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ICTS SPECIAL COLLOQUIUM

Beauty in Science: An Empirical Assessment

This presentation summarizes the results of the world's first empirical study of the role of beauty in science. We surveyed more than 3000 physicists and biologists in India, Italy, UK, and USA, and interviewed more than 200. Results demonstrate that beauty plays a vital role in science: the majority of scientists say that beauty drew them to become scientists, that they regularly encounter beauty in their scientific work, that it shapes vital aspects of the practice of science such as theory choice and experimental design, and that it is especially important for science communication and even persistence in scientific careers. We examine differences and similarities between physicists and biologists in what beauty means and the role it plays in the scientific process. We also discuss the potential pitfalls of beauty such as when it might lead science astray, particularly in physics.



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Brandon Vaidyanathan is Associate Professor and Chair of Sociology at The Catholic University of America. He holds a PhD in Sociology from the University of Notre Dame. His research examines how culture shapes human flourishing in diverse institutional contexts (i.e., business, science, and religion), as well as how beauty shapes our lives and work.

04:00PM, 22nd September, 2022

Zoom link: shorturl.at/GJR46

Meeting ID: 818 7109 6216

Passcode: 220922

Ramanujan Lecture Hall,
ICTS, Bengaluru

Credits: NASA, ESA, CSA, and STScI. <https://www.nasa.gov/webbfirstimages>