

Workshop with Prof. Dr. Stuart Firestein

«It is ignorance – not knowledge – that is the true engine of science.» Stuart Firestein, a neurobiologist working on the sense of smell, thereby justifies the value of ignorance in his 2012 book of the self-same title. His next book *Failure: Why Science Is So Successful* (Oxford University Press, 2016) expounds on the value of failure in science. Stuart Firestein is at ETH Zurich to present at the Philosophy Colloquium, and this workshop is designed to further benefit from his stay in order to discuss the validity and implications of his claims.

While much of the discussion on the value of ignorance and failure has centred on the natural sciences, this workshop brings together scholars from the very different backgrounds – including medicine and the humanities – in order to further flesh out Firestein's claims. By comparing the conditions under which ignorance and failure are valuable, and the limitations of this view in different disciplines, we aim to create a more complete picture applicable to a variety of research fields.

Contact

ETH Zurich
Dr. Nadja El Kassar and Dr. Vanessa Rampton
Clausiusstrasse 59
8092 Zürich
nadja.elkassar@gess.ethz.ch
vanessa.rampton@gess.ethz.ch
www.philosophie.ethz.ch

Registration:

nadja.elkassar@gess.ethz.ch

Publisher Departement Geistes-, Sozial- und Staatswissenschaften
 Professur für Philosophie II
Editor Victoria Laszlo
Design Hochschulkommunikation, ETH Zürich



Rethinking Progress via Ignorance and Failure: Insights from Science, Medicine and Humanities

Workshop with Prof. Dr. Stuart Firestein (Columbia University)

Date: Thursday, March 15, 2018

Venue: ETH Zurich, Zentrum, Rämistrasse 101, HG F 33.5

Please register.

Organization:
Vanessa Rampton and Nadja El Kassar

Program

- 10.30 – 11.00 Arrival & Coffee
- 11.00 **Welcome & Introduction to Stuart Firestein's Work & Concepts**
Dr. Nadja El Kassar & Dr. Vanessa Rampton (ETH Zurich)
- 11.20 **Mistakes as Everyday Experience**
Gina Bucher (Zurich, author & journalist)
- 11.30 **Asking the Wrong Questions with the Right Technologies**
Dr. Kelly Clancy (UCL, Neuroscience)
- 11.40 – 12.10 Discussion
- 12.10 **The Implications of <Clouds> for Scientific Progress**
Dr. Matthieu Galvez (ETH Zurich, Geology)
- 12.20 **Evolution Risk Management: A Study in Ignorance**
Prof. Dr. Andrew Read (Penn State/ETH Zurich, Biology)
- 12.30 – 13.00 Discussion
- 13.00 - 14.30 Lunch – ETH Dozentenfoyer
- 14.30 **Failure in Science as a Topic in Philosophy**
Dr. Karim Bschr (ETH Zurich, Philosophy)
- 14.40 **tba**
Prof. Dr. Michael Hagner (ETH Zurich, Science Studies)
- 14.50 – 15.20 Discussion

Program

- 15.20 **Productive Failure in Education**
Dragan Trninic (ETH Zurich, Education)
- 15.30 **The Concept of Failure in Parental Education**
Dr. med. Christine Kuhn (Psychiatrische Universitäts-
klinik Zürich)
- 15.40 – 16.10 Discussion
- 16.10 – 16.40 Coffee Break
- 16.40 **Surgeons Don't Make Mistakes – Does the Culture Change?**
Dr. med. Sabine Goldhahn (Science and News)
- 16.50 **Learning by Failing – What is Holding Us Back in Life Sciences?**
Prof. Dr. Simone Schürle (ETH Zurich, Biomedical
engineering)
- 17.00 – 17.30 Discussion
- 17.30 – 18.15 **Final Discussion: Ignorance and Failure in Practice – Where Do We Go from Here?**
Moderator: Dr. Karim Bschr