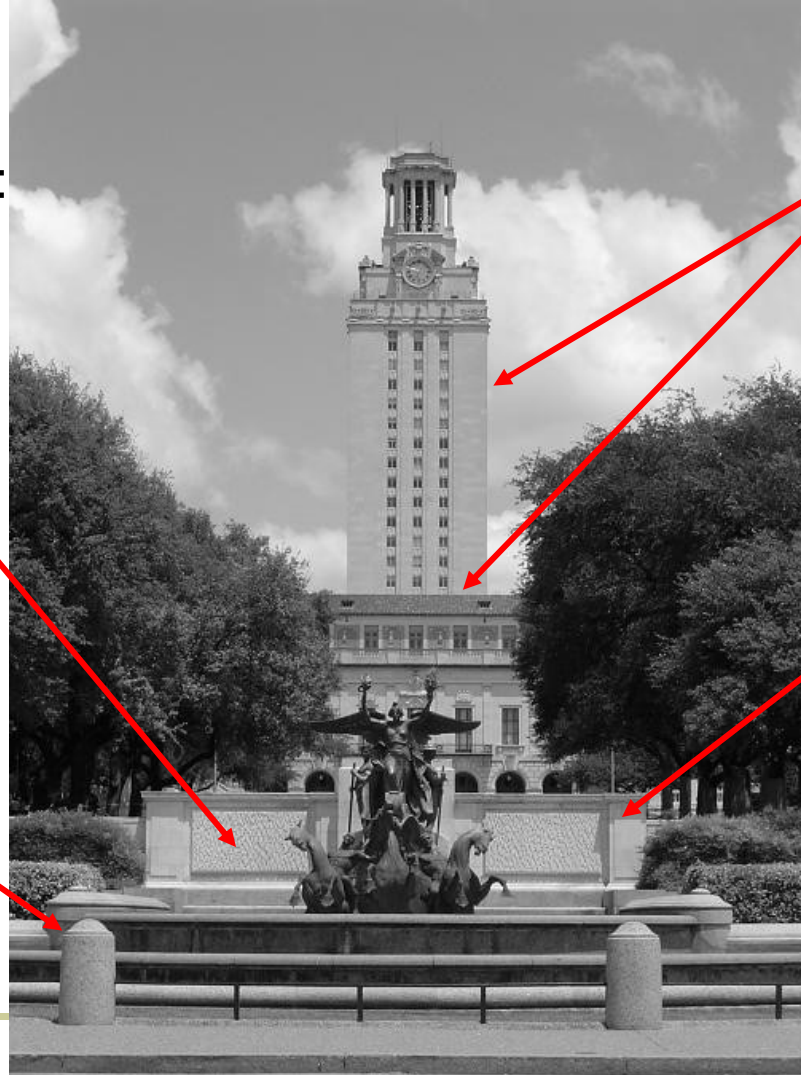


# What causes an edge?



Reflectance change:  
appearance  
information, texture

Change in surface  
orientation: shape



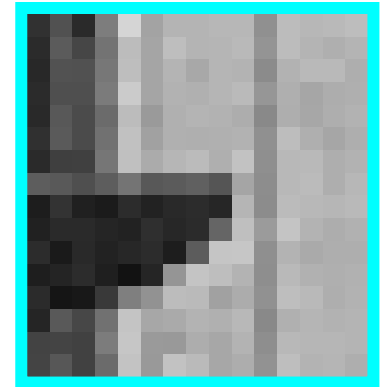
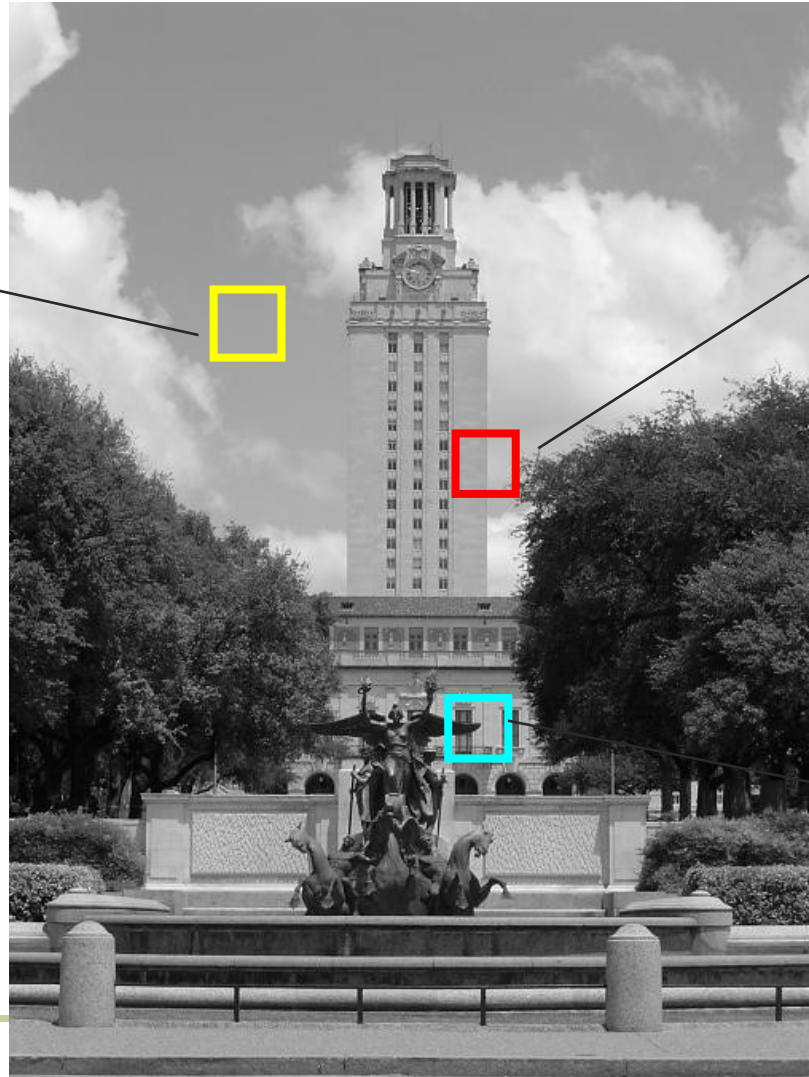
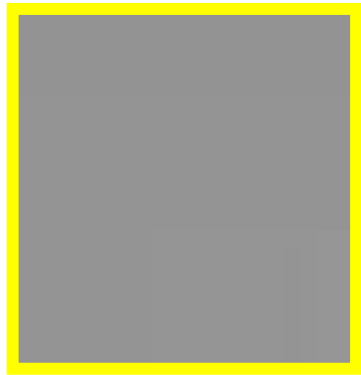
Depth discontinuity:  
object boundary

Cast shadows

Slide credit:  
Kristen Grauman



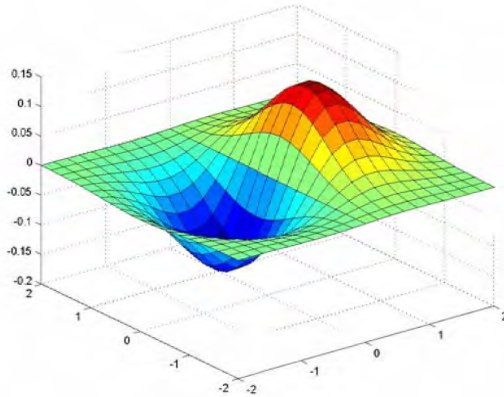
# Edges/gradients and invariance



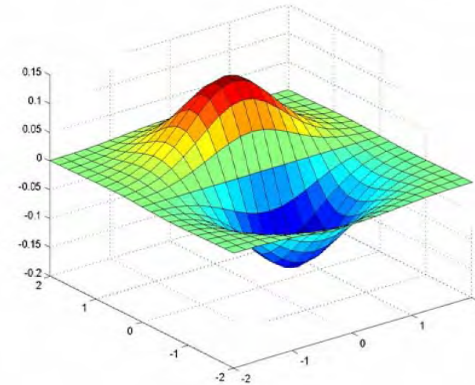
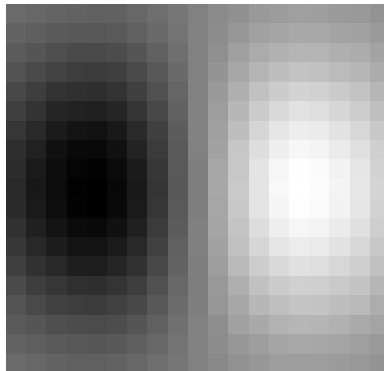




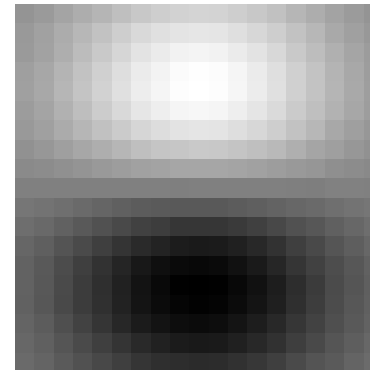
# Derivative of Gaussian filters



**x-direction**



**y-direction**





# The Sobel Operator: A common approximation of derivative of gaussian



- Common approximation of derivative of Gaussian

$$\frac{1}{8} \begin{bmatrix} -1 & 0 & 1 \\ -2 & 0 & 2 \\ -1 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

$s_x$

$$\frac{1}{8} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ -1 & -2 & -1 \end{bmatrix}$$

$s_y$

- The standard defn. of the Sobel operator omits the  $1/8$  term
  - doesn't make a difference for edge detection
  - the  $1/8$  term is needed to get the right gradient value



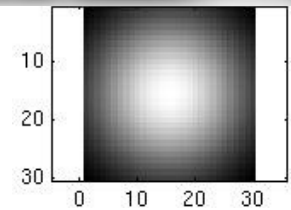
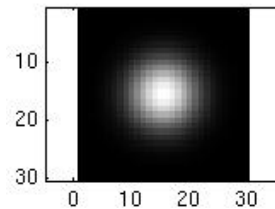
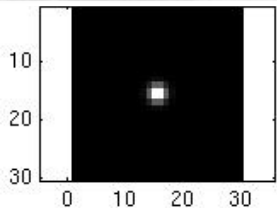
# Smoothing with a Gaussian



Recall: parameter  $\sigma$  is the “scale” / “width” / “spread” of the Gaussian kernel, and controls the amount of smoothing.

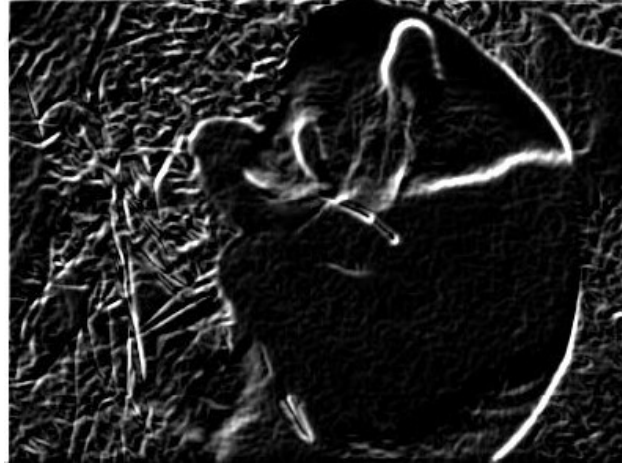


...

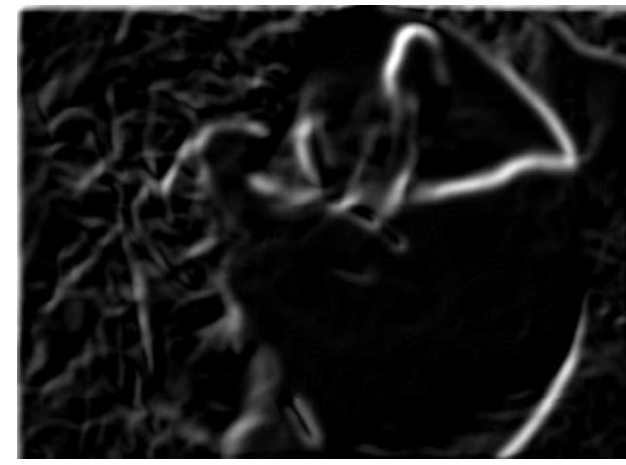




# Effect of $\sigma$ on derivatives



$\sigma = 1$  pixel



$\sigma = 3$  pixels

The apparent structures differ depending on Gaussian's scale parameter.

Larger values: larger scale edges detected

Smaller values: finer features detected



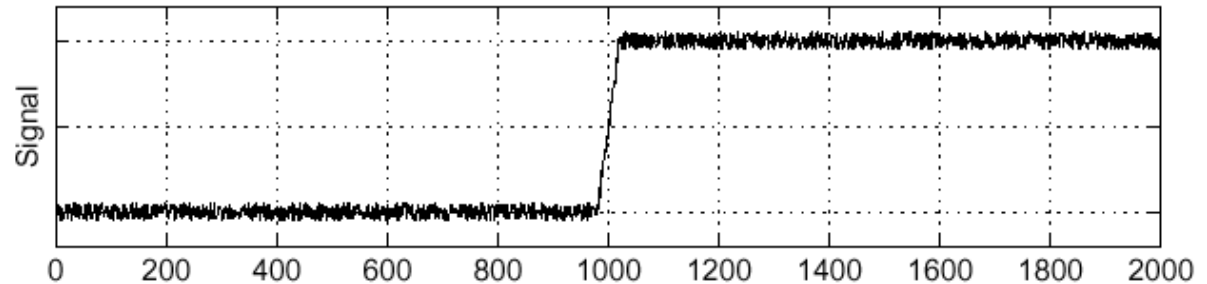
# Laplacian of Gaussian



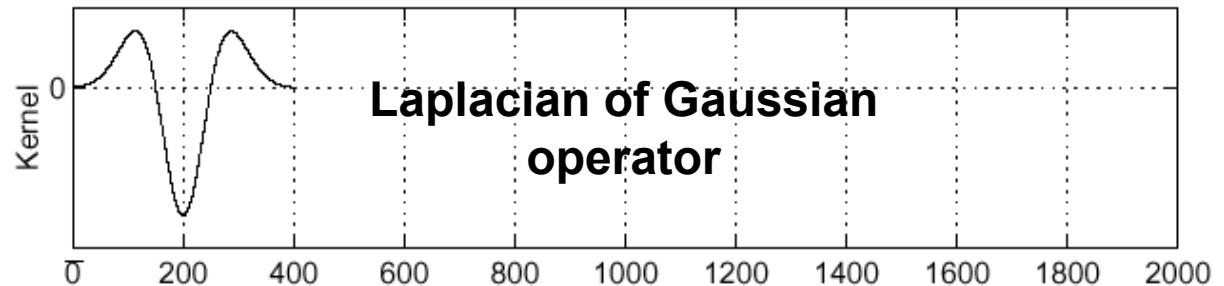
Consider  $\frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2}(h \star f)$

Sigma = 50

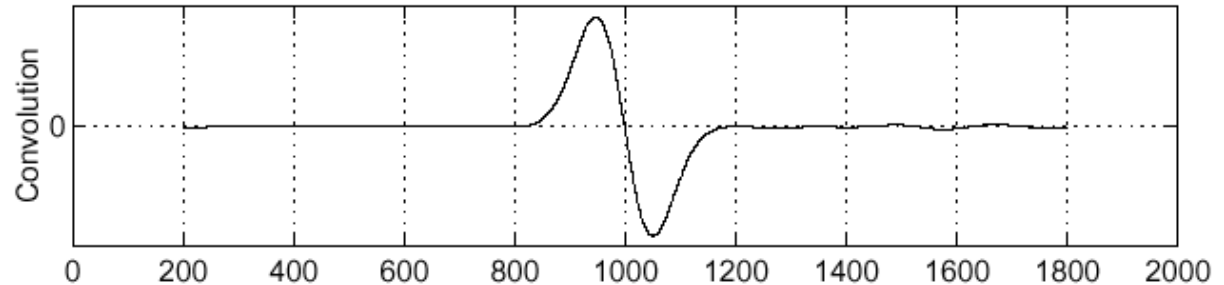
$f$



$\frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2}h$



$(\frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2}h) \star f$

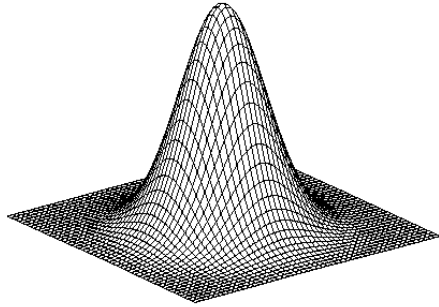


Where is the edge?

Zero-crossings of bottom graph

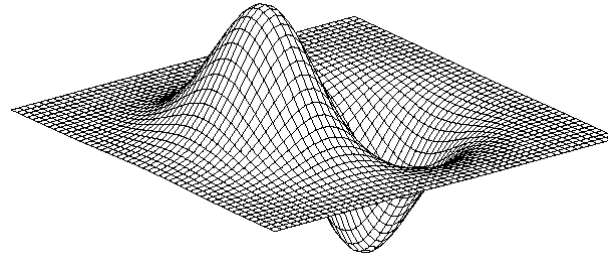


# 2D edge detection filters



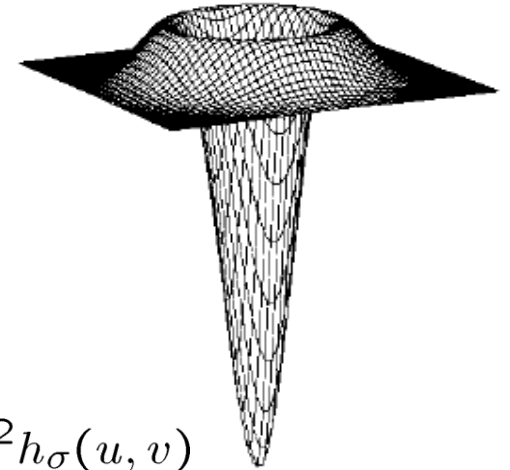
**Gaussian**

$$h_{\sigma}(u, v) = \frac{1}{2\pi\sigma^2} e^{-\frac{u^2+v^2}{2\sigma^2}}$$



**derivative of Gaussian**

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial x} h_{\sigma}(u, v)$$



$$\nabla^2 h_{\sigma}(u, v)$$

**Laplacian of Gaussian**

- $\nabla^2$  is the Laplacian operator:

$$\nabla^2 f = \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial y^2}$$

Slide credit: Steve Seitz



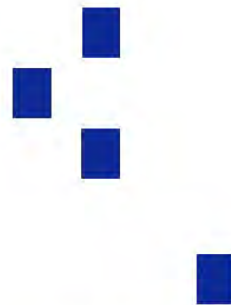
# Designing an edge detector



- Criteria for an “optimal” edge detector:
  - **Good detection:** minimize the probability of false positives (detecting spurious edges caused by noise), as well as that of false negatives (missing real edges)
  - **Good localization:** must be as close as possible to the true edges
  - **Single response:** the detector must return one point only for each true edge point;



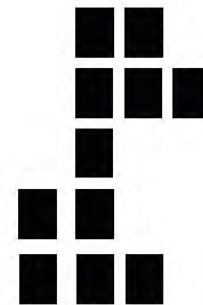
True edge



Poor robustness to noise



Poor localization



Too many responses

# Basic Comparisons of Edge Operators

Gradient:

$$\nabla f = \left[ \frac{\partial f}{\partial x}, \frac{\partial f}{\partial y} \right]$$

Good Localization  
Noise Sensitive  
Poor Detection

Roberts (2 x 2):

0	1
-1	0

1	0
0	-1

Sobel (3 x 3):

-1	0	1
-1	0	1
-1	0	1

1	1	1
0	0	0
-1	-1	1

Sobel (5 x 5):

-1	-2	0	2	1
-2	-3	0	3	2
-3	-5	0	5	3
-2	-3	0	3	2
-1	-2	0	2	1

1	2	3	2	1
2	3	5	3	2
0	0	0	0	0
-2	-3	-5	-3	-2
-1	-2	-3	-2	-1

Poor Localization  
Less Noise Sensitive  
Good Detection







## Gradients $\rightarrow$ edges



Primary edge detection steps:

1. Smoothing: suppress noise
2. Edge enhancement: filter for contrast
3. Edge localization

Determine which local maxima from filter output are actually edges vs. noise

Thresholding and thinning

# Example: Laplacian of Gaussian (LoG) and Canny Edge Detector

## *Marr and Hildreth Filtering, 1980.*

- Smooth Image with Gaussian Filter
- Applying the Laplacian for a Gaussian-filtered image can be done in one step of convolution.
- Find zero-crossings
- Find slope of zero-crossings
- Apply threshold to slope and mark edges

## *J. Canny. 1986*

- Smooth Image with Gaussian filter
- Compute Derivative of filtered image
- Find Magnitude and Orientation of gradient
- Apply Non-max suppression
- Apply Thresholding (Hysteresis)



# Canny edge detector



- This is probably the most widely used edge detector in computer vision
- Theoretical model: step-edges corrupted by additive Gaussian noise
- Canny has shown that the first derivative of the Gaussian closely approximates the operator that optimizes the product of *signal-to-noise ratio* and localization

J. Canny, *[A Computational Approach To Edge Detection](#)*, IEEE Trans. Pattern Analysis and Machine Intelligence, 8:679-714, 1986.



