



# The Art of Building Small

*from molecular switches to motors*

**Ben Feringa**

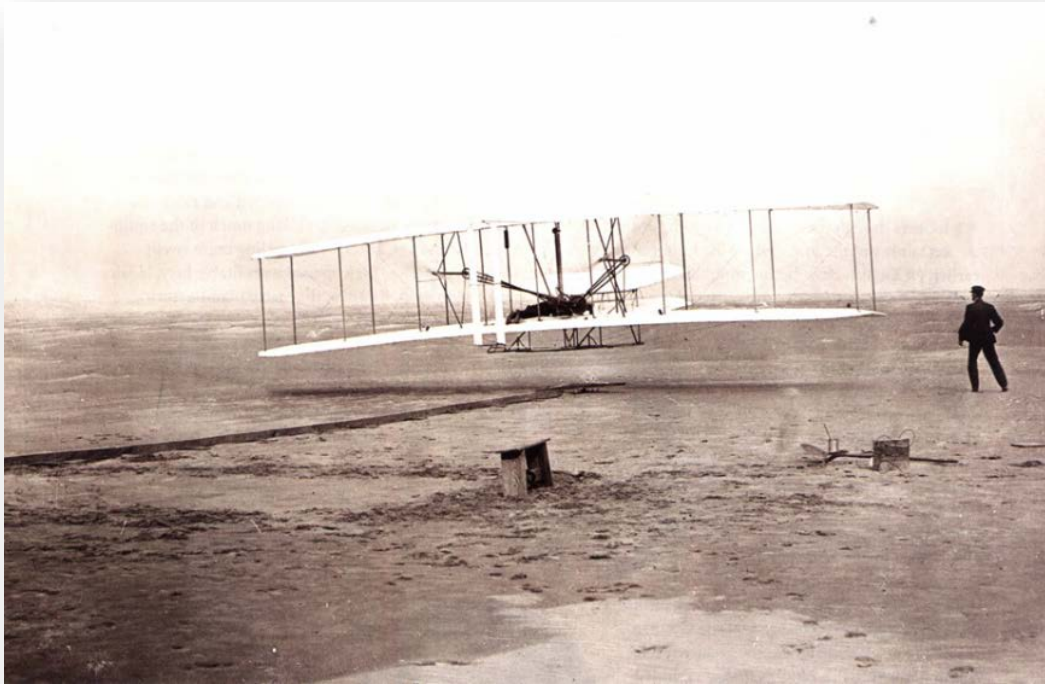
Stockholm  
december 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016



university of  
groningen

# *Bioinspired Motion*

*the early days*



17<sup>th</sup> of December 1903 at Kitty Hawk

*fascinated by...*



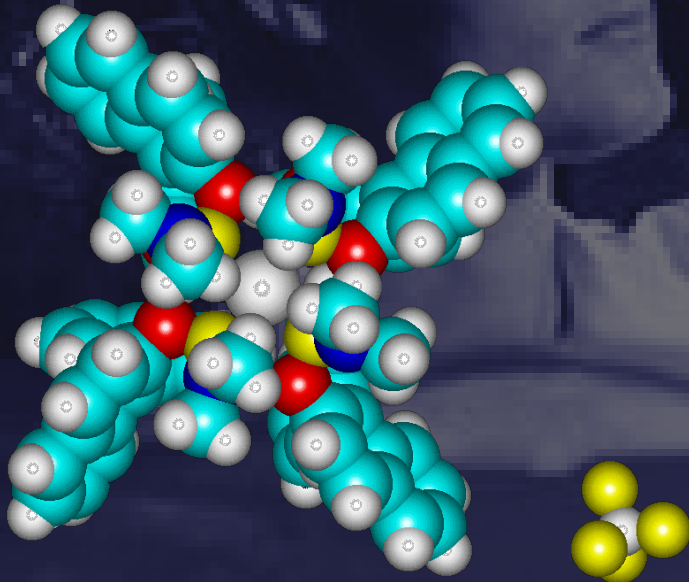
*...but no copy or mimic!*

*heading for.....?*

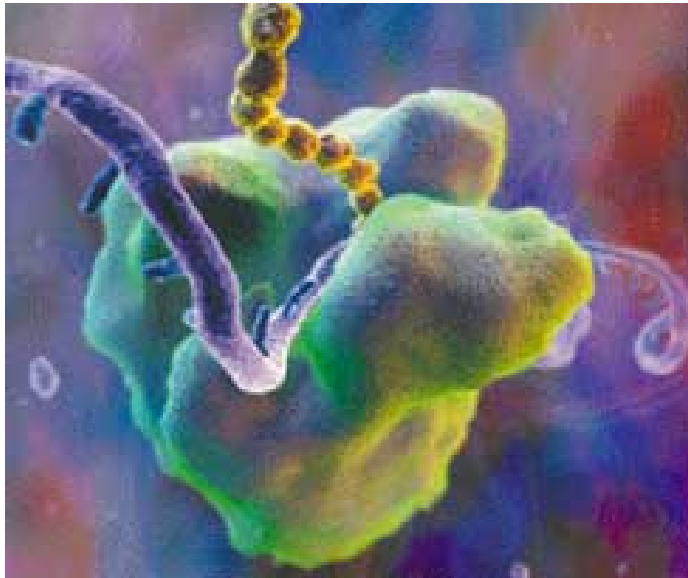


# *The Art of Building Small*

## Chemical Synthesis



Natural Robot



$\pm 24 \text{ nm} =$   
 $0.000000024 \text{ m}$

Artificial Robot



$\pm 2 \text{ m}$

***soft***

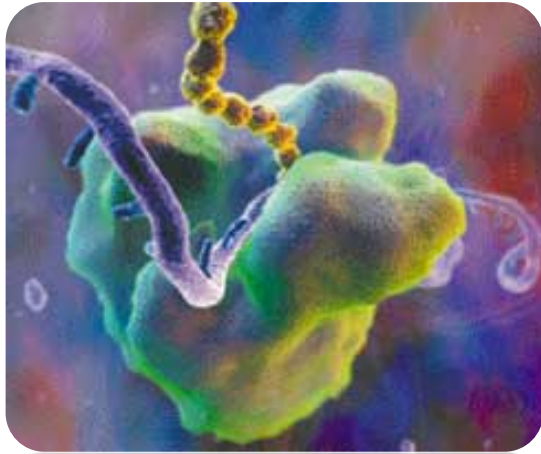
**effect of length scales**

*Low Reynolds number*  
*Brownian motion*

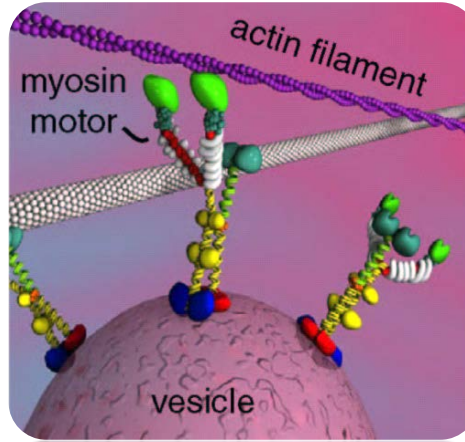
***hard***

# Biomolecular Machines

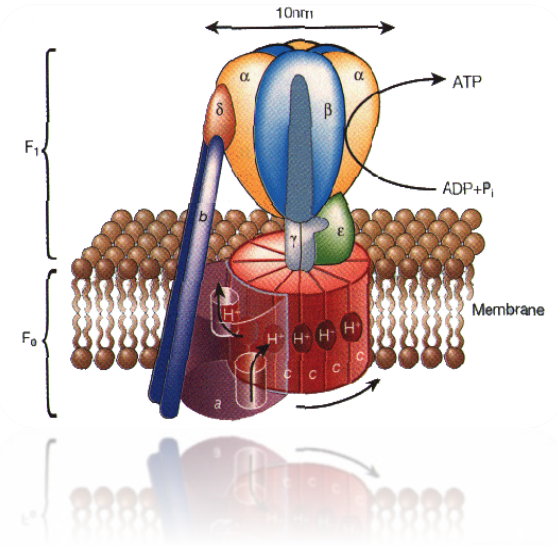
**Ribosome**  
*protein synthesis*



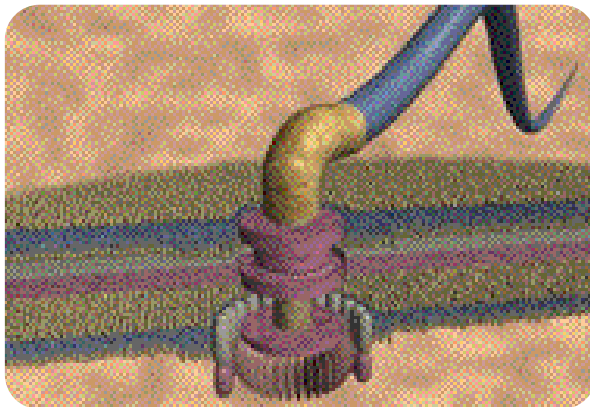
**Bio-Nanomotors**  
*transport – muscle function*



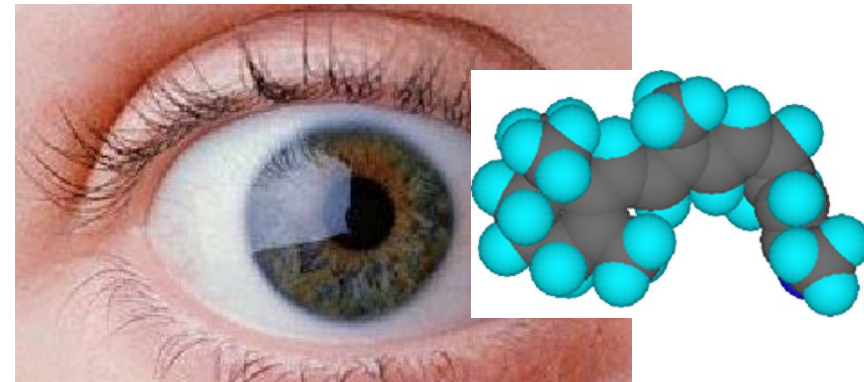
**Rotary Motor**  
*transport-catalysis*



**Bacterial Flagellar Motor**  
*propulsion*

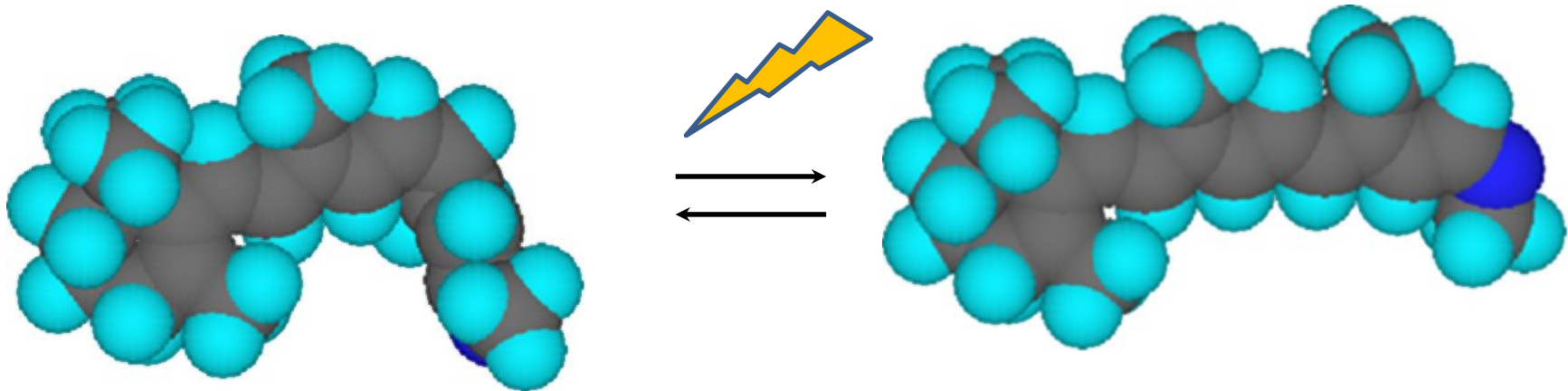
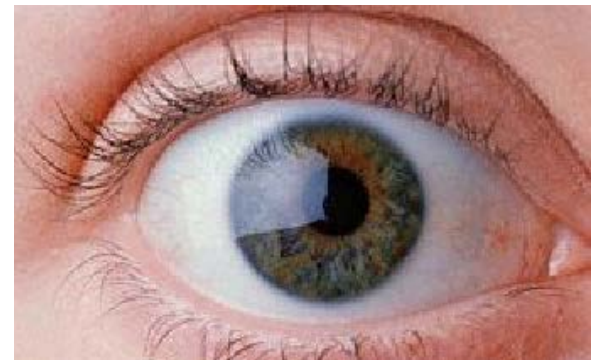
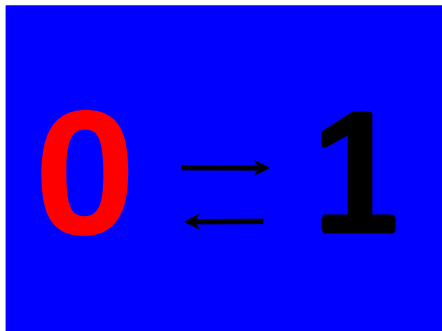


