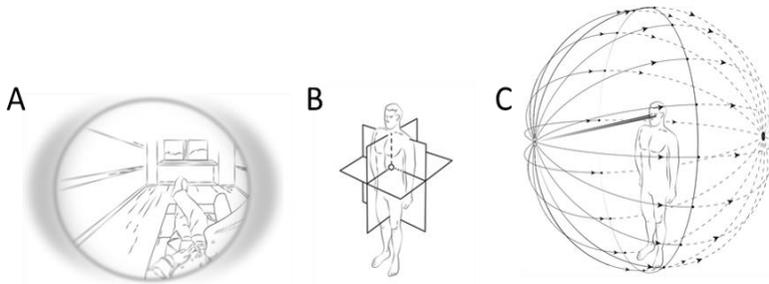


# FINDING PERSPECTIVE - DETERMINING THE EMBODIMENT OF PERSPECTIVAL EXPERIENCE

*Does looking at something HUGE make you feel tiny?*

Nearly everyone has experienced the awe of standing at the edge of a massive environment, like a mountain-scape – the experience is strikingly different when stuck in a cramped space, like an aeroplane seat, in which the spatial limits are all too apparent. But do you actually *feel smaller* when you are looking at something huge? And, conversely, do you actually *feel bigger* than you really are when you can see you don't have much personal space?



## *Forms of perspective studied by the FINDING PERSPECTIVE project*

Saying someone sees from a perspective can mean that the origin of her visual field is within her body (as in **A**), or that her visual experience is organised around a point in her body according which things look to the left or the right, up or down (as in **B**) or that she can see where her body is headed as she moves, e.g., toward a runway, or round a corner in a tunnel (as in **C**).

By distinguishing these forms of perspective, the FINDING PERSPECTIVE project will be able to investigate the deep structure of perspectival experience and its relation to bodily experience with a level of precision that has never been achieved.

These are some of many novel questions concerning *how perspectival experience* (the way things look from your perspective) *affects bodily experience* (the way your body feels), to be addressed by the FINDING PERSPECTIVE project using cutting edge virtual reality techniques and innovative interdisciplinary research methods spanning philosophy, psychology and neuroscience.

FINDING PERSPECTIVE will also look at influences in the opposite direction, i.e., *how bodily experience affects perspectival experience*.

For instance:

*Do some people see from their CHEST?*

Most people think that when you look at something you see it from your eyes. The FINDING PERSPECTIVE project challenges this common assumption. Look at something straight ahead and turn your torso to the right. Does it still look straight ahead? If it looks like it's to the left, you're seeing it from your chest. Feeling your body twisted off to the right has changed the way things look.

Not everyone sees from their chest, and certainly not all the time (look at the same thing but this time keep your torso straight and turn your head to the right). By manipulating our senses of posture and balance, and our experience of the shape and size of the body,

FINDING PERSPECTIVE will for the first time be able to understand this basic but subtle way in which things can look different for different people, or look different for the same person at different times, as a matter of how they experience their bodies.

Behind each of these questions are issues concerning the way in which *our experience of ourselves as embodied* (what philosophers call bodily self-consciousness) is far more malleable, fragmented and complex than we realise. In an age where more and more people spend their professional and personal lives in virtual environments, to ensure the optimum user experience we must answer questions like:

*How does it feel to be SOMEONE else SOMEWHERE else?*

Using novel neuroimaging techniques and state of the art display technologies, the FINDING PERSPECTIVE project will not only be able to fully understand how exactly we feel when we *embody* a virtual body and feel *present* in a virtual world, but also how exactly we feel *during the process* of doing so.

By answering these and many more questions, the FINDING PERSPECTIVE project is uniquely poised to uncover precisely how bodily experience and perspective interact, which will help us to better manage the relationship between ourselves and our physical and (increasingly) virtual world.