# Canny edge detector



- Filter image with derivative of Gaussian
- Find magnitude and orientation of gradient
- **Non-maximum suppression:**
  - Thin wide “ridges” down to single pixel width
- **Linking and thresholding (hysteresis):**
  - Define two thresholds: low and high
  - Use the high threshold to start edge curves and the low threshold to continue them
- MATLAB: `edge(image, 'canny');`
- `>>help edge`



# The Canny edge detector



original image (Lena)



# The Canny edge detector



norm of the gradient



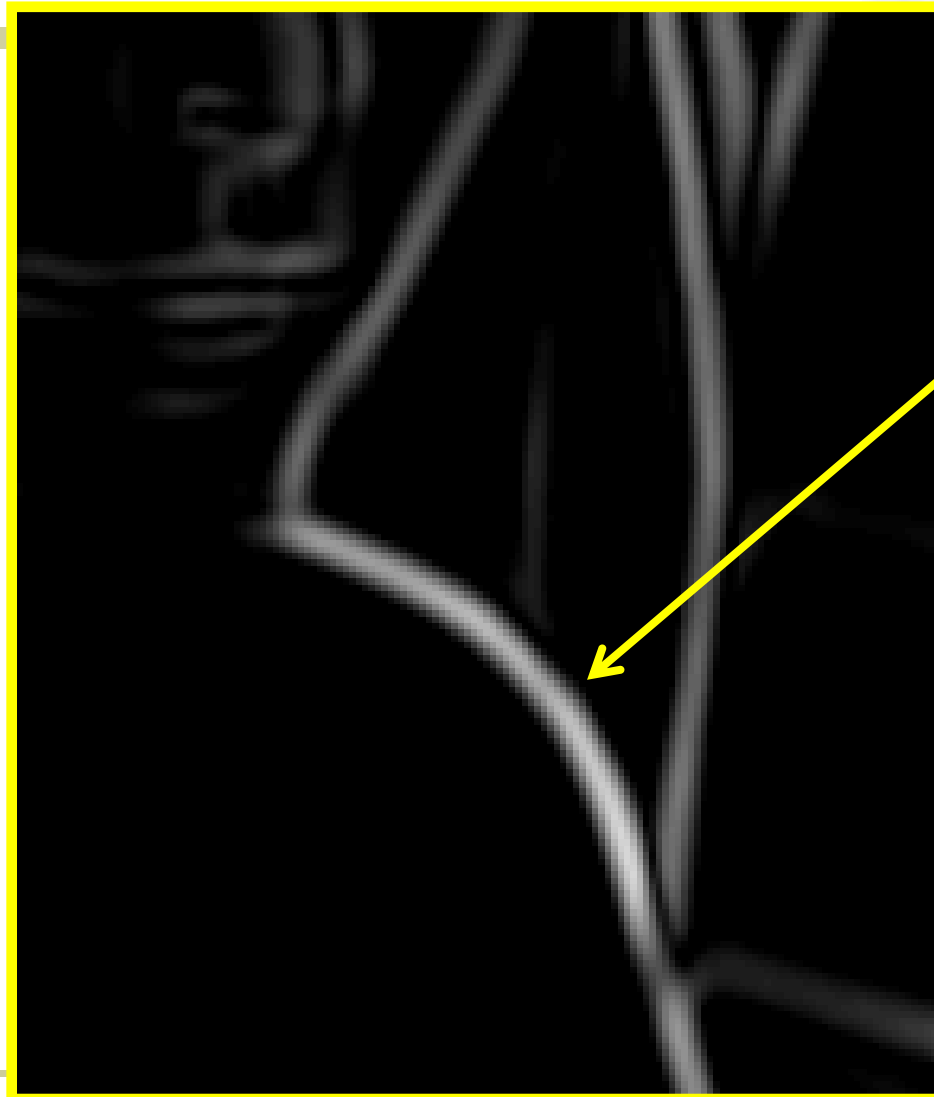
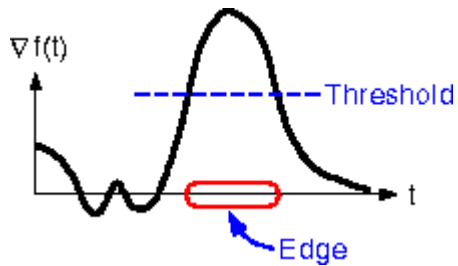
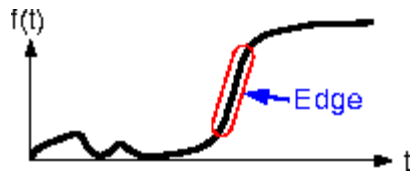
# The Canny edge detector



thresholding



# The Canny edge detector

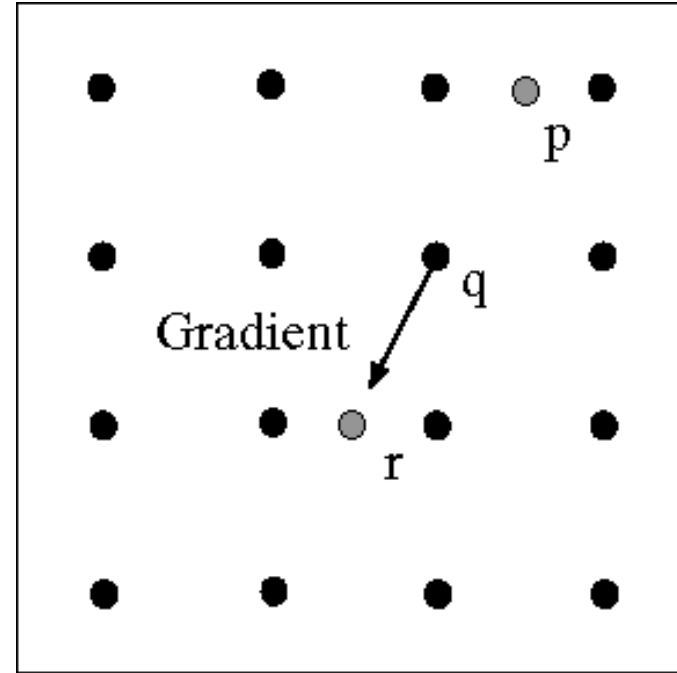
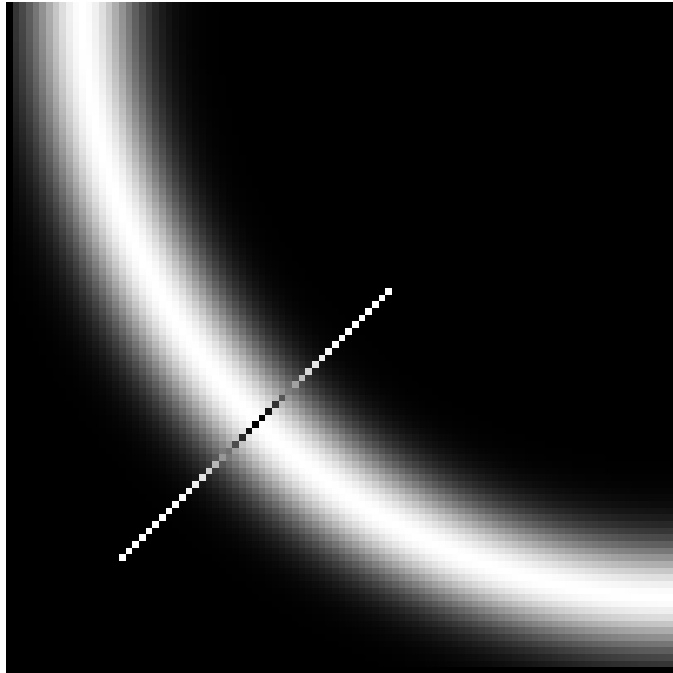


How to turn these thick regions of the gradient into curves?





# Non-maximum suppression



Check if pixel is local maximum along gradient direction,  
select single max across width of the edge

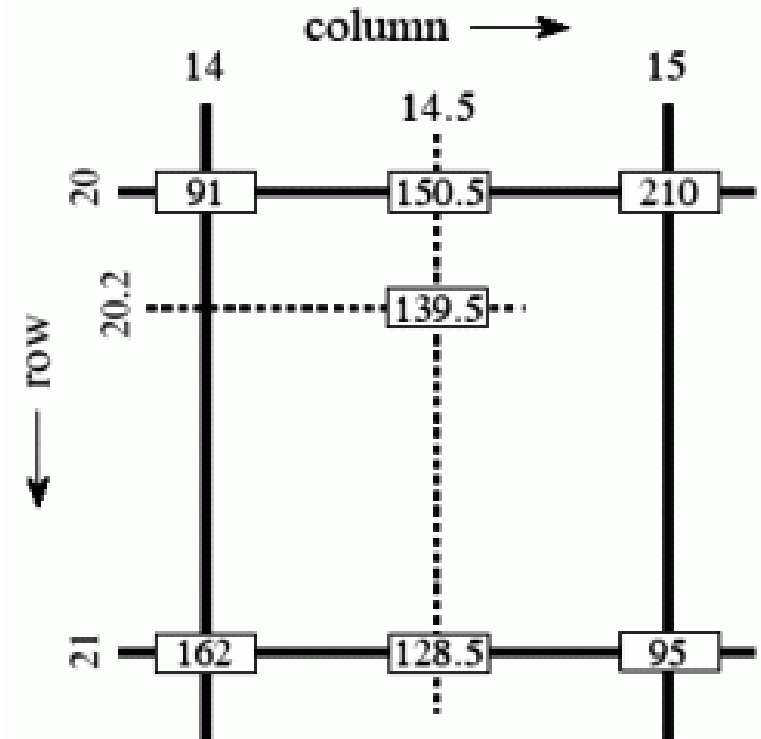
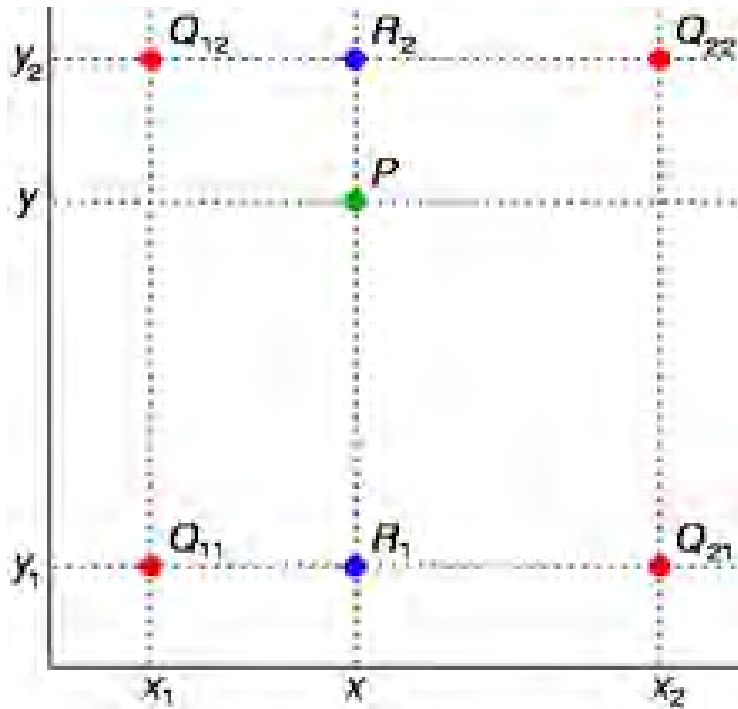
- requires checking interpolated pixels  $p$  and  $r$



# Bilinear Interpolation



$$f(x, y) \approx \begin{bmatrix} 1 - x & x \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} f(0, 0) & f(0, 1) \\ f(1, 0) & f(1, 1) \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 1 - y \\ y \end{bmatrix}.$$

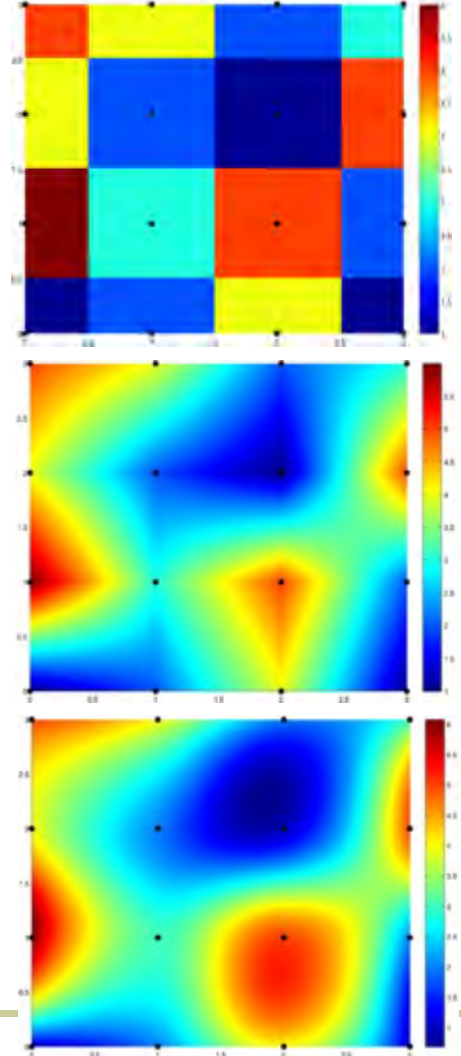




# Sidebar: Interpolation options



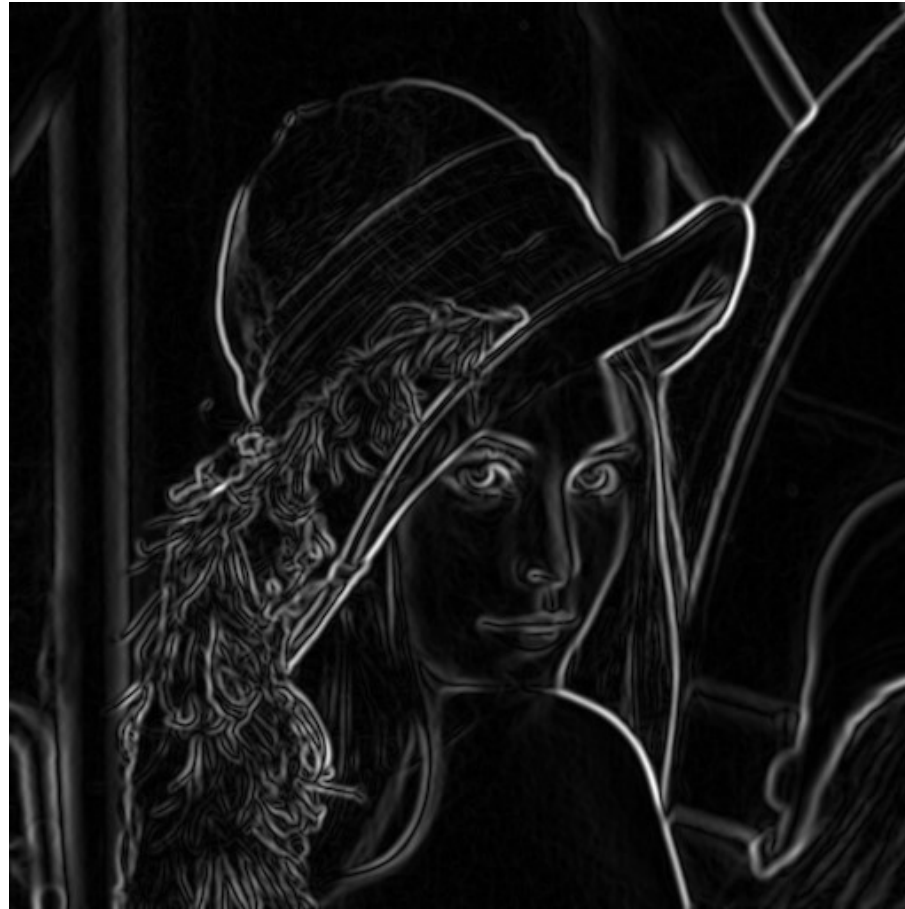
- `imx2 = imresize(im, 2, interpolation_type)`
- 'nearest'
  - Copy value from nearest known
  - Very fast but creates blocky edges
- 'bilinear'
  - Weighted average from four nearest known pixels
  - Fast and reasonable results
- 'bicubic' (default)
  - Non-linear smoothing over larger area
  - Slower, visually appealing, may create negative pixel values



Examples from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bicubic\\_interpolation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bicubic_interpolation)

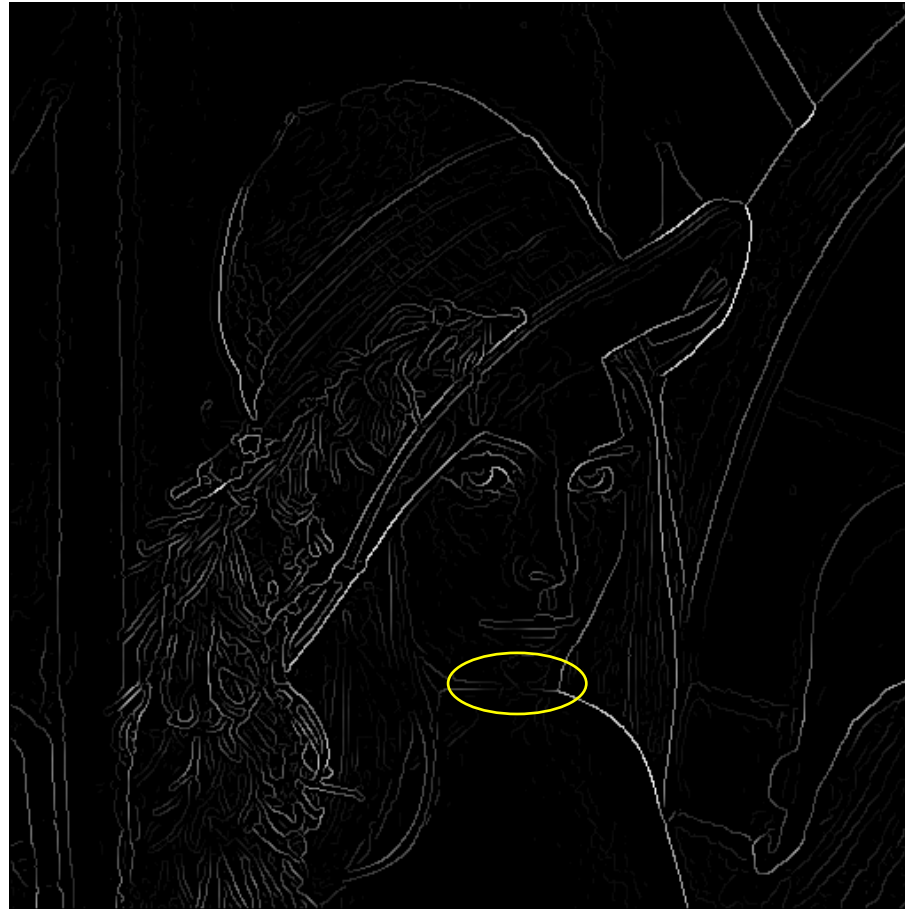


# Before non-max suppression





# After non-max suppression



Problem:  
pixels along  
this edge  
didn't  
survive the  
thresholding



# Hysteresis thresholding



- Threshold at low/high levels to get weak/strong edge pixels
- Do connected components, starting from strong edge pixels

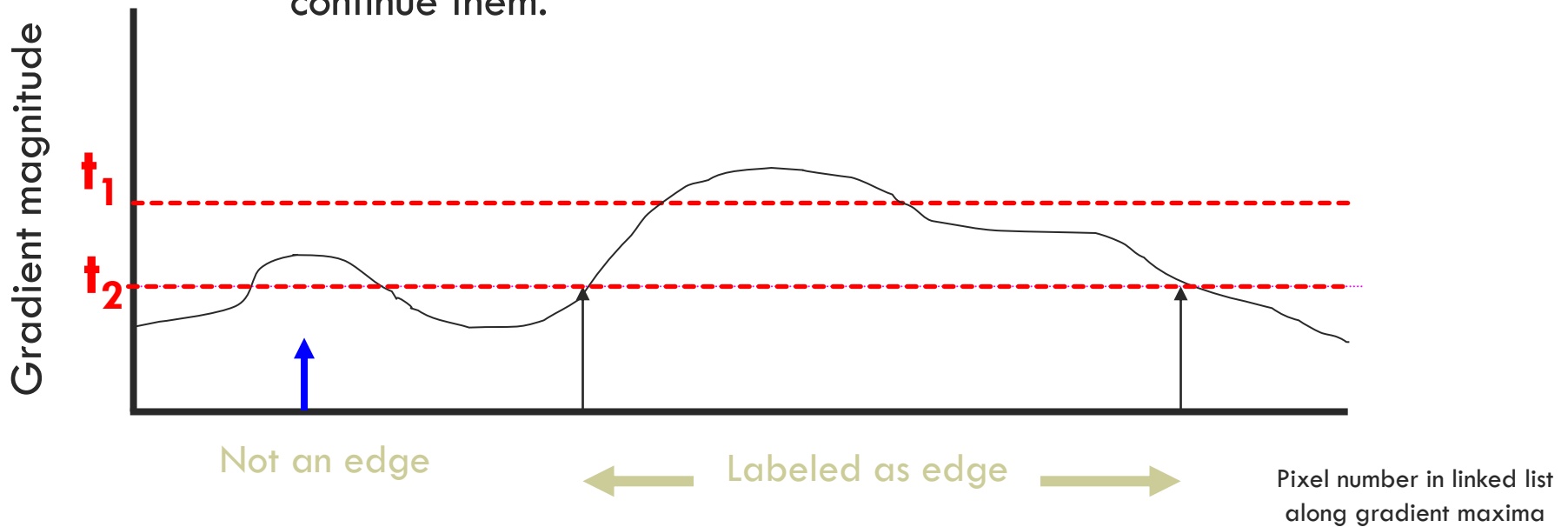




# Closing edge gaps

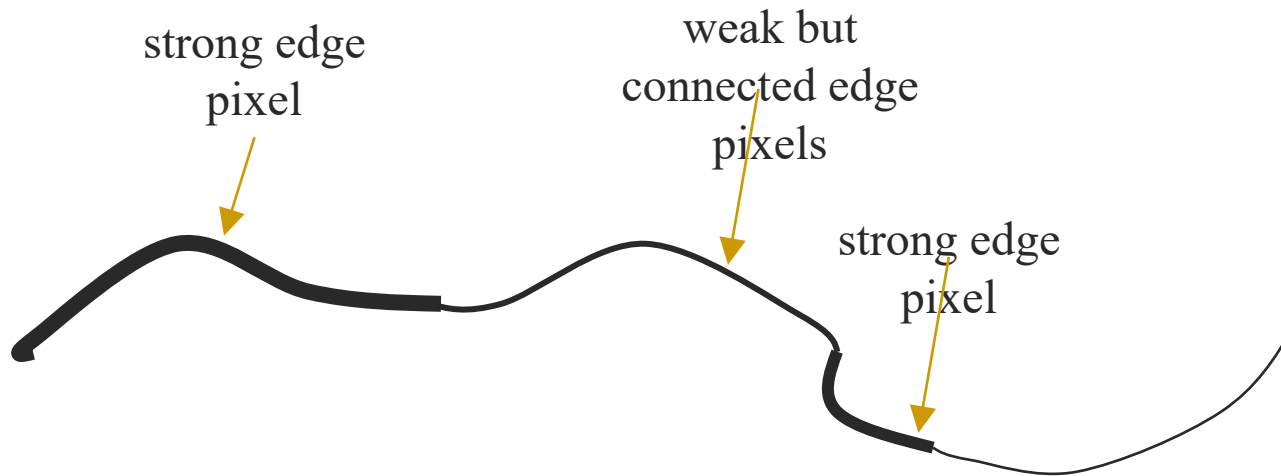


- Check that maximum value of gradient value is sufficiently large
  - drop-outs? use **hysteresis**
    - use a high threshold to start edge curves and a low threshold to continue them.





# Hysteresis thresholding



Source: S. Seitz





# Hysteresis thresholding



**original image**



**high threshold  
(strong edges)**



**low threshold  
(weak edges)**



**hysteresis threshold**



# Final Canny Edges





# Effect of $\sigma$ (Gaussian kernel spread/size)



original



Canny with  $\sigma = 1$



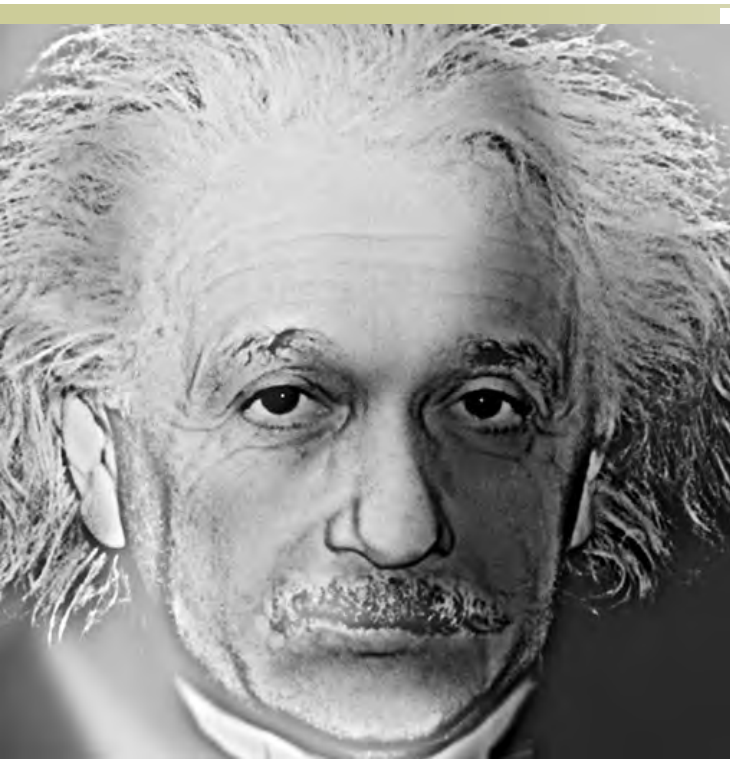
Canny with  $\sigma = 2$

The choice of  $\sigma$  depends on desired behavior

- large  $\sigma$  detects large scale edges
- small  $\sigma$  detects fine features