**Optical Switching**  
*Information*



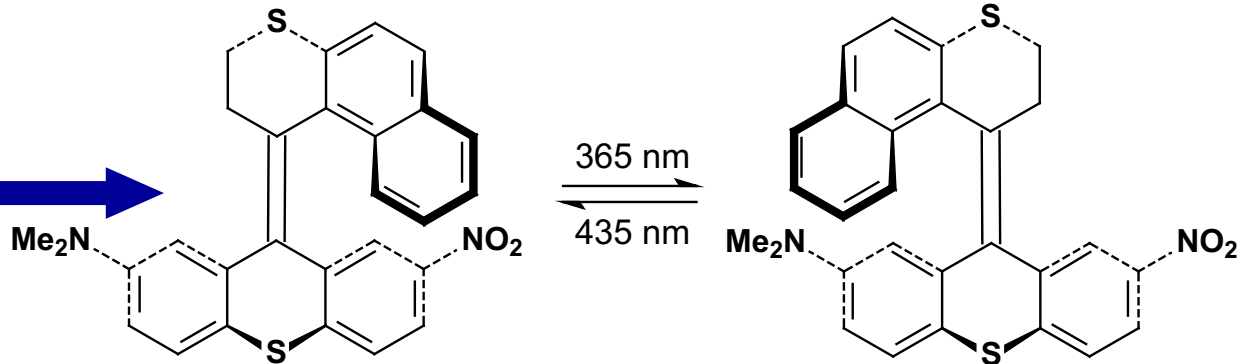
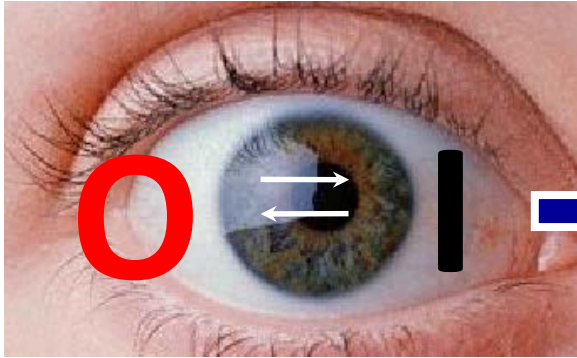
# Molecular Nanoscience

## molecular light switch



# Optical Molecular Switch

## Binary System at the Molecular Level



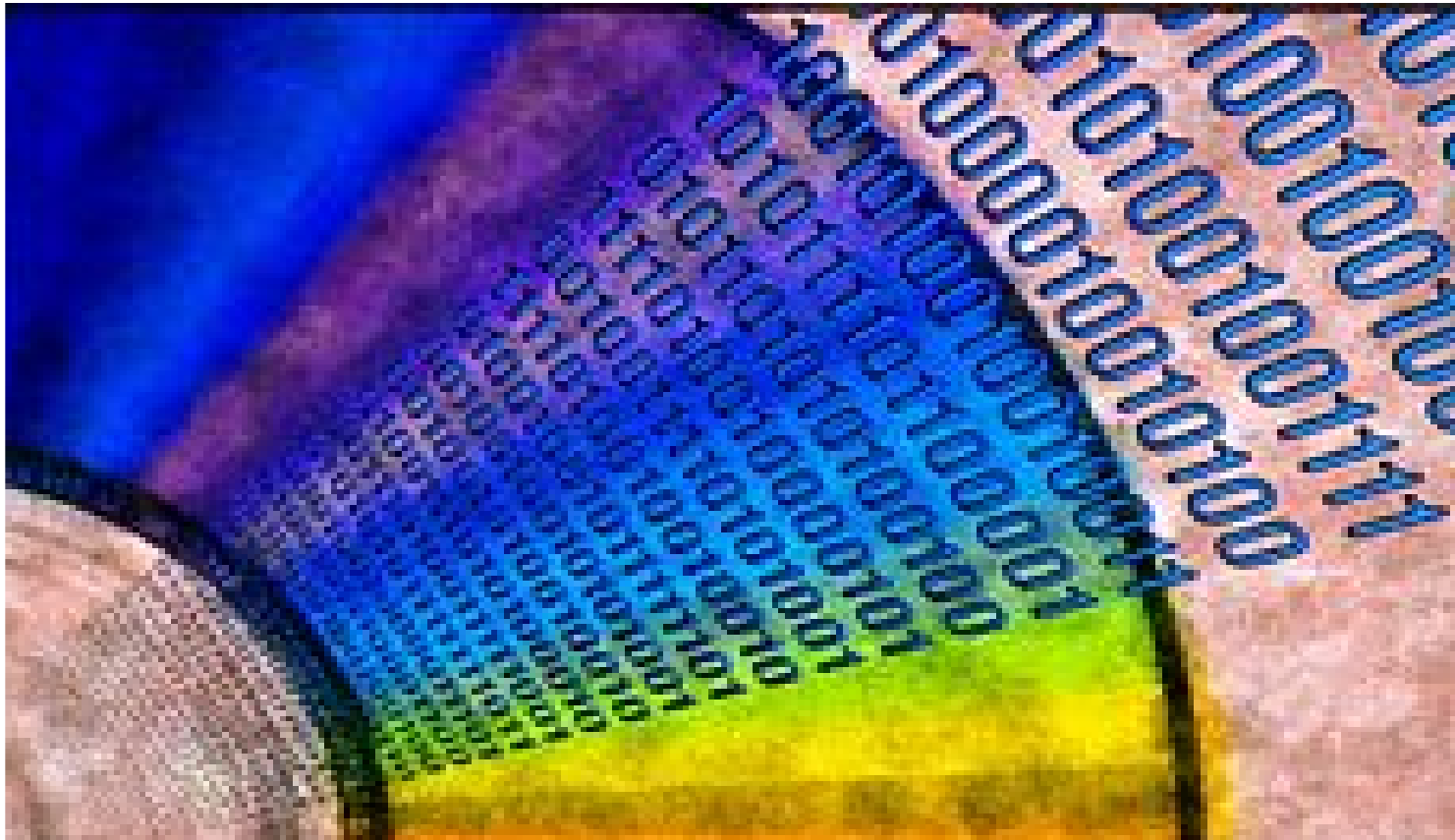
## Information Storage

Non-destructive read-out

Left (0)

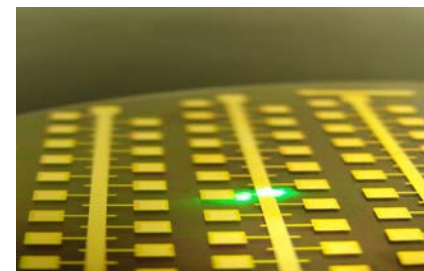
Right (1)

# Potential of Molecular Nanotechnology



Storage capacity of one CD:  
**1.125.000.000 MB = > 240 years of music**

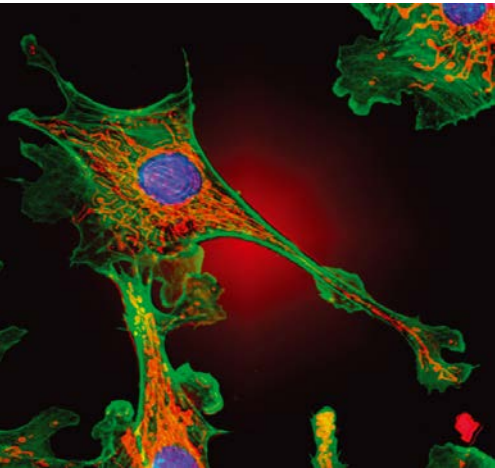
**Molecular Electronics**



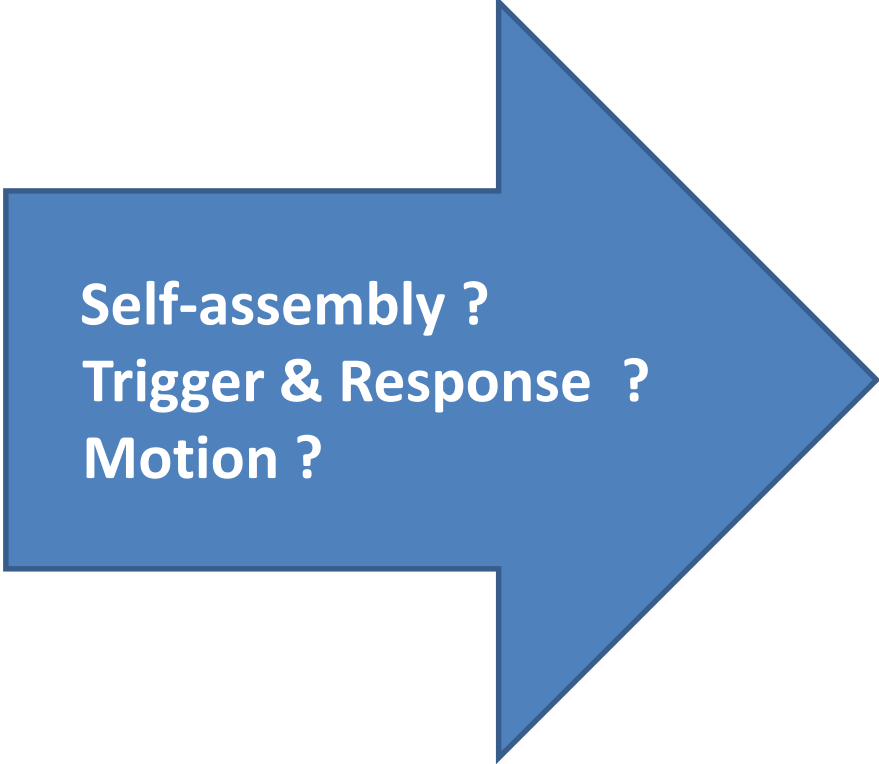


# Challenges

from Molecules to Dynamic Molecular Systems  
out of Equilibrium

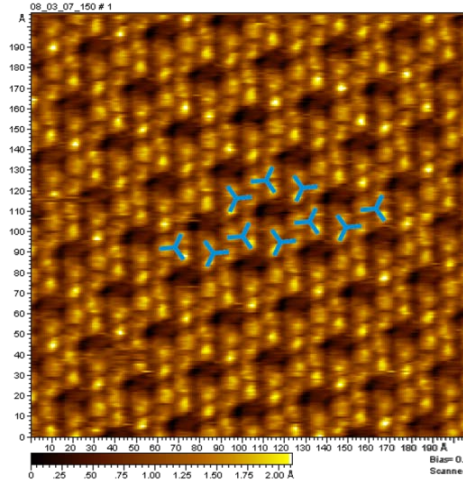


Cell



Self-assembly ?  
Trigger & Response ?  
Motion ?

## Responsive Materials



## Smart Drugs

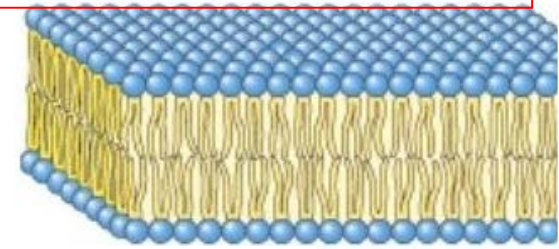


## Soft Robotics

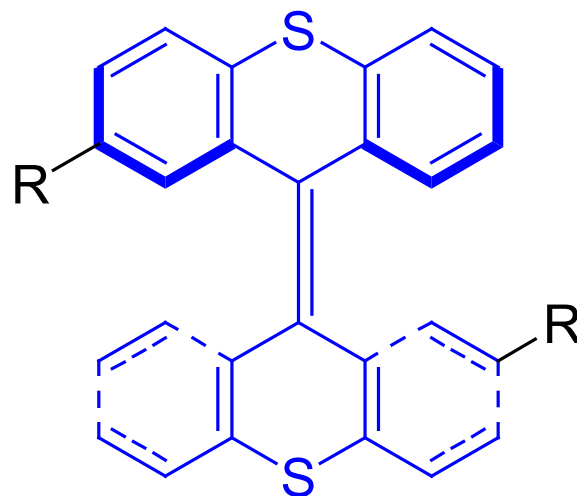
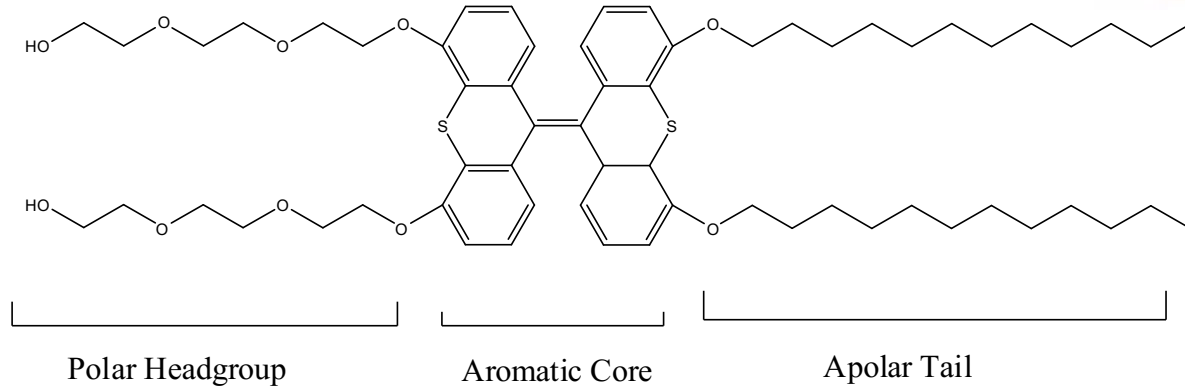
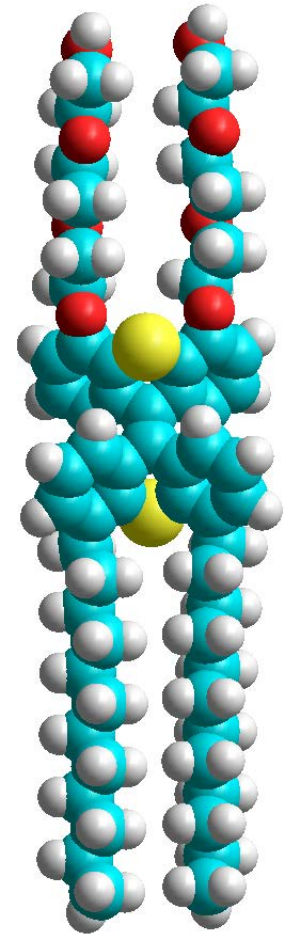
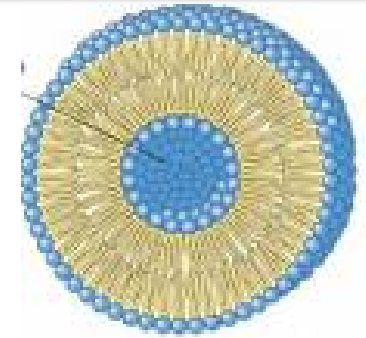


