The Affective Sciences are coming of age. At least in their Swiss instantiation. The National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) for the Affective Sciences has finished its first phase of funding (2005-2009) with flying colours. The 10 eminent scientists of the international review panel judged the quality of the research in the Centre as very high, suggesting that the NCCR had “achieved an international reputation as a uniquely interdisciplinary centre for the study of affect”. Based on these achievements, the Swiss National Science Foundation and the Ministry of Education renewed funding for another 4-year period (2009 to 2013).

The NCCR in the Affective Sciences also made a giant step forward with the establishment of its home institution, the Centre Interdisciplinaire en Sciences Affectives (CISA), as a “pole d’excellence” at the University of Geneva. A major agreement with the Canton will allow the creation of a number of professorships in emotion research in collaboration with the different faculties at the university. Multiple efforts are underway to establish and institutionalize an unprecedented concentration of research and training in this new multidisciplinary domain. CISA is already the home institution for a number of large scale research projects, like an Advanced Grant from the European Research Council and a 5-year research unit on emotion and mood in collaboration with a leading fragrance manufacturer. Thus, the Centre starts its second 4-year phase under very positive auspices. Successful instruments like the interdisciplinary Research Foci and the Methods Development program (judged by the panel as having produced a “unique and unusually wide array of innovative methodological and measurement contributions”), will be continued with renewed vigour. International networking can be expected to yield excellent results for collaborative research and training activities, especially our International Summer School in the Affective Sciences (ISSAS), which enjoyed a very successful start last year. Strong attention will continue to be devoted to the Education and Training program, the advancement of women, and our popular knowledge transfer activities with museums, art and music schools and festivals, private and public institutions, and the media. New policies include incentive and start-up funding for novel interdisciplinary projects, visiting professorships for promising junior scientists, and the hosting of scientists who choose the centre as base for their excellence fellowships and research projects.

We believe that the reason for the unprecedented interdisciplinary research and teaching activity generated by the centre is its topic – emotion. As expected, this fundamental aspect of human experience has revealed its potential to bring together scientific perspectives generally considered to be worlds apart. The yields require hard sustained work and a healthy dose of enthusiasm, as well as certain tolerance for frustration and an ability to deal with complexity. Unfortunately, much of modern science, privileging rapid output, standard paradigms, simple but flashy take-home messages, and high impact on specialized interest groups, does not immediately reward the interdisciplinary tool. However, we remain convinced that, in the end, a better understanding of the mechanisms underlying emotion and its effects on human behaviour, social interaction and culture will prove its sustainability.

Prof. Klaus R. Scherer, Director


Other “Mark your calendars”

Nuit de la science “Extremes & limites”, July 10-11 2010

The NCCR Affective Sciences will participate in the next “Nuit de la science”, which will take place next July. As usual, an exhibition stand and workshops are planned. We are looking for people to be involved in this event. Note that it is a great opportunity to do surveys and inquiries with the general public. If you are interested, please contact carole.varone@unige.ch

Achievements

Prof. Norbert Sommer received on September 2009 the Siegfried Geef Innovation Award from the Division of Industrial and Organizational Psychological Research of the German Psychological Association. The German Psychological Association is the professional association of psychologists actively involved in teaching and research in Germany.

A SYNERGIA research grant, a new important funding initiative of the Swiss National Foundation, has just been awarded to the project “Intentionality as the Mark of the Mental. Metaphysical Perspectives on Contemporary Philosophy of Mind”, led by Prof. Kevin Mulligan, Prof. Gianfranco Soldati, Dr. Julien Deonna and Dr. Fabrice Teroni as project leaders. The principal investigator is Prof. Fabrice Correia (UNIGE). The budget amounts to CHF 1 350 000 for a duration of three years and it will finance at least two doctoral students in the NCCR Affective Sciences. The SYNERGIA researchers will work on reconciling the results and methods of modern metaphysics with the main topics of research in the contemporary philosophy of mind. This project is closely linked to the large four-year European International Training Network project (Seventh Framework Programme) “Perspectival Thoughts and Facts” and will start in March 2010.

Jointly with D. Courvoisier, R. Voelinger, T. Agostats, P. Chopard, B. Burnand and T. Pereneger from the University of Bern and Lausanne University Hospitals, the NCCR researchers Dr. R.E. Schmidt and Prof. Paolizza Lombardo were awarded a research grant of CHF 50 000 to investigate the role of regret and regret coping strategies in medical decision making.

Sophie Jarlier is the 2009 winner of the poster session of the NCCR Affective Sciences Annual Research Forum (ARF) on November 27. Her poster presents the results of a study on the human facial thermal changes induced by spontaneous emotions.

Prof. Patrik Vuilleumier is the 2009 winner of the Hans-Sigrist prize awarded by the University of Bern within the framework of the Hans-Sigrist Foundation Prize, the most important recognition of the University of Bern. The NCCR Affective Sciences is very proud of this prestigious scientific recognition.

