

Michael Kasumovic:

Sexy spiders and violent videogames: how social experiences affect mating and competitive strategies

I've always been fascinated by how animals use information from social interactions to maximise their fitness. To me, understanding how individuals navigate social environments can help explain why 'suboptimal' phenotypes continue to exist, even under strong selection. In hopes of sparking the same interest in all of you, I've put together what initially seems like an eclectic talk. In the first third of my talk, I will explore how strong selective pressures can lead to developmental systems that respond to social variation. For this, I will focus on my favourite animals: spiders. Next, I will explore some of my research in humans and demonstrate how videogames can be used to understand how humans respond to competitive and mating challenges. Finally, I'll end this talk by asking the audience to participate in a brand-new ~~videe-~~game experiment where we will collect and explore data in real time. I mean isn't it more fun doing some science together instead of just talking about it?