

The 5th SSB+RM Young Scientists Symposium - Bringing Materials to Life

On January 20th 2023, researchers from labs all around Switzerland gathered in the main building at ETH Zurich for the 5th SSB+RM Young Scientists Symposium for a day of inspiring talks, interesting poster presentations and eye-opening conversations. With this symposium, we wanted to provide young scientists with a platform where they can meet and discuss with other people from their field of research, possibly initiating new inter-institutional collaborations throughout Switzerland. The main target audience of our symposium were master and PhD students who might have not had many opportunities yet to present their research in such a conference setting. Thus, our symposium also enabled the participants to become more confident in presenting their research and improving their communication skills in general.

The 5th SSB+RM Young Scientists Symposium had one of the biggest attendances yet and we were very happy to welcome 91 people in our auditorium for the event. Though most of the participants were from research institutions in Zurich (ETH Zurich, University of Zurich, University Hospital Zurich), over a third was affiliated to an institution from outside of Zurich (AO Research Institute Davos, EMPA, EPFL, Radboud UMC, University of Basel) which made us especially proud.



We were particularly happy to also welcome our two keynote speakers to the event which were Prof. Dr. Bert Müller, professor at the Biomaterials Science Center at the University of Basel and Prof. Dr. Li Tang, associate professor at the Institute for Bioengineering and the Institute for Materials Science and Engineering at the EPFL in Lausanne. During their talks, they spoke about mechano-sensitive nanoparticles for the targeted treatment of vasodilators (Prof. Müller) and novel approaches to improve cancer immunotherapy (Prof. Tang) respectively. Both talks presented highly innovative, cutting edge research which stimulated a lot of questions in the following Q&A session as well as during the coffee breaks and lunch break.



In addition to our two keynotes, there were 8 student presentations of 15 minutes each (incl. Q&A) as well as a block of 10 two-minute rapid fire presentations. Moreover, we had 31 poster presentations at this year's symposium covering everything from the development of new materials for bioprinting to the role of specific cellular pathways in different

joint diseases. Overall, an almost impossible job to determine the winners for our awards but we were very happy to count on our amazing jury which attentively listened to all of the oral contributions and graded all of the poster presentations. The winners and runner-ups were Esma Tankus (University of Basel) and Simone Ponta (ETH Zurich) for the oral presentations, Oscar Cipolato (ETH Zurich) and Mira Jacobs (University Hospital Zurich) for the rapid fires and Stéphane Bernhard (ETH Zurich) and Anna Neuer (EMPA) for the posters.

As tradition requires, we closed our symposium with some tasty hummus and baba ganoush at the apéro where the discussions then continued in a more informal setting.

Overall, we were extremely happy and proud with how the symposium went and the feedback that we had received and we are already looking forward to the next one!

Of course, this event would not have been possible without the support of certain institutions/individuals:

First and foremost, we would like to thank the SSB+RM parent organization and particularly its current president Prof. Dr. Martin Ehrbar for their unbroken support in all of our endeavours.

Secondly, we want to thank ETH Zurich for providing us with the necessary infrastructure to host this event as well as the financial contribution through the “Doctoral project funding” programme without which this event would not have been possible.

Thirdly, we would like to thank our amazing jury, namely Dr. Parth Chansoria (ETH Zurich), Dr. Alexander Ehret (EMPA & ETH Zurich), Dr. Katharina Gegenschatz (University Hospital Zurich), Dr. Géraldine Guex (AO Research Institute Davos), Dr. Anna Marsano (University of Basel) and Dr. Markus Rottmar (EMPA).

Also, our thanks go to the AO Research Institute Davos for sponsoring the name tags for our symposium

Last but not least, we would like to thank our two keynote presenters Prof. Dr. Bert Müller and Prof. Dr. Li Tang for taking the time to travel all the way to Zurich to share their enthusiasm for research with our audience.