# MEMBRANE

## Self-Assembly



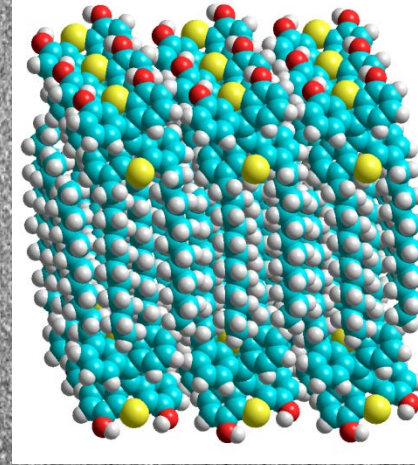
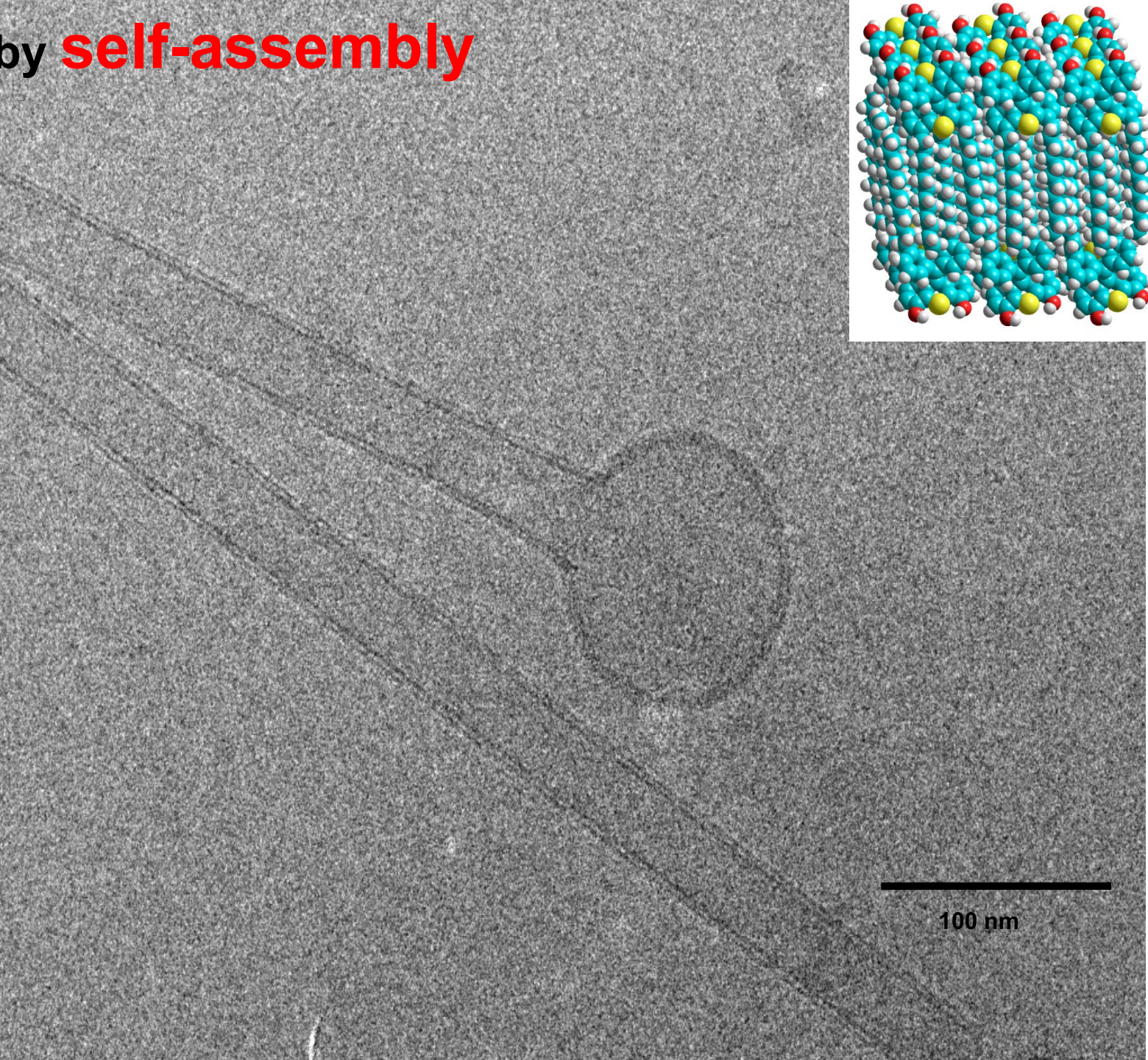
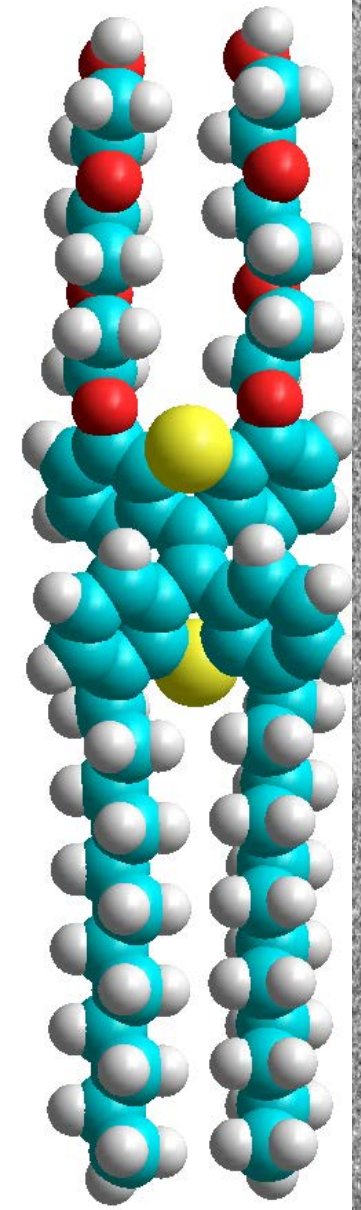
*amphiphile*



Molecular switch

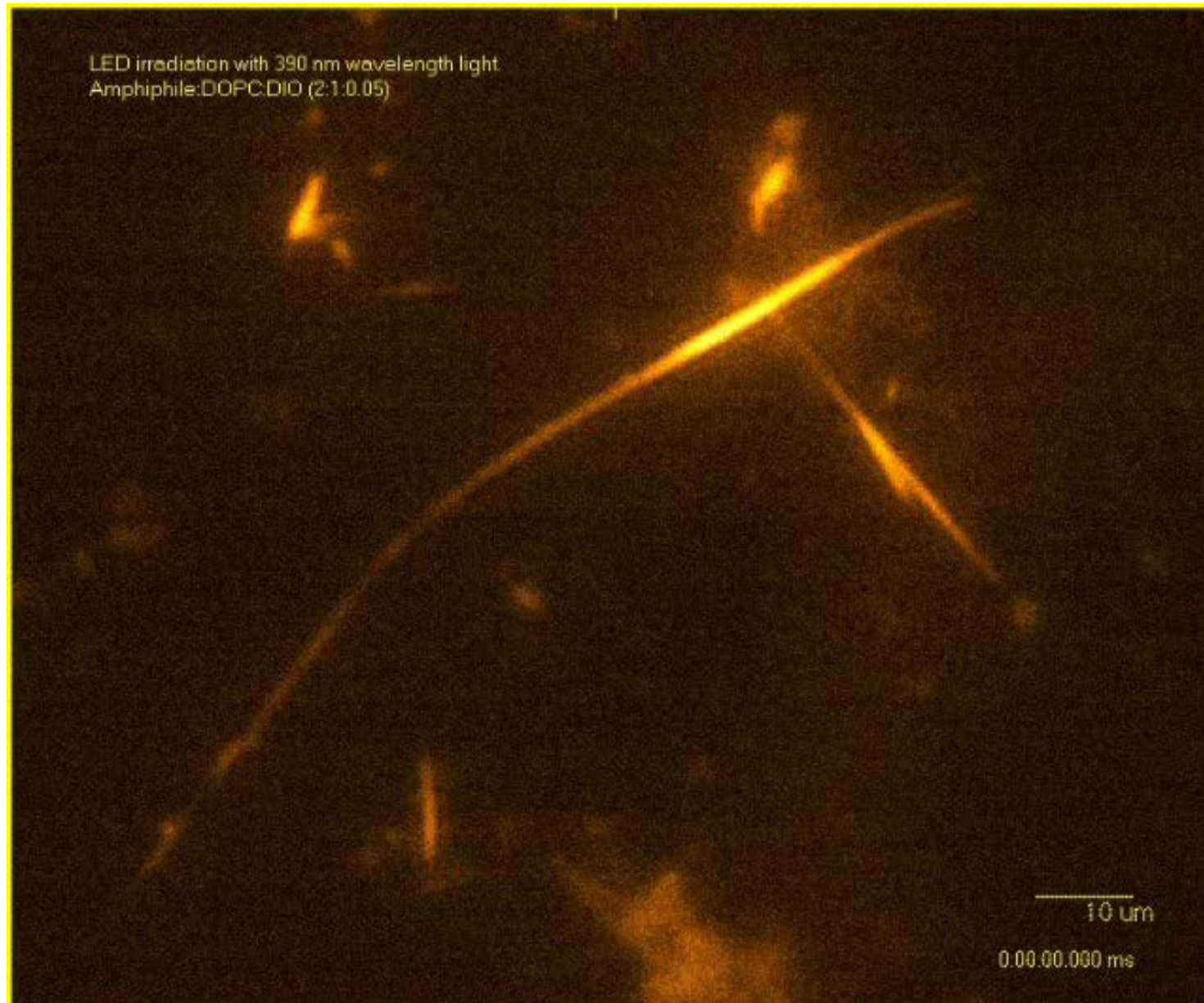
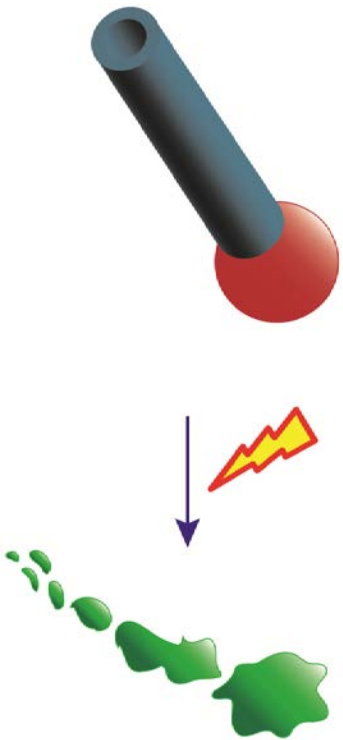
*photo- and electro-chemical switching*

# Nanotube by self-assembly

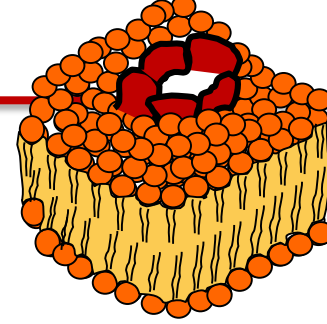


# Controlling the disassembly

## of a Nanotube with light

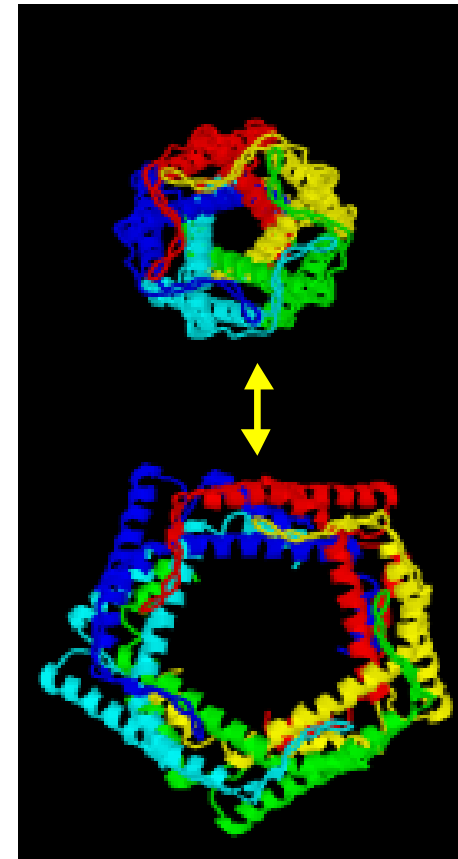
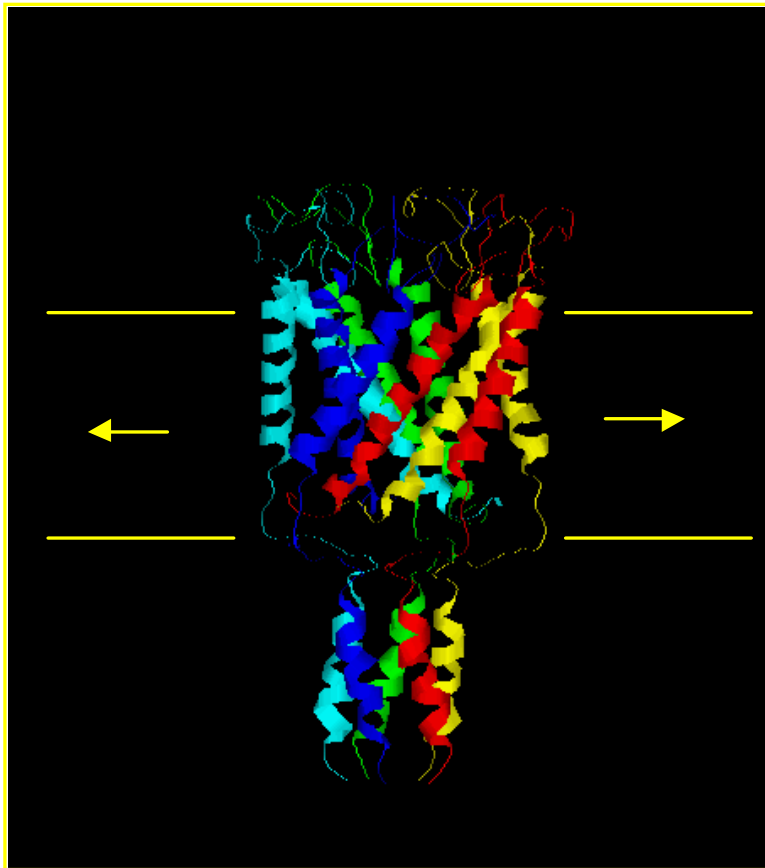


