

EMPAC

TALK

Luca Turin

Why Does Consciousness
Dissolve in Chloroform?
The Story of an
Enduring Mystery

WED / NOV 05TH

FREE



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Why Does Consciousness Dissolve in Chloroform? The Story of an Enduring Mystery

What is time? Does our understanding of time depend on the human mind in some fundamental way? Biophysicist Luca Turin investigates one of the stranger mysteries of human consciousness in this presentation, using images and 3D animations to share the many unusual discoveries from his research with general anesthesia and its influence on our internal sense of duration. Unlike sleep, time essentially stops for the anesthetized subject, who frequently wakes with a feeling of “the next thing I knew . . .” In *Why Does Consciousness Dissolve in Chloroform?*, Turin will combine his characteristic wit and scientific rigor to unwind this bizarre phenomenon, finding at its heart a richer understanding of the human mind and the strange conditions we’re given to understand through it.

Biophysicist Luca Turin was born in 1953 in Beirut, Lebanon. He received his French baccalauréat in 1970, and his PhD in physiology and biophysics in 1978 from University College London. Turin worked at The French National Center for Scientific Research from 1982 to 1992, and was a lecturer in biophysics at University College London from 1992 to 2000. He was the CTO of a startup company creating new fragrance and flavor molecules until 2009. He’s the author of *Perfumes: The Guide* and the subject of Chandler Burr’s 2003 book *The Emperor of Scent*. He worked at MIT from 2009 to 2011 and at the Alexander Fleming Institute in Athens, Greece, from 2011 to 2013. Turin is currently a visiting professor at the Institute for Theoretical Physics in Ulm, Germany, and writes a column for the Zurich-based monthly *NZZ Folio*. He is also the perfume critic of *Style Arabia*.



Material Performance

This series of talks focuses on materiality and time—how material and passing time can be seen as reciprocal conditions for each other’s qualities. It is inspired by the thoughts of French philosopher Henri Bergson:

“If I want to mix a glass of sugar and water, I must . . . wait until the sugar melts. This little fact is big with meaning. For here the time I have to wait is not the mathematical time, which would apply equally well to the entire history of the material world. . . . It coincides with my impatience, that is to say, with a certain portion of my own duration. . . . It is no longer something thought, it is something lived.”

Bergson’s text has punctuated philosophical discussions since it first appeared in 1908. The series will bring together material scientists, biochemists, philosophers, curators, and media theorists to unravel the relationship of time and materiality within each discipline. On December 3, media theorist **Thomas Zummer** will present *On the Notion of “Capture”*: *arché*, *techné*, *epistemé*, and on December 4, psychologist **Riccardo Manzotti** will speak on *The Spread Mind*.

STAFF

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