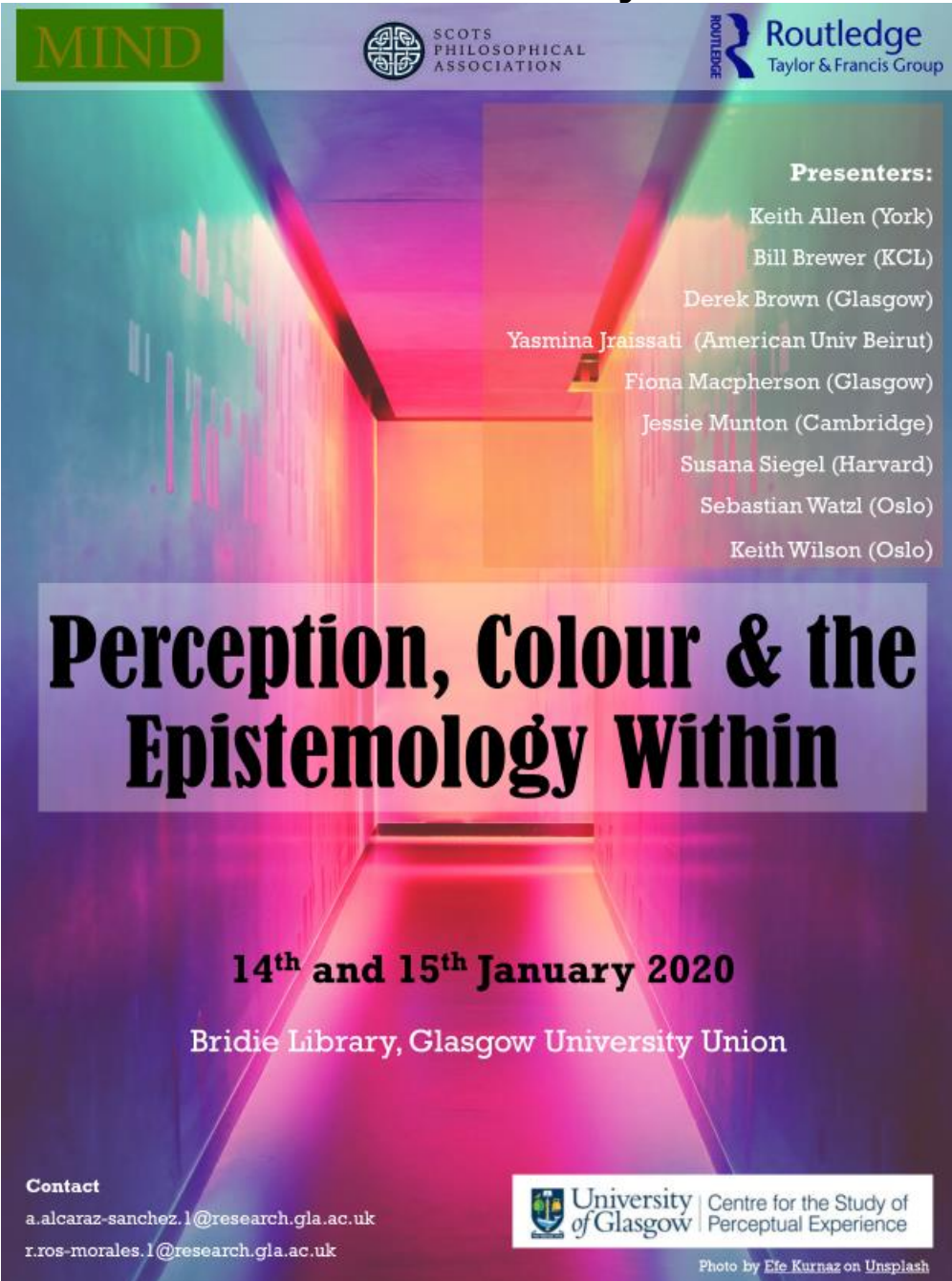




**Philosophy of Perception, Colour and Epistemology
Within
14th and 15th January 2020**



MIND

 SCOTS
PHILOSOPHICAL
ASSOCIATION

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group

Presenters:

- Keith Allen (York)
- Bill Brewer (KCL)
- Derek Brown (Glasgow)
- Yasmina Jraissati (American Univ Beirut)
- Fiona Macpherson (Glasgow)
- Jessie Munton (Cambridge)
- Susana Siegel (Harvard)
- Sebastian Watzl (Oslo)
- Keith Wilson (Oslo)

**Perception, Colour & the
Epistemology Within**

14th and 15th January 2020

Bridie Library, Glasgow University Union

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 University
of Glasgow | Centre for the Study of
Perceptual Experience

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General Information

With the upcoming release of the [Routledge Handbook on Philosophy of Colour](#) (Derek Brown and Fiona Macpherson, Eds.), and with the motive of Professor Susana Siegel's 2019 [Scots Centenary Fellow](#) at the University of Glasgow, the Centre for the Study of the Perceptual Experience (CSPE) is hosting the conference 'Philosophy of Perception, Colour and Epistemology Within'.