# Nano-channel: trigger & response



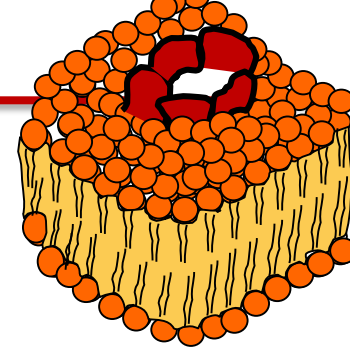
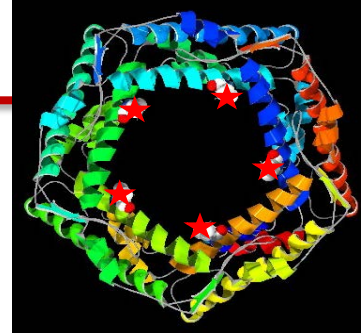
*open & close with light ??*

Mechanosensitive Channel from *E. coli* bacterium

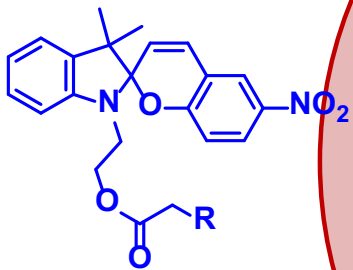
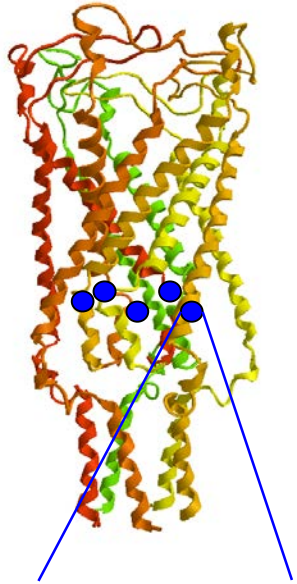


*3-4 Nm channel in open state*

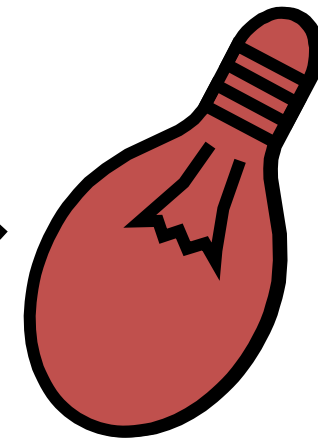
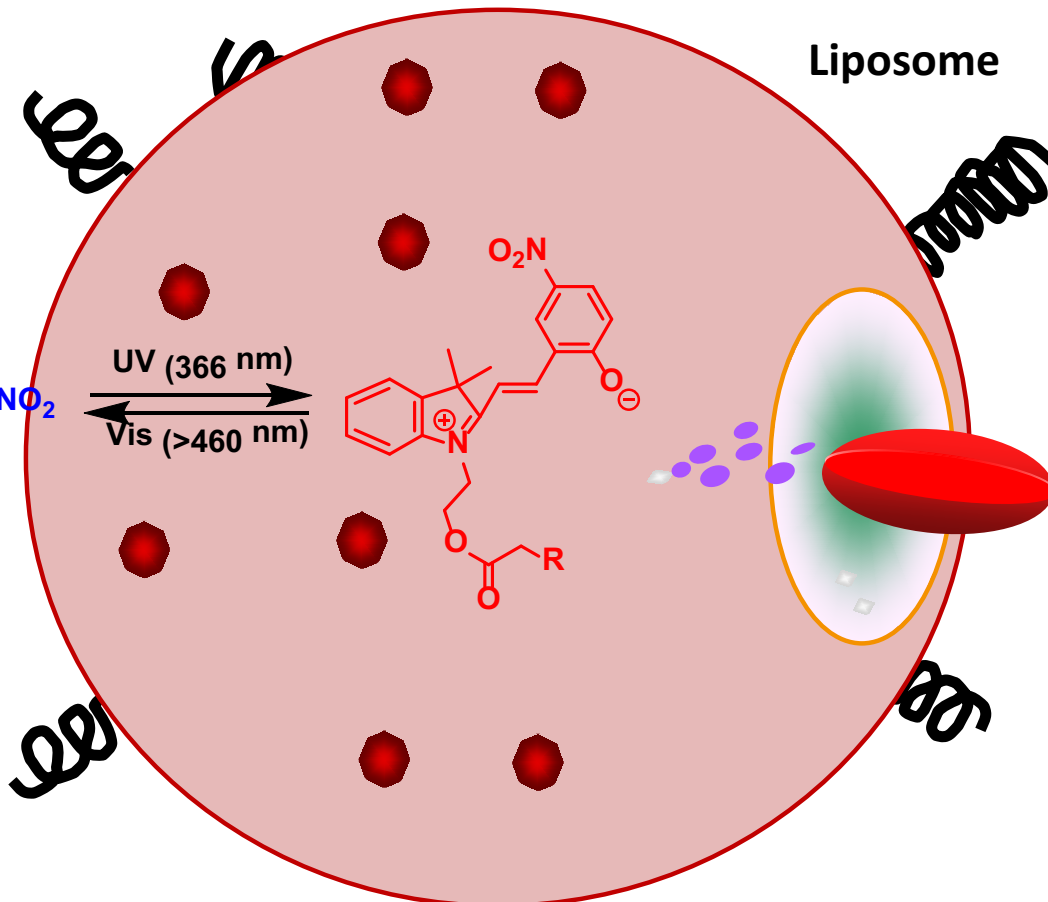
# Molecular Device



MscL channel protein

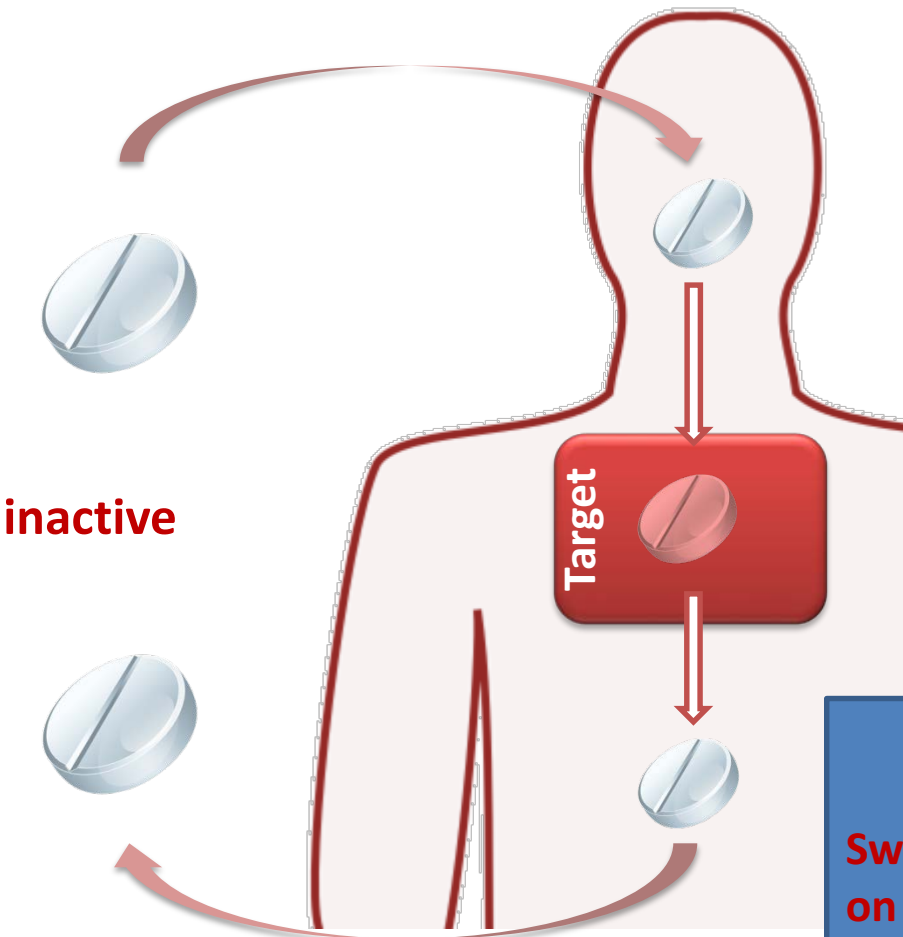


Switch



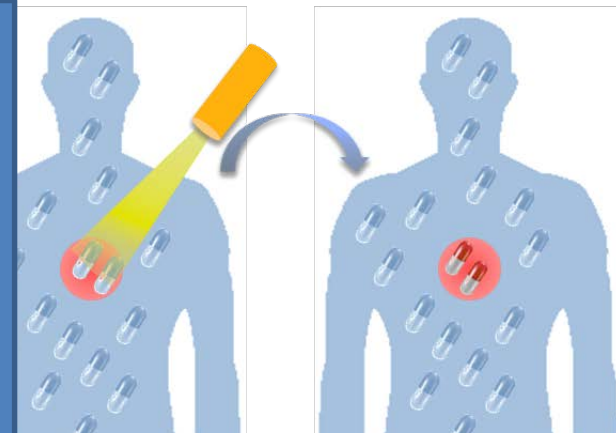
Controlled drug delivery  
Self-healing materials

# Smart Pharmaceuticals



**0**  $\rightleftharpoons$  **1**  
**(off)**  $\rightleftharpoons$  **(on)**

Switching a medicine  
on with a light signal  
High precision in  
therapeutic action



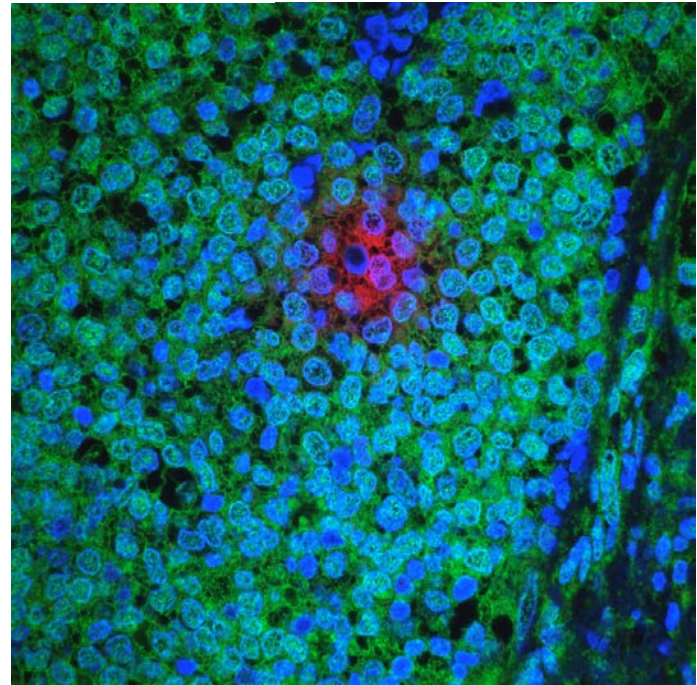


# World Health Organization



## Bacterial Resistance

*one of humanity's  
"ticking time-bombs"*

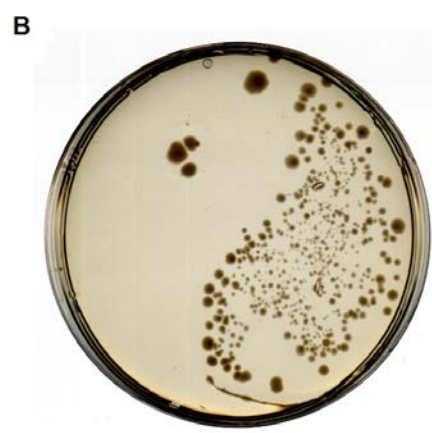
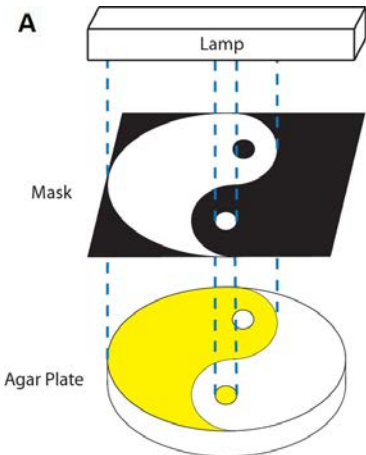
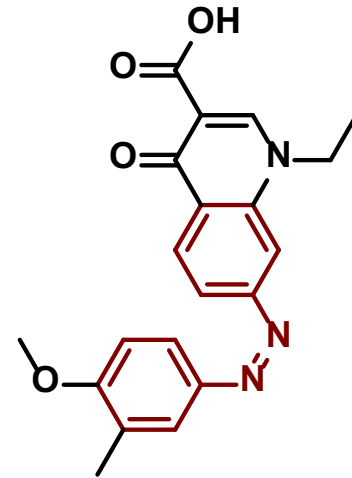
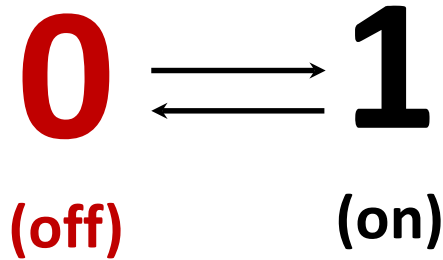
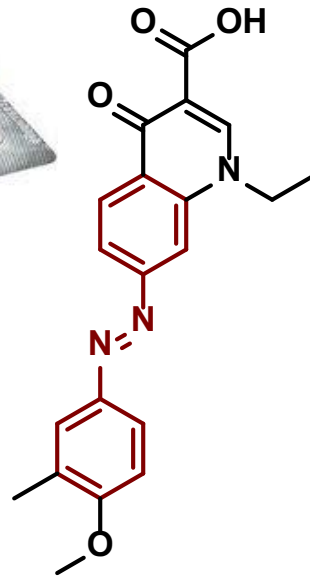


