



Julien Lecher

contents

Commemoration Event	1
Commemoration Event - cont. Selected recent publications	2
Exhibition by Julius Bockelt Hertie Lecture	3
PhD prize / IMPRS graduations 2016 Upcoming Lectures	4

Paul Weindling gave the first annual Ethics in Science Lecture titled "Provenance and Personal Identity: Problems of Brain Specimens and Tissues from the Era of National Socialism".

MPI for Brain Research commemorates its tragic past

on October 28, 2015, the Max Planck Institute (MPI) for Brain Research organized an event to commemorate the murder of 38 children exactly 75 years ago in the institution Brandenburg Görden.

In her opening statement Managing Director's **Erin Schuman** described the horrible acts by former directors, in particular **Julius Hallervorden**, of the ancestral Institute, the Berlin-based Kaiser Wilhelm Institute (KWI) for Brain Research, who supported the murder of children and young adults with assumed or proven psychiatric disorders to provide material for their research. The human material **Hallervorden** collected were used well beyond the 1960s when the institute had moved to Frankfurt. Brain tissue originating from these patients remained in possession of the MPI for Brain Research until the mid 1980s, after which they were buried in an official ceremony in Munich (1990). Amongst the brain specimens were those of more than 30 children killed on October 28, 1940 at Berlin's Brandenburg Görden institution.

Erin Schuman stated that the current and emeritus directors, including **Gilles Laurent**, **Moritz Helmstaedter**, **Heinz Wässle**, **Wolf Singer** and herself, wish to fully acknowledge the past and express their profound sadness and regret over this history. **Schuman**: "We think that the only way forward is to keep this memory, however unpleasant, alive. We must all understand that our collective humanity includes the ability to conduct unthinkable acts such as these, and we must keep this reflection alive in our collective consciousness in order to ensure that it never happens again."

Paul Weindling, an internationally renowned Professor of History of Medicine at Oxford Brookes University, gave the first annual Ethics in Science lecture in which he described the history of brains and body materials used for scientific research during the Third Reich and thereafter. **Paul Weindling** noted that the anonymity associated with mass burials of brain sections and tissues from these victims is not acceptable or enlightened as the names and life histories of the victims must be discovered and shared.

MPI for Brain Research commemorates its tragic past - continued

after the lecture by Paul Weindling, the three current directors Erin Schuman, Gilles Laurent and Moritz Helmstaedter read the 38 names of the children ranging from 7 to 18 years old, all murdered at Brandenburg Görden on October 28, 1940.

In addition, Christiane Cuticchio, Director of Atelier Goldstein, a gallery that features the works of exceptional artists with mental disabilities, opened the exhibition by Julius Bockelt. Cuticchio: "Julius Bockelt is one of the most gifted artists I know and he was lucky to be born during these times", a poignant reference to the fact that had Bockelt been born 60 years earlier he might have met the horrible fate of the murdered child victims being commemorated on this day. Intermezzos were provided by two musicians from Ensemble Modern.



Left: directors read the names of children murdered at Brandenburg Görden 75 years ago and right: exhibition of Julius Bockelt at the Max Planck Institute for Brain Research

Selected recent publications

Berning, M., Boergens, K.M. and Helmstaedter, M. (2015) SegEM: Efficient Image Analysis for High-Resolution Connectomics. *Neuron* 87: 1193–1206.

Bittner, R.A., Linden, D.E.J., Roebroek, A., Härtling, F., Rotarska-Jagiela, A., Maurer, K., Goebel, R., Singer, W. and Haenschel, C. (2015): The when and where of working memory dysfunction in early-onset schizophrenia – A functional magnetic resonance imaging study. *Cerebral Cortex* 25: 2494–2506.

Huston, S.J., Stopfer, M., Cassenaer, S., Aldworth, Z.N., Laurent, G. (2015) Neural Encoding of Odors during Active Sampling and in Turbulent Plumes. *Neuron* 88: 403–418.

Letzkus, J.J., Wolff, S.B.E. and Lüthi, A. (2015) Disinhibition, a circuit mechanism for associative learning and memory. *Neuron* 88: 264–276.

Martin, K.C. and Schuman, E.M. (2015). Opting in or out of the network. *Science* 350: 1477–1478.

