

Colour with a twist: from nature to applications

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The most brilliant colours in nature are obtained by structuring transparent materials on the scale of the wavelength of visible light. By controlling/designing the dimensions of such nanostructures, it is possible to achieve extremely intense colourations over the entire visible spectrum without using pigments or colorants. Colour obtained through structure, namely structural colour, is widespread in the animal and plant kingdom [1]. Such natural photonic nanostructures are generally synthesised in ambient conditions using a limited range of biopolymers. Given these limitations, an amazing range of optical structures exists: from very ordered photonic structures [2], to partially disordered [3], to completely random ones [4].

In this seminar, I will introduce some striking example of natural photonic structures [2-4] and review our recent advances to fabricate bio-mimetic photonic structures using the same material as nature. Developing biomimetic structures with cellulose enables us to fabricate novel photonic materials using low cost polymers in ambient conditions [6-7]. Importantly, it also allows us to understand the biological processes at work during the growth of these structures in plants.

References

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Figures

