IMP Press Release

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IMP
Research Institute of Molecular Pathology

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Neuroscientist Christof Koch to give Max Birnstiel Lecture at the IMP

How does the brain make up our mind? How is conscious experience generated by the biophysical processes in our brains? Christof Koch, President and Chief Scientific Officer at the Allen Institute for Brain Science, will talk about his quest for the "Neuronal and Theoretical Foundations of Consciousness" in his Max Birnstiel Lecture at the Research Institute of Molecular Pathology (IMP) in Vienna.

"Neuronal and Theoretical Foundations of Consciousness"

Wednesday, 6 May, 2015, 11:00 a.m.
IMP Lecture Hall
Dr. Bohr-Gasse 7
1030 Vienna

Christof Koch is one of the most influential neuroscientists of our times. He wrote seminal papers and books bridging theoretical and computational neurosciences to philosophy, and contributed widely to the public discussion about brain and consciousness. He currently leads the Allen Institute for Brain Science - one of the largest non-profit initiatives in brain research where he and his team deconstruct wiring and mechanisms of information processing in the brain.

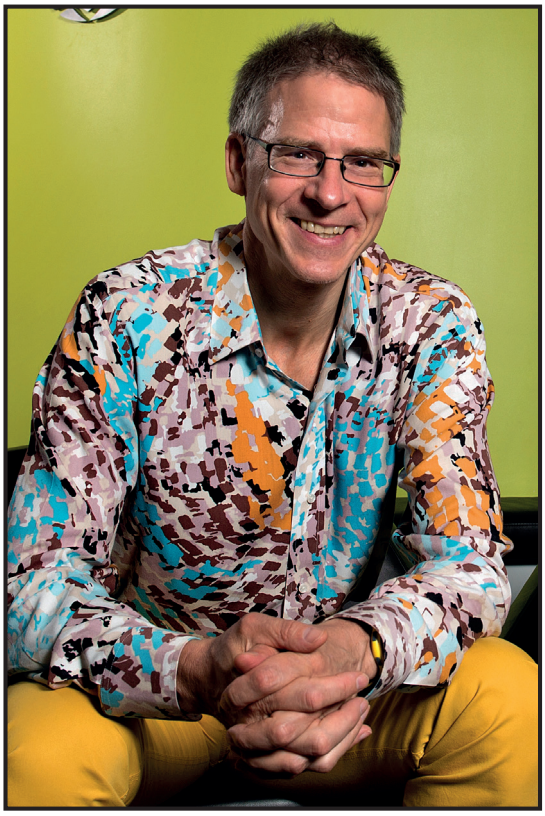

Foto Credit: Allen Institute for Brain Science

The Koch-lab uses electrophysiology and functional brain imaging to map neuronal activity in the visual system and computational approaches to build models of visual information processing in order to distill the critical steps underlying visual attention. In a very popular study, Christof Koch and colleagues identified neurons that represent such highly processed information in the human brain: one of those cells reached world fame for recognizing Jennifer Aniston. These findings are not only entertaining, they are proof that single neurons are tied to individual concepts and help neuroscientists understand the mechanisms of memory.

The Max Birnstiel Lectures are a special series of seminars at the Research Institute of Molecular Pathology (IMP) in Vienna and represent the highest award that the IMP can give to outside scientists. They are named after the founding director of the institute, Max L. Birnstiel, who passed away in 2014. Each year, around six scientists of the life sciences are invited to deliver one of these lectures, among them a number of Nobel Prize laureates. The Max Birnstiel Lectures attract considerable attention on campus and within the wider scientific community and invariably draw a large audience to the IMP.

Programme of the Max Birnstiel Lectures:
www.imp.ac.at/seminars/max-birnstiel-lecture-series

About Christof Koch
Christof Koch was born in Kansas City on November 13, 1956. He received a PhD in nonlinear information processing from the Max Planck Institute in Tübingen, Germany

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in 1982. As a postdoc, he spent four years at the Artificial Intelligence Lab at MIT before joining the California Institute of Technology in 1986. Since 2011, Christof Koch is President and Chief Scientific Officer at the Allen Institute for Brain Science in Seattle.

About the IMP

The Research Institute of Molecular Pathology (IMP) in Vienna is a basic biomedical research institute largely sponsored by Boehringer Ingelheim. With over 200 scientists from 35 nations, the IMP is committed to scientific discovery of fundamental molecular and cellular mechanisms underlying complex biological phenomena. Research areas include cell and molecular biology, , neurobiology, disease mechanisms and computational biology. The IMP is located at the Vienna Biocenter.

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