Friends of the Max Planck Institute for Brain Research

Exhibition by Julius Bockelt

the Max Planck Institute for Brain Research currently exhibits unique work by **Julius Bockelt** (born 1983) from Atelier Golstein. In this exhibition "*Schicht, Blase, Effekt*", he presents drawings and photographic work, which primarily concentrate on physical phenomena. In **Bockelt's** drawings, complex structures on paper arise from linear sequences and overlays, which are closely linked with his musical attempts related to interferences and sound vibrations.

Bockelt's photographic work are testimonies of unconventional observation and experiments: he takes up formations of clouds, rainbows, snow crystals and photoelasticity or the modified structure and characteristics of soap bubbles by using cola (see also image on this page).

The exhibition can be visited during weekdays between 8.00-18.00 hours. Additional information is available at the Institute's reception.

Website www.brain.mpg.de/news-events/exhibition-schicht-blase-effekt.html



Hertie Foundation Lecture at the MPI for Brain Research



Claire Wyart
Dec 09, 11 am

Claire Wyart (Institut du Cerveau et de la moelle épinière, CRICM, Paris, France)

Title: "Investigation of a novel sensory interface relaying information from the cerebrospinal fluid to the nervous system"

Lecture Hall of the Max Planck Institute for Brain Research
Max-von-Laue-Straße 4, 60438 Frankfurt am Main (Campus Riedberg)

www.brain.mpg.de/wyart

Image by Kristen Severi and Claire Wyart

Second Hertie Lecture by Claire Wyart

on December 9, **Claire Wyart** (Institut du Cerveau et de la moelle épinière, CRICM, Paris, France) presented the second Hertie Foundation Lecture. Her presentation about novel sensory interface relaying information from the cerebrospinal fluid to the nervous system was visited by around eighty people.

Already the evening before her lecture (December 8) **Claire Wyart** gave an inspiring Master Class to a group of 35 (Graduate) Students, mainly from the Institutes's Graduate Program (International Max Planck Research School for Neural Circuits). We thank the Hertie Foundation and the Friends of the Max Planck Institute for Brain Research for their generous contribution to these events.

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Matthias Kaschube (middle) awarded the PhD prize to Georgi Tushev (left) at the Institute's holiday party. Johannes Letzkus (right) introduced this new initiative.

PhD prize for Georgi Tushev

As of 2015, the Friends will award prizes to excellent scientists. On December 17, Georgi Tushev, now head of the Institute's Scientific Computing Facility, received the PhD prize of 500 Euro as well as a certificate. Georgi did his doctoral studies at the Lab of Erin Schuman. On March 4, he defended his thesis titled: "Quantification and analysis of neuropil transcriptome in the central nervous system". We congratulate him on this achievement.

First three IMPRS students graduate

2015 marks the first PhD defenses from students from the International Max Planck Research (IMPRS) for Neural Circuits. The first IMPRS student from the 2011 generation defending her thesis at the Goethe University is Melanie Heck (July 28) from the Lab of Georg Auburger, followed by her colleague Nadine Brehm (September 16) and Eva Harde from the Lab of Amparo Acker-Palmer (October 6). All three students accepted positions in industry. We expect to have more graduations next year.

2016 Upcoming Lectures

(all Lectures start at 11.00 hours at the Institute's Lecture Hall)

27.01 Kevin Briggman (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, NIH, Bethesda, USA) *Neuroscience Lecture*

09.03 Andreas Schäfer (University College London, The Francis Crick Institute, UK) *Neuroscience Lecture*

16.03 Caspar Hoogenraad (Utrecht University, the Netherlands) *Special Lecture*

13.04 Gordon Fishell (Neuroscience Institute, New York University, USA) *Neuroscience Lecture*

04.05 Jackie Schiller (Science and Engineering of Neural Systems, Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa, Israel) *Neuroscience Lecture*

11.05 Yiaowei Zhang (Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Harvard University, USA) *Neuroscience Lecture*

14.09 May-Britt Moser (Norwegian University of Science and Technology Trondheim, Norway) *Neuroscience Lecture*

Contact

Friends of the MPI for Brain Research
Max-von-Laue-Str. 4
60438 Frankfurt am Main
www.brain.mpg.de/friends
friends@brain.mpg.de