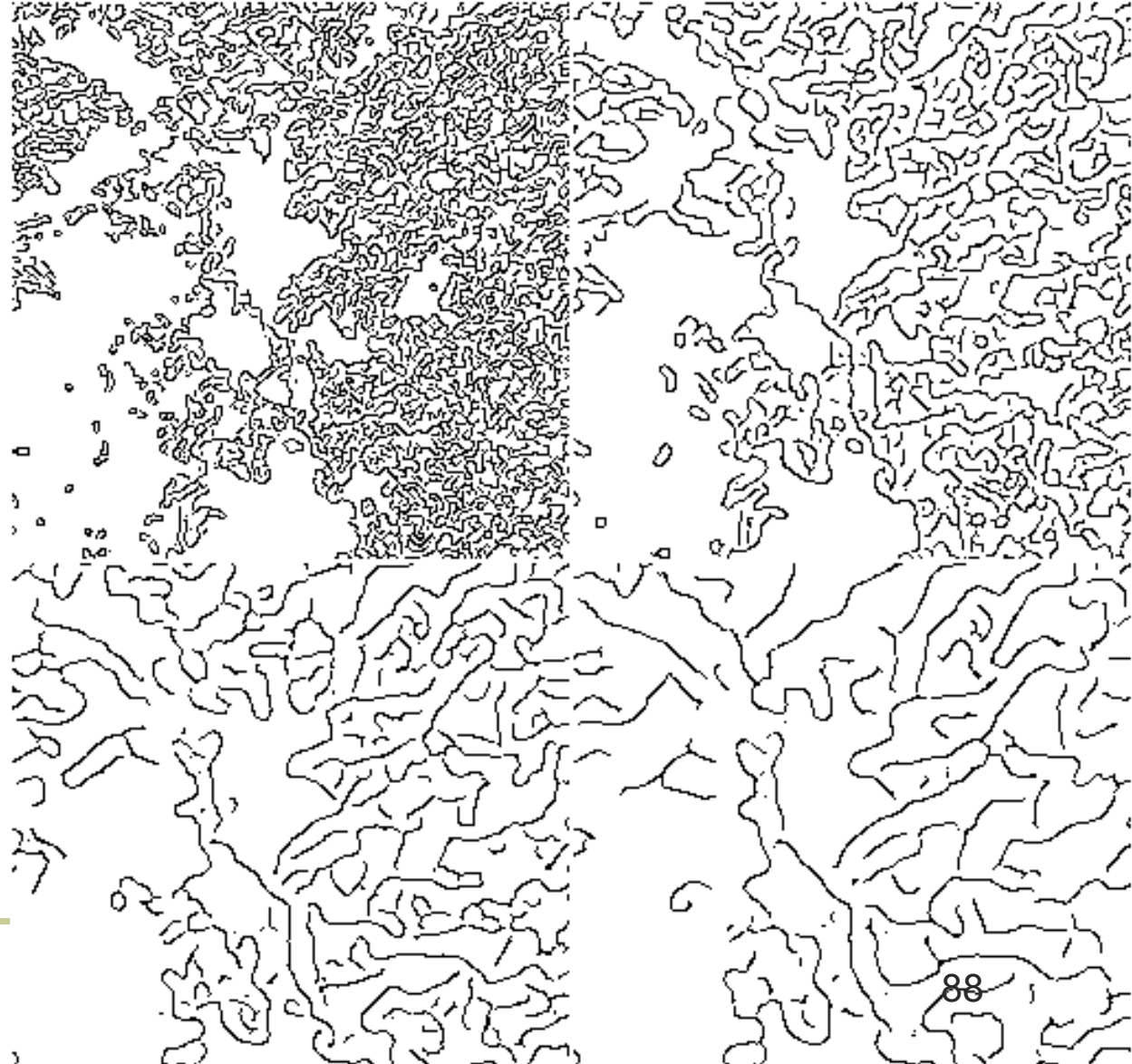


# Example: Canny Edge Detection





# Example: Canny Edge Detection





# Low-level edges vs. perceived contours



**Background**

**Texture**

**Shadows**<sub>90</sub>





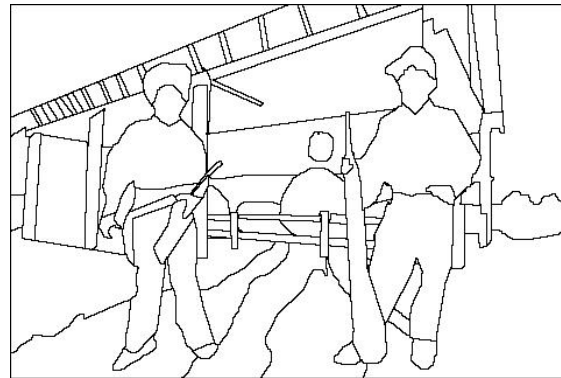
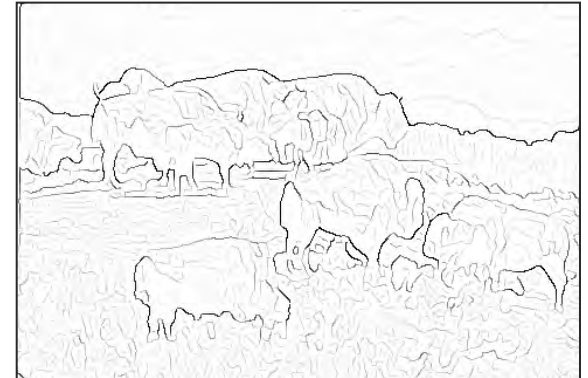
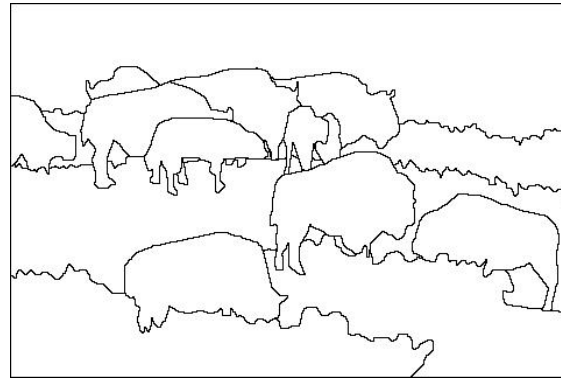
# Low-level edges vs. perceived contours



image

human segmentation

gradient magnitude



- Berkeley segmentation database:  
<http://www.eecs.berkeley.edu/Research/Projects/CS/vision/grouping/segbench/>





# A Database of Human Segmented Natural Images and its Application to Evaluating Segmentation Algorithms and Measuring Ecological Statistics



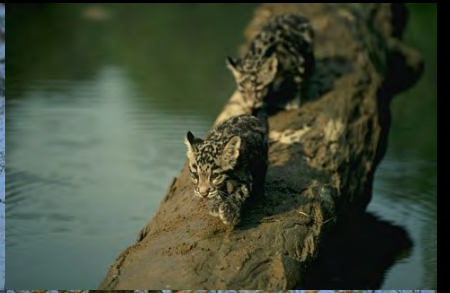
David Martin   Charles Fowlkes   Doron Tal   Jitendra Malik  
Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences  
University of California, Berkeley  
Berkeley, CA 94720  
{dmartin,fowlkes,doron,malik}@eecs.berkeley.edu

*This paper presents a database containing ‘ground truth’ segmentations produced by humans for images of a wide variety of natural scenes. We define an error measure which quantifies the consistency between segmentations of differing granularities and find that different human segmentations of the same image are highly consistent. Use of this dataset is demonstrated in two applications: (1) evaluating the performance of segmentation algorithms and (2) measuring probability distributions associated with Gestalt grouping factors as well as statistics of image region properties.*

[A database of human segmented natural images and its application to evaluating segmentation algorithms and measuring ecological statistics](#)

D Martin, C Fowlkes, D Tal... - Proceedings Eighth IEEE ..., 2001 - ieeexplore.ieee.org

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# Protocol

*You will be presented a photographic image. Divide the image into some number of segments, where the segments represent “things” or “parts of things” in the scene. The number of segments is up to you, as it depends on the image. Something between 2 and 30 is likely to be appropriate. It is important that all of the segments have approximately equal importance.*

- Custom segmentation tool
- Subjects obtained from work-study program (UC Berkeley undergraduates)



# Annotation tool



(a)



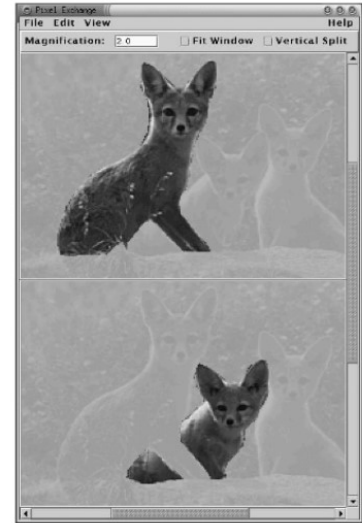
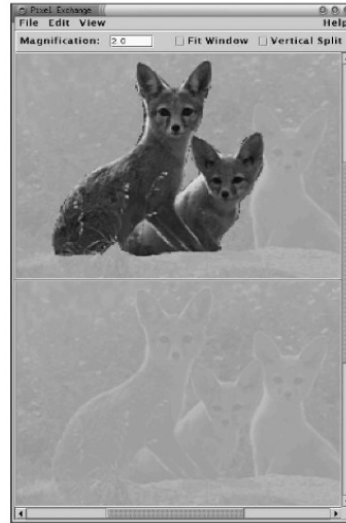
(b)

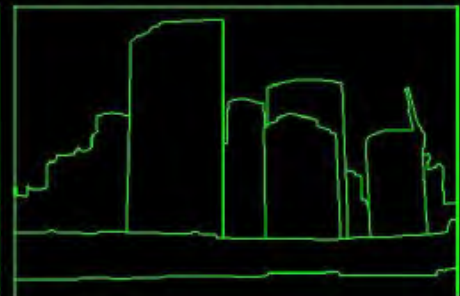
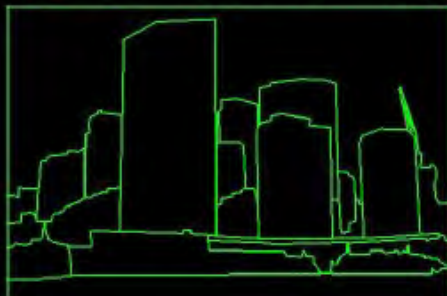
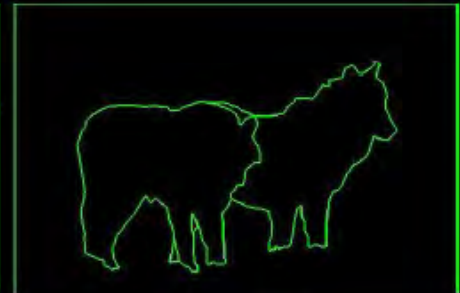
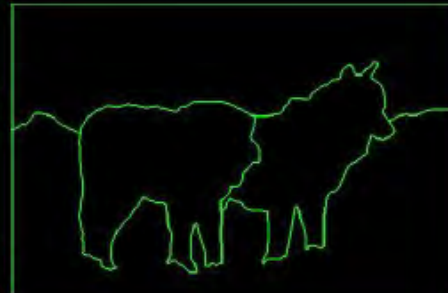
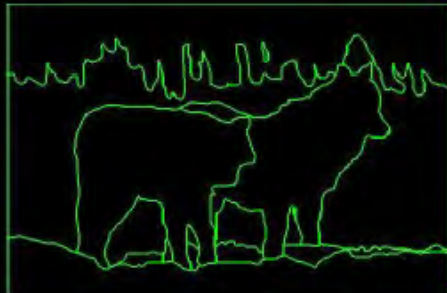
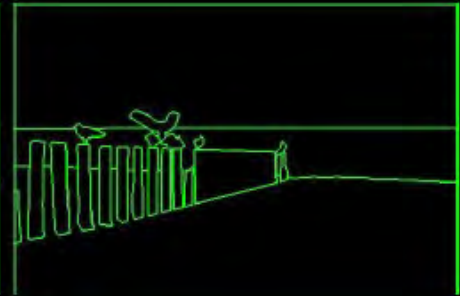
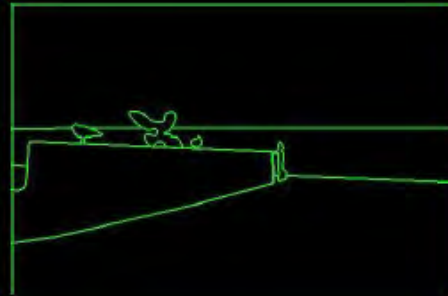
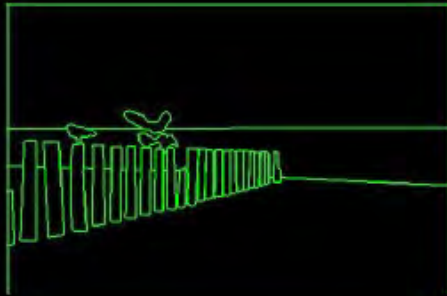


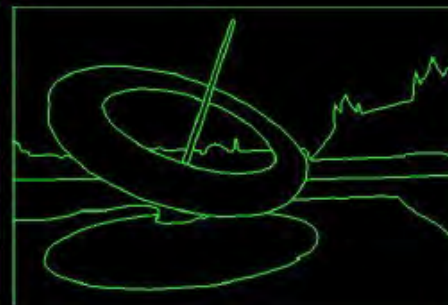
(c)



(d)









# Segmentation Error Measure



- A segmentation is a division of the pixels an image into sets.
- A segmentation error takes two segmentations as input and produces a real-valued output.
- We define a measure error at each pixel that is **tolerant to refinement**.

$$E(S_1, S_2, p_i) = \frac{|R(S_1, p_i) \setminus R(S_2, p_i)|}{|R(S_1, p_i)|}$$



# GCE vs. LCE



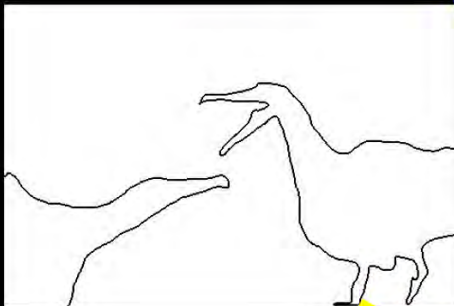
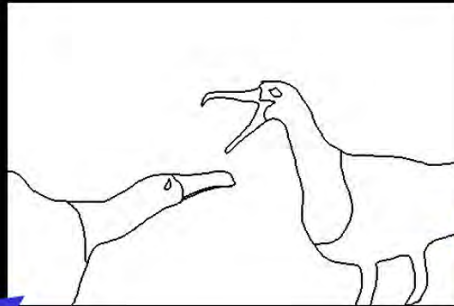
$$GCE(S_1, S_2) = \frac{1}{n} \min \left\{ \sum_i E(S_1, S_2, p_i), \sum_i E(S_2, S_1, p_i) \right\} \quad (2)$$

$$LCE(S_1, S_2) = \frac{1}{n} \sum_i \min \left\{ E(S_1, S_2, p_i), E(S_2, S_1, p_i) \right\} \quad (3)$$

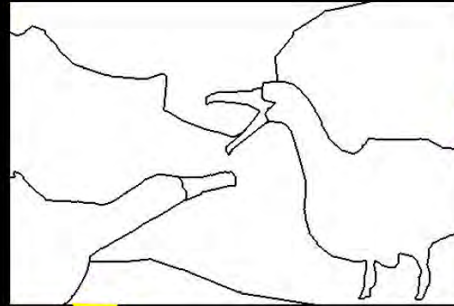


# Consistency

A

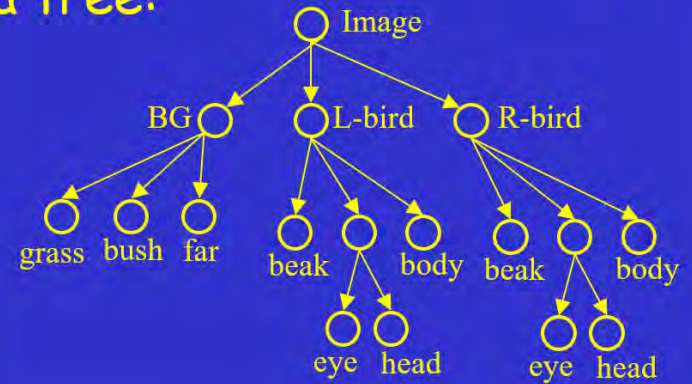


B



C

Perceptual organization forms a tree:

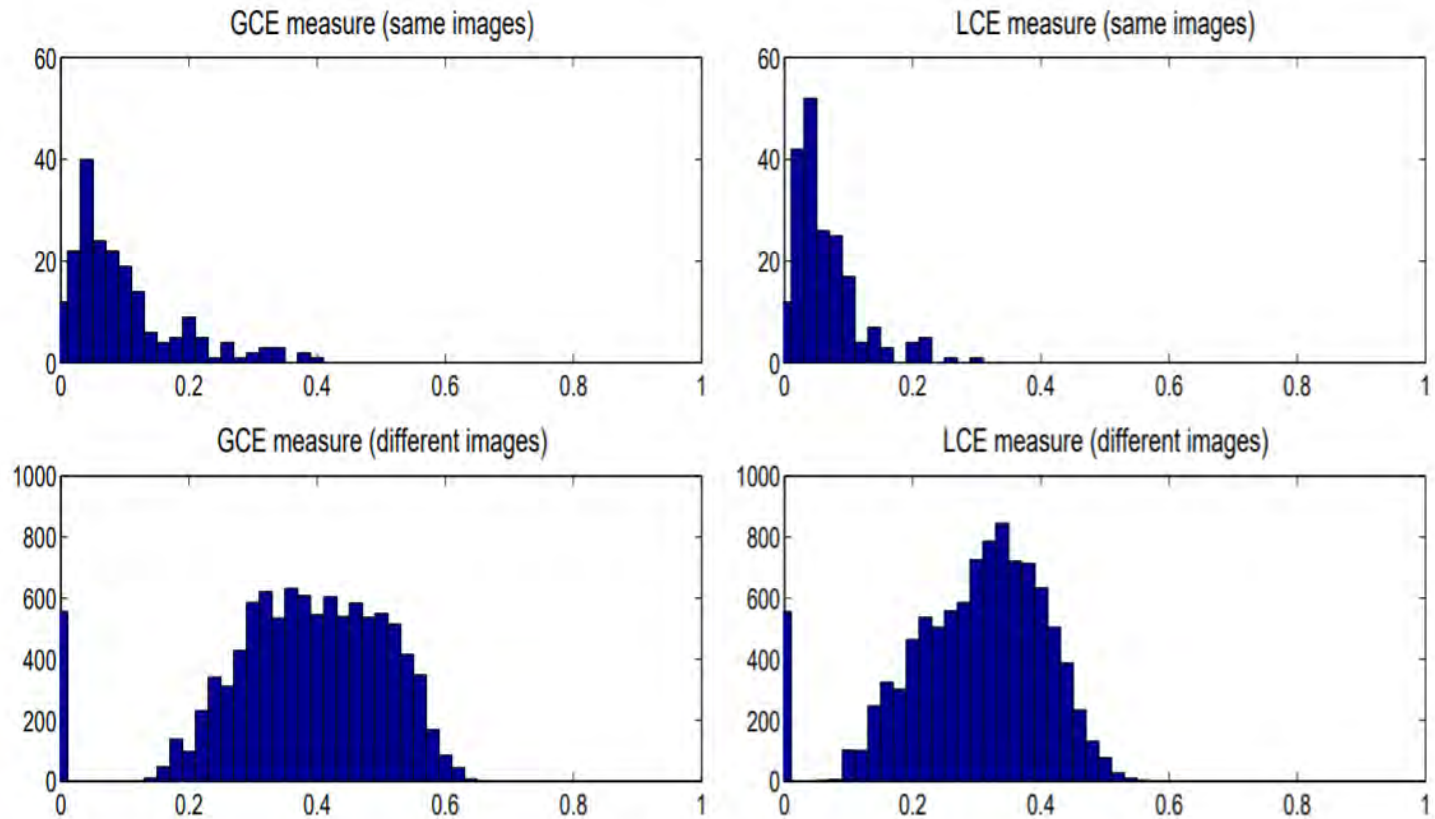


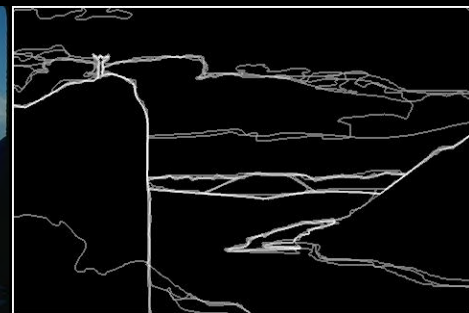
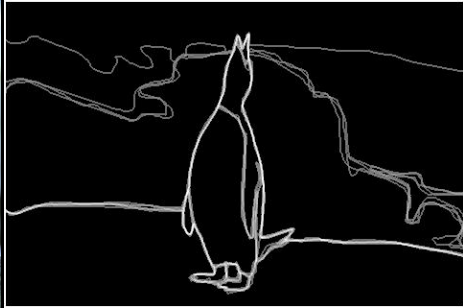
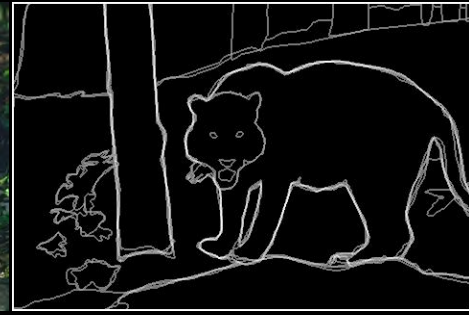
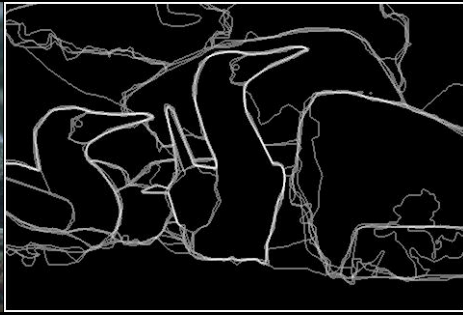
- A,C are refinements of B
- A,C are mutual refinements
- A,B,C represent the same percept
  - Attention accounts for differences

★ Two segmentations are consistent when they can be explained by the same segmentation tree (i.e. they could be derived from a single perceptual organization).



# Error Measure Validation





# Dataset Summary

- 30 subjects, age 19-23
  - 17 men, 13 women
  - 9 with artistic training
- 8 months
- 1,458 person hours
- 1,020 Corel images
- 11,595 Segmentations
  - 5,555 color, 5,554 gray, 486 inverted/negated



# Learning to Detect Natural Image Boundaries Using Local Brightness, Color, and Texture Cues

David R. Martin, *Member, IEEE*, Charless C. Fowlkes, and Jitendra Malik, *Member, IEEE*

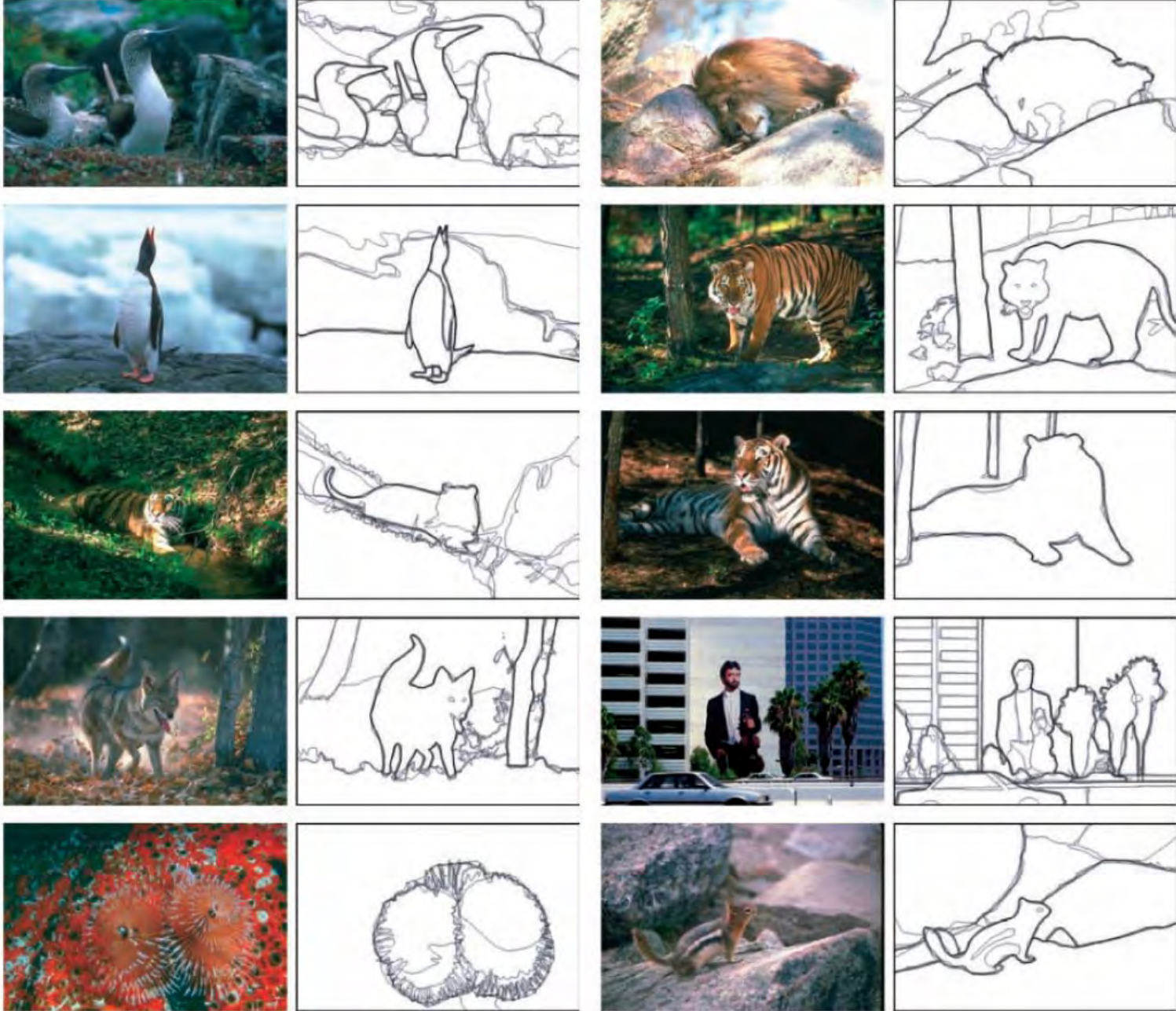
**Abstract**—The goal of this work is to accurately detect and localize boundaries in natural scenes using local image measurements. We formulate features that respond to characteristic changes in brightness, color, and texture associated with natural boundaries. In order to combine the information from these features in an optimal way, we train a classifier using human labeled images as ground truth. The output of this classifier provides the posterior probability of a boundary at each image location and orientation. We present precision-recall curves showing that the resulting detector significantly outperforms existing approaches. Our two main results are 1) that cue combination can be performed adequately with a simple linear model and 2) that a proper, explicit treatment of texture is required to detect boundaries in natural images.