Dr. David Sander became Professor of Psychology in the domain of emotion psychology and head of the Laboratory for the study of Emotion Elicitation and Expression (ElEaB) at the Department of Psychology, (FPS) of the University of Geneva.

Dr. Didier Grandjean became Professor of Psychology in the domain of affective neuropsychology and neurosciences, and head of the Neuroscience of Emotion and Affective Dynamics lab (NEAD) at the Department of Psychology, (PSIE) of the University of Geneva.

Annual Research Forum (ARF)

The NCCR’s Annual Research Forum will take place on March 22-23, 2010 in the presence of the Inter- national Scientific Council. All researchers are ex- pected to come and present their latest results.

Progress Report 2010-Deadline, April 15 2010

International Summer School in Affective Sciences (ISSAS) 2010, August 23 to September 1st 2010, Château de Bossey.
The way that abstract music can express and arouse emotions is one of the most mysterious and fascinating aspects of emotion research. Patterns of sound have no immediate bearing upon our well-being, yet are responsible for some of the most profound experiences that people report. Research into our responses to music can potentially illuminate the expressive powers of music, as well as delve into some of the more unusual emotions aroused by music such as wonder or transcendence, as well as normally unattributed feelings, for tension which in musical contexts become enjoyable to experience. To tackle these issues, various members of the NCCR Affective Sciences have been involved in research projects on neuroscientific and philosophical studies, and have organized a number of activities in collaboration with the Geneva Haute Ecole de Musique, the Geneva musicology department and the Grand Théâtre. Between September and June 2009, six workshops were held focusing on various aspects of instrumental and vocal performance. Issues addressed included the ways that musicians feel personally engaged with the music they see and hear, how the physical nature of their instruments constrains or enhances their expressive capacities. For instance we learned that it was often more difficult to create an even tone on the Baroque counterparts of the violin or oboe, but expert musicians reported that they valued the greater flexibility and expressive potential that accompanied these difficulties. Meanwhile, while regarding operatic voice, the internationally famous tenor Thomas Mouser emphasised the ways that a professional performer must avoid becoming caught up in the emotions of the music, since more is required of an opera singer. This is a particularly important innovation for research here because all too often listeners are forced to apply simple emotional labels to a piece of music when in fact there are all kinds of nuanced varieties of work as it progresses. Additionally an fMRI experiment is about to begin aimed at observing and measuring similarities in neural activation between people as they listen to a piece of music with which they are not looking for more ways to explore musical experience by presenting listeners with an entire work instead of short clips, and this we will be looking for subtle variations in emotional arousal as the music progresses.

Finally, the Swiss Center for Affective Sciences has become a major partner in a 2 million Euro interdisciplinary project on synchronization in music and emotion, called “Social Interac- tion and Entrainment Using Music PerformeXperiments (SIEMPE).” Prof. D. Grandjean coordinates the contribution of the center to this highly interdisciplinary project involving psychologists, philosophers, engineers, and cognitive neuroscientists. Musical performance is known to be one of the most intensive collaborative activities that humans engage in, so there is much we can learn about social interaction from this paradigmatic case. This research is also particularly geared towards developing technological ways to measure and enhance social collaboration and its accom- companying experiences of intense emotional engagement, which may well have applications beyond the field of musical appreciation.

Dr. Thomas Cochrane, postdoctoral fellow
Phase II Research projects at a glance

**APPRAISAL / VALUES / NORMS**

**The Impact of Emotional Cues on Prosocial Behavior and Norm Compliance**
**LEADER:** Ernst Fehr
This project studies the impact of subliminal emotional cues on prosocial behaviour and norm compliance in economic games; in addition, the goal is to identify the neural network causally involved in the behavioral effects of the primes with the help of neuroimaging and brain stimulation tools.

**STAFF:**
- Postdocs: Klaas Enno Stephan, Thomas Baumgartner
- PhD Students: Charles Efferson, Christoph Eisenegger
- Staff: Susanne Leiberg, Giorgia Silani

**Emotion, Feeling and Value**
**LEADER:** Philippe Borgeaud
This project aims to continue the comparative investigation of myths and rites as cultural expressions of emotions in different ancient civilizations, especially related to the notion of the "sacred".

**STAFF:**
- Senior Researchers: Francesca Prescendi, Youri Volokhine
- Postdoc: Doralice Fabiano
- PhD Student: Anne-Caroline Rendu Loiseau

**Myths and Rites as Cultural Expression of Emotion**
**LEADER:** Philippe Borgeaud

**Systems / Dynamics**

**Emotional response patterning and its mental representation**
**LEADER:** Didier Grandjean / Klaus Scherer
This project aims to experimentally examine emotional response patterning as driven by appraisal, the consequent adaptive mechanisms and their mental representation, categorization and verbal labelling, as well as the regulation mechanisms associated to such responses.

