

SFB/TR 8 Spatial Cognition / IQN Video Conference

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SPATIAL REASONING WITH MIRRORS

Mirrors are familiar objects, yet we all have a hard time dealing with them and reasoning about what we see or expect to see on their surface. Common errors include: failing to establish a proper correspondence between real and reflected movements; overestimating the size of our own mirror reflection; expecting the size itself to depend on our distance from the mirror; miscalculating what we can see in a mirror as we approach it or look at it from a side; and, of course, believing that (and wondering why) mirror images are reversed left/right but not up/down. One may ask what psychological factors explain these surprising difficulties, and one may speculate on their philosophical significance (e.g. regarding the opposition between absolute and relational conceptions of space, or the ungroundedness of certain spatial distinctions). But beneath it all there is a deeper question, whose answer may not be the one we think. *What* is it that we see in a mirror? Do we see enantiomorphic images of ourselves, or do we see ourselves enantiomorphically?

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