**Index Terms**—Texture, supervised learning, cue combination, natural images, ground truth segmentation data set, boundary detection, boundary localization.



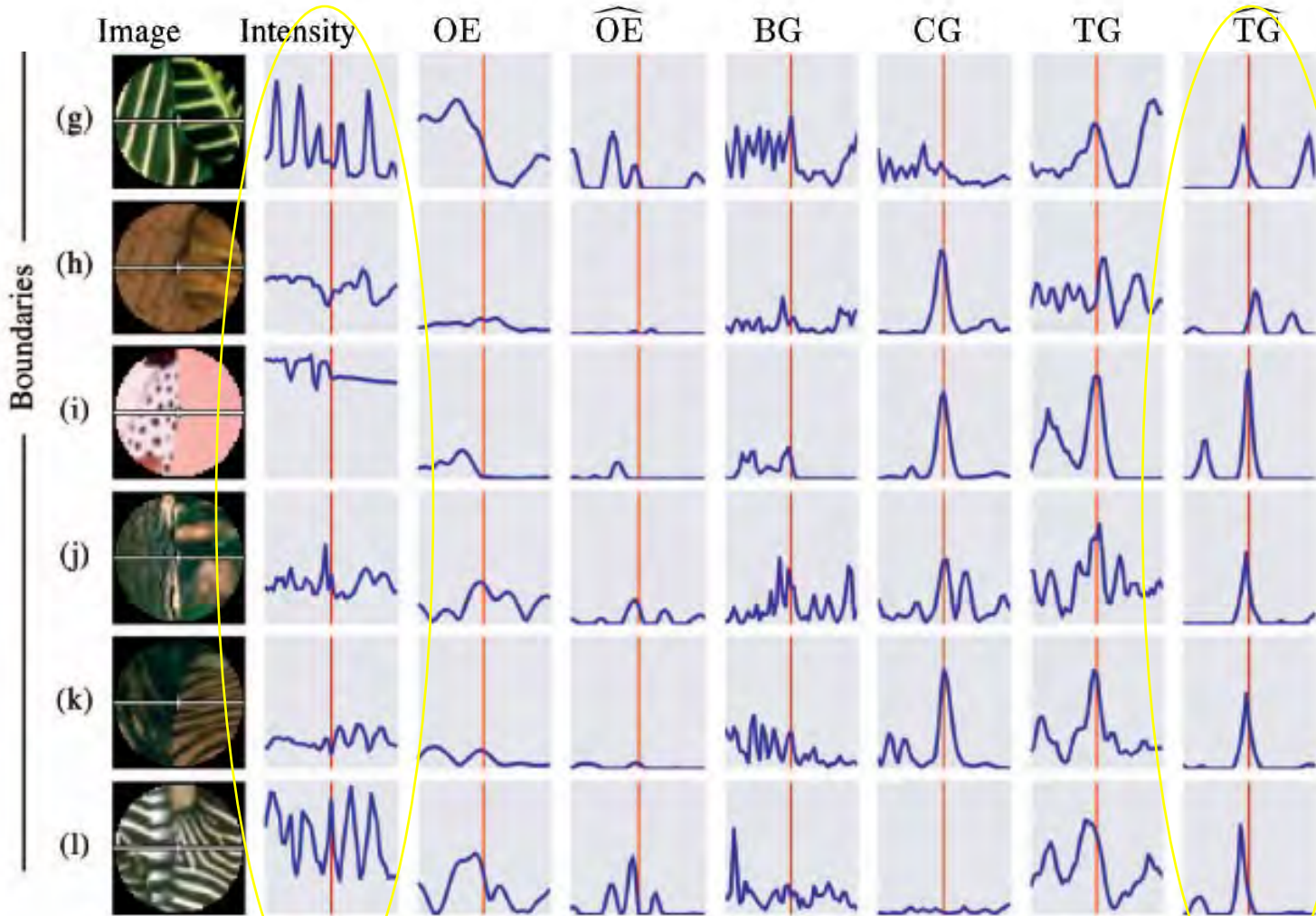


Learn from humans which combination of features is most indicative of a “good” contour?





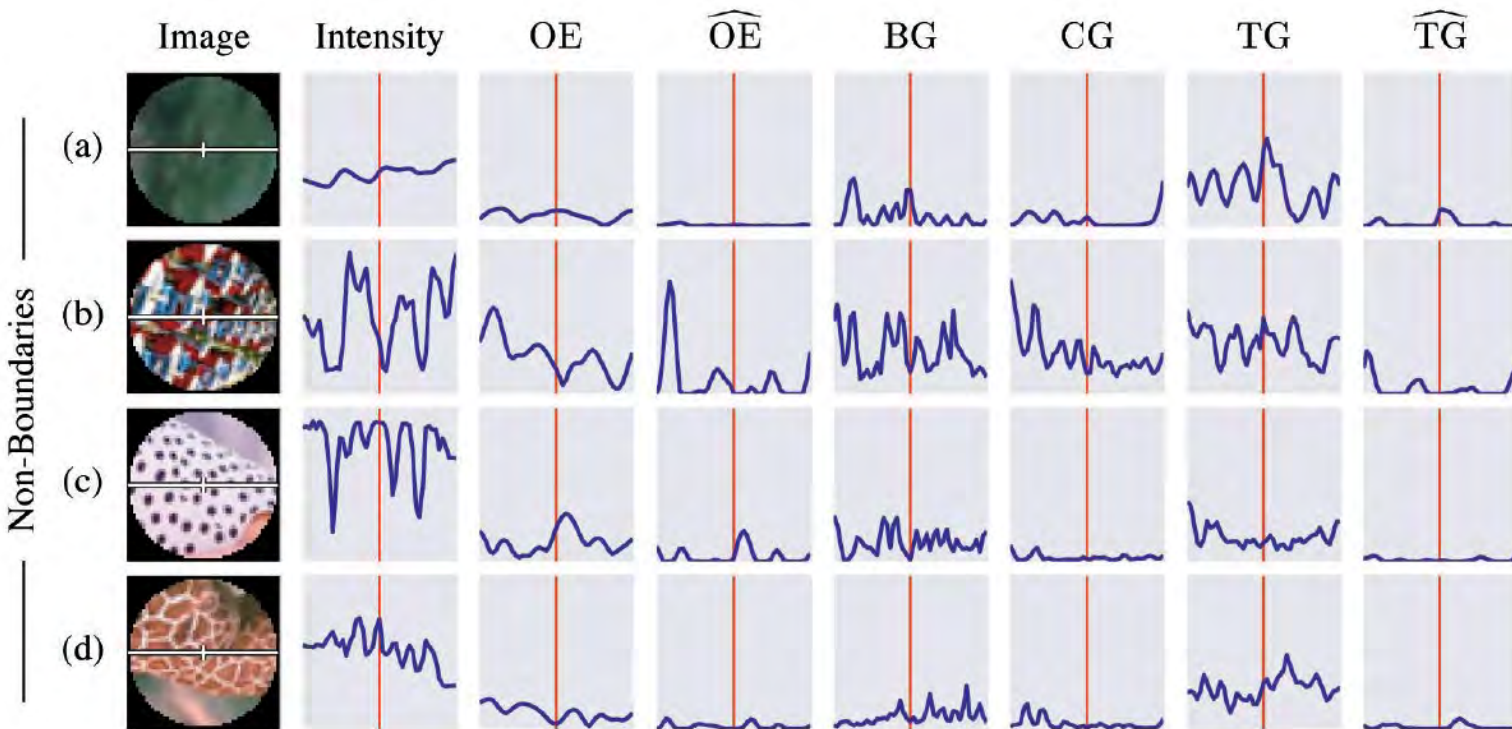
# What features are responsible for perceived edges?



Feature profiles (oriented energy, brightness, color, and texture gradients) along the patch's horizontal diameter



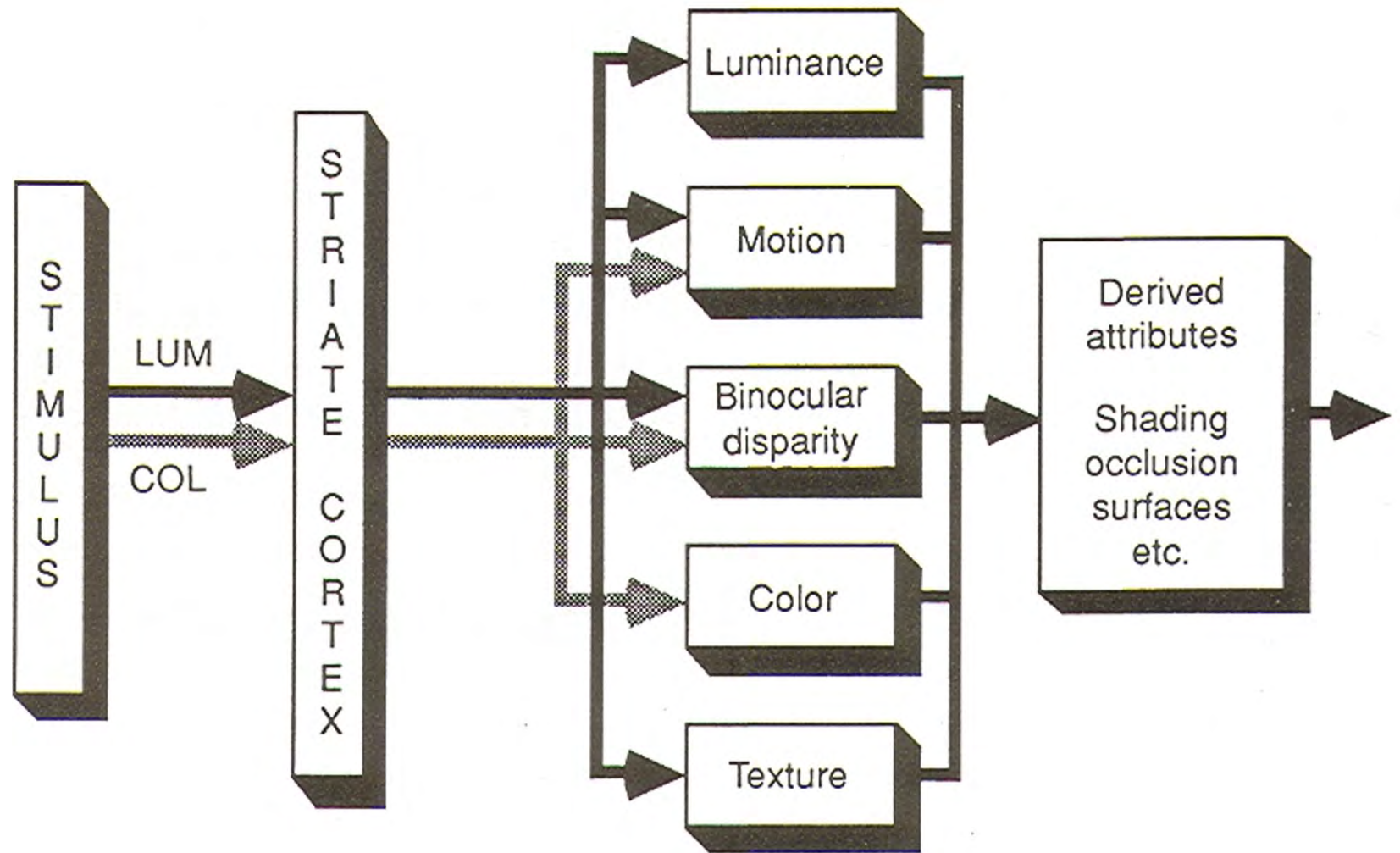
# What features are responsible for perceived edges?



Feature profiles (oriented energy, brightness, color, and texture gradients) along the patch's horizontal diameter



# Contours can be defined by any of a number of cues (P. Cavanagh)





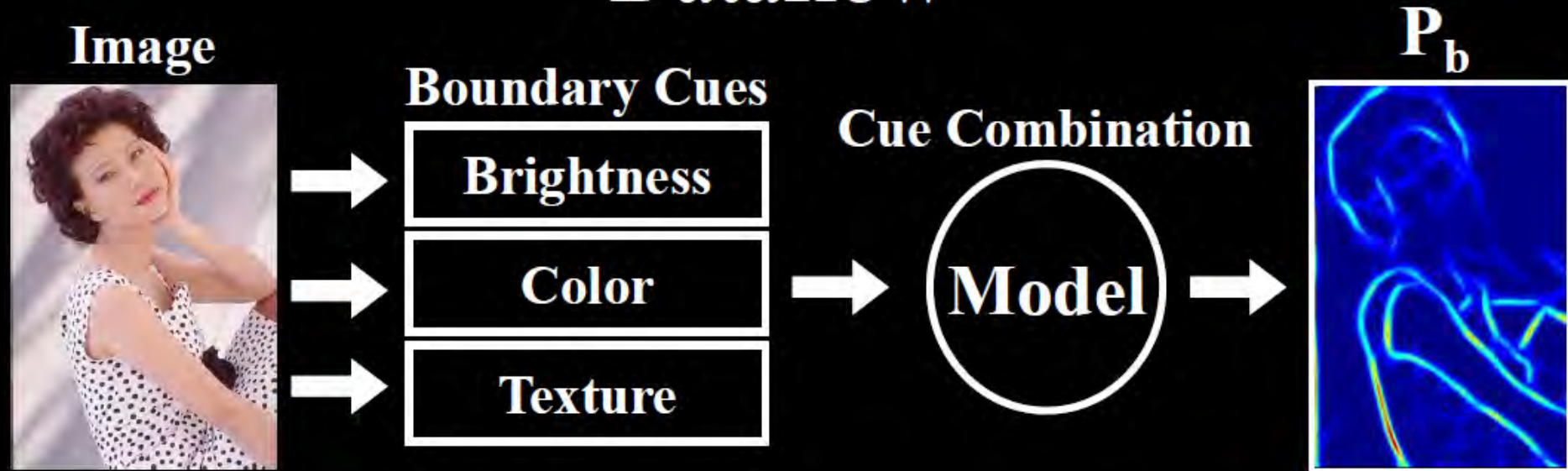
# Boundaries of image regions defined by a number of cues



- Brightness
- Color
- Texture
- Motion (in video)
- Binocular Diparity (if available)
- Familiar objects



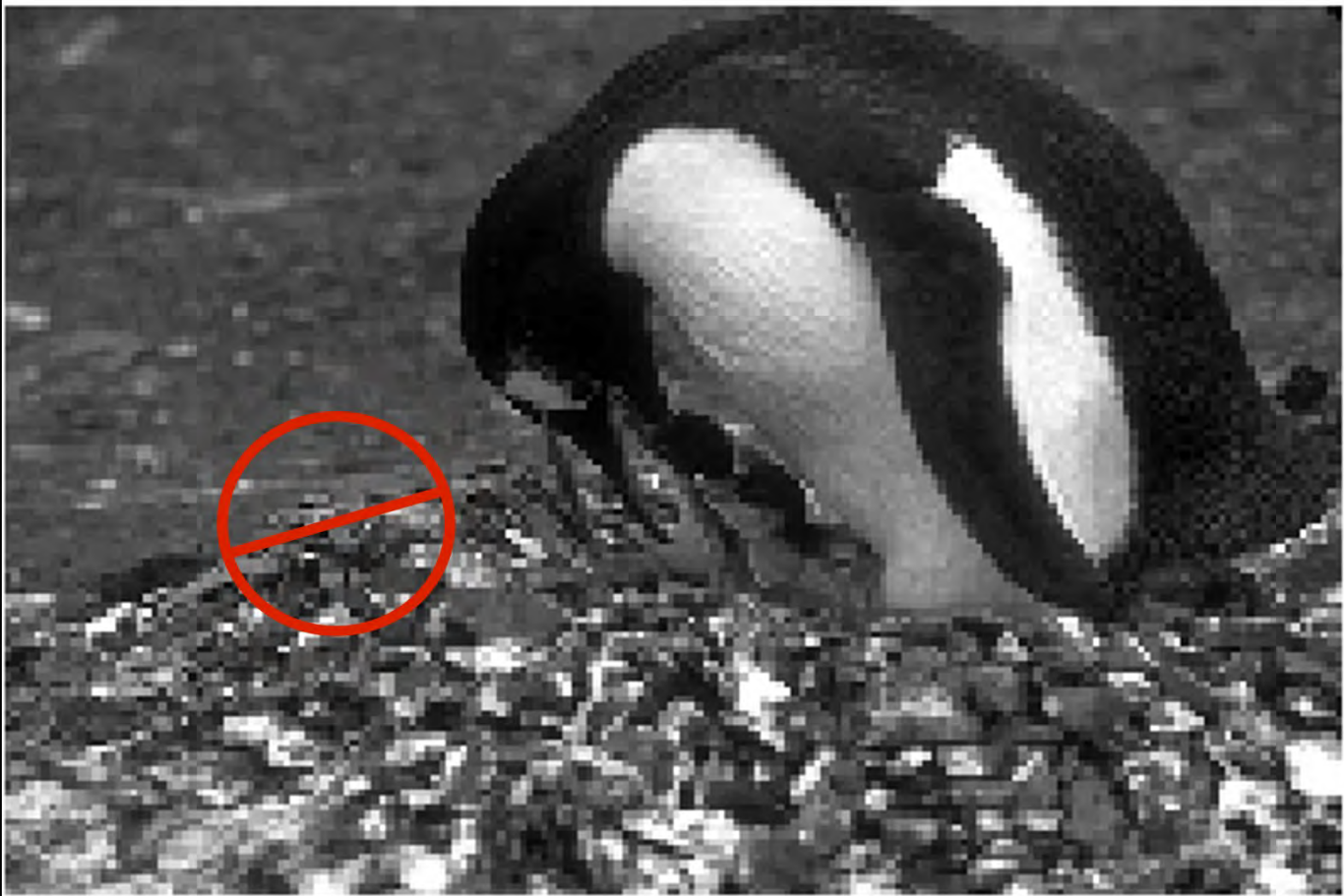
# Dataflow



Challenges: texture cue, cue combination

Goal: learn the posterior probability of a boundary  $P_b(x,y,\theta)$  from local information only

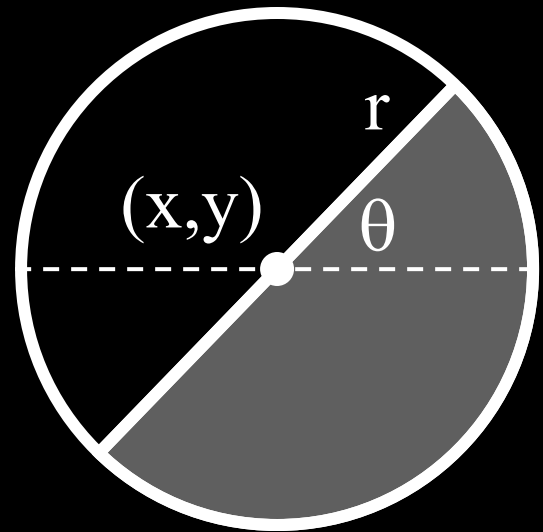
# Oriented Feature Gradient



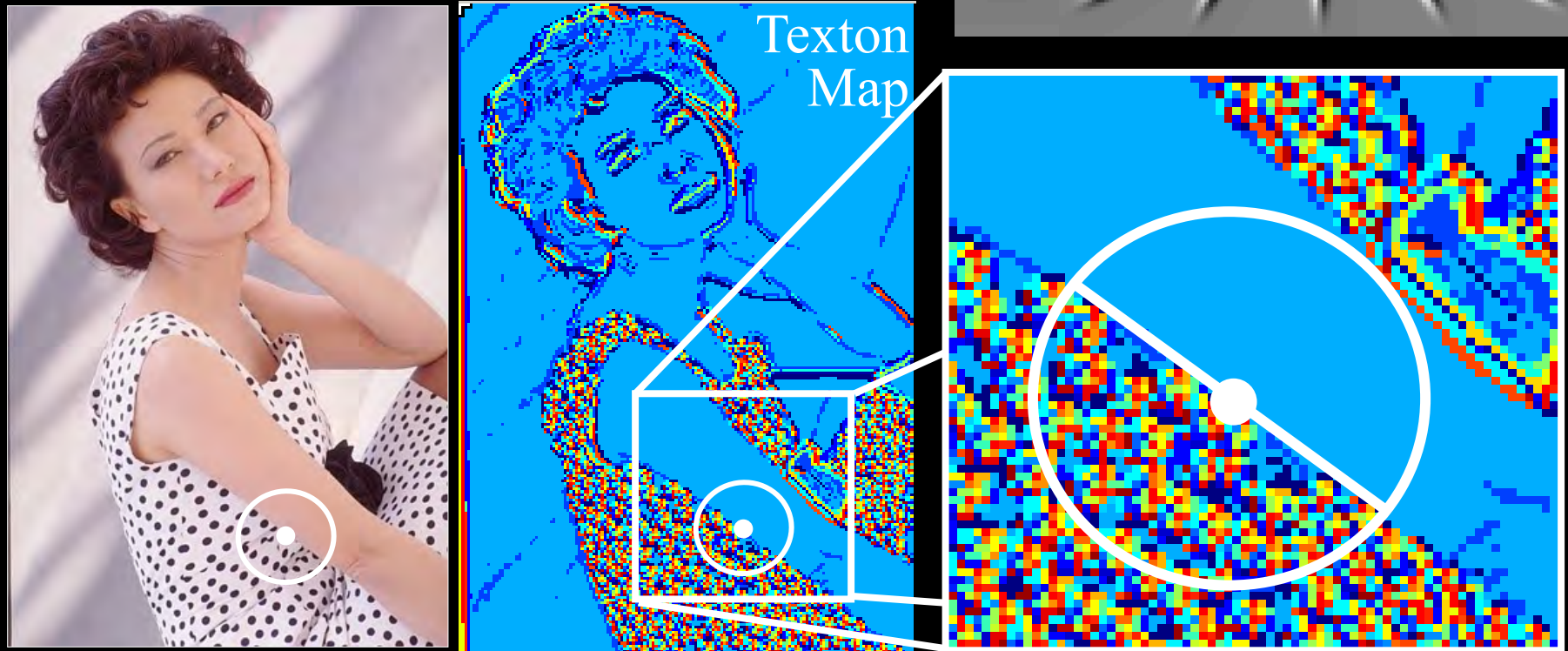
# Brightness and Color Features

- 1976 CIE L\*a\*b\* colorspace
- Brightness Gradient  $BG(x,y,r,\theta)$ 
  - $\chi^2$  difference in L\* distribution
- Color Gradient  $CG(x,y,r,\theta)$ 
  - $\chi^2$  difference in a\* and b\* distributions

$$\chi^2(g, h) = \frac{1}{2} \sum_i \frac{(g_i - h_i)^2}{g_i + h_i}$$



# Texture Feature

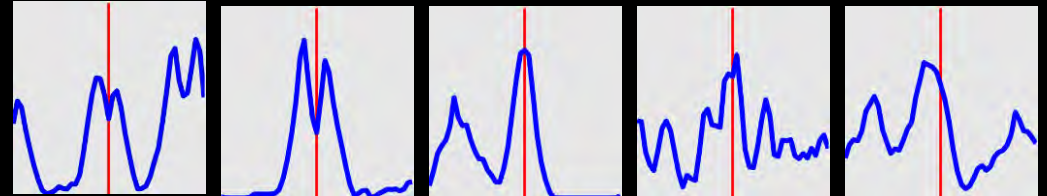
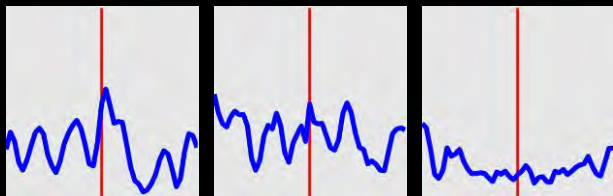


- Texture Gradient  $TG(x,y,r,\theta)$ 
  - $\chi^2$  difference of texton histograms
  - Textons are vector-quantized filter outputs

