
ASSC NEWSLETTER – September 2007

Welcome to this month's ASSC newsletter.

This month's newsletter contains the following information:

– ASSC EVENTS AND INFORMATION:

1. ASSC Committees: New Members
2. ASSC–12 Poster Prize: Change of Deadline
3. ASSC–12 Programm: First keynote speakers confirmed
4. ASSC–11 Conference Report Now Online
5. ASS Eprints–Archive: The Five "Most Popular" Papers of August 2007

– NON–ASSC EVENTS AND INFORMATION:

1. Notes from our Members: Obituaries for Susan Hurley and Benjamin Libet
2. Call for Illusion Submissions: The 4th Annual Best Illusion of the Year Contest
3. PhD Positions in Consciousness Research Available at Brunel University and the University of Duesseldorf
4. Recently Published Papers by our Members

Enjoy the newsletter and have a great weekend!

Kristina

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

All members of the ASSC are invited to submit items for inclusion in the newsletter that are of potential interest to the general membership to Kristina Musholt (kmusholt@gmail.com) by no later than the 10th of the month (subject: ASSC newsletter).

Items should be in the form of ONE paragraph of plain ASCII text no longer than 200 WORDS, and should be of general relevance to the

MAINSTREAM ACADEMIC study of consciousness. Attachments will not be accepted. The submitting author must be a current member of the ASSC. Submissions that do not meet these requirements may be rejected without further correspondence.

ASSC EVENTS AND INFORMATION

1. ASSC COMMITTEES: NEW MEMBERS

Corresponding author: Christof Koch (koch@klab.caltech.edu)

Further information: <http://www.assc.caltech.edu/board.htm>

The board is pleased to announce that a decision concerning the ASSC committees has been made. We would like to thank all applicants for their willingness to contribute to the running of the ASSC. The following applicants have been elected to join one of the committees: Robert Balas and Rabinder Lee (Conference Committee); Susan Blackmore (Elections Committee); Michael Hill, Chien-Hui (Lynn) Chiu and Heather Berlin (Student Committee); Michel Ferrari (Membership Committee); Michael Beaton (Eprints Committee). Congratulations to all of you and we hope you'll enjoy working on these committees.

We would also like to thank the past committee members Alunit Ishai and Erik Myin (Conference Committee); Paula Droege (Elections Committee); Stephan Schleim and Alva Noë (Student Committee); Robert Balas (Membership Committee); and Geraint Rees, Eric Schwitzgebel, Jane Aspell, Tim Bayne and Manos Tsakiris (Psyche Committee) for their valuable contributions to the ASSC.

2. ASSC-12 POSTER PRIZE: CHANGE OF DEADLINE

Corresponding author: Chien-Hui (Lynn) Chiu (assc12@ym.edu.tw)

Further information: <http://ym.edu.tw/assc12/poster.htm>

We are making changes to the deadline of the ASSC12 Poster Design Contest. The final deadline of submission will be moved to October 28th, 2007. Please submit your graphics to assc12@ym.edu.tw before that date. The 500 USD prize winner will be announced on Nov. 1st, 2007. For further information on the contest, please refer to the Poster Contest webpage.

3. ASSC-12 PROGRAMM: FIRST KEYOTE SPEAKERS CONFIRMED
Corresponding author: Ralph Adolphs (radolphs@caltech.edu)
Further information: <http://www.ym.edu.tw/assc12>

The ASSC-12 Program Committee is currently in the process of soliciting conference presentations. Confirmed keynote speakers for ASSC-12 already include Thomas Metzinger ("The self" - <http://www.philosophie.uni-mainz.de/metzinger>) and Tetsuro Matsuzawa ("The mind of the chimpanzee" - <http://www.pri.kyoto-u.ac.jp/koudou-shinkei/shikou/staff/matsuzaw>).
A call for papers and symposia will be send out shortly. The committee also welcomes suggestions for tutorials. If you have any ideas that you would like to share please contact me (see email above).

4. ASSC-11 CONFERENCE REPORT NOW ONLINE
Corresponding author: Paula Droege (pdroege@psu.edu)
Further information: <http://eprints.assc.caltech.edu/323>

The full ASSC-11 conference report is now online and available for download at the URL above.

5. ASSC EPRINTS-ARCHIVE: THE FIVE "MOST POPULAR" PAPERS OF AUGUST
Corresponding author: Kristina Musholt (kmusholt@gmail.com)
Further information: <http://eprints.assc.caltech.edu/>

The Eprint Committee is pleased to announce the five "most popular" papers of August 2007. Overall, we registered 40946 downloads from 63 countries.