## Cancer Treatment

*chemotherapy*



# Photocontrolled Antibiotic

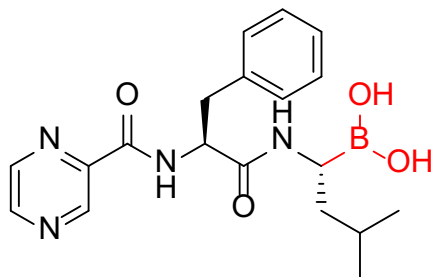


No resistance build-up  
Control biofilm formation

# Photocontrolled Chemotherapeutic Agent

## Bortezomib

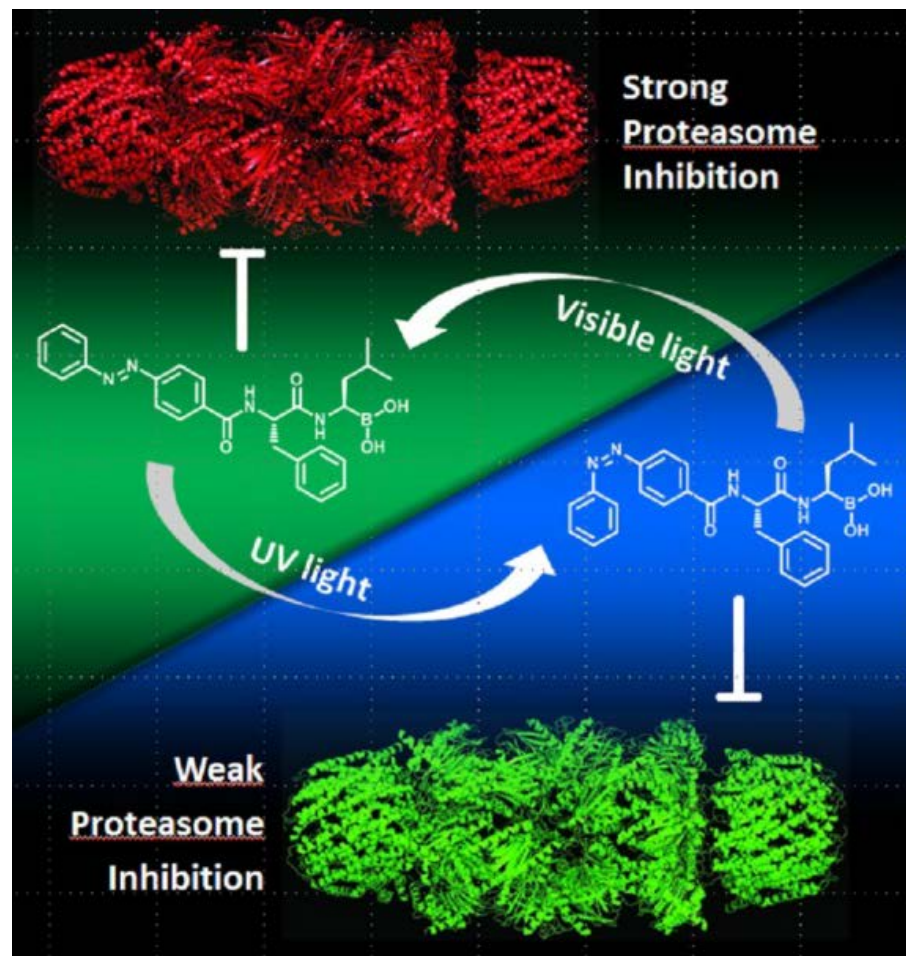
On the market (US; 2003) for the treatment of mantle cell cancer and multiple myeloma



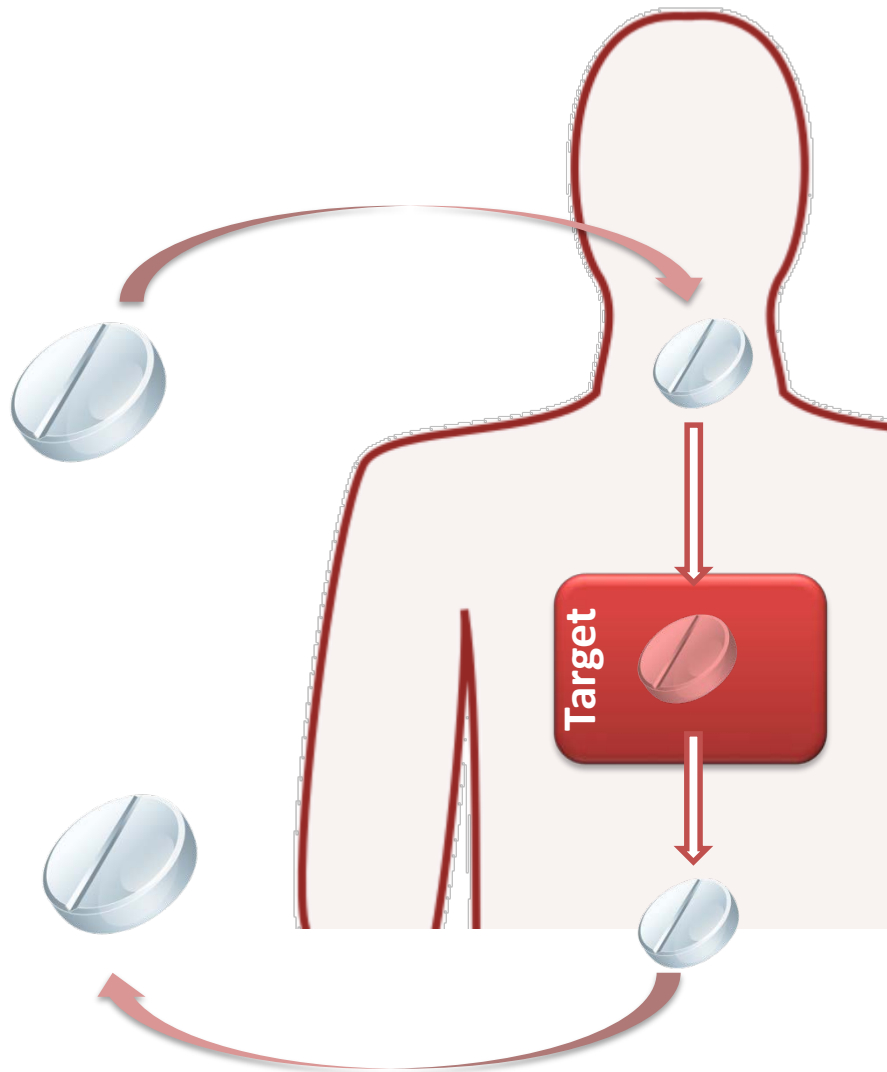
Avoiding severe side-effects  
in chemotherapy



© Simon Jarratt/Corbis



# Photopharmacology



**0**  $\rightleftharpoons$  **1**  
**(off)**  $\rightleftharpoons$  **(on)**

**Triggering**

activation with non-invasive  
light signal

**Response**

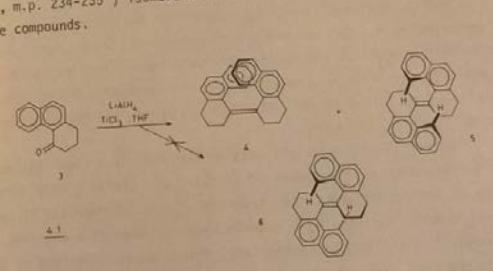
Spatio-temporal precision in action



**Smart Pharmaceuticals**

Challenges: near-infrared light  
imaging > drug activation

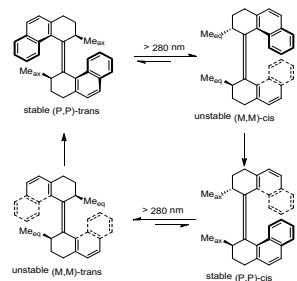
# **Molecular Motor**



1977

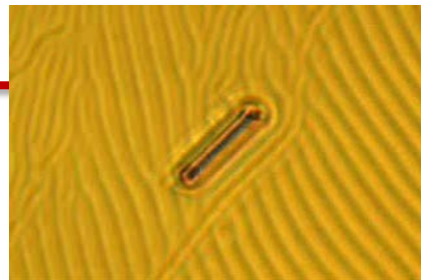
(PhD thesis, p 61)

First synthesis of  
Overcrowded alkene



1999

Unidirectional  
molecular motor



2006

Unidirectional  
molecular motor  
controlled  
liquid crystals



First electric car  
to Stockholm

2016

1991

Chiroptical  
Overcrowded alkene  
switch

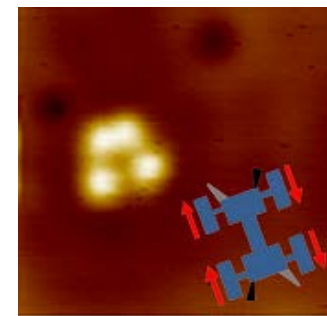
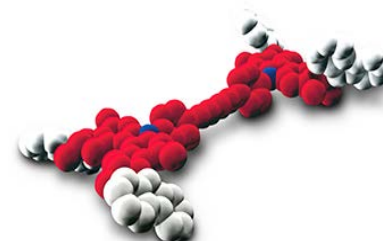
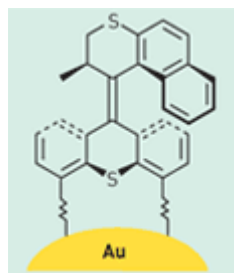
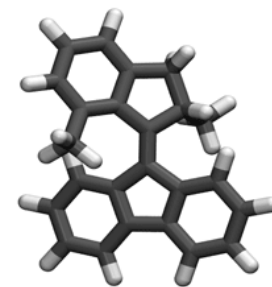
24

2005

Unidirectional  
Motor on a  
surface

2011

Molecular nanocar  
Powered translational  
motor on surface



Chiroptical Molecular Switch

Ben L. Feringa,\* Wolter F. Jager, and Ben de Lange  
Department of Organic Chemistry  
University of Groningen  
Nijenborgh 16, 9747 AG Groningen, The Netherlands

Egbert W. Meijer<sup>†</sup>

Philips Natuurkundig Laboratorium  
Post Office Box 80.000  
5600 JA Eindhoven, The Netherlands  
Received January 30, 1991  
Revised Manuscript Received May 8, 1991

Photochemically switchable bistable molecules have recently attracted much attention due to possible applications in reversible optical data storage and optical computing.<sup>1,2</sup> To be suitable for optical memory devices, such molecules should meet the following requirements: (a) thermal stability of both isomers, (b) a ready-peatable switching cycle without loss of activity, and (c) ready

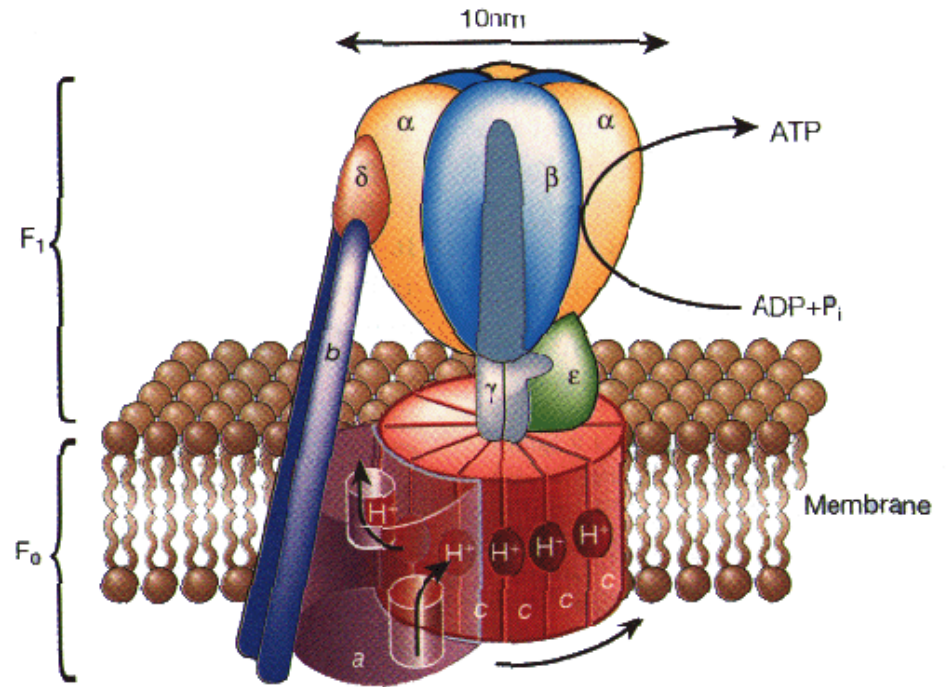
\* Present address: DSM Research, P.O. Box 18, 6160 MD Geleen, The Netherlands.  
† Present address: Philips Natuurkundig Laboratorium, Post Office Box 80.000, 5600 JA Eindhoven, The Netherlands.  
(1) Emmelius, M.; Pawlowski, G.; Vollmann, H. W. *Angew. Chem., Int. Ed. Engl.* **1989**, *28*, 1445.  
(2) Engler, E. M. A. *Chem. Mater.* **1990**, *2*, 166.