**STAFF:**
- Postdocs: Sascha Fruehholz, Eva Krumhuber, Marc Mehu, Christof Stadelmann, Sona Patel
- PhD Students: Olga Klimecki, Frederic Schneider, Leonardo Cesavolo, André Christen, Nele Daël, Kerneil Gentsch, Jérôme Glauser
- Staff: Sebastian Korb, Valère Milesi, Katja Schlegel

**Cerebral bases of individual differences in affect perception and regulation**
**LEADER:** Patrik Vuilleumier / Theodor Landis
People differ in the way they react to emotional events. This project aims to identify the neural processes underlying individual differences in emotion perception and emotion regulation, including their relation to attachment style, self/other representations, and empathy. The project also examines how emotional events may induce long-lasting effects on brain states, and thus modify subsequent behaviour or cognitive performance.

**STAFF:**
- Senior Researchers: Sophie Schwartz, Tatjana Aue, Yann Cojan, Corrado Corradi dell’Acqua, Swann Pichon
- PhD Students: Amal Achalibou, Hamid Eryilmaz, Christoph Heseler, Leonie Kohn, Camille Piguet, Johanna Witek Trott

**EmOdor Project**
**LEADERs:** David Sander / Patrik Vuilleumier
This project is expected to further the scientific knowledge concerning the emotional and motivational foundations and consequences of olfactory processing using methods and concepts of the affective sciences.

**Work & emotions: Experiencing and regulating emotions, issues of self-involvement, and relationships to well-being and performance**
**LEADERs:** Norbert Semmer / Franziska Tschan
This project aims to empirically study the experience and regulation of emotion in work settings, in particular in relation to issues of self-involvement and self-esteem, as well as their effects on well-being and performance.

**STAFF:**
- Senior Researchers: Nicola Jacobshagen
- PhD Students: Wolfgang Kälin, Martial Berset, Laurence Meier, Karolin Messerli, Sven Gross
- Postdocs: Céline Mühlethaler, Pascale Widmer

**Emotion and Gender under a Power Perspective**
**LEADERs:** Marianne Schmid-Mast / Susanne Kaiser
This project aims to empirically examine the effect of gender differences on emotion as approached from a power perspective, in particular the effect of hierarchical position and emotional sensitivity on the experience and labelling of emotion by men and women.

**STAFF:**
- Postdoc: Petra Schmid

**The cognitive-affective interplay of self regulation**
**LEADER:** Martial Van der Linden
The aims of this project include the development of measures of self-regulation and impulsivity, the exploration of underlying cognitive-affective processes and neural substrates, and the investigation of their role in psycho- and neuropsychological disorders. In light of basic research findings, prevention and intervention programs will be developed.

**STAFF:**
- Senior Researchers: Ralph Erich Schmidt, Jean-Marc Gomez, Claudia Lardi, Sandrine Oliveira, Lucien Rochat

**INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES / DISPOSITION**

**Brain & Behavior Laboratory**
**The Brain and Behaviour Laboratory (BBL) is a multidisciplinary center to study the cerebral bases of human mental functions, emotions, and behaviour as well as dysfunctions due to neurological or psychiatric diseases.**

**Research Foci**
- Postdocs: Aesthetic emotions
- Thomas Cochrane
- Decision making & conflict
- Benoit Bediou
- Empathy & fairness
- Gender
- Language & Culture
- Anna Ogarlova
- Cristina Soriano

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**LEADERs:** David Sander / Patrik Vuilleumier
This project is expected to further the scientific knowledge concerning the emotional and motivational foundations and consequences of olfactory processing using methods and concepts of the affective sciences.

**Senior Researchers:**
- Sylvain Delplanque
- Camille Ferdenzi
- PhD Students: Coraline Coppin, Sophie Jarlier, Aline Pichon

**Staff:**
- Martial Berset, Laurenz Meier, Laurence Meier, Karolin Messerli, Sven Gross, Céline Mühlethaler, Pascale Widmer, Wolfgang Kälin, Martial Berset, Laurence Meier, Karolin Messerli

**Research projects at a glance**

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**LEADER:** Philippe Borgeaud

**Emotion, Feeling and Value**
**LEADER:** Philippe Borgeaud
This project aims to elucidate the concept of valence in emotion, particularly in relation to intentionality, motivation and regulation, values, and self-reflexive processes.

**STAFF:**
- Senior Researchers: Julien-Amos Deonna, Fabrice Teroni
- PhD Students: Federico Laura, Olivier Massin, Alain Pe-Curto
- Staff: Olga Klimecki, Frederic Schneider, Leonardo Cesavolo, André Christen, Nele Daël, Kerneil Gentsch, Jérôme Glauser
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