The Future of the Body in the Light of Neurotechnology

Project Coordinator: Christopher Coenen, Germany
Project Partners: Dr. Gregor Wolbring, Canada (CIHR); Dr. Oliver Müller, Germany; Dr. Markus Schmidt, Austria

The FUTUREBODY project aims at identifying, addressing and discussing relevant philosophical, societal and cultural transformations, focusing on human corporeality and its envisioned merging with emerging neurotechnologies (NTs) via the following means: technological modifications of the body in which technology replaces or augments bodily functions by means of surgical interventions (implants, prostheses), the use of technologies which modify the body without such interventions (non-invasive neurostimulation technologies), and the coupling of humans and artefacts via brain-machine interface technology. Our examination will (i) integrate philosophical analysis of embodiment and agency as core concepts regarding mechanised corporeality, (ii) vision assessment for the understanding of the overall social and cultural significance of NTs and of broader visions of the future of the human body, (iii) socio-empirical research in using quantitative and qualitative methods to better understand the practices and points of view of actual or potential users of NT and people closely working with them, (iv) participatory reflection on NTs including art-science interactions and other experimental practices, and (v) a socio-theoretical approach which focuses on ability expectations. Our collaboration aims to contribute to ELSA research by providing a new basis for ethical reflection and help responsibly steer NT innovation.