

“SENSORY WORLDS: Limits and Adaptations”

Professor Friedrich Barth

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Time: Thursday, February 14, 2008, 4PM

Place: MEC, 341 Mechanical Engineering Building

Refreshments at 3:30PM in MAE Faculty Lounge, MEC 305

Abstract

"All living beings from bacteria to man depend on information about their external and internal environment. This is why animals are so richly supplied with the most diverse sensory systems. These do not serve the perception of an abstract or physically complete truth but instead they help secure biological fitness, that is survival and reproduction. Sensory organs and the corresponding neuronal networks of the central nervous system are not transparent windows through which we and other animals experience the world. Instead they form a highly limited and biased picture of the world which at the same time, however, makes a lot of sense biologically. Considering the numerous sensory filters and the active participation of the brain in sensory perception, experiencing the world to a considerable extent is experiencing ourselves."