1. Mashour, George A. (2007) Inverse Zombies, Anesthesia Awareness, and the Hard Problem of Unconsciousness. In: 11th Annual Meeting of the ASSC, Las Vegas.

(936 downloads from 21 countries).

<http://eprints.assc.caltech.edu/294/>

2. Windt, Jennifer Michelle and Metzinger, Thomas (2006) The philosophy of dreaming and self-consciousness: What happens to the experiential subject during the dream state? In: The new science of dreaming (928 downloads from 19 countries).

<http://eprints.assc.caltech.edu/200/>

3. Koriat, A. (2006) Metacognition and Consciousness. In: Cambridge handbook of consciousness. CUP (801 downloads from 18 countries) <http://eprints.assc.caltech.edu/175/>

4. Rosenthal, David (2007) Consciousness and its function. In: 11th annual meeting of the Association for the Scientific Study of Consciousness, 22-25 June 2007, Las Vegas, USA. (741 downloads from 19 countries). <http://eprints.assc.caltech.edu/293/>

5. Rosen, Alan and Rosen, David B. (2006) The Design of a Sensation-generating Mechanism in the Brain: A first step towards a quantitative definition of consciousness. Consciousness and Cognition, CONCOG-06-00174 (596 downloads from 18 countries). <http://eprints.assc.caltech.edu/195/>

Please feel free to check out the complete statistics under http://eprints.assc.caltech.edu/es/index.php?action=cumulative_usage;range=all and continue to upload to and benefit from the archive.

NON-ASSC EVENTS AND INFORMATION

1. NOTES FROM OUR MEMBERS:

- Obituary for Susan Hurley (from David Rosenthal)

Susan Hurley, whose important work on consciousness is known to very many of our members, died August 16, after a fight with cancer that lasted many years. In addition to her work in legal philosophy, for which she held a chair in the Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Warwick from 1994 to 2006, Susan did groundbreaking work on consciousness, much of it in her much admired and widely referred to 1998 Harvard University Press book, *Consciousness in Action*, which examined the

connections among consciousness, perception, intentional action, and the unity of consciousness. The book is richly informed by work in both philosophy and neuroscience. Having become the first female Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, in 1981, Susan taught at St Edmund Hall, Oxford, before moving to Warwick and, a year ago, to Bristol. Talking with Susan about issues related to consciousness was always a pleasure and immensely rewarding. Susan also co-edited a two-volume collection of papers on imitation (2005), and a collection of papers on rationality in non-human animals (2006). She continued working almost to the end, hosting an international conference "Perception, Action and Consciousness" last summer at Bristol.

Notices from the Times of London and at the University of Bristol are at:

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/obituaries/article2395405.ece> and

<http://www.bris.ac.uk/news/2007/5587.html>

- Obituary for Benjamin Libet (from Christof Koch)

Benjamin Libet passed away on July 23 of this year at his home in Davis, California at the age of 91. A professor of physiology at UCSF since 1949, he worked with neurosurgical patients, directly stimulating their cortex, to study the timing of consciousness sensations. In a landmark paper published in "Brain" in 1983, he and his three collaborators explored the relationship between brain events and the subjective sensation of initiating an action. They concluded that the onset of the readiness potential, recorded in frontal regions from the skull in normal subjects in response to a voluntary hand movement, preceded the subject's feeling of having initiated this action by at least several hundred milliseconds. This counterintuitive result calls into question deeply held beliefs about free will. The implications of his seminal experiment, whose basic results have been replicated a number of times, continue to be vigorously debated. We honor him as one of the pioneering scholars of consciousness.

A blog by Susan Blackmore on the Guardian website is at

http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/sue_blackmore/2007/08/mind_over_matter.html .

2. CALL FOR ILLUSION SUBMISSIONS: THE FOURTH ANNUAL BEST VISUAL ILLUSION OF THE YEAR CONTEST

Corresponding author: Susana Martinez-Conde (smart@neuralcorrelate.com)

