

Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. **Vittorio Gallese**, University of Parma, Italy

Vittorio Gallese, MD, and trained neurologist, is Professor of Psychobiology and Cognitive Neuroscience at the Dept. of Medicine & Surgery of the University of Parma, Italy, Adjunct Senior Research Scholar at the Dept. of Art History and Archeology, Columbia University, New York, USA, and Honorary Fellow of the Institute of Philosophy of the School of Advanced Study of the University of London. His significant scientific contribution is the discovery of mirror neurons, together with the colleagues of Parma. Since this discovery, he played a major role in proposing the possible far-reaching consequences of this neural mechanism, formulating embodied simulation theory. He identified the wide implications of the discovery of mirror neurons for a range of disciplines such as cognitive, social, and developmental psychology, psychiatry, psycholinguistics, philosophy of mind, educational sciences, and aesthetics. Gallese proposed that sensorimotor processes and their interplay with interoception are the embodied bases of intersubjectivity and social cognition, establishing new experimental approaches to several aspects defining human cognition. To this purpose, he established extensive collaborations with cognitive linguists, psychiatrists, philosophers, art and film scholars, leading to a series of empirical investigations in all these different fields. Another strength of Gallese's approach consists in adopting a comparative perspective, the only one capable of connecting distinctive traits of human cognition to their likely phylogenetic precursors. Indeed, he is one of the few contemporary cognitive neuroscientists. They can investigate the relationship between brain, behavior, and cognition, moving from recording neurons in non-human primates to the study of the human brain-body employing physiological and imaging techniques. During the last decade, his research activity has been mainly devoted, on the one hand, to the investigation of the neural and physiological mechanisms at the basis of a core dimension of the Self—the bodily self—and its psychopathological aspects in Psychosis, Autism, and PTSD. His research, on the other, has shed new light on the neural and physiological mechanisms underlying the aesthetic experience of art, film, and literature, proposing a radically new approach to aesthetics. He is the author of more than 300 scientific publications and three books.