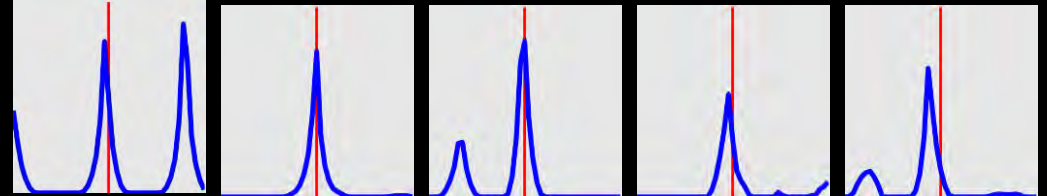
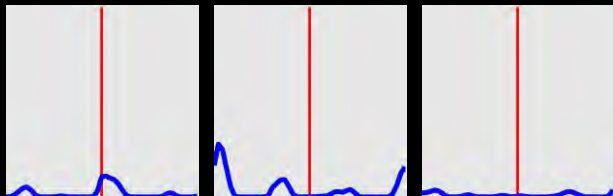
# Boundary Localization

— Non-Boundaries —

———— Boundaries —————

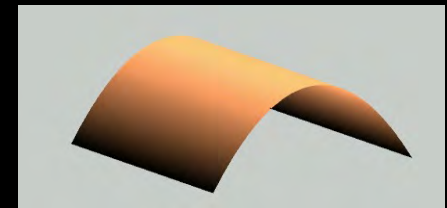


TG



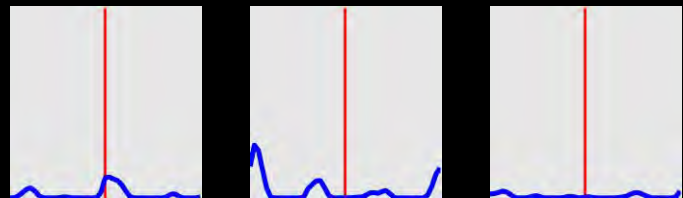
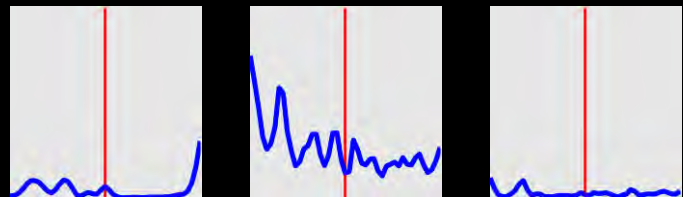
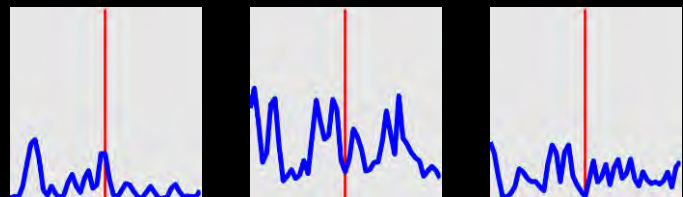
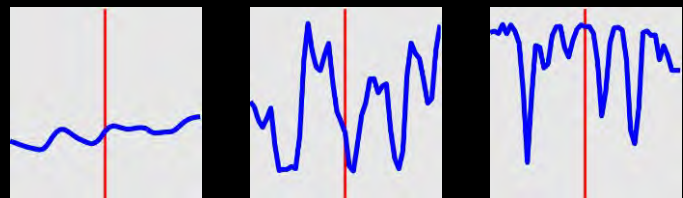
$\hat{TG}$

(1) Fit cylindrical parabolae to raw oriented signal to get local shape: (Savitsky-Golay)



(2) Localize peaks:  $\hat{f} = \tilde{f} \cdot \left( \frac{-f''}{|f'| + \varepsilon} \right)$

Non-Boundaries



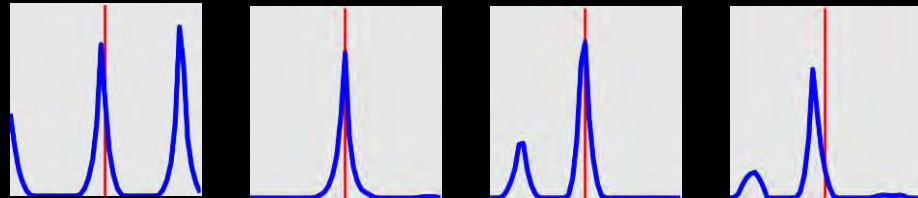
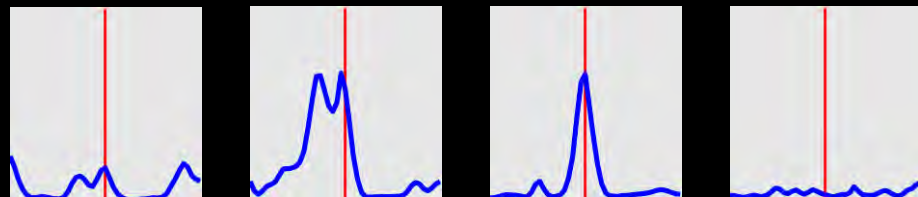
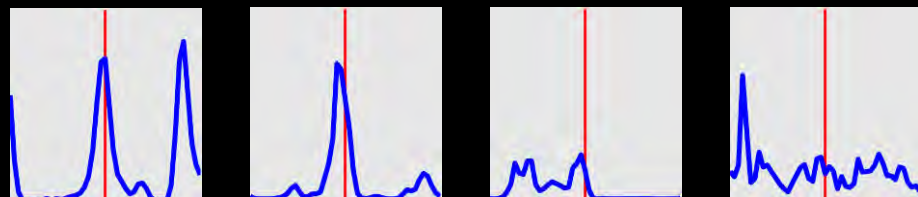
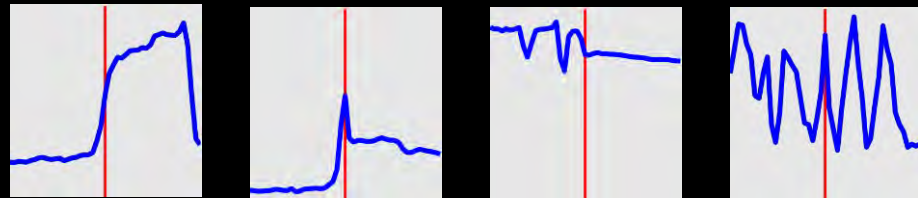
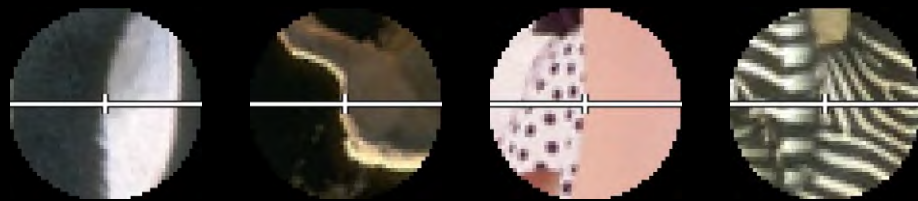
I

B

C

T

Boundaries





# Cue Combination Models

- Classification Trees
    - Top-down splits to maximize entropy, error bounded
  - Density Estimation
    - Adaptive bins using k-means
  - Logistic Regression, 3 variants
    - Linear and quadratic terms
    - Confidence-rated generalization of AdaBoost (Schapire&Singer)
  - Hierarchical Mixtures of Experts (Jordan&Jacobs)
    - Up to 8 experts, initialized top-down, fit with EM
  - Support Vector Machines (`libsvm`, Chang&Lin)
    - Gaussian kernel,  $\nu$ -parameterization
- Range over bias, complexity, parametric/non-parametric

# Computing Precision/Recall

**Recall** =  $\Pr(\text{signal}|\text{truth})$  = fraction of ground truth found by the signal

**Precision** =  $\Pr(\text{truth}|\text{signal})$  = fraction of signal that is correct

- Always a trade-off between the two
- Standard measures in information retrieval (van Rijsbergen XX)
- ROC from standard signal detection the wrong approach

## Strategy

- Detector output ( $P_b$ ) is a soft boundary map
- Compute precision/recall curve:
  - Threshold  $P_b$  at many points  $t$  in  $[0,1]$
  - $\text{Recall} = \Pr(P_b > t | \text{seg}=1)$
  - $\text{Precision} = \Pr(\text{seg}=1 | P_b > t)$

# ROC vs. Precision/Recall

$$F = \max_t \left\{ \frac{2pr}{p+r} \right\}$$

		Truth	
		P	N
Signal	P	TP	FP
	N	FN	TN

## ROC Curve

Hit Rate =  $TP / (TP+FN) =$  

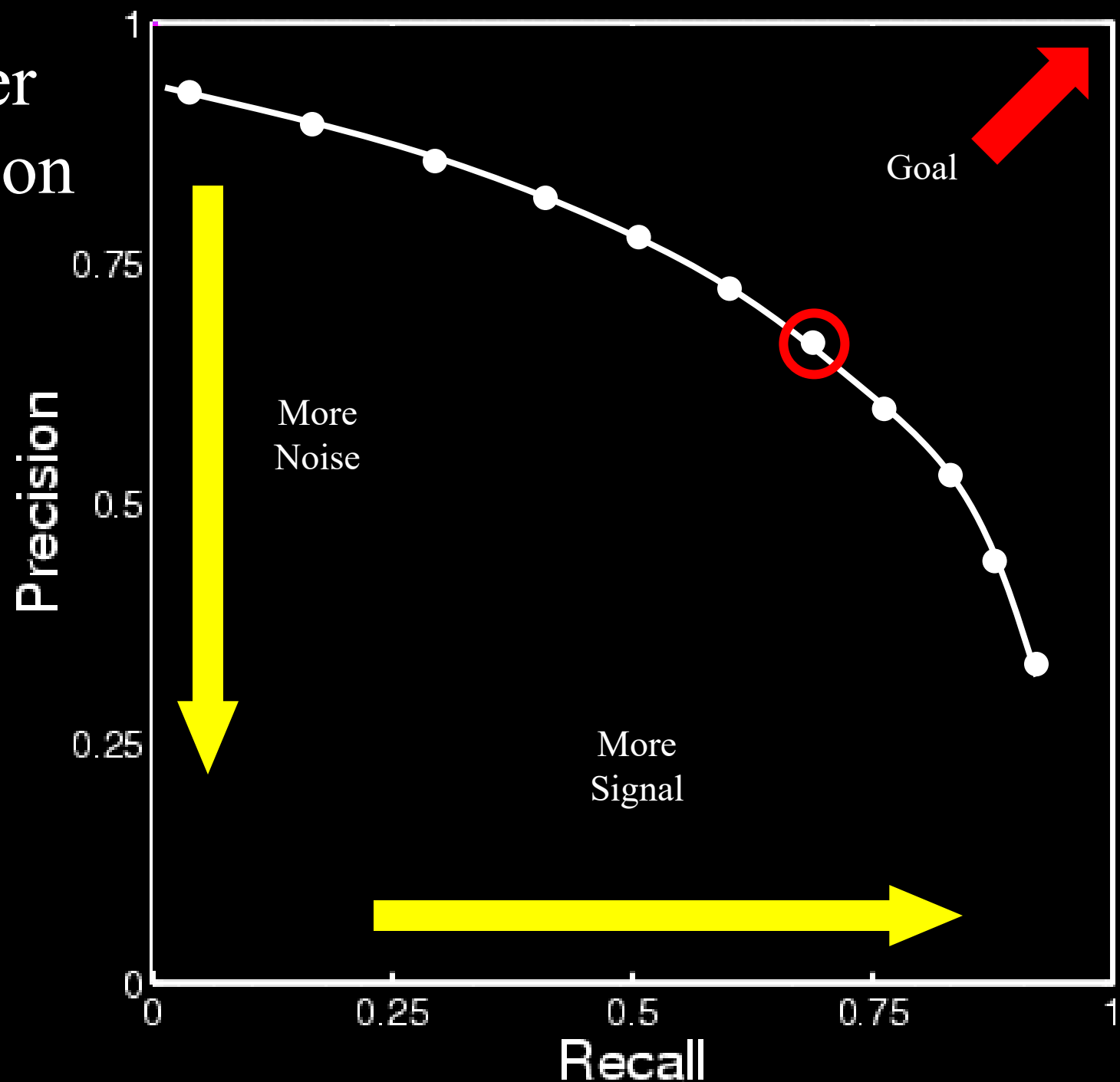
False Alarm Rate =  $FP / (FP+TN) =$  

## PR Curve

Precision =  $TP / (TP+FP) =$  

Recall =  $TP / (TP+FN) =$  

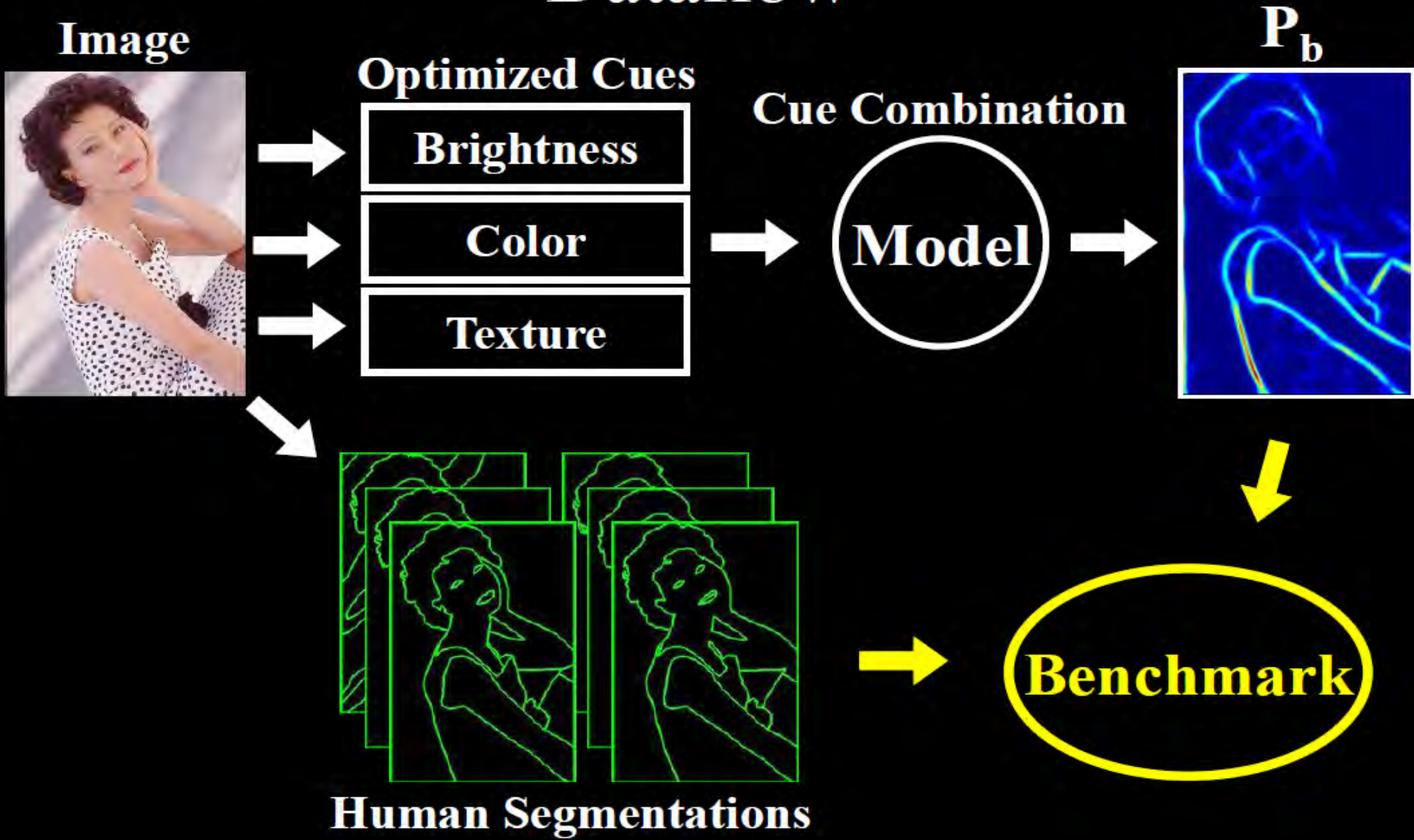
# Classifier Comparison



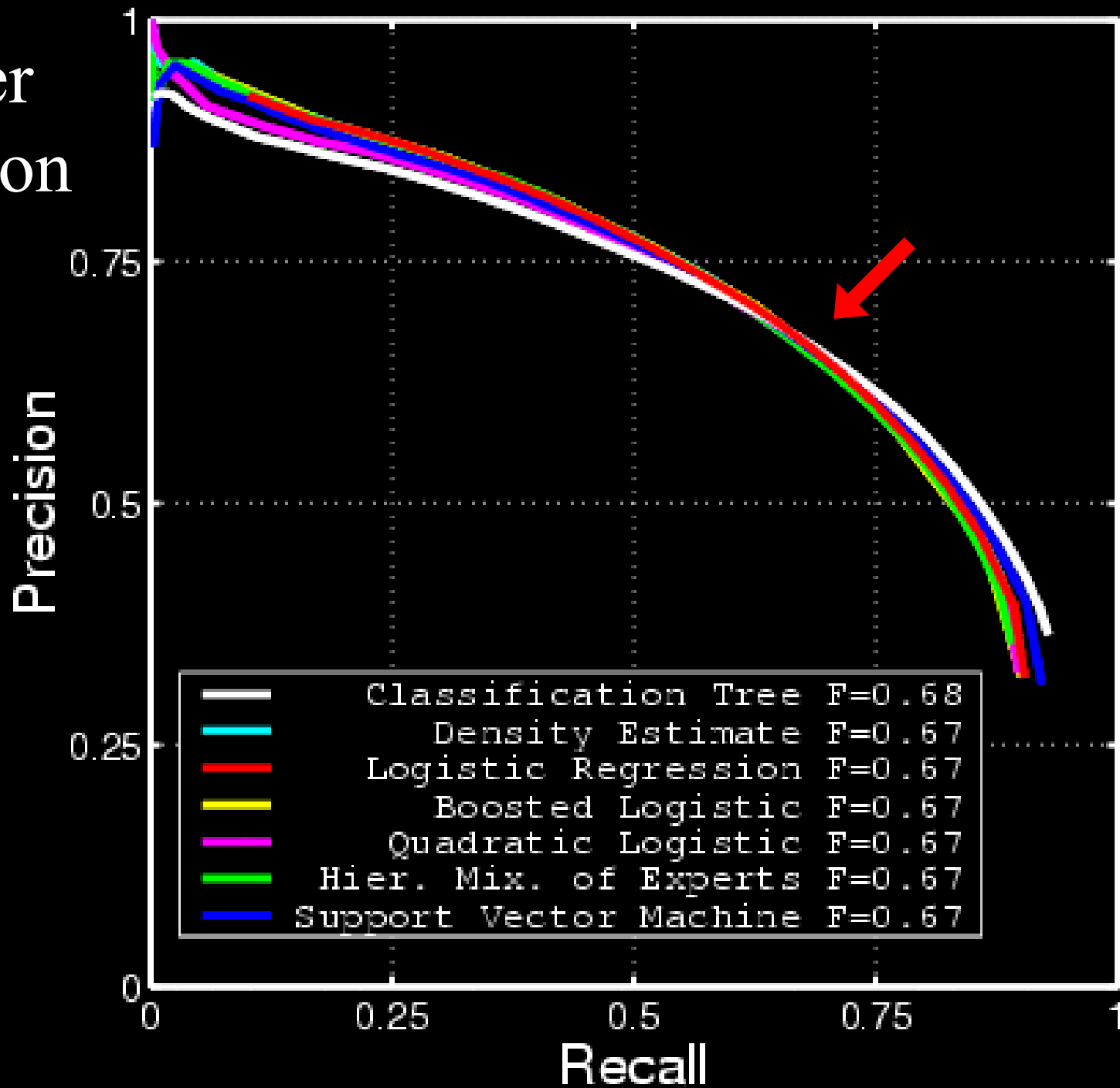
# Cue Calibration

- All free parameters optimized on training data
- All algorithmic alternatives evaluated by experiment
- Brightness Gradient
  - Scale, bin/kernel sizes for KDE
- Color Gradient
  - Scale, bin/kernel sizes for KDE, joint vs. marginals
- Texture Gradient
  - Filter bank: scale, multiscale?
  - Histogram comparison:  $L^1$ ,  $L^2$ ,  $L^\infty$ ,  $\chi^2$ , EMD
  - Number of textons, Image-specific vs. universal textons
- Localization parameters for each cue

# Dataflow

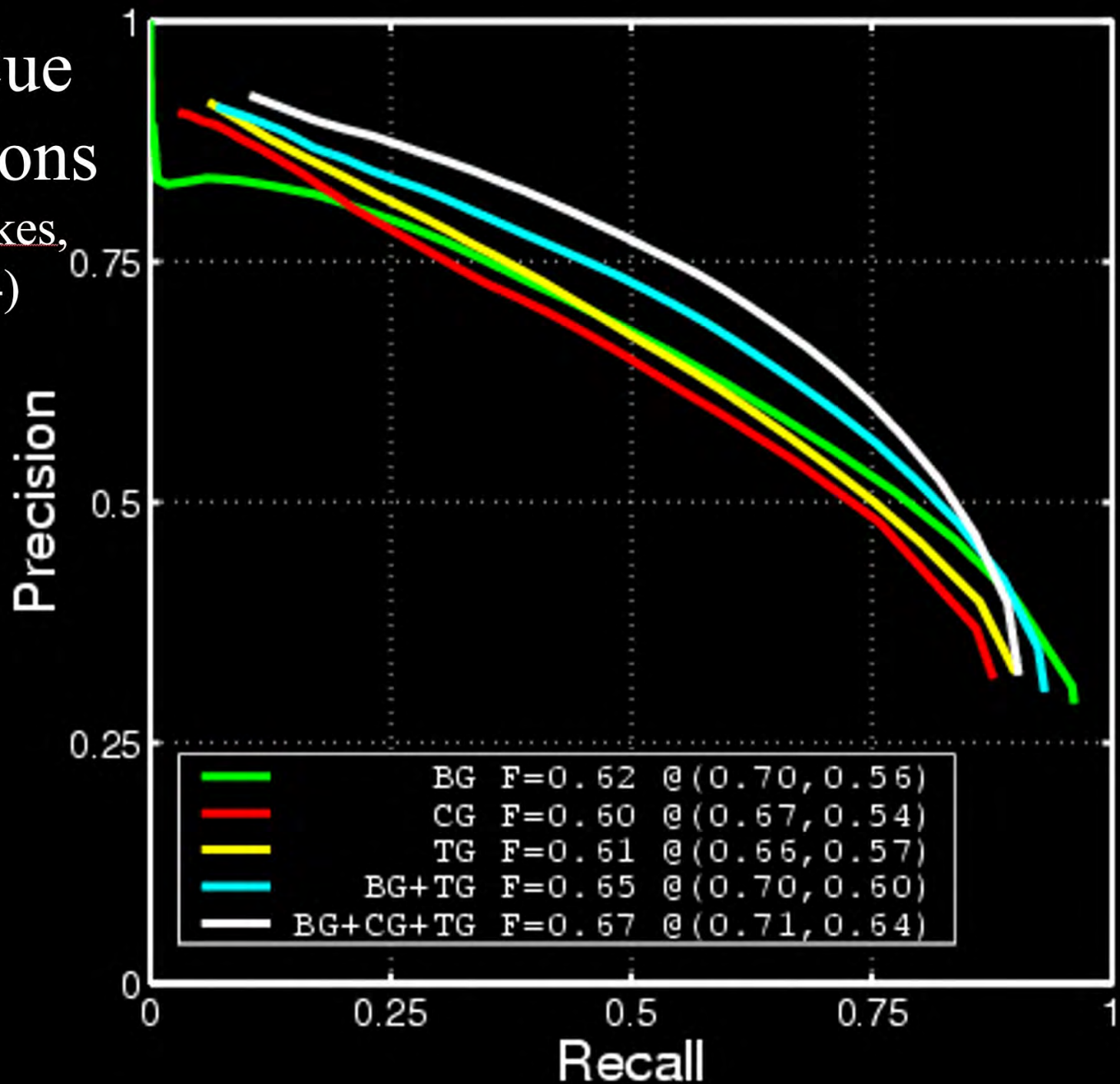


# Classifier Comparison



# Various Cue Combinations

(Martin, Fowlkes, Malik, 2004)





# Alternate Approaches

- Canny Detector
  - Canny 1986
  - MATLAB implementation
  - With and without hysteresis
- Second Moment Matrix
  - Nitzberg/Mumford/Shiota 1993
  - cf. Förstner and Harris corner detectors
  - Used by Konishi et al. 1999 in learning framework
  - Logistic model trained on full eigenspectrum