The aim of this two-day conference is to bring together a unique collection of philosophers who work on disparate approaches to and topics within the nature of perception. We envision three main threads in the conference: representationalism versus naïve realism; the nature of colour and colour perception; the boundaries between perception, epistemology, and social knowledge. Questions participants are encouraged to explore therefore include, but are not limited, to the following:

1. ***What is the nature of perception and perceptual experience?*** Representationalists maintain that perceptual states, including perceptual experiences (i.e. conscious perceptual episodes), achieve their status as perceptual states by virtue of *representing* in a distinctive way. Representing involves expressing contents that can be variously accurate or true of what is represented. In the case of perception, what is purportedly represented is the relevant elements of the perceiver's environment. By contrast, naïve realists (or advocates of the 'object view') maintain that perceptual experiences are constituted in part by the elements of a perceiver's environment that are being experienced. Because of this, perceptual experiences cannot be variously accurate of these elements in a perceiver's environment.
2. ***What is the role of colour in perception, and what does perception teach us about colour?*** Colour has been a central topic in philosophy of perception for some time, and interest in the topic has grown considerably over the last two decades. Its privileged status will hopefully be enhanced by the forthcoming launch of the *Routledge Handbook on Philosophy of Colour* in early 2020.
3. ***How does perception intersect epistemology and social knowledge?*** Perceptual states are often-conceived of as encapsulated from higher cognitive states like beliefs and perceptual reports, and from the influence of social interactions. For example, while attaching degrees of confidence or imperatives to perceptual reports is commonplace and relatively unproblematic, the idea that there are degrees of confidence or imperatives within perceptual experiences themselves is to many at once off-putting and deeply intriguing. To take an example, colour names (e.g. 'blue', 'green') typically designate broad classes of colours, or colour categories. There are difficult questions about the extent to which these categories are mere reports of commonalities between experienced colours or are to some extent reflective of one's language and culture.

The conference is generously sponsored by the Mind Association, The Scots Philosophical Association, Routledge and the Centre for the Study of the Perceptual Experience at the University of Glasgow.

We aim to make this conference accessible to all, in light of the BPA/SWIP guidelines for accessible conferences. For that purpose, all the information about the talks, including handouts and abstracts, will be made available as soon as possible.

Programme

TUESDAY 14TH JANUARY

9:30-10:50	Jessie Munton, <i>Cambridge University</i> ('How to see invisible objects')
10:50-11:15	<i>Coffee Break</i>
11:15-12:40	Yasmina Jraissati, <i>American University of Beirut</i> ('On the relationship of colour to object')
12:40-13:40	<i>Lunch</i>
13:40-15:00	Susana Siegel, <i>Harvard University</i> ('Are There Norms of Attention?')
15:00-15:15	<i>Short Break</i>
15:15-16:40	Bill Brewer, <i>Kings College London</i> ('Perception of Continued Existence Unperceived')
16:40-17:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>
17:00-18:20	Keith Wilson, <i>Oslo University</i> ('The Auditory Field')

WEDNESDAY 15TH JANUARY

9:30-10:50	Sebastian Watzl, <i>Oslo University</i> ('Salience plays a rational role')
10:50-11:15	<i>Coffee Break</i>
11:15-12:40	Keith Allen, <i>University of York</i> ('What is it like to be colour blind?')
12:40-13:40	<i>Lunch</i>
13:40-15:00	Fiona Macpherson, <i>University of Glasgow</i> ('Novel colours')
15:00-15:15	<i>Short Break</i>
15:15-16:40	Derek Brown, <i>University of Glasgow</i> ('The philosophy of colour constancy')

Abstracts

Jessie Munton, *Cambridge University*, 'How to see invisible objects'

It is an apparent truism about visual perception that we can see only what is visible to us. It is also frequently accepted that visual perception is dynamic: our visual experiences are extended through, and evolve over time. I argue that taking the dynamism of visual experience seriously renders certain simplistic interpretations of the first claim, that a subject at a given time can see only what is visible to her at that time, false: we can be meaningfully said to see invisible objects. This counterintuitive result in turn focuses our attention on the relationship between perception and memory. I show that it is difficult to draw a clear or simple distinction between the two.

Yasmina Jraissati, *American University of Beirut*, 'On the relationship of colour to object'

What is the role of colour in visual cognition? Traditionally, colour is thought to be an unreliable source of information, especially when it comes to the structure of a visual scene, as colour typically varies, depending on the visual system and more importantly, on the illumination. Yet, colour does seem useful in object recognition, and as a result, object recognition seems to be a good candidate regarding the role of colour. However, if colour is to be useful for recognition, then colour variations need to be compensated. Colour constancy has therefore taken up a lot of space in colour research. In this paper, I suggest that the focus on colour constancy might have been mistaken: What mechanisms account for colour constancy still need to be determined, and whether there is such a thing as colour constancy is currently being discussed. I conclude that the value or role of colour in visual cognition precisely rests on the fact that it varies.

