

FACE TO FACE

Prosopagnosia Research Center at Dartmouth College



"Falcon Eyes" is a film that explores love, loss, and memories through the true story of face blindness.

Have you ever lost someone you loved and can't remember their face anymore?

"*Falcon Eyes*" is a story of a girl with face blindness who is determined to find her lost mother's face.

The team behind this film is raising funds to create a short film, that will serve as a showcase to attract investment for the full-length feature film.

Find the fundraiser [*here*](#).

Newsletter Highlights

Falcon Eyes, a new film

The Metagnosis Project

Excerpt from a Memoir by
Rai-Ching Yu

A song about living with
faceblindness

New Member Spotlight

TRYING TO DISTINGUISH ZEBRAS

Excerpt from a Memoir by Rai-Ching Yu

On a cold, windy, November afternoon, rowing practice was cancelled. Instead, the team would condition in the warm, cozy gym, which I was not dressed for. With only a half-hour warning, I had to borrow workout clothes from someone, fast.

My high school, Cranbrook Kingswood, was a boarding school, but not all students lived on campus. I was a day student, and walking down the Kingswood hallway, I saw a group of Asian boarders, who were all novices in rowing. Since they might've had extra workout clothes in their rooms, I asked, "Hey, can I borrow leggings?"

Slightly shorter than me, with straight, black hair down to her shoulder, one of the girls responded, "I'm not a boarder."

Oh, right: Ash was the only Asian novice who was a day student. I recognized her voice. But, since Ash was in rowing, I figured this was indeed a group of novice rowing girls. I asked the other three people, though two did not have leggings.

The last person did, so I waited for her outside the glass door of the dorms.

As I waited, I said hi to my friends going in and out. Though I can usually recognize my friends pretty easily, how I recognize them is different. While most people can look at a face and instantly know who it is, with prosopagnosia (or face-blindness) I can't recognize anyone by their face alone.

I have to figure it out from other features, like their physique, skin color, glasses, clothes, and hair. Especially hair. It can be black red blonde grey or dyed any color of the rainbow; waist-length back-length shoulder-length buzzed-short or any length in between; straight wavy curly frizzy or any grade of curliness. It can be styled in a ponytail or braid or not styled at all and combined with color length and curliness, I can identify most people just from their hair. However, context is key. For example, I know the name and characteristics of everyone who's in my science class and can just use the processes of elimination to figure out who's who.

Living with prosopagnosia is like trying to distinguish zebras.

I can figure out which is the biggest in a tribe, what color is its mane, and how long is its tail. I'll certainly be able to identify one if it was wearing glasses. Although I could try to memorize the subtle differences between the stripes, it's practically impossible to identify one from a crowd with that alone. All zebras are basically horses with black and white stripes, but they're evolved to recognize each other through the stripes. It's like how humans are evolved to recognize faces, even though each face is just two eyes, a nose, and a mouth. For prosopagnosics, that evolutionary shortcut is disrupted, and we're left with hairstyles and height.

[Read the full memoir here!](#)

ABOUT RAI-CHING

Rai-Ching is a Dartmouth '27 student who's interested in studying something environmentally-related, exploring some Psychological and Brain Sciences courses, and conducting some prosopagnosia research to understand it better. She discovered her face-blindness when her mother sent her a quiz about prosopagnosia.

Feel free to reach out at yuraiching@gmail.com with questions or comments!

THE METAGNOSIS PROJECT

A new project from Columbia University hopes to highlight stories from individuals who have experienced metagnosia (see definition to the right). The realization that one has prosopagnosia is a great example of metagnosia.

Met•ag•no•sis, n. [/.metə'nəʊsɪs/].
Etymology: from μετα- across, changed, different, after + γινώσκειν to learn to know, perceive.
1. The revelation of a longstanding undetected condition affecting a change in the terms of knowledge.

If you're interested in contributing your story or learning more, you can sign up at www.metagnosis.org. The team will reach out to you directly.

HI SCOTT, IT'S ME MAGGIE!



Scott Gurley, of St. Louis, Missouri, is an entrepreneur who owns two businesses. In his spare time, Gurley composes and produces music as **Scott Hart** with Girly Girl Productions. Scott realized he experienced the world differently when watching movies/TV with his wife, who poked fun at him for confusing the heroes with the villains.

"Since then, I've realized how much I rely on hair and height, weight, gait, and voice to know who people are."

Scott's song, *Grace and Maggie* was inspired by his best friend's family, who has six children- two of whom look very similar to him. Maggie, who is in high school and Grace, who is in college, both love the song and now always introduce themselves to Scott saying, "Hi Scott, it's me Maggie!" or "Grace".

You can find his song [here!](#)

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

SYDNEY FORTNER



Sydney is an undergraduate student in the class of 2024 majoring in neuroscience. Her honors thesis uses fMRI and behavioral paradigms to investigate a developmental prosopometamorphopsia and identity misrecognition case study. Sydney also works as a Women in Science Peer Mentor, runs the local community kitchen, and is the president of her A Cappella group on campus. She will pursue a PhD in social cognitive neuroscience after graduating from Dartmouth.

ANUSHA PATGIRI



Anusha is a Research Assistant in the Social Perception Lab. She received her Bachelor's in Science in 2021 from the University of Pittsburgh, where she studied Neuroscience, Chemistry, and Music. Anusha is interested in using neuroimaging and behavioral testing to study music cognition in populations with prosopagnosia. Outside of work, Anusha teaches voice, and works on original music.