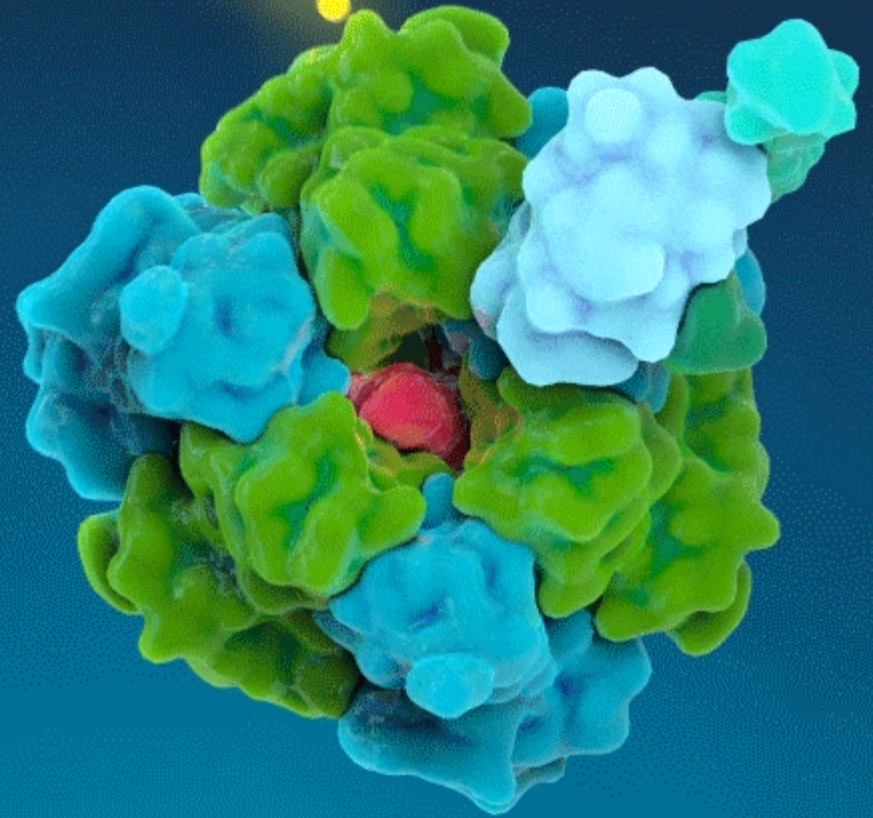
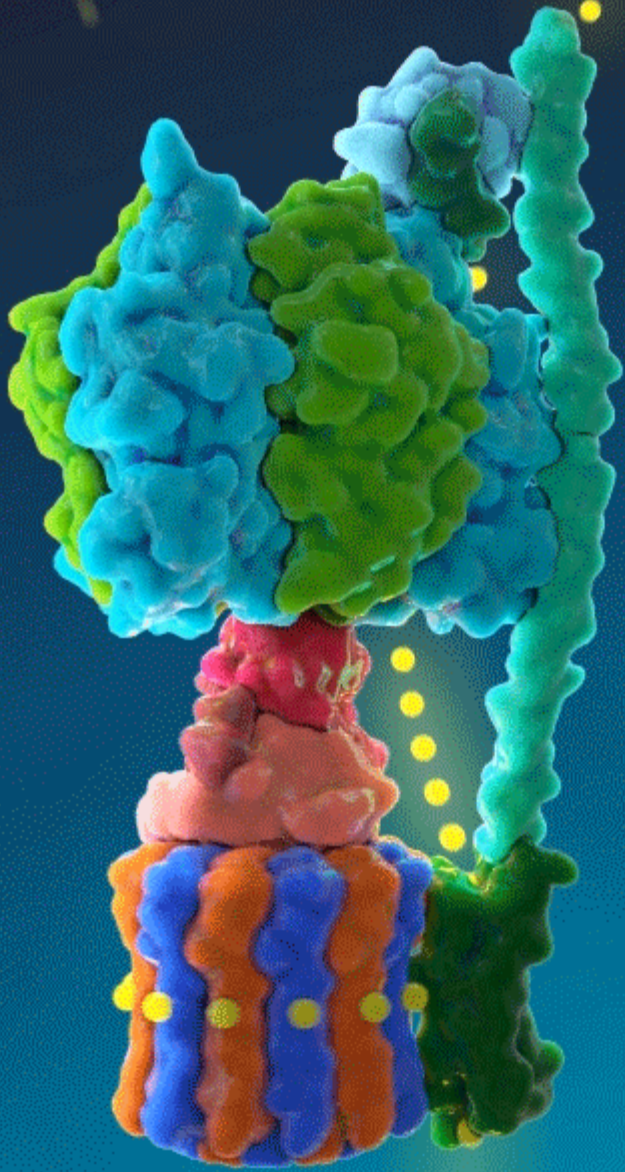
# Man's Motor vs. Nature's Motor

## Motor



## ATP - ase







# Molecular Motor

**How to control rotary motion?**

*in the nanoworld*

**How to control left or right?**





# *My Teachers and Hero's*

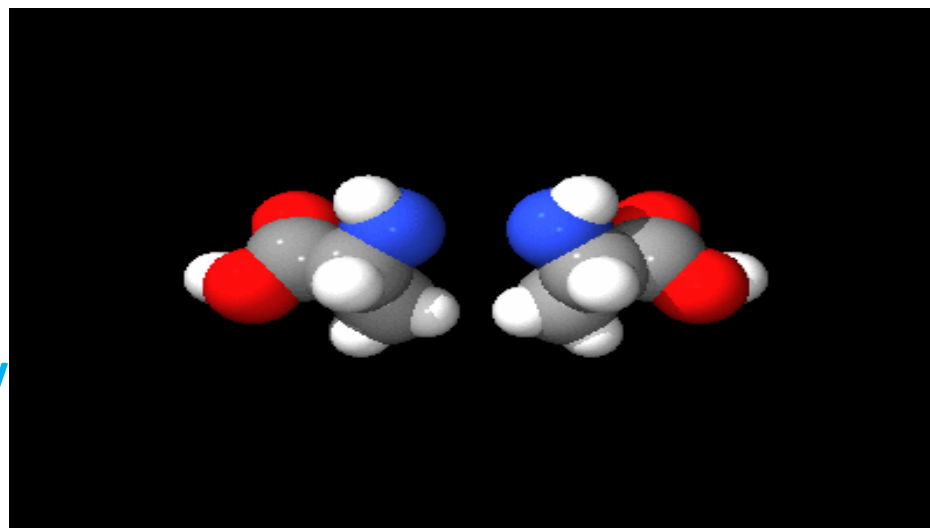
Jacobus van 't Hoff



Hans Wijnberg



## Stereochemistry



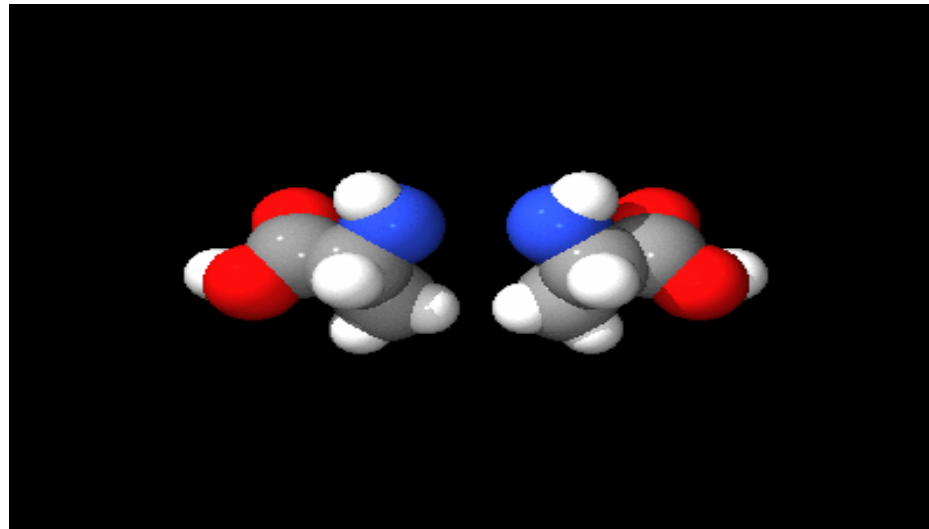
mirror image symmetry  
"a signature of life"

# *Mirror Image*

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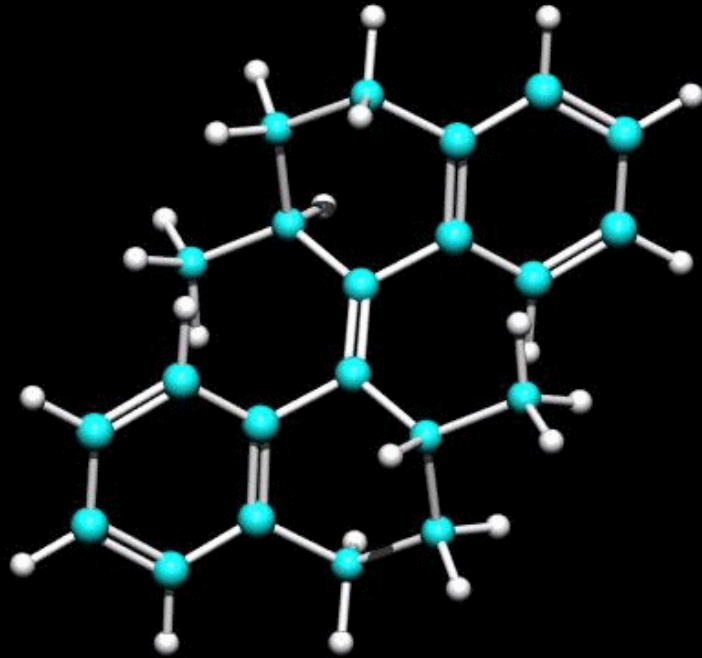


**Breaking Symmetry**



# Unidirectional Rotary Molecular Motor

## Powered by Light



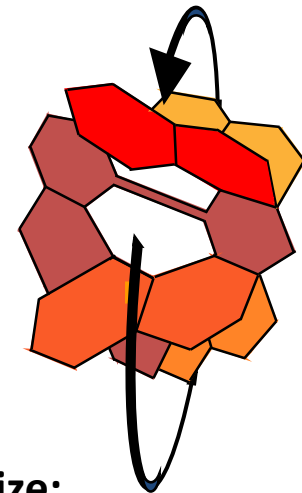
a power-stroke motor

### DEFINITION:

A rotary motor is a device that is able to convert energy input into controlled, directional, rotary motion in a continuous fashion

### REQUIREMENTS:

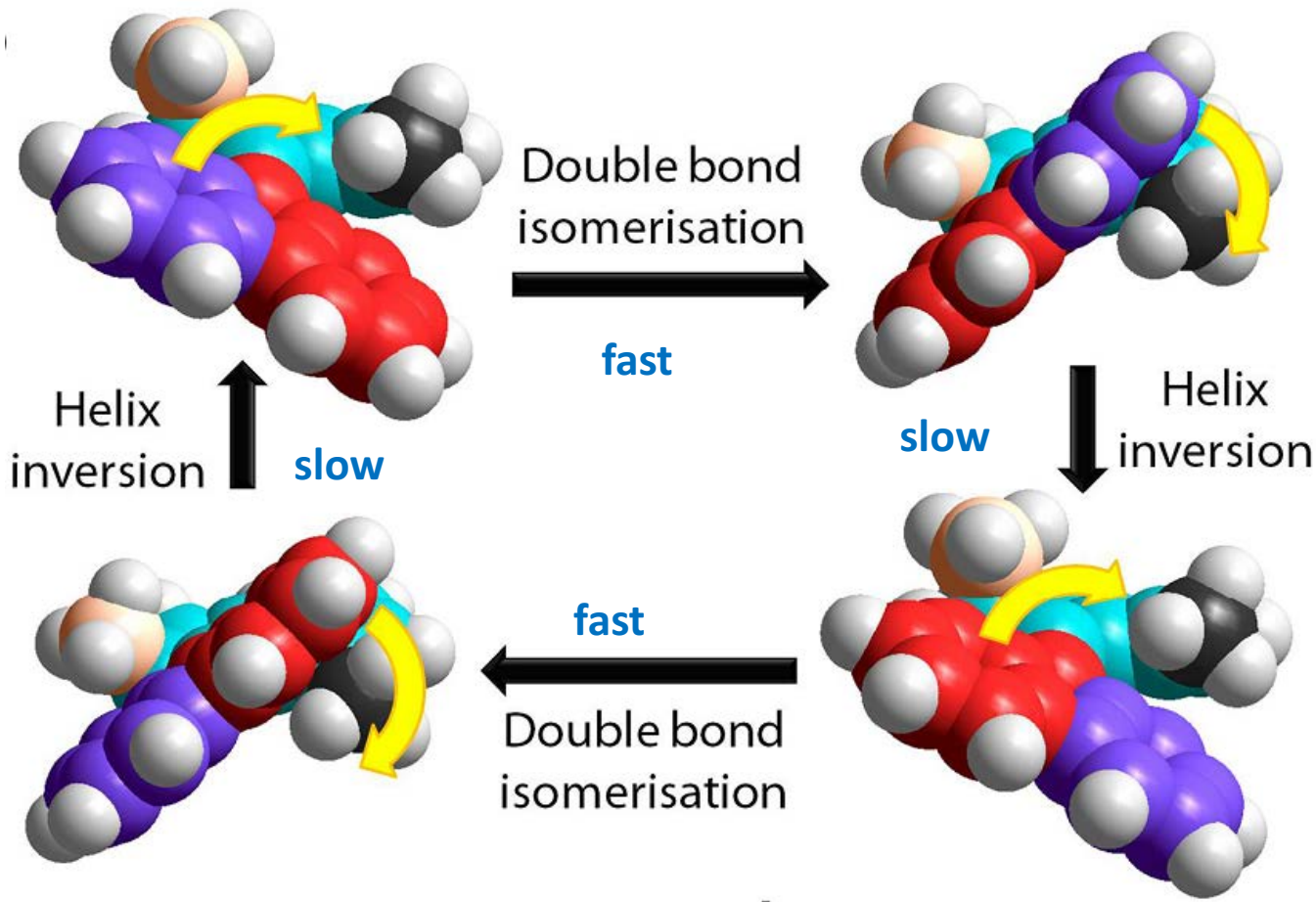
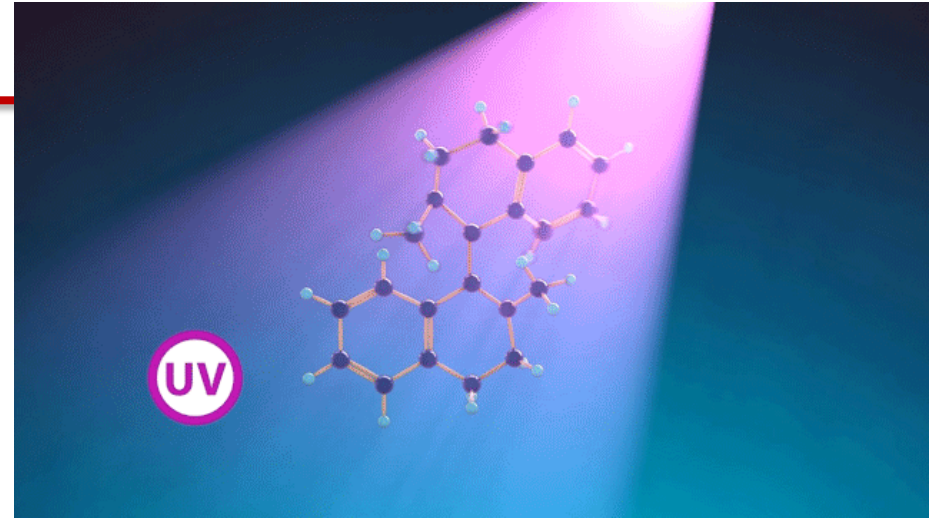
- ▶ Controlled Motion
- ▶ Consumption of Energy
- ▶ Directional Movement
- ▶ Repetitive (Continuous) Process