# $P_b$ Images

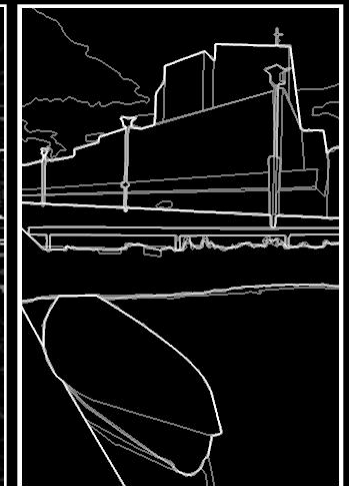
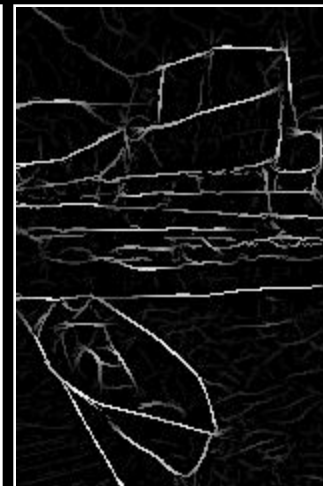
Image

Canny

2MM

Us

Human



# $P_b$ Images II

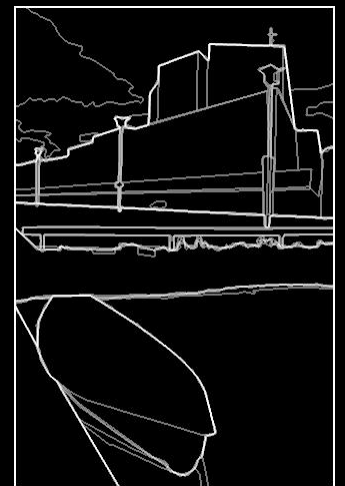
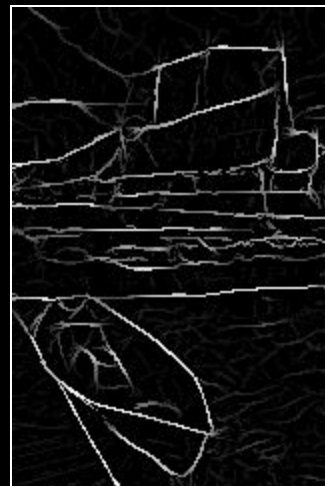
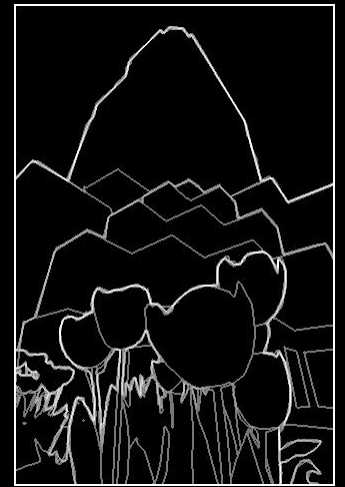
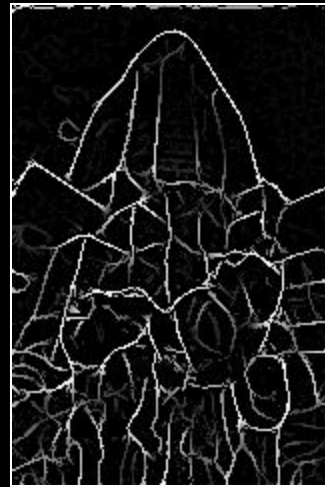
Image

Canny

2MM

Us

Human



# $P_b$ Images III

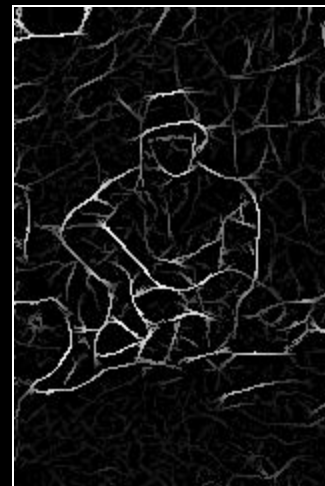
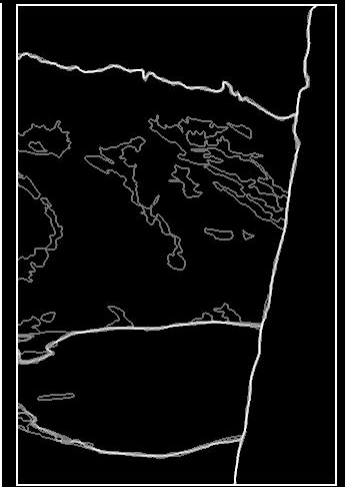
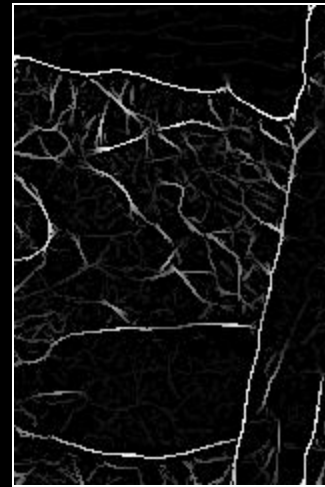
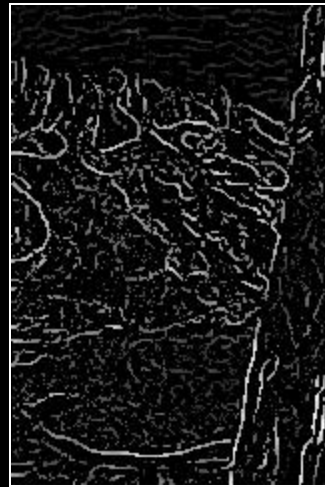
Image

Canny

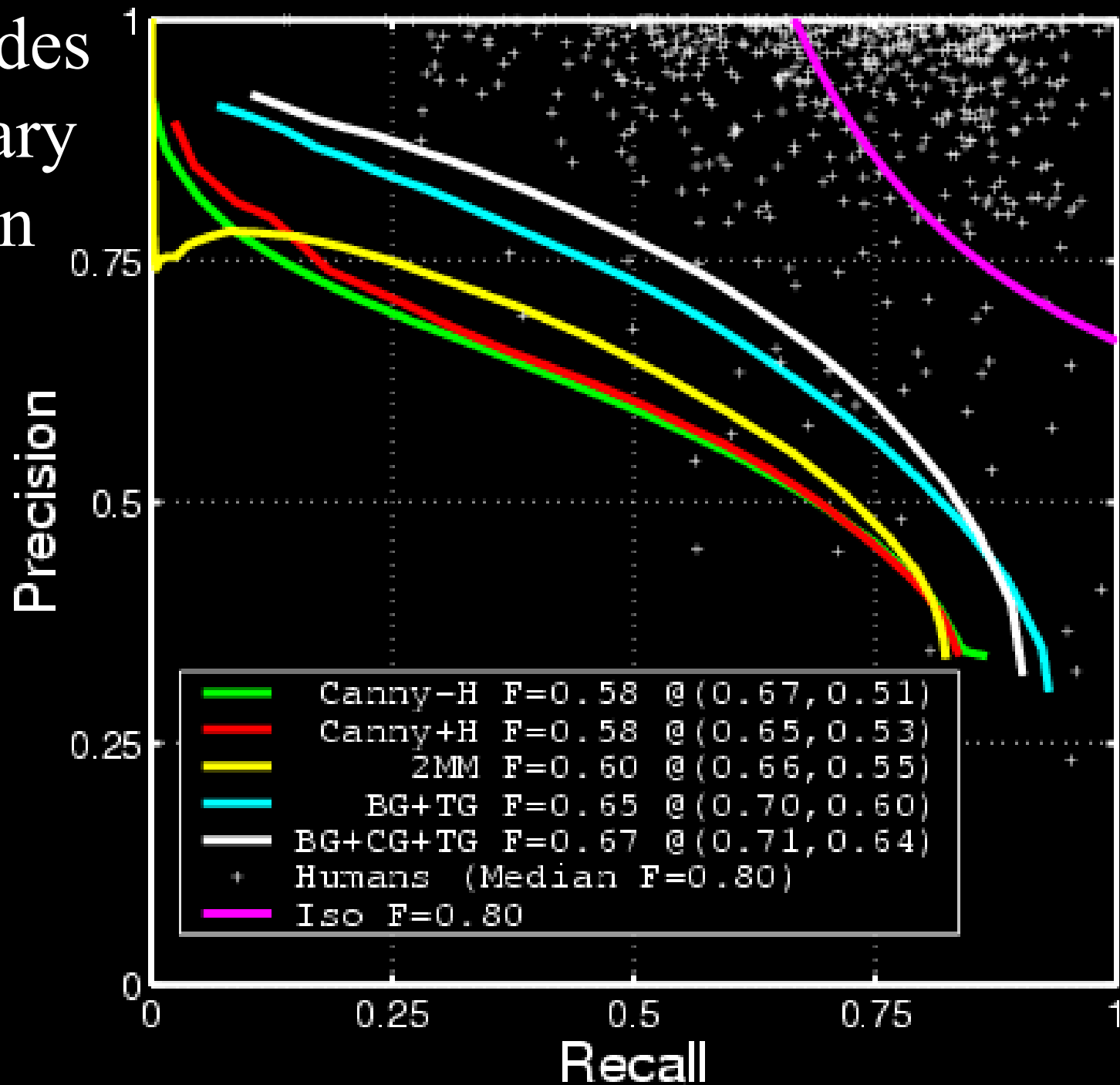
2MM

Us

Human



# Two Decades of Boundary Detection



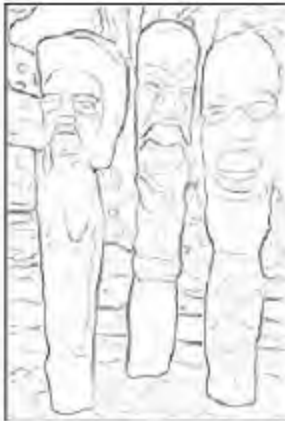
# Findings

1. A simple linear model is sufficient for cue combination
  - All cues weighted approximately equally in logistic
2. Proper texture edge model is not optional for complex natural images
  - Texture suppression is not sufficient!
3. Significant improvement over state-of-the-art in boundary detection
  - $P_b(x,y,\theta)$  useful for higher-level processing
4. Empirical approach critical for both cue calibration and cue combination

Image



BG+CG+TG



Human





Brightness

Color

Texture

Combined

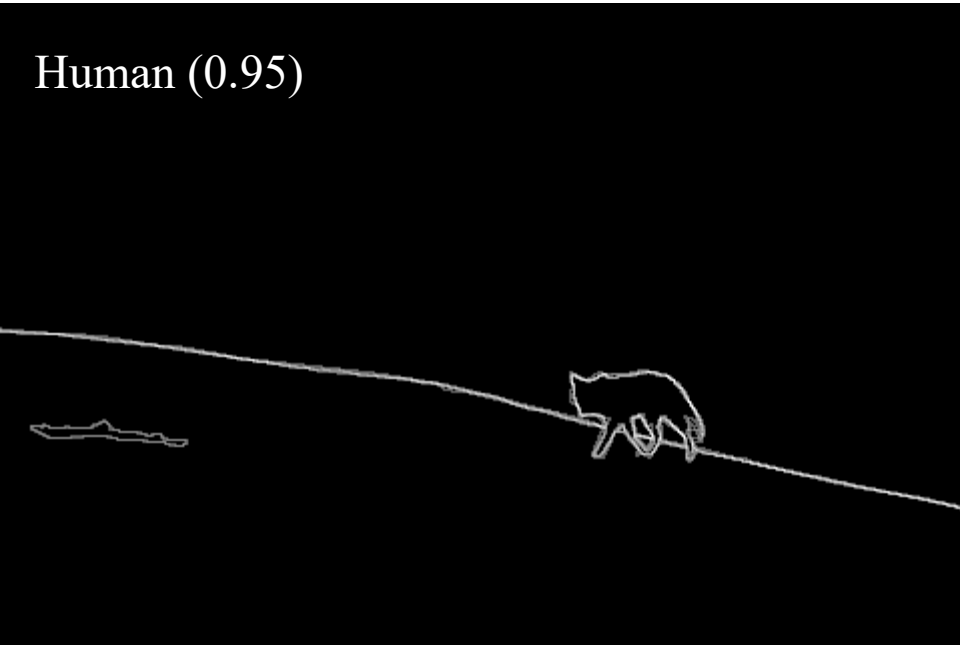
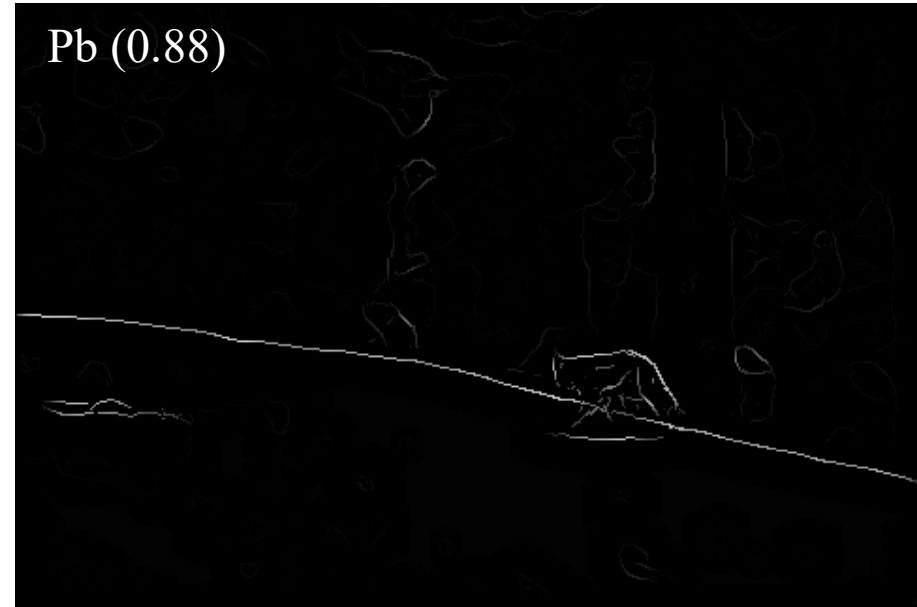
Human





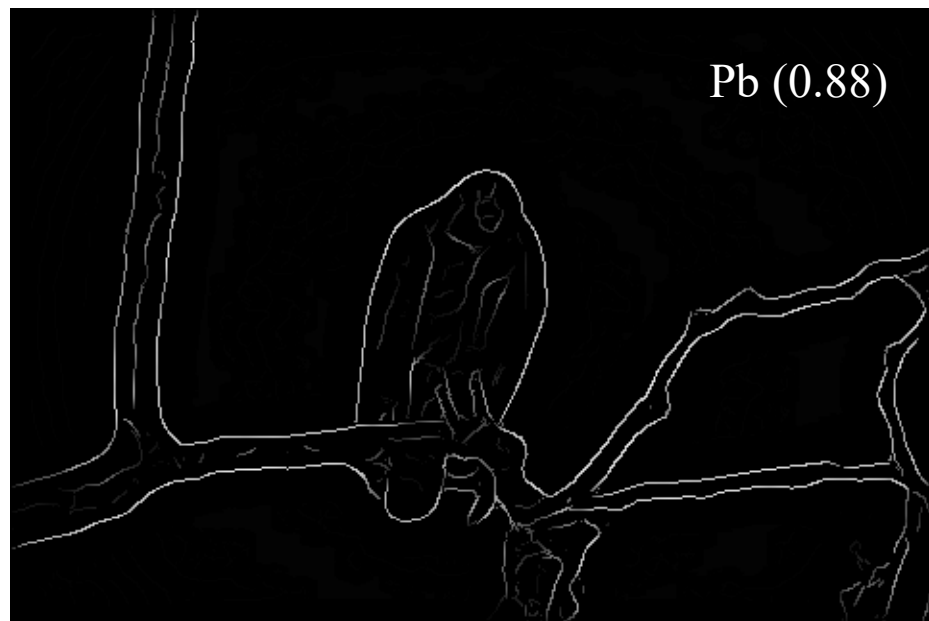
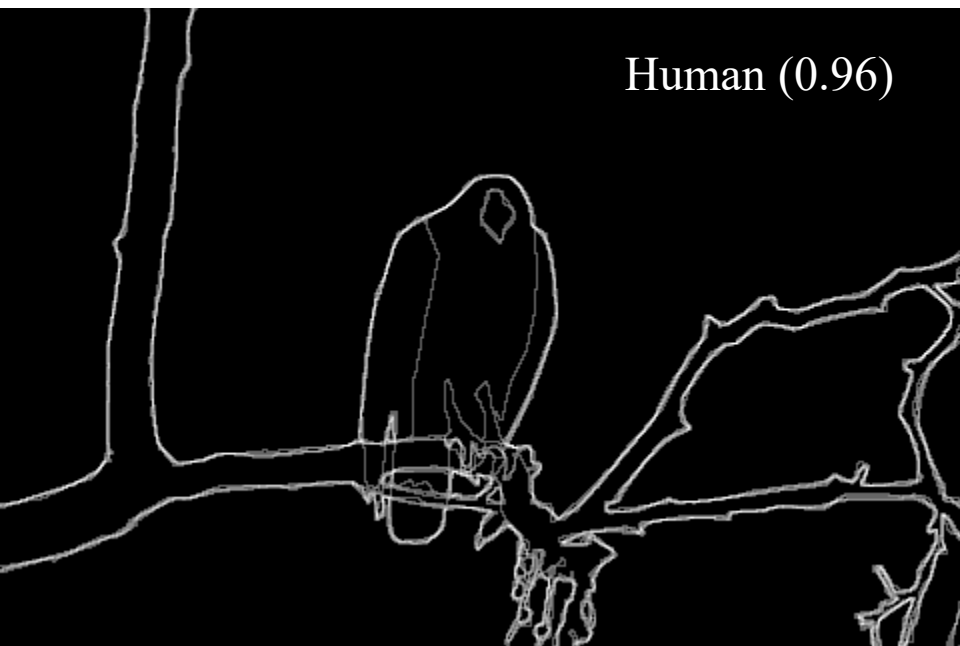


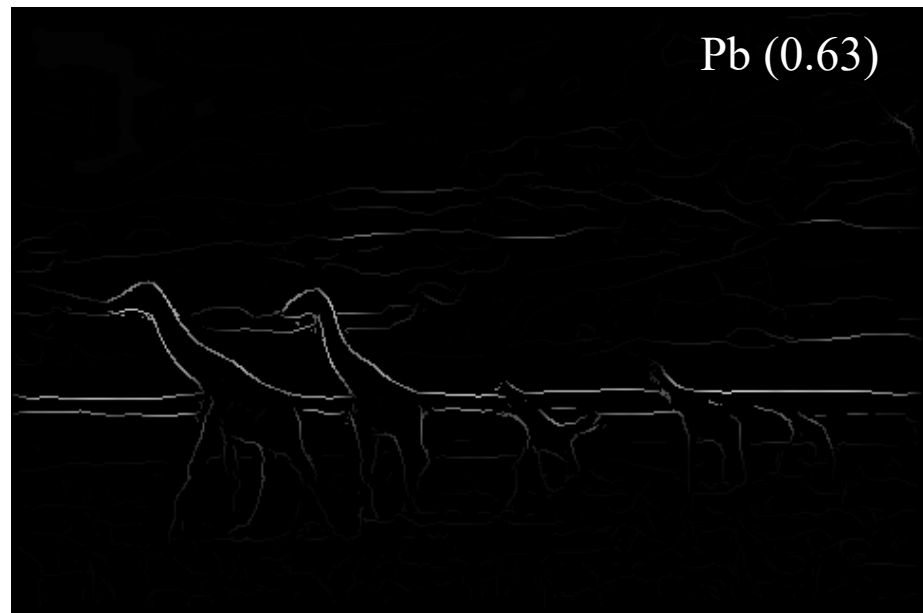
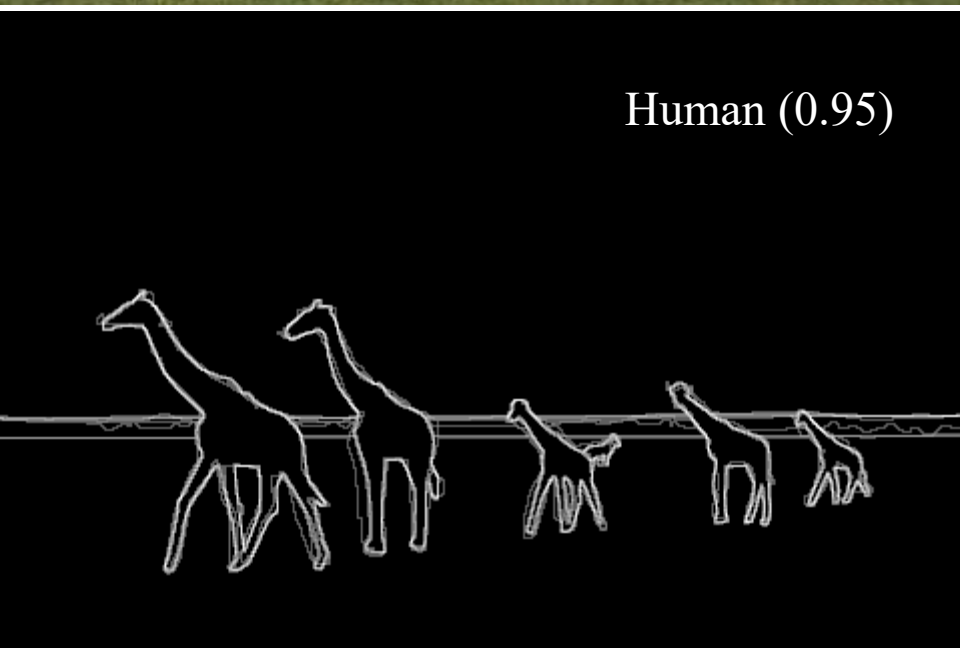
# Results

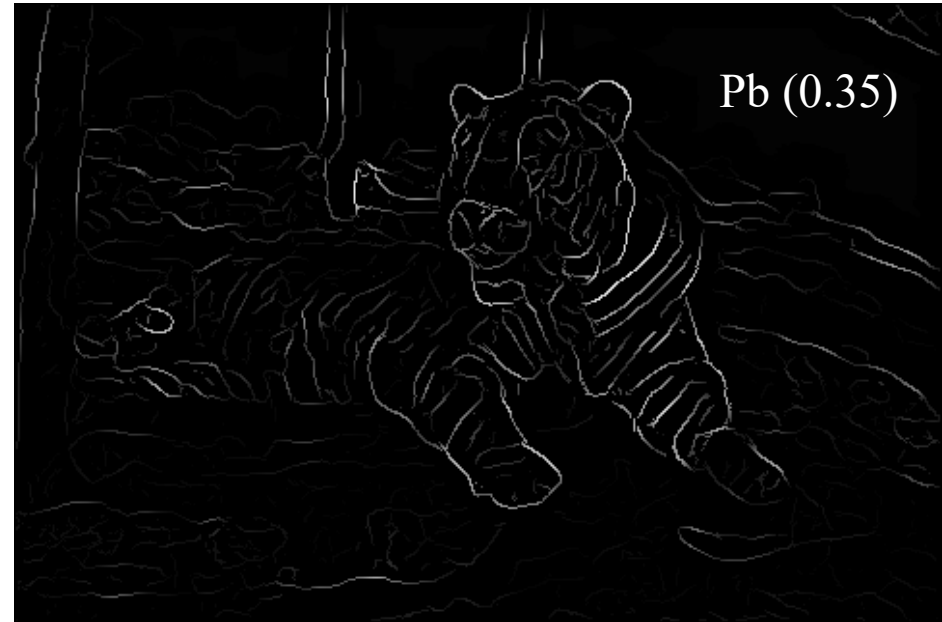




# Results







For more:

<http://www.eecs.berkeley.edu/Research/Projects/CS/vision/bsds/bench/html/108082-color.html>



# Contour Detection and Hierarchical Image Segmentation

Pablo Arbeláez, *Member, IEEE*, Michael Maire, *Member, IEEE*,  
Charless Fowlkes, *Member, IEEE*, and Jitendra Malik, *Fellow, IEEE*.

**Abstract**—This paper investigates two fundamental problems in computer vision: contour detection and image segmentation. We present state-of-the-art algorithms for both of these tasks. Our contour detector combines multiple local cues into a globalization framework based on spectral clustering. Our segmentation algorithm consists of generic machinery for transforming the output of any contour detector into a hierarchical region tree. In this manner, we reduce the problem of image segmentation to that of contour detection. Extensive experimental evaluation demonstrates that both our contour detection and segmentation methods significantly outperform competing algorithms. The automatically generated hierarchical segmentations can be interactively refined by user-specified annotations. Computation at multiple image resolutions provides a means of coupling our system to recognition applications.