Susana Siegel, *Harvard University*, 'Are There Norms of Attention?'

TBC

Bill Brewer, *Kings College London*, 'Perception of Continued Existence Unperceived'

Hume asked what the source is of our belief in the continued existence unperceived of the ordinary physical objects that we perceive (Treatise, I.iv.2). He argued quickly and dismissively against answering 'the senses', that is to say, against the idea that this belief has its source in the subjective nature of our perceptual experience itself. Evans makes a suggestion about how the Humean argument against the senses as the source of our belief in continued existence unperceived might be refuted by appeal to the role of a simple theory of perception in our perception (Things Without the Mind). Most developed accounts of the objectivity of perception implement Evans's suggestion in one way or another - I claim. I offer reasons to doubt all of these views (in some cases, inevitably, only sketchily) and I propose instead my own implementation of Evans's insight, according to which it is the role of Evans's appeal to a simple theory of perception in the

metaphysics of conscious perceptual experience itself that explains how such experience is the source of our belief in the continued existence unperceived of its objects.

Keith Wilson, *Oslo University*, 'The Auditory Field'

Philosophers and scientists commonly talk of the 'visual field', but many of the same theorists reject the analogous notion of an 'auditory field' on the grounds that the metaphysics or phenomenology of audition lack the requisite (or indeed any) spatial structure. In this paper, I argue that some of the most common reasons for rejecting the existence of an auditory field are misguided and that, contrary to a philosophical tradition of scepticism about the intrinsic spatiality of auditory experience, it is as richly spatial—and in some ways even more so—than visual experience. By closely examining the boundedness and spatiality of audition, along with how sounds and their sources are presented as occurring within a surrounding acoustic environment, we can gain a better understanding of both the auditory experience of space and the conditions for the existence of spatial fields in general.

Sebastian Watzl, *Oslo University*, 'Salience plays a rational role'

Salience is a pervasive force that shapes our actions and belief formation. Salient features, patterns, and options have an immediate and direct pull on our attention, and, through that pull, change what we do and think. Is that influence of salience always rationally neutral (somewhat like the influence of our physiology), or is it ever a rational influence – impacting the rational standing of the beliefs and actions it shapes? In this talk, I argue that salience can have a rational influence. Specifically, I argue that even though salience does not influence which reasons we have, we have a default rational entitlement to attend to and act on what is most salient. My argument for the rational entitlement view exploits a parallel to views in epistemology of perception, on which we have a default rational entitlement to beliefs formed on the basis of perception. I end by drawing out consequences of the rational entitlement view in a number of domains, including the possibility of rational coordination and the problem of induction.

Keith Allen, *University of York*, 'What is it like to be colour blind?'

What is the experience of colour blindness like? It is often assumed that someone who is red-green colour blind, for instance, is entirely unable to see reds and greens. But is this right—or is the experience of colour blind perceivers richer and more complex than this? This paper presents the results of a study that uses qualitative research methods to better understand the lived experience of colour blindness. Colour blind participants were asked to describe their experiences of a variety of coloured stimuli, both with and without EnChroma glasses, which are claimed by their manufacturers to be able to address common forms of colour blindness. This study provides a case study in experimental philosophy of experience (Ex-XPhi).

Fiona Macpherson, *University of Glasgow*, 'Novel colours'

TBC

Derek Brown, *University of Glasgow*, 'The philosophy of colour constancy'

I aim to convince you that colour constancy is a deep, fascinating philosophical topic that is ripe for numerous research initiatives. Colour constancy is often described as a colour visual system's tendency to stabilize perceived colour across changes in illumination. It is thus a perceptual phenomenon that (for example) can partly ground our tendency to describe objects in our environment as having stable or intrinsic colours. Colour constancy has been actively studied by vision scientists, yielding numerous disparate models and a wealth of subtle, difficult to interpret data. I will summarize the science of constancy, highlighting areas of philosophical interest, and then give an overview of why the phenomenon is of deep, widespread significance to philosophy of perception.

Location and accessibility

The conference will be held at the [Bridie Library](#) in the **Glasgow University Union (GUU)**. The address of the venue is [32 University Avenue, Glasgow, G12 8LX](#). The Bridie Library is situated on the second floor, which can be reached by lift.

Unfortunately, there is no step-free access to the GUU building from the main entrance, but the room can be also reached from the [rear door](#) (step-free) and by using the lift.

All talks will take place at the Bridie Library and all coffee and lunch breaks will be also provided in there.

There are several rooms at the GUU building that can be used, including the Café situated on the ground floor and a quiet [Reading Room](#) next to the Bridie Library that can be used for resting.

For any other issues regarding accessibility, please contact Adriana (a.alcaraz-sanchez.1@research.gla.ac.uk) and (r.ros-morales.1@research.gla.ac.uk)

Registration

Attendance is **free** and open to **all**. For catering purposes, please contact us at a.alcaraz-sanchez.1@research.gla.ac.uk and r.ros-morales.1@research.gla.ac.uk indicating which days you will be attending and if you have any dietary requirements.

Do please contact us you have further questions not resolved above.

