

Press release**Universität zu Köln****Eva Schissler**

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<http://idw-online.de/en/news821476>Personnel announcements, Press events
Biology
transregional, national**Brian Smith is Ernst Bresslau Guest Professor of Zoology**

The Institute of Zoology has awarded the Ernst Bresslau Guest Professorship 2023/2024 to the American neurobiologist Brian Smith. Smith will give his public inaugural lecture on 4 October. With the guest professorship, the University of Cologne is facing up to its responsibility for injustices committed during National Socialism.

The American scientist Brian Smith has been awarded the third Ernst Bresslau Guest Professorship at the Institute of Zoology at the University of Cologne. Smith will come to Cologne for two research stays of six weeks each from his home university, Arizona State University at Tempe, at the beginning and after the end of the coming winter semester 2023/2024. His guest professorship will begin with the obligatory public Ernst Bresslau Lecture, which he will deliver on Wednesday, 4 October 2023, at 5 p.m. in Lecture Hall o.024 of the Biozentrum Köln (Building 304: Zülpicher Straße 47b, 50674 Cologne) on the topic of:

“Reverse engineering brains: Use of animal ‘models’ for understanding the relation between brain, behavior and cognition”

Ernst Ludwig Bresslau (1877–1935), a medical doctor of Jewish descent, was appointed to the still young University of Cologne in 1925. He became its first professor of zoology and founded the Zoological Institute. After the National Socialists seized power, then rector Ernst Leupold forced him into involuntarily retirement on 24 September 1933, which effectively meant a professional ban. A year later, Bresslau, his wife and three of his children emigrated to Brazil, the country of his earlier research trips. There, at the University of São Paulo, founded in the same year, he once again established the Zoological Institute from scratch before succumbing to heart failure in May 1935.

The insect neurobiologist Brian Harvey Smith first was a professor at Ohio State University for 15 years before he joined Arizona State University in 2005. In his work, he explores and compares odour-controlled behaviour and the neural mechanisms by which animals perceive, process and discriminate odours. He is an expert on chemical communication among honey bees and gives workshops on bee health to researchers and beekeepers worldwide. His research has implications for the treatment of neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson’s disease, which often begins with an impaired sense of smell.

With the Ernst Bresslau Guest Professorship in Zoology, the University of Cologne wants to honour today’s outstanding researchers and at the same time remember Bresslau’s fate, which he shared with many university teachers of his time. Last but not least, it is a way for the University of Cologne to face up to the historical responsibility of its role during National Socialism. Smith follows – with a four-year delay due to the coronavirus pandemic – as the third Ernst Bresslau Guest Professor after Hans-Joachim Pflüger (2015/2016) and Konrad Dettner (2017/2018). In the academic year 2023/24, the professorship will be financially supported by the North Rhine-Westphalian neuroscience research network “iBehave”.

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URL for press release: [http://Pflüger, H.-J. \(2017\). Professor Ernst Bresslau, founder of the Zoology Departments at the Universities of Cologne and Sao Paulo: lessons to learn from his life history. Zoology, 122, 1–6. DOI: 10.1016/j.zool.2017.04.002](http://Pflüger, H.-J. (2017). Professor Ernst Bresslau, founder of the Zoology Departments at the Universities of Cologne and Sao Paulo: lessons to learn from his life history. Zoology, 122, 1–6. DOI: 10.1016/j.zool.2017.04.002)