# Exploiting global constraints: Image Segmentation as Graph Partitioning



V: image pixels

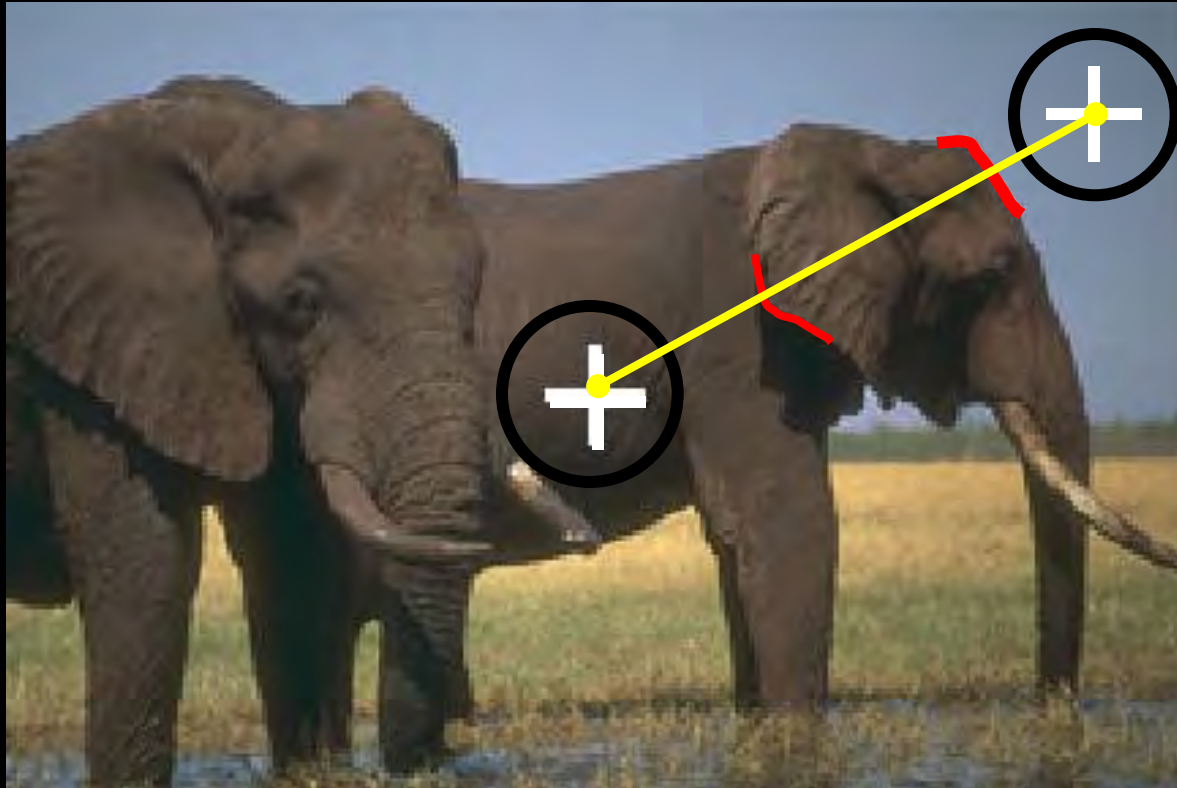
E: connections between  
pairs of nearby pixels

Partition graph so that similarity within group is large and similarity between groups is small -- *Normalized Cuts*

[Shi & Malik 97]

$W_{ij}$  small when intervening contour strong, small when weak..

$C_{ij} = \max P_b(x,y)$  for  $(x,y)$  on line segment  $ij$ ;  $W_{ij} = \exp(-C_{ij} / \sigma)$



# Spectral Pb



Fig. 7. **Spectral Pb.** **Left:** Image. **Middle Left:** The thinned non-max suppressed multiscale Pb signal defines a sparse affinity matrix connecting pixels within a fixed radius. Pixels  $i$  and  $j$  have a low affinity as a strong boundary separates them, whereas  $i$  and  $k$  have high affinity. **Middle:** First four generalized eigenvectors resulting from spectral clustering. **Middle Right:** Partitioning the image by running K-means clustering on the eigenvectors erroneously breaks smooth regions. **Right:** Instead, we compute gradients of the eigenvectors, transforming them back into a contour signal.

$$sPb(x, y, \theta) = \sum_{k=1}^n \frac{1}{\sqrt{\lambda_k}} \cdot \nabla_{\theta} \mathbf{v}_k(x, y)$$

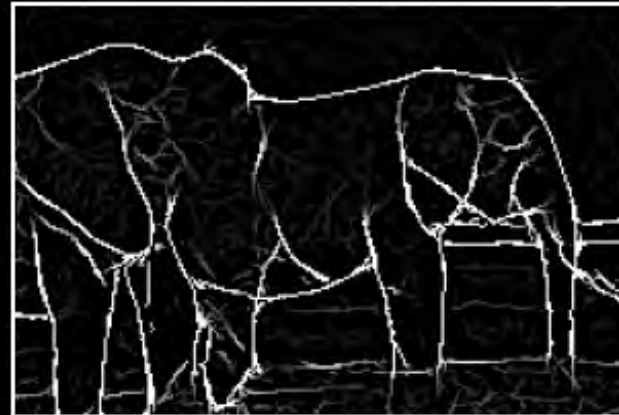




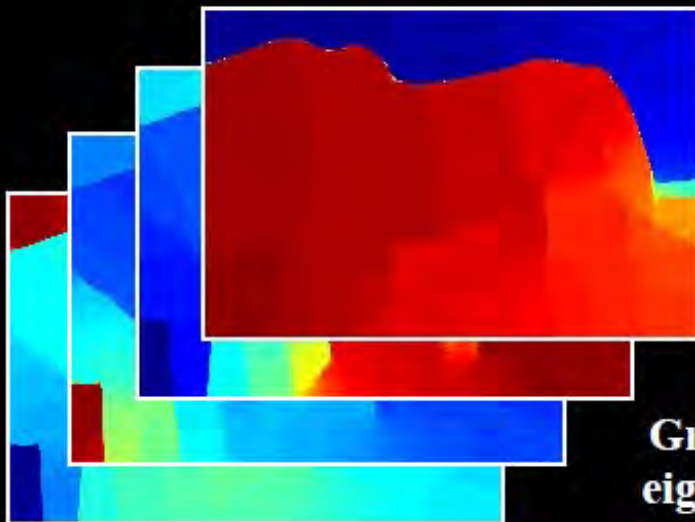
# Global pB boundary detector



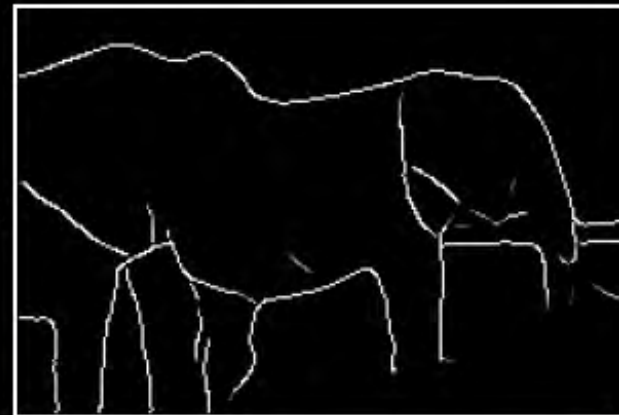
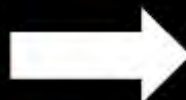
Extract Pb



Compute Eigenvectors



Gradient of eigenvectors





# Contour Detection



- Local and Global cues combination

$$gPb(x, y, \theta) = \sum_s \sum_i \beta_{i,s} G_{i,\sigma(i,s)}(x, y, \theta) + \gamma \cdot sPb(x, y, \theta)$$

where  $s$  indexes scales,  $i$  indexes feature channels (brightness, color a, color b, texture), and  $G_{i,\sigma(i,s)}(x, y, \theta)$  measures the histogram difference in channel  $i$  between



# Global $pB$ boundary detector

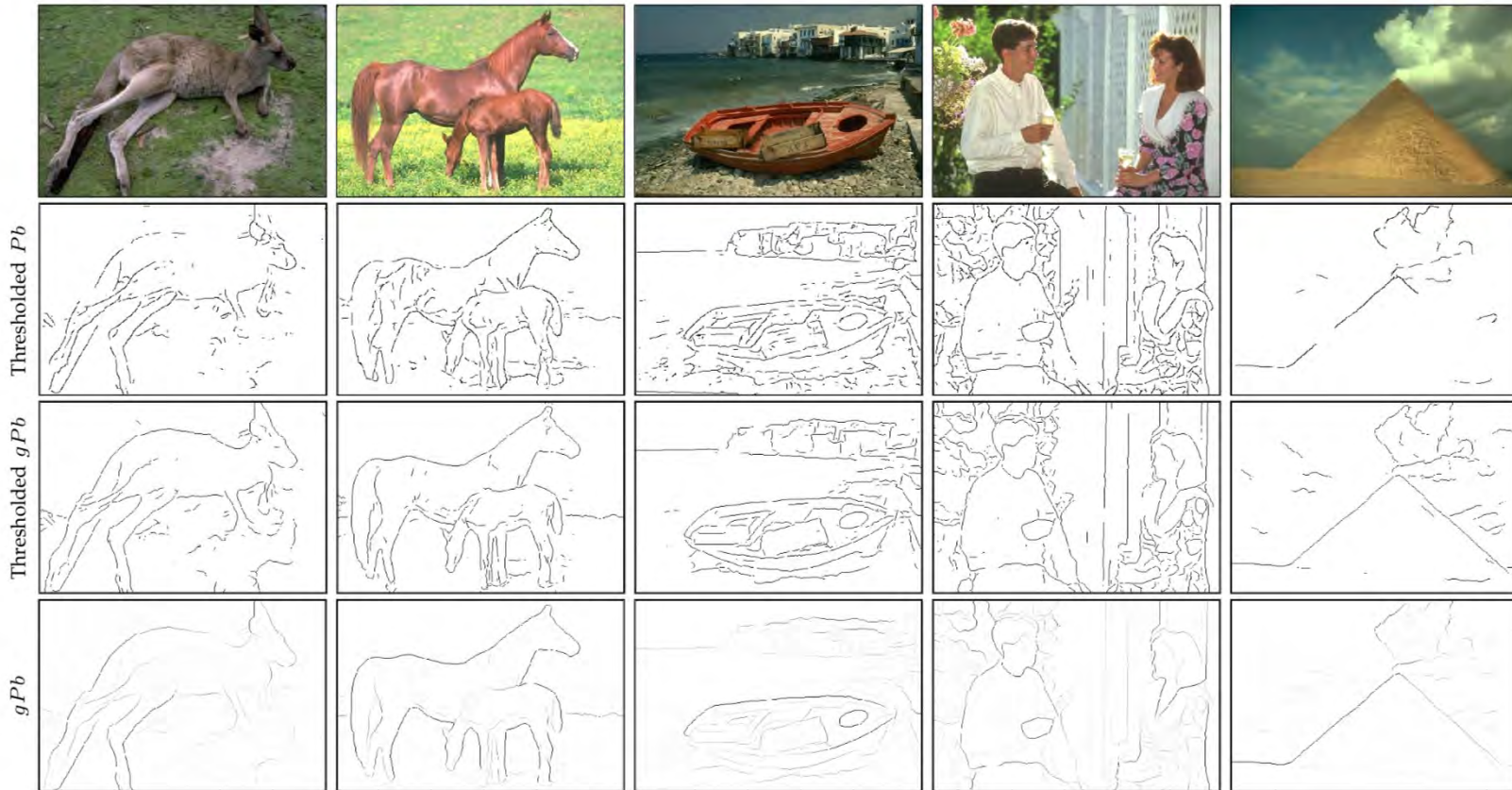
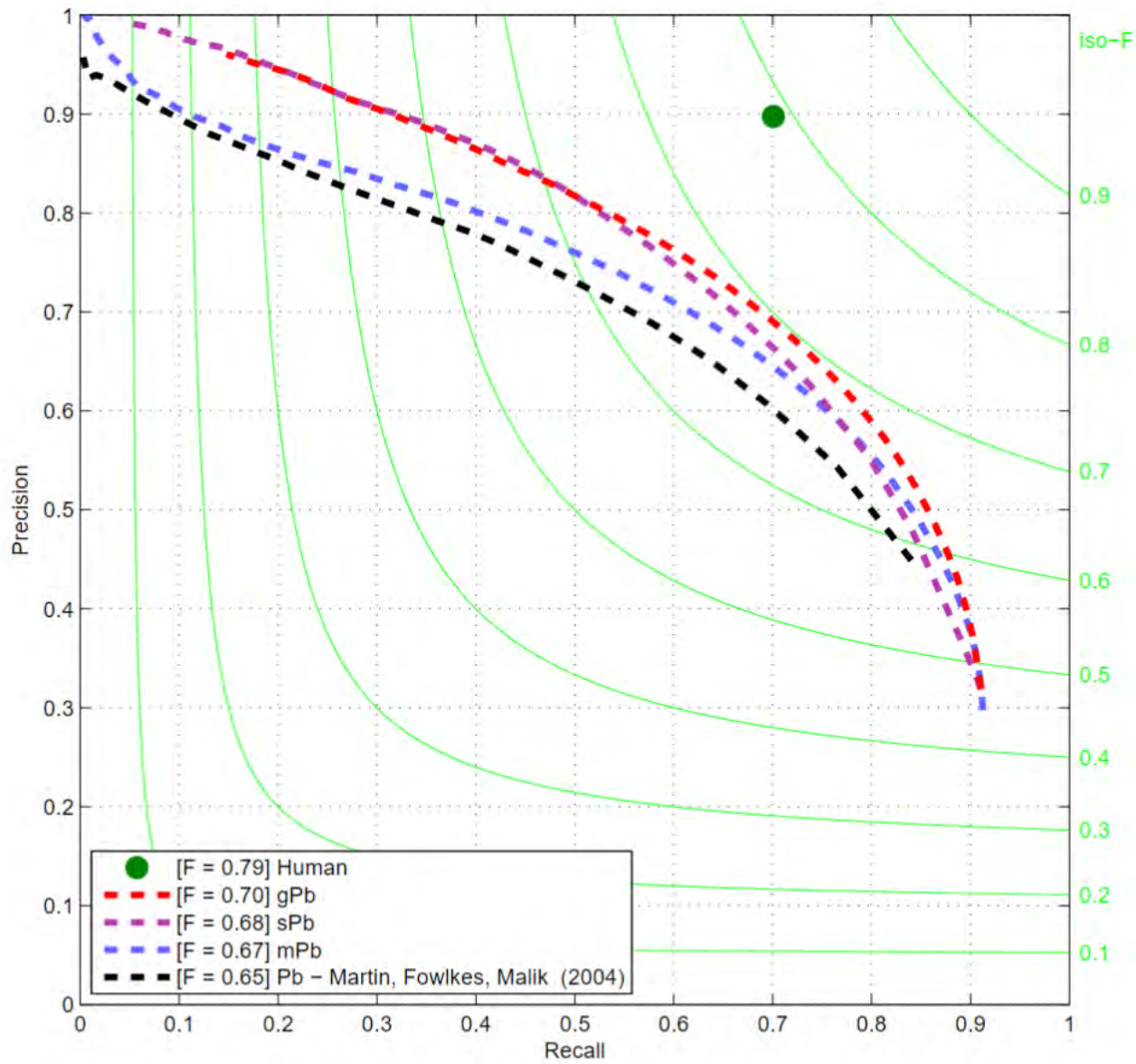
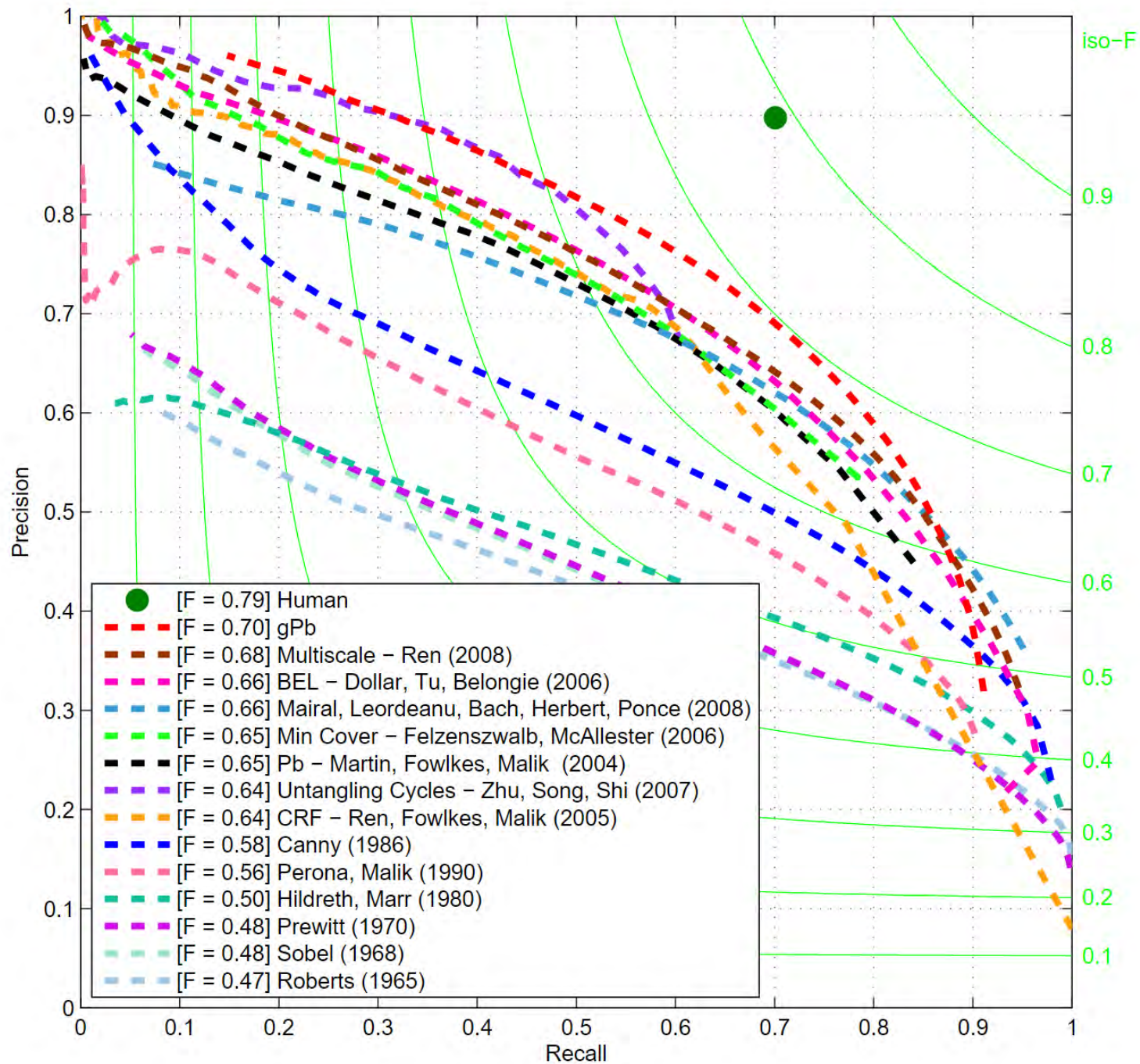


Fig. 9. **Benefits of globalization.** When compared with the local detector  $P_b$ , our detector  $gP_b$  reduces clutter and completes contours. The thresholds shown correspond to the points of maximal F-measure on the curves in Figure 1.







# Fast Edge Detection Using Structured Forests

Piotr Dollár and C. Lawrence Zitnick

**Abstract**—Edge detection is a critical component of many vision systems, including object detectors and image segmentation algorithms. Patches of edges exhibit well-known forms of local structure, such as straight lines or T-junctions. In this paper we take advantage of the structure present in local image patches to learn both an accurate and computationally efficient edge detector. We formulate the problem of predicting local edge masks in a structured learning framework applied to random decision forests. Our novel approach to learning decision trees robustly maps the structured labels to a discrete space on which standard information gain measures may be evaluated. The result is an approach that obtains realtime performance that is orders of magnitude faster than many competing state-of-the-art approaches, while also achieving state-of-the-art edge detection results on the BSDS500 Segmentation dataset and NYU Depth dataset. Finally, we show the potential of our approach as a general purpose edge detector by showing our learned edge models generalize well across datasets.

**Index Terms**—Edge detection, segmentation, structured random forests, real-time systems, visual features



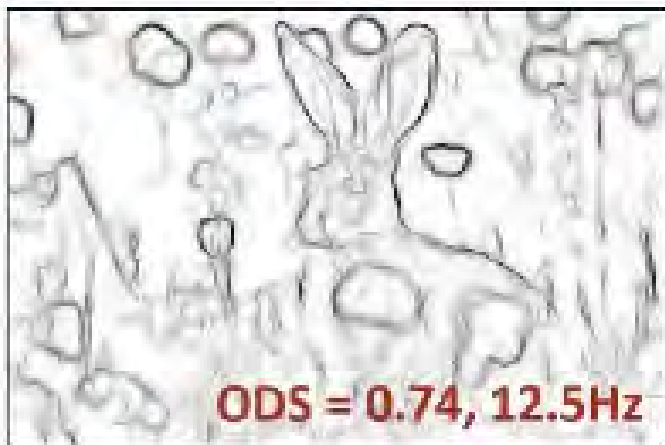
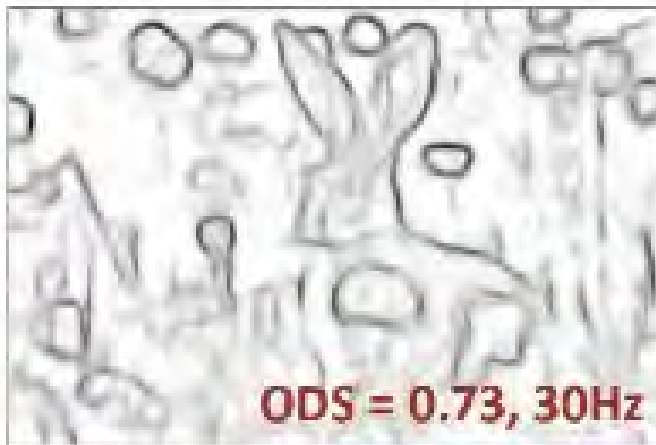
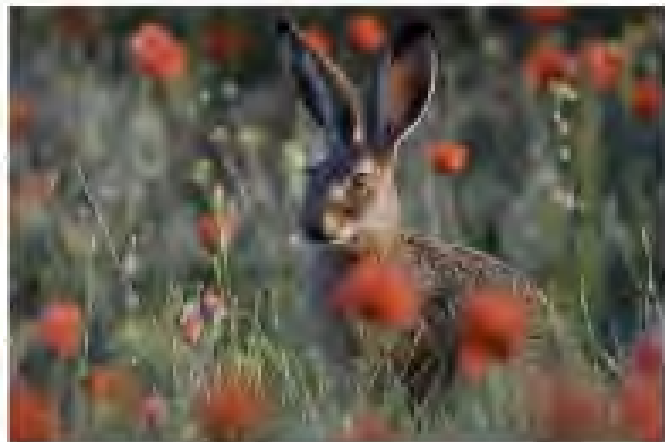


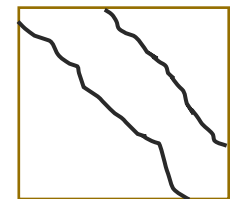
Fig. 1. Edge detection results using three versions of our Structured Edge (SE) detector demonstrating tradeoffs in accuracy vs. runtime. We obtain realtime performance while simultaneously achieving state-of-the-art results. ODS numbers were computed on BSDS [1] on which the popular gPb detector [1] achieves a score of .73. The variants shown include SE, SE+SH, and SE+MS+SH, see §4 for details.