Size:  
1 nanometer

# Molecular Motor

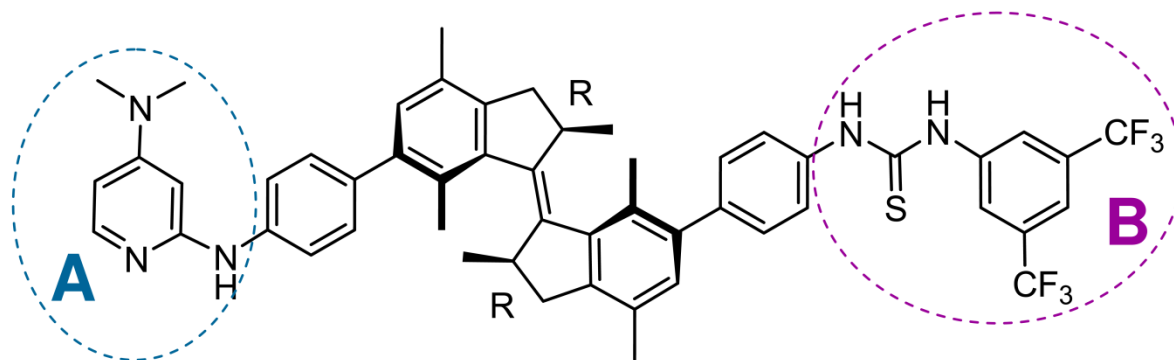
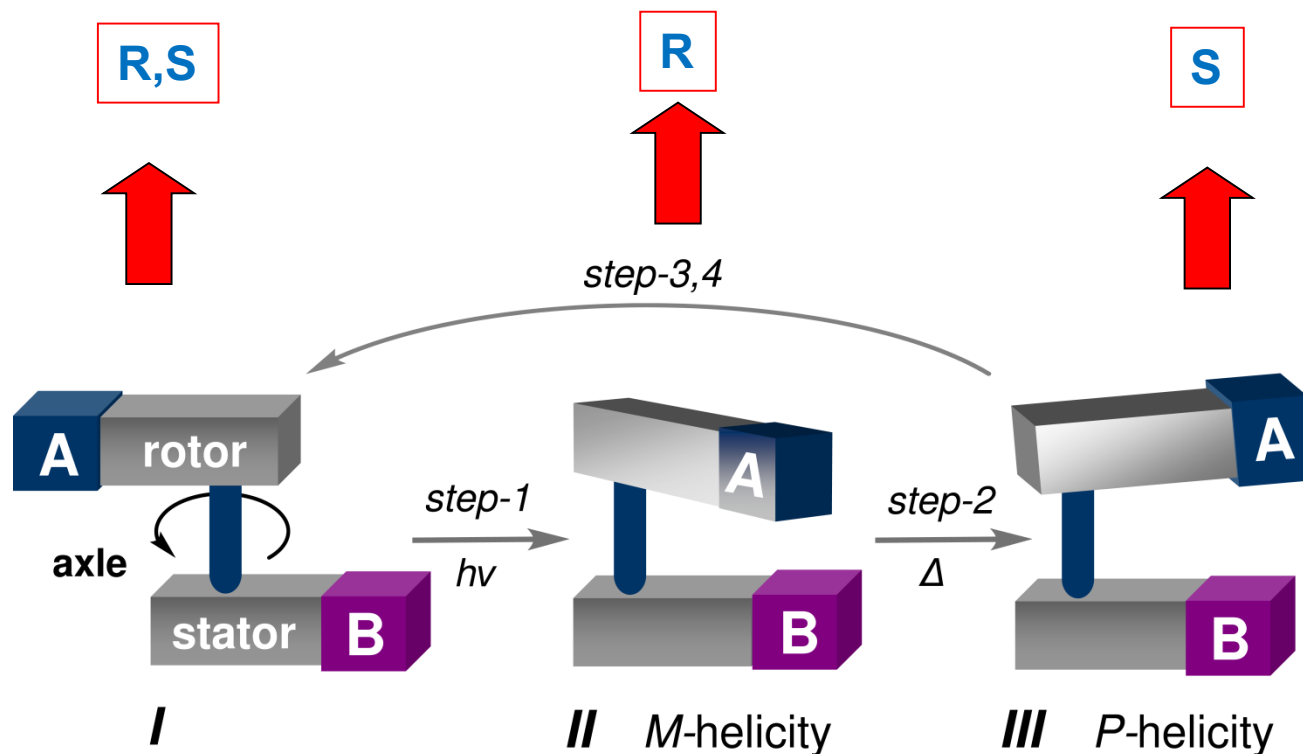
*powered by light*



# Responsive Catalysts

dynamic control of chiral space using a molecular motor

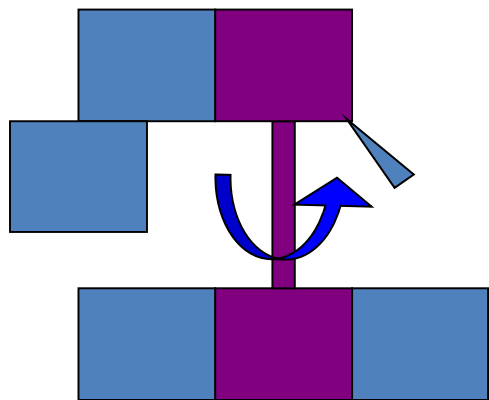
product  
chirality



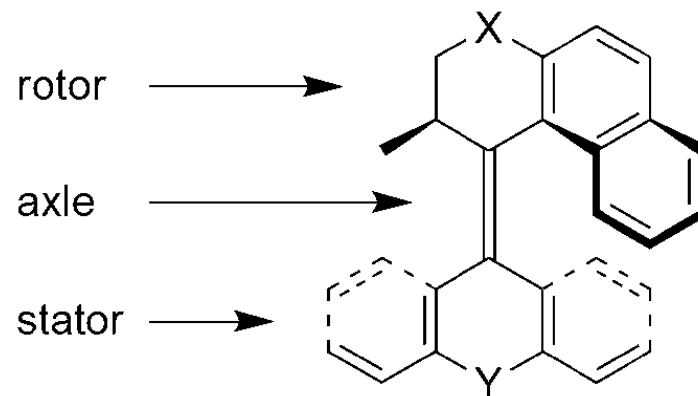
multitasking  
organo-catalyst  
sequence control

**(2R,2'R)-(P,P)-trans-1**

# Second Generation Molecular Motor



**Molecular Design**



***enhancing the speed***

from  
1 rotation/hour



to  
more than 10 million rotations/sec

# Control of Motion

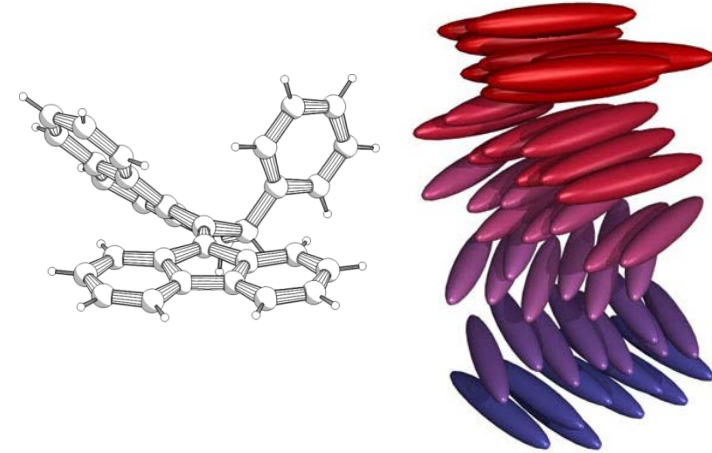
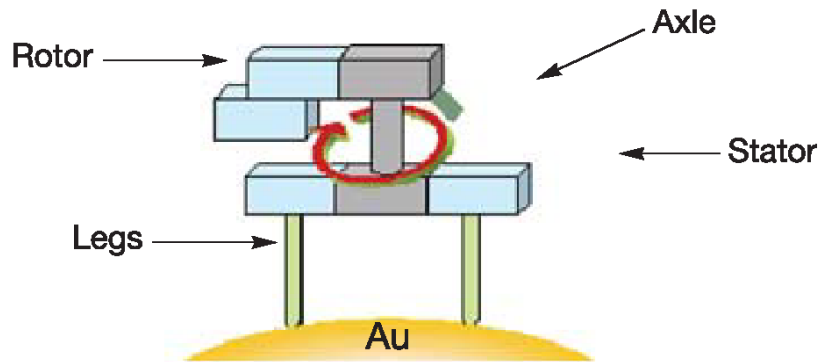
## Molecular

*dynamics & length scales*

## Mesoscopic

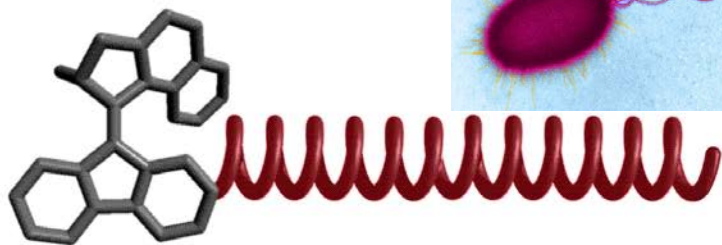
*surfaces & catalysts*

*micro-objects & droplets*



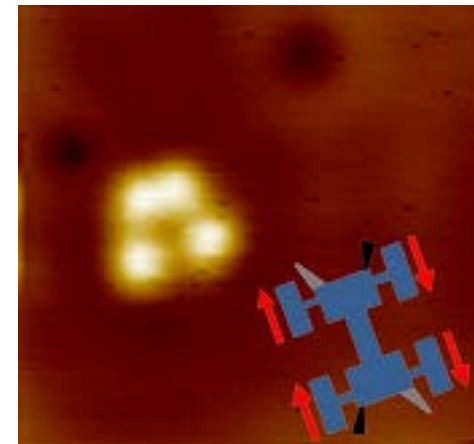
## Macromolecular

*polymer helicity*



## Nano

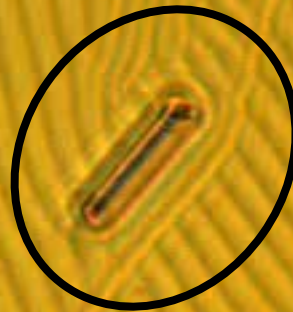
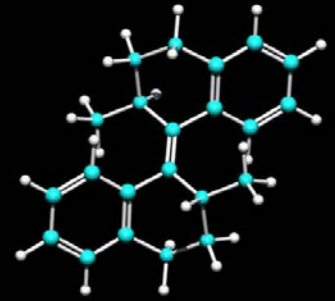
*single molecule  
movement*



