

SEMINARIO / SEMINAR

Titolo / Title:

Affordances? No more, please!

Quando / When:

14 luglio 2022, ore 12:00 / 14th July 2022 at 12:00 CET

Dove / Where:

Aula Galileo, ITAB and online - Microsoft Teams

[https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3a0b724a844f004f47bbf9e6bfc4ccc1b8%40thread.tacv2/1657018948669?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2241f8b7d0-9a21-415c-9c69-a67984f3d0de%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22aebf9932-2c06-4b91-862f-ae81e43ca747%22%7d)

[join/19%3a0b724a844f004f47bbf9e6bfc4ccc1b8%40thread.tacv2/1657018948669?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2241f8b7d0-9a21-415c-9c69-a67984f3d0de%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22aebf9932-2c06-4b91-862f-ae81e43ca747%22%7d](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3a0b724a844f004f47bbf9e6bfc4ccc1b8%40thread.tacv2/1657018948669?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2241f8b7d0-9a21-415c-9c69-a67984f3d0de%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22aebf9932-2c06-4b91-862f-ae81e43ca747%22%7d)



Relatore / Speaker:

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Abstract

In recent years, the notion of *affordance* originally offered by J.J. Gibson, which captures the idea that we can *visually perceive possibilities for action* offered by objects by *directly seeing motoric information*, has been more and more invoked by philosophers and neuroscientists, thus massively monopolizing the research on the links between vision and action. The idea that *there is something as affordance perception* is defended with three main lines of argument, based on three families of evidence. (1). *Behavioral evidence* that subjects display the so-called *affordance facilitation effects*, during tasks requiring *vision-for-action*: they visually detect, very fast, object shapes that recall specific *affordances*, and immediately respond to them with a congruent motor act. (2). *Neurobiological evidence*, mostly from the *Two Visual Systems Model*, that allegedly seems to suggest that there are neural correlates of *affordance visually based detection*, i.e. *visuomotor areas* in the brain that respond to *visually presented affordances* of the shapes of objects by triggering the activation of a motor command suitable to act upon them. (3). *Phenomenological evidence*, sometimes based on lesion studies (e.g. *visual neglect*), that *affordances* are part of our *visual experience* of objects. I first describe the notion of *affordance as per* the original definition by Gibson. Then, I analyze the sets of evidence for the claim that *we see affordances*, i.e. that *there is something as affordance visual perception*. I suggest that none of these experimental results actually show that we can see affordances. I oppose (1) by criticizing the notion of *facilitation effect*, (2) with a different interpretation of the *Two Visual Systems Model*, (3) using the *method of phenomenal contrast*. I contend that the *best explanation* of the three pieces of evidence is *only* that we *see spatial* information that is coupled with the construction of appropriate motor commands. But, as I explain, this *falls short of the claim that we actually see affordances, sensu stricto*, i.e. that *we see any alleged motoric information offered by objects*. I finally discuss the philosophical impact of my view on our conception of *Vision-for-Action* and the *detection of action possibilities*.

Gabriele Ferretti is a Humboldt Fellow at the Institute for Philosophy II, Ruhr- University Bochum, Germany, where he is also a member of the Center for Mind and Cognition. Previously, he was a NOMIS fellow at Eikones, Center for the Theory and History of the Image, University of Basel, Switzerland. He received his Ph.D. in Philosophy of Mind from the *Centre for Philosophical Psychology* at the University of Antwerp, in Belgium, where he was a member of the research group 'Between Perception and Action'. His research is mostly about Philosophy of Perception and Philosophy of Action and is empirically informed by cognitive neuroscience, especially visual and motor neuroscience. His main research interest is vision and its relation to the pictorial and the motoric.

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