# Edge Detection with Structured Random Forests



- Goal: quickly predict whether each pixel is an edge
- Insights
  - Predictions can be learned from training data
  - Predictions for nearby pixels should not be independent
- Solution
  - Train structured random forests to split data into patches with similar boundaries based on features
  - Predict boundaries at patch level, rather than pixel level, and aggregate (average votes)



Boundaries  
in patch



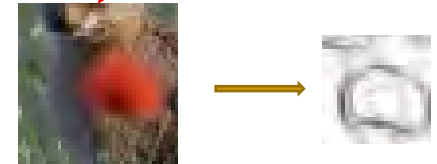
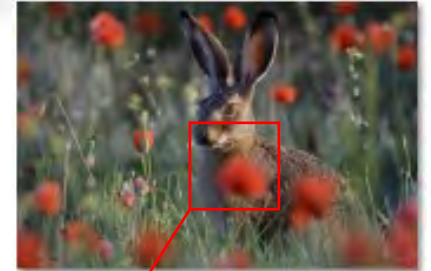


# Edge Detection with Structured Random Forests



## Algorithm

1. Extract overlapping 32x32 patches at three scales
2. Features are pixel values and pairwise differences in feature maps (LUV color, gradient magnitude, oriented gradient)
3. Predict  $T$  boundary maps in the central 16x16 region using  $T$  trained decision trees
4. Average predictions for each pixel across all patches





# Standard Decision Tree Learning



Each tree is trained independently in a recursive manner. For a given node  $j$  and training set  $\mathcal{S}_j \subset \mathcal{X} \times \mathcal{Y}$ , the goal is to find parameters  $\theta_j$  of the split function  $h(x, \theta_j)$  that result in a ‘good’ split of the data. This requires defining an *information gain criterion* of the form:

$$I_j = I(\mathcal{S}_j, \mathcal{S}_j^L, \mathcal{S}_j^R) \quad (2)$$

For multiclass classification ( $\mathcal{Y} \subset \mathbb{Z}$ ) the standard definition of information gain can be used:

$$I_j = H(\mathcal{S}_j) - \sum_{k \in \{L, R\}} \frac{|\mathcal{S}_j^k|}{|\mathcal{S}_j|} H(\mathcal{S}_j^k) \quad (3)$$

where  $H(\mathcal{S}) = -\sum_y p_y \log(p_y)$  denotes the Shannon entropy and  $p_y$  is the fraction of elements in  $\mathcal{S}$  with label  $y$ . Alternatively the Gini impurity  $H(\mathcal{S}) = \sum_y p_y(1 - p_y)$  has also been used in conjunction with Eqn. (3) [6].

For regression, entropy and information gain can be extended to continuous variables [11]. Alternatively, a common approach for single-variate regression ( $\mathcal{Y} = \mathbb{R}$ ) is to minimize the variance of labels at the leaves [6]. If we write the variance as  $H(S) = \frac{1}{|S|} \sum_y (y - \mu)^2$  where  $\mu = \frac{1}{|S|} \sum_y y$ , then substituting  $H$  for entropy in Eqn. (3) leads to the standard criterion for single-variate regression.



# General Information Gain

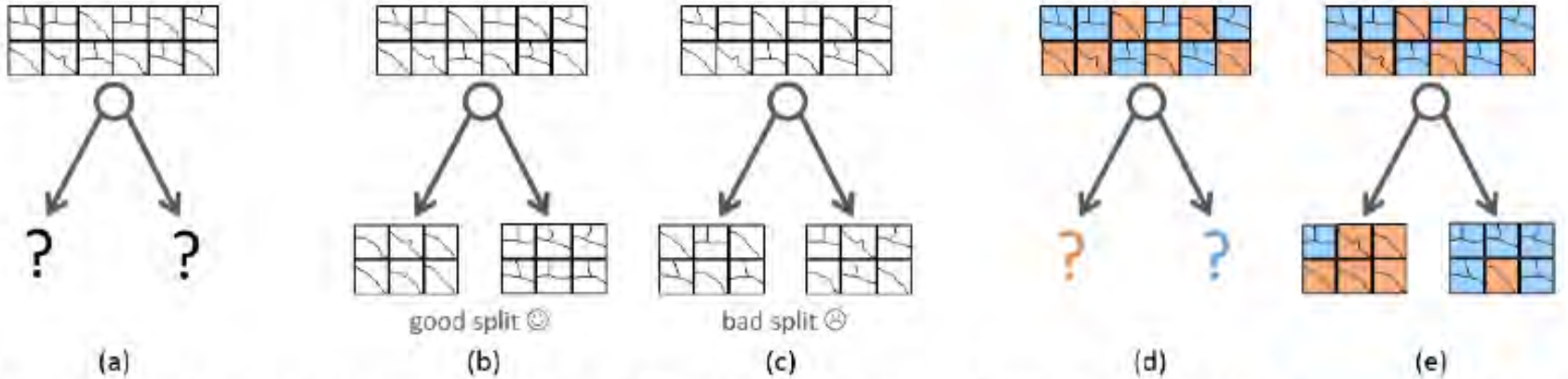
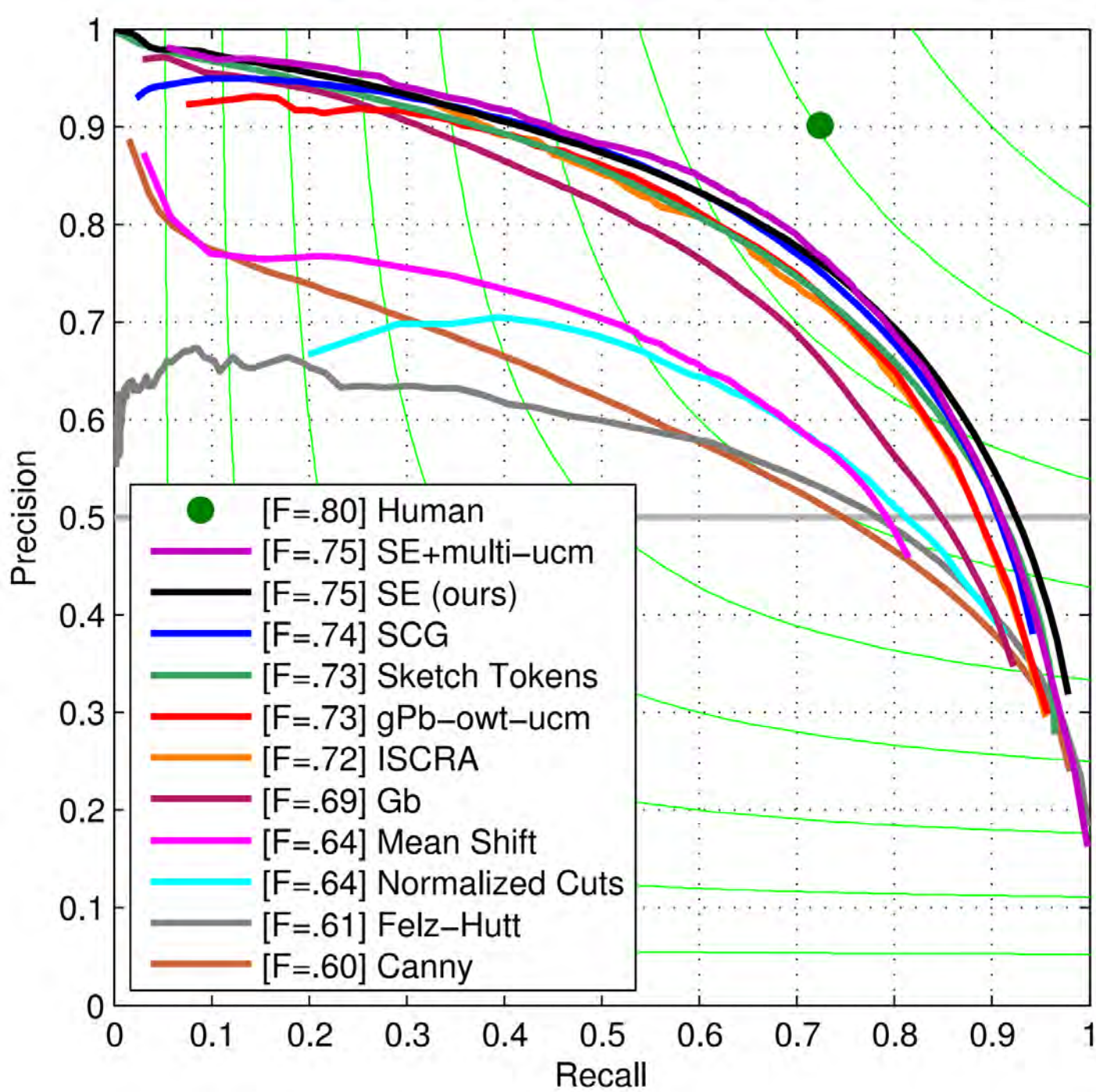


Fig. 2. Illustration of the decision tree node splits: (a) Given a set of structured labels such as segments, a splitting function must be determined. Intuitively a good split (b) groups similar segments, whereas a bad split (c) does not. In practice we cluster the structured labels into two classes (d). Given the class labels, a standard splitting criterion, such as Gini impurity, may be used (e).

Our key assumption is that for many structured output spaces, including for structured learning of edge detection, we can define a mapping of the form:

$$\Pi : \mathcal{Y} \rightarrow \mathcal{Z} \quad (4)$$

We map a set of structured labels  $y \in \mathcal{Y}$  into a discrete set of labels  $c \in \mathcal{C}$ , where  $\mathcal{C} = \{1, \dots, k\}$ , such that labels with similar  $z$  are assigned to the same discrete label  $c$ , see





# Edge Detection with Structured Random Forests



## Results

BSDS 500

	ODS	OIS	AP	FPS
Human	.80	.80	-	-
Canny	.60	.64	.58	15
Felz-Hutt [11]	.61	.64	.56	10
Hidayat-Green [16]	.62 <sup>†</sup>	-	-	20
BEL [9]	.66 <sup>†</sup>	-	-	1/10
gPb + GPU [6]	.70 <sup>†</sup>	-	-	1/2 <sup>‡</sup>
gPb [1]	.71	.74	.65	1/240
gPb-owt-ucm [1]	.73	.76	.73	1/240
Sketch tokens [21]	.73	.75	.78	1
SCG [31]	.74	.76	.77	1/280
SE-SS, $T=1$	.72	.74	.77	<b>60</b>
→ SE-SS, $T=4$	.73	.75	.77	30
SE-MS, $T=4$	.74	.76	.78	6

NYU Depth dataset edges

	ODS	OIS	AP	FPS
gPb [1] (rgb)	.51	.52	.37	1/240
SCG [31] (rgb)	.55	.57	.46	1/280
SE-SS (rgb)	.58	.59	.53	<b>30</b>
SE-MS (rgb)	<b>.60</b>	<b>.61</b>	<b>.56</b>	6
gPb [1] (depth)	.44	.46	.28	1/240
SCG [31] (depth)	.53	.54	.45	1/280
SE-SS (depth)	.57	.58	.54	<b>30</b>
SE-MS (depth)	<b>.58</b>	<b>.59</b>	<b>.57</b>	6
gPb [1] (rgbd)	.53	.54	.40	1/240
SCG [31] (rgbd)	.62	.63	.54	1/280
SE-SS (rgbd)	.62	.63	.59	<b>25</b>
→ SE-MS (rgbd)	<b>.64</b>	<b>.65</b>	<b>.63</b>	5



## Holistically-Nested Edge Detection

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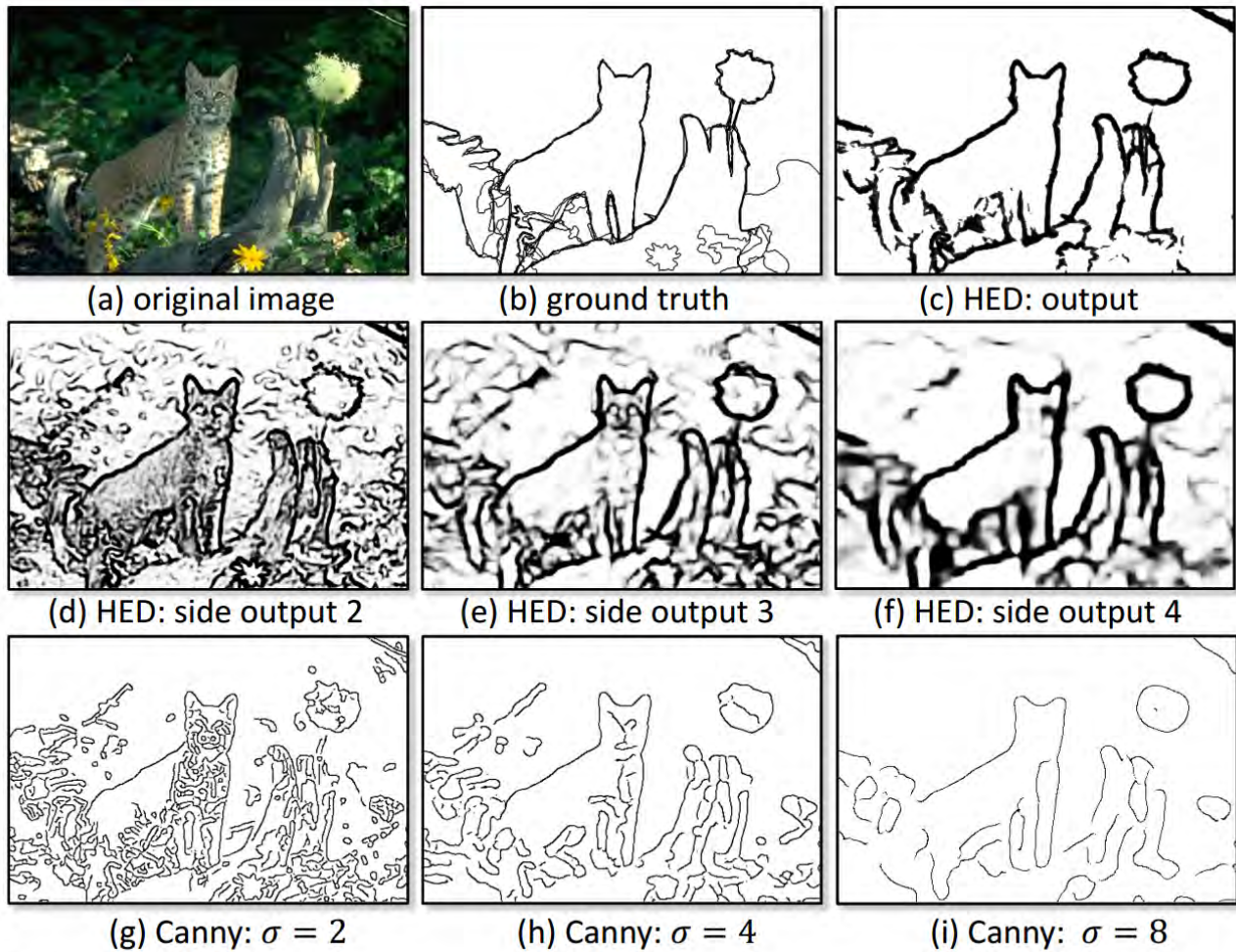


Figure 1. Illustration of the proposed HED algorithm. In the first row: (a) shows an example test image in the BSD500 dataset [28]; (b) shows its corresponding edges as annotated by human subjects; (c) displays the HED results. In the second row: (d), (e), and (f), respectively, show side edge responses from layers 2, 3, and 4 of our convolutional neural networks. In the third row: (g), (h), and (i), respectively, show edge responses from the Canny detector [4] at the scales  $\sigma = 2.0$ ,  $\sigma = 4.0$ , and  $\sigma = 8.0$ . HED shows a clear advantage in consistency over Canny.



# Holistically nested edge detection

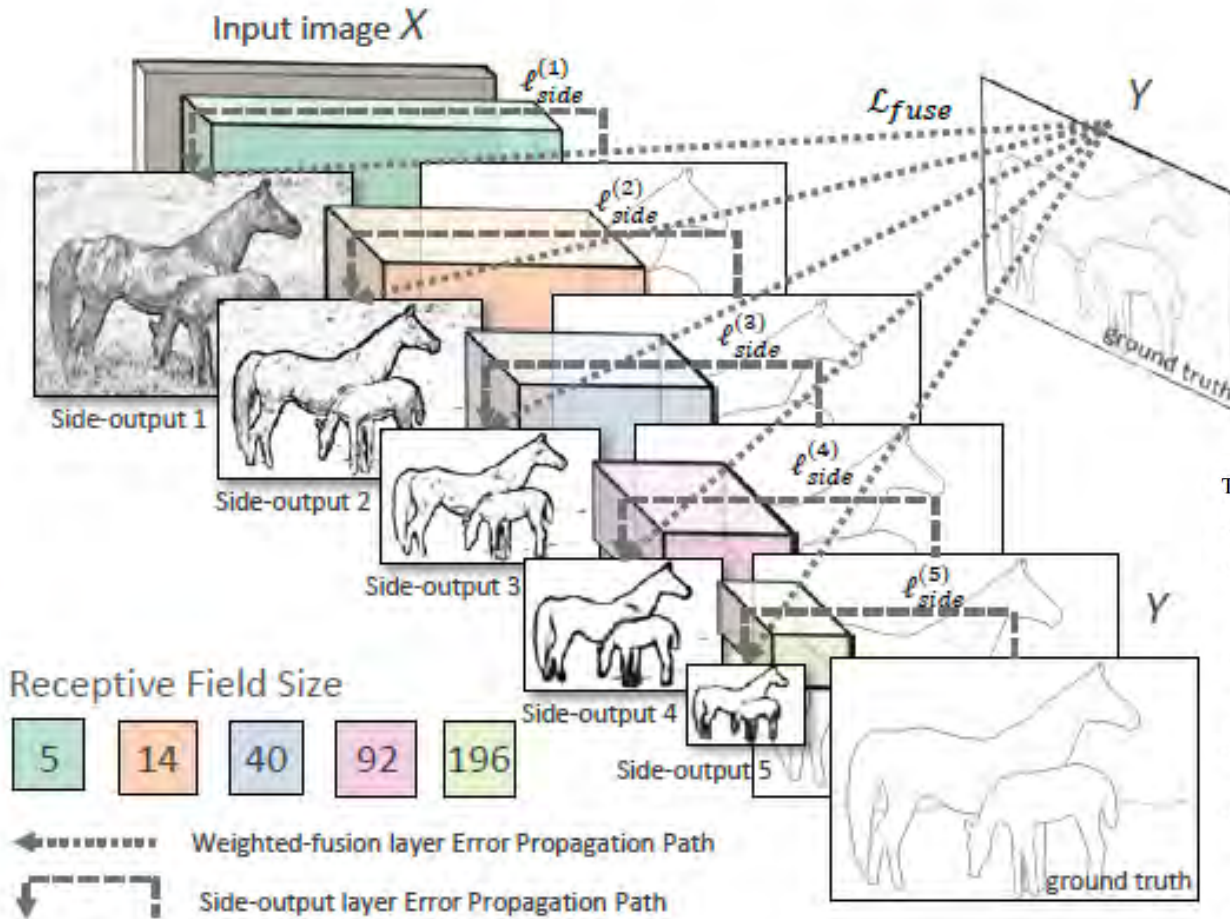
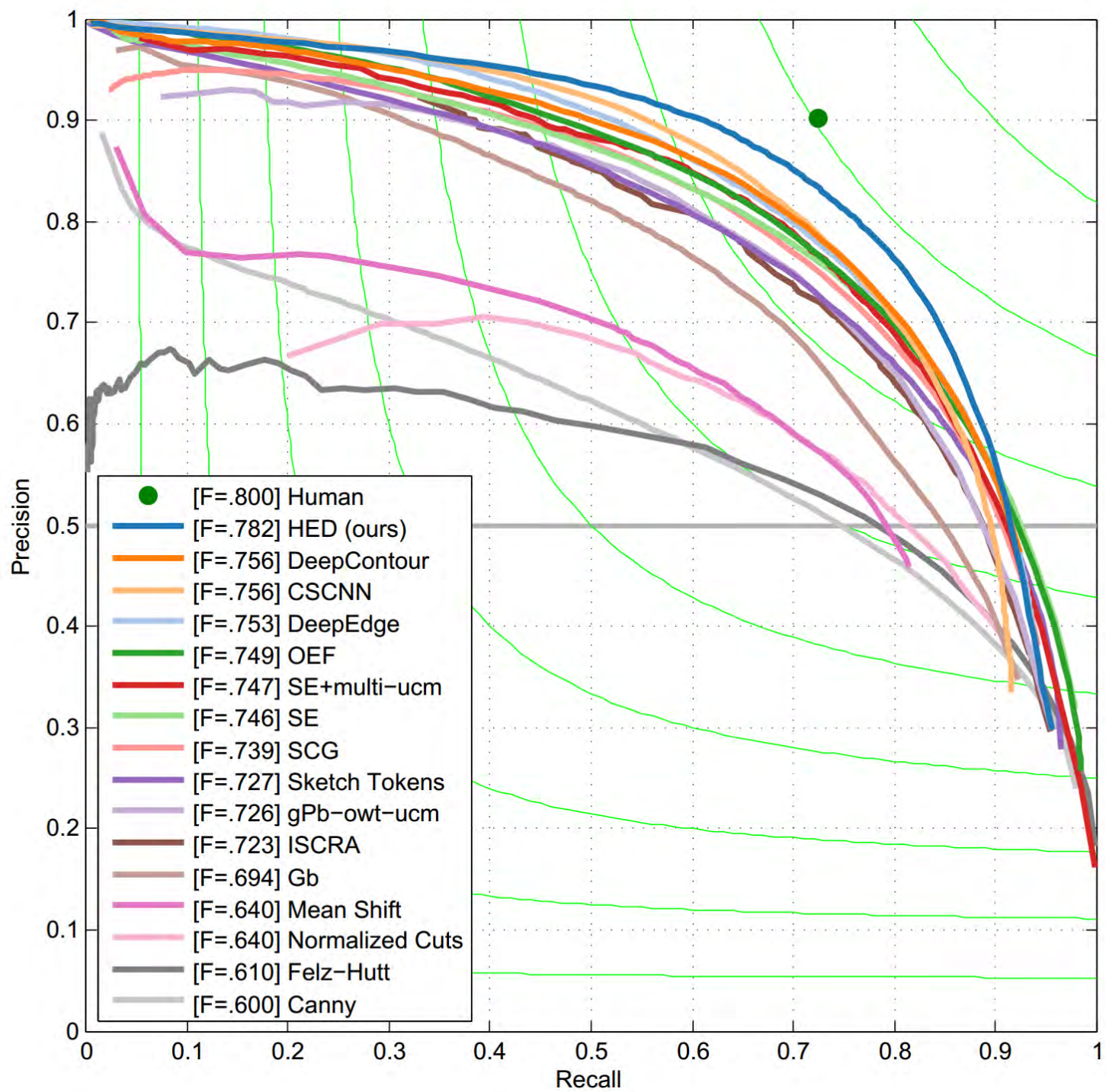


Table 4. Results on BSDS500. \*BSDS300 results, †GPU time

	ODS	OIS	AP	FPS
Human	.80	.80	-	-
Canny	.600	.640	.580	15
Felz-Hutt [9]	.610	.640	.560	10
BEL [5]	.660*	-	-	1/10
gPb-owt-ucm [1]	.726	.757	.696	1/240
Sketch Tokens [24]	.727	.746	.780	1
SCG [31]	.739	.758	.773	1/280
SE-Var [6]	.746	.767	.803	2.5
OEF [13]	.749	.772	.817	-
DeepNets [21]	.738	.759	.758	1/5†
N4-Fields [10]	.753	.769	.784	1/6†
DeepEdge [2]	.753	.772	.807	1/10 <sup>3</sup> †
CSCNN [19]	.756	.775	.798	-
DeepContour [34]	.756	.773	.797	1/30†
<b>HED (ours)</b>	<b>.782</b>	<b>.804</b>	<b>.833</b>	2.5†, 1/12







# State of edge detection



- Local edge detection is mostly solved
  - Intensity gradient, color, texture
  - HED on BSDS 500 is near human performance
- Some room for improvement by taking advantage of higher-level knowledge (e.g., objects)
- Still hard to produce all objects within a small number of regions



# Finding straight lines





# Finding line segments using connected components



## 1. Compute canny edges

- Compute:  $g_x, g_y$  (DoG in x,y directions)
- Compute:  $\theta = \text{atan}(g_y / g_x)$

## 2. Assign each edge to one of 8 directions

## 3. For each direction d, get edgelets:

- find connected components for edge pixels with directions in  $\{d-1, d, d+1\}$

## 4. Compute straightness and theta of edgelets using eig of x,y 2<sup>nd</sup> moment matrix of their points

$$\mathbf{M} = \begin{bmatrix} \sum (x - \mu_x)^2 & \sum (x - \mu_x)(y - \mu_y) \\ \sum (x - \mu_x)(y - \mu_y) & \sum (y - \mu_y)^2 \end{bmatrix} \quad [v, \lambda] = \text{eig}(\mathbf{M})$$

Larger eigenvector  
↓  
 $\theta = \text{atan2}(v(2,2), v(1,2))$   
 $\text{conf} = \lambda_2 / \lambda_1$

## 5. Threshold on straightness, store segment



# Things to remember

- Canny edge detector = smooth → derivative → thin → threshold → link
- Pb: learns weighting of gradient, color, texture differences
  - More recent learning approaches give at least as good accuracy and are faster
- Straight line detector = canny + gradient orientations → orientation binning → linking → check for straightness