# *Rotation of a micro object*



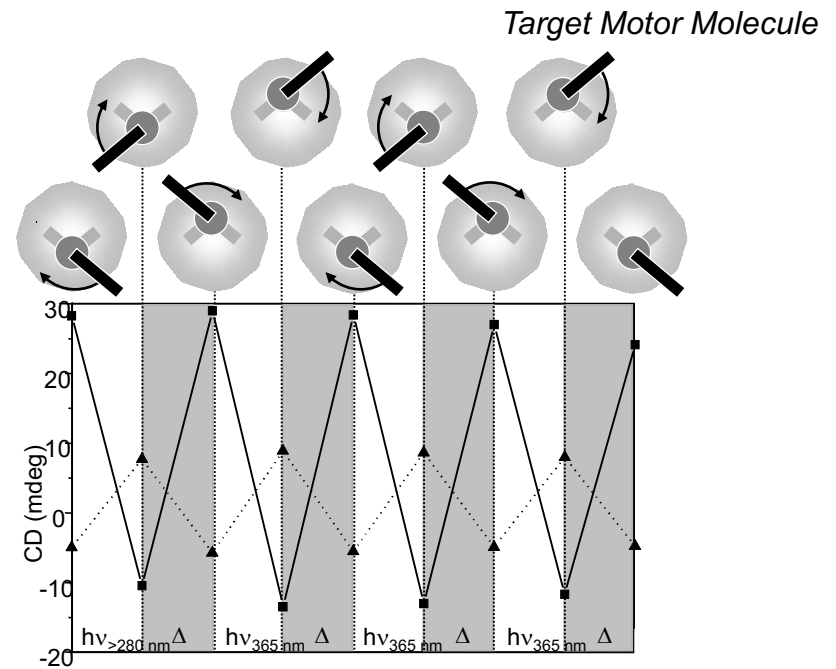
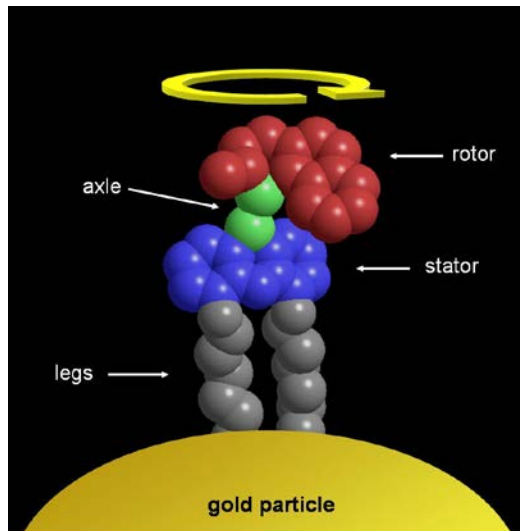
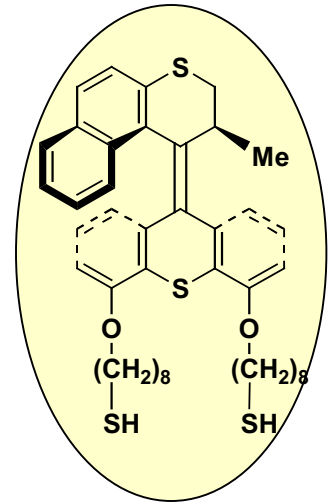
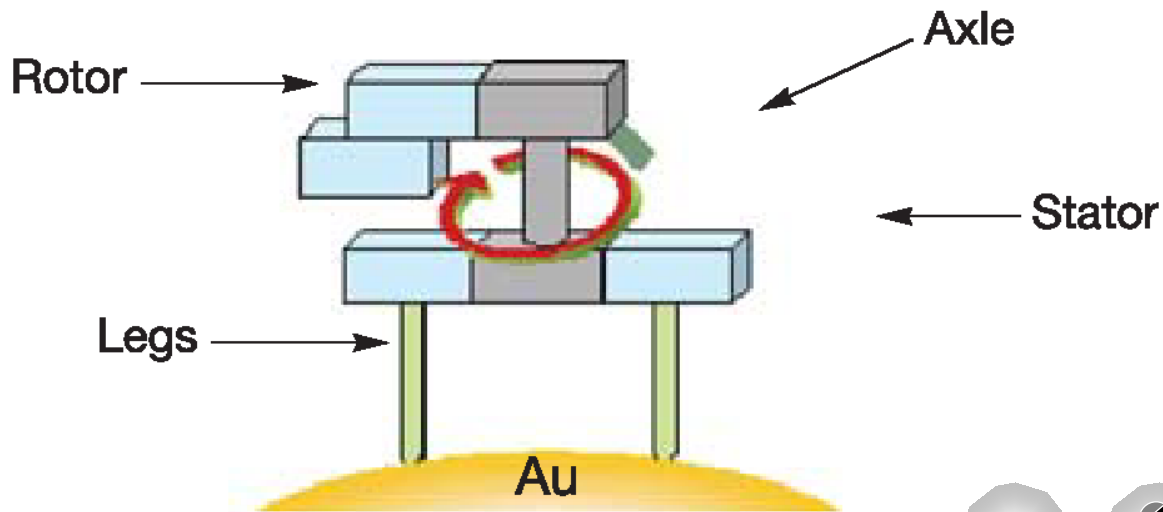
**Molecular motor 1nm**



**Glass rod, 5 x 28  $\mu\text{m}$**

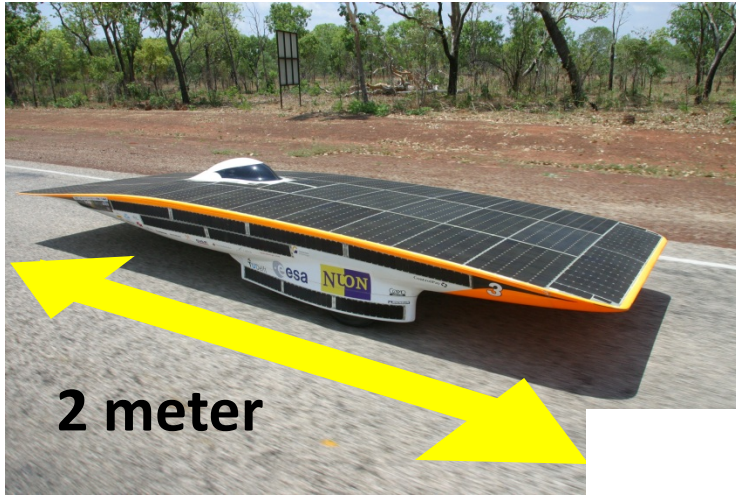


# Design of Molecular Motors on Surfaces



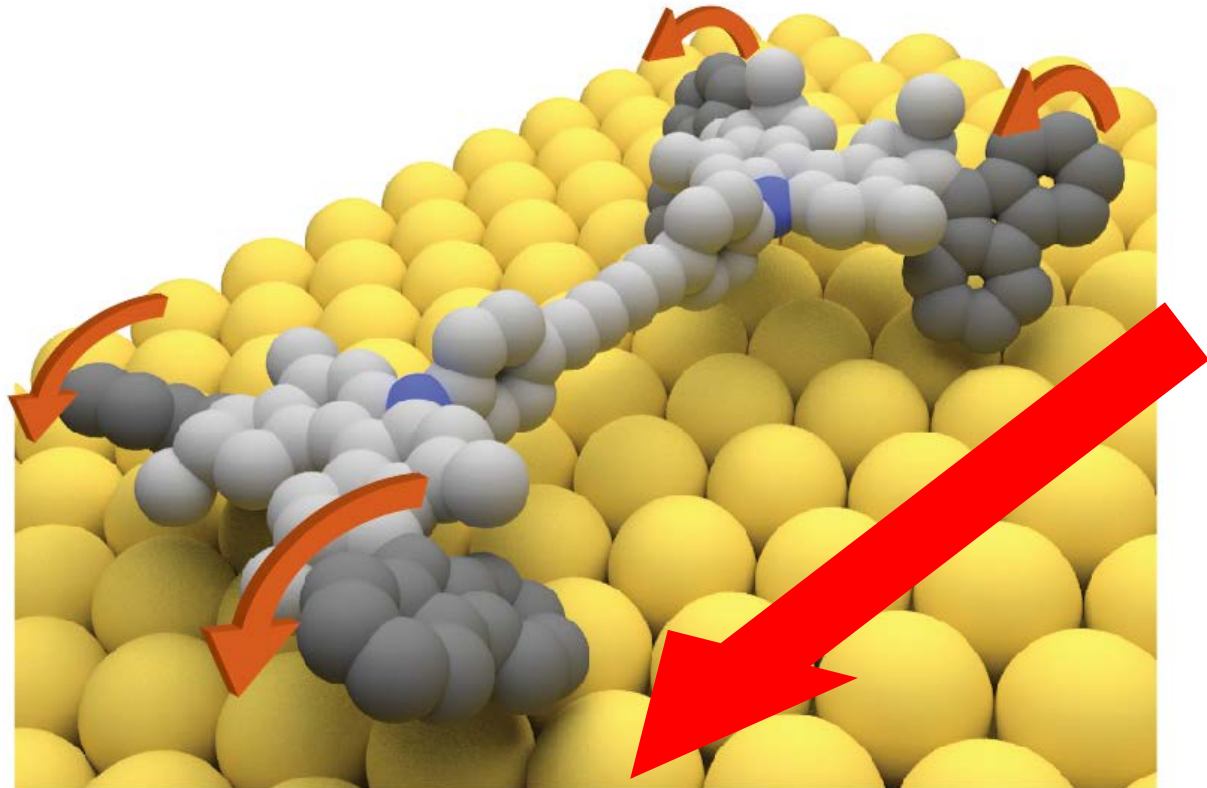


# Molecular Car



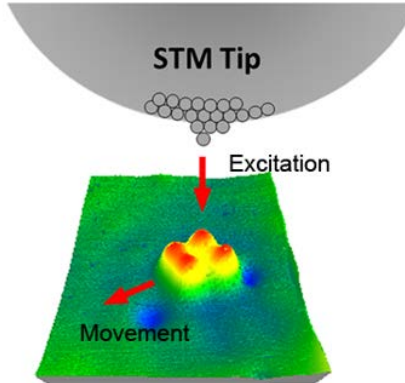
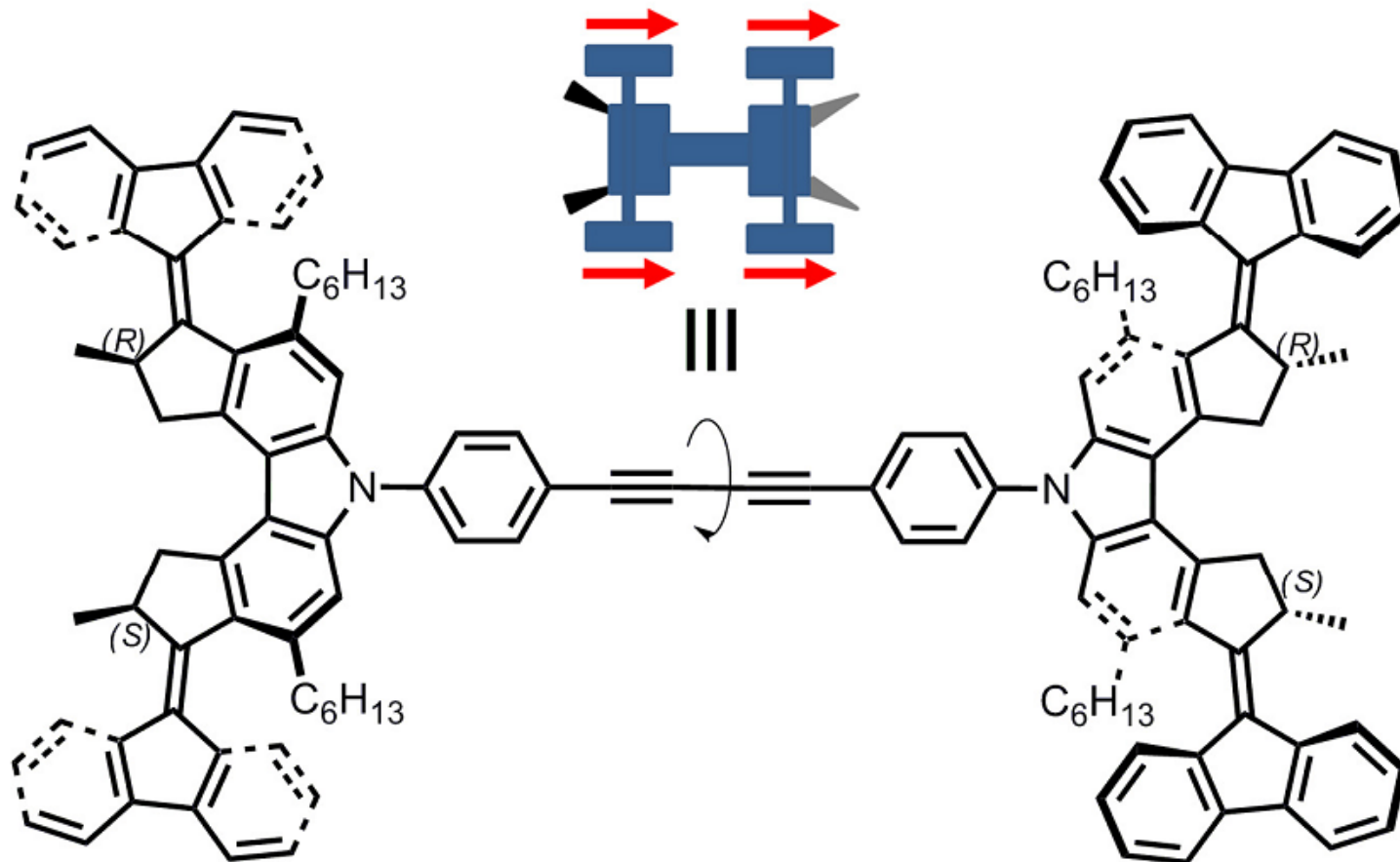
0.000000002 meter

Four-wheel  
drive



# Four Wheel Drive Molecular Car

*meso*-(*R,S*-*R,S*) isomer



**Nano Car**

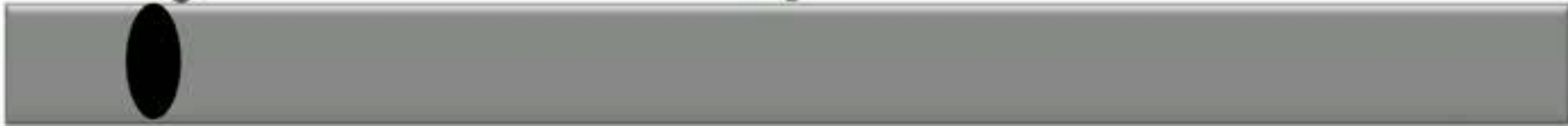
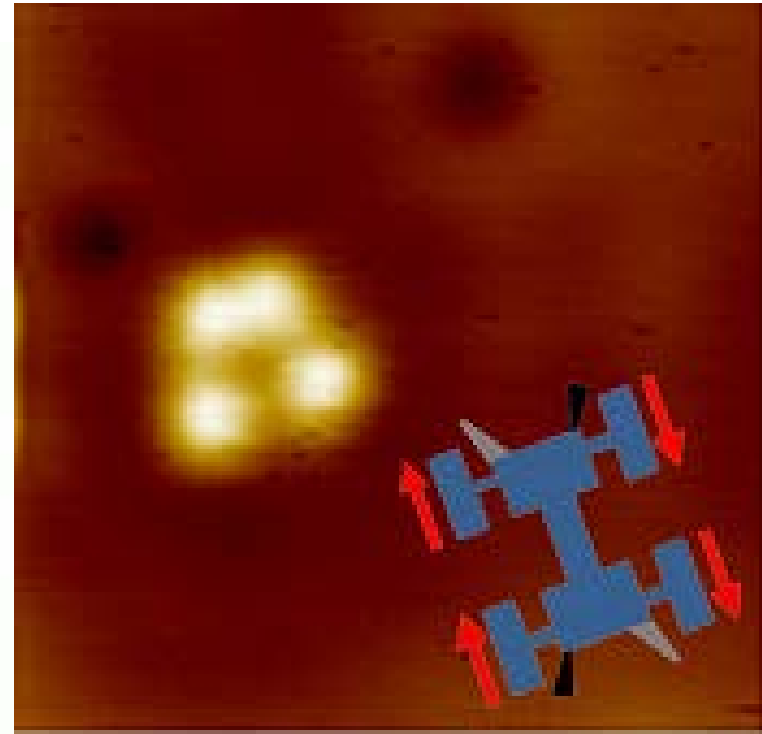
