The Interdisciplinarity of Spatial Thinking in Psychology and the Arts

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Phelps Hall 3512
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Abstract. Interdisciplinary thinking is a powerful mechanism for learning and growth. It can address issues resulting from a purely specialized education, such as fragmentation and stifling of creativity, by allowing for novel and innovative approaches. Interdisciplinary thinking has become a central component to my theoretical and practical pursuits. I have built upon the proposition that there is a relationship between psychology and architecture, and more broadly the arts in all of my endeavors. I will present my research and creative work related to architecture, art and dance. For example, my research work focuses on understanding the role that physical environments play in human perception and behavior. My training in the arts informs theoretical questions about the nature of spatial ability in spatial experts, such as architects and dancers. In my art, I explore assumptions and manipulations of the human perceptual system.

Margaret Tarampi is a Junior Research Fellow in the SAGE Center for the Study of the Mind at UCSB and a postdoctoral researcher working with Mary Hegarty in the UCSB Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences. She received her Ph.D. in Cognitive Psychology from University of Utah and a Bachelor of Architecture from Carnegie Mellon. Her interdisciplinary research investigates the cognitive and neural mechanisms that underlie spatial perception and cognition in special populations including individuals with visual impairments and spatial experts such as dancers and architects. Other research interests include spatial thinking, perception and action, perspective taking, and kinesthetic imagery. She is also an accomplished visual artist whose work explores the assumptions and manipulations of the human perceptual system.