Further information: <http://illusioncontest.neuralcorrelate.com>

We are happy to announce the world's 4th Annual Best Visual Illusion of the Year Contest!!The deadline for illusion submissions is February 15th, 2008! The 2008 contest will be held in Naples, Florida (Naples Philharmonic Center for the Arts, <http://www.thephil.org/>) on Sunday, May 11th, 2008, during the week of the Vision Sciences Society (VSS) conference. Visual Illusion Contestants are invited to submit novel visual or multimodal illusions (unpublished, or published no earlier than 2007) in standard image, movie or html formats. An international panel of impartial judges will rate the submissions and narrow them to the TOP TEN. Then, at the Contest Gala in Naples, the TOP TEN illusionists will present their contributions and the attendees of the event will vote to pick the TOP THREE WINNERS! Illusions submitted to previous editions of the contest can be re-submitted to the 2008 contest, as long as they meet the above requirements and were not among the top three winners in previous years. Submissions can be made to Dr. Susana Martinez-Conde (Illusion Contest Coordinator, Neural Correlate Society) via email (smart@neuralcorrelate.com) until February 15, 2008. Illusion submissions should come with a (no more than) one-page description of the illusion and its theoretical underpinnings (if known). Illusions will be rated according to: . Significance to our understanding of the visual system . Simplicity of the description . Sheer beauty . Counterintuitive quality . Spectacularity. Visit the illusion contest website for further information and to see last year's illusions: <http://illusioncontest.neuralcorrelate.com>

3. PhD POSITIONS AVAILABLE:

– PhD fellowship & MSc options at the Centre for Cognition and Neuroimaging, Brunel University, West London.

Corresponding author: Noam Sagiv (noam.sagiv@brunel.ac.uk)

Further information: <http://people.brunel.ac.uk/~hsstnns/>

European/UK-based students interested in doctoral studies in London (looking at the neural correlated of consciousness, synaesthesia, or face perception) are invited to apply for this fellowship: http://www.jobs.ac.uk/jobs/TN196/PhD_Studentship/ (deadline Sep 20th).

This fellowship is offered by our school on a competitive basis. Interested students should discuss research proposal with me as soon as possible.

Ideally, candidate should have some research experience (e.g., undergrad research assistant, or an MSc), interest in cognitive neuroscience, and good understanding of statistics. Good writing skills are essential.

Students based in Canada, the US, or any other country with alternative funding sources are welcome to discuss options with me.

Applications for the MSc in Neuroimaging are still being considered, although we anticipated that most students will be self funded.

Further details:

<http://www.brunel.ac.uk/courses/pg/cdata/n/Functional+Neuroimaging+MSc>

– PhD Positions in consciousness research at the Institute of Experimental Psychology II at the University of Duesseldorf (Dr.rer.nat., German Public Service Scale, 50%)

Corresponding author: Petra Stoerig (petra.stoerig@uni-duesseldorf.de)

Further information: http://www.psycho.uni-duesseldorf.de/abteilungen/ebp/index_html

Research at our lab is focussed on conscious and unconscious processes and their neuronal basis. We have predominantly been

studying the visual system; blindsight, visual field rehabilitation and sensory substitution for the blind are central topics. In addition, we pursue questions regarding self-related memory and recognition processes. Methods include psychophysics, neuropsychology, electrophysiology, and neuroimaging. If you are interested in the possibility of an experimental doctoral thesis in this area of consciousness research, if you have a diploma or M.Sc. in Psychology, Biology, or Neuroscience/Medicine, and are happy to teach Biological/Neuroscientific Psychology (2 hours per term-week) to our students, we can offer you a doctoral position for three years, prolongation possible. Please send your CV, letter of interest, and the contact details of two possible referees to <petra.stoerig@uni-duesseldorf.de>.

4. RECENTLY PUBLISHED PAPERS BY OUR MEMBERS:

- Bigna Lenggenhager, Tej Tadi, Thomas Metzinger, and Olaf Blanke (24 August 2007) Video Ergo Sum: Manipulating Bodily Self-Consciousness, *Science* 317 (5841), 1096. [DOI: 10.1126/science.1143439]
- H. Henrik Ehrsson (24 August 2007) The Experimental Induction of Out-of-Body Experiences, *Science* 317 (5841), 1048. [DOI: 10.1126/science.1142175]

Corresponding author: Thomas Metzinger (metzinger@uni-mainz.de)

Further information:

<http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/abstract/317/5841/1048>

In understanding the functional and representational deep-structure of the phenomenal self-model and the consciously experienced first-person perspective, one of the most important research goals is to understand the simplest form of the target phenomenon, namely non-conceptual self-consciousness. It is widely agreed that the body model in the brain plays a central role. One logical conclusion of this is that all phenomenal state-classes generating an experience of disembodiment are of highest theoretical relevance, because they demonstrate a dissociation of the self and the body as consciously represented. Researchers in

Switzerland, Germany, and Sweden have now artificially induced such states in healthy subjects by developing a whole body analog of the rubber-hand illusion in a virtual reality setting. What these experiments show is that an elementary form of bodily self-consciousness can be created without an agency component and due to multisensory conflict alone. Two of these researchers (Thomas Metzinger and H. Henrik Ehrsson) are members of the ASSC, and Henrik Ehrsson presented his work at ASSC-11. Thomas Metzinger will present at ASSC-12.