



11th "Symposium On Biological Complexity" at the Salk Institute

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For eleven years now, this convention, sponsored by the French **Foundation IPSEN**, has presented the scientific community with top-level scientific discussion. This year's theme was centered around **the biology of RNA**.

The conference was opened by Elizabeth Blackburn (Nobel prizewinner for Physiology or Medicine in 2009) and included presentations from speakers Venki Ramakrishnan (Nobel prizewinner of Chemistry 2009), Gary Ruvkun (Lasker 2008), and French-born scientist Emmanuelle Charpentier (Co-discoverer of CRISPR-Cas9 technology). Several important advancements were presented throughout the duration of the event including the discovery of a new subclass of RNA "Downstream of Human Genes", or DoGs, by Joan Steitz (Yale), and a discussion of the role of satellite RNAs by Inder Verma (Salk).

The symposium paid witness to a particular explosion of work in the field of structural biology, made possible by the recent progress in cryo-electron microscopy. It was precisely this powerful tool, amongst others, that enabled V. Ramakrishnan to determine the structure of the ribosome, Kiyoshi Nagai (also from Cambridge, UK) to determine the structure of the spliceosome (Three publications in Nature since 2016), and Dinshaw Patel (Memorial Sloan Kettering, New York) to refine the mechanism of action of CRISPR-Cas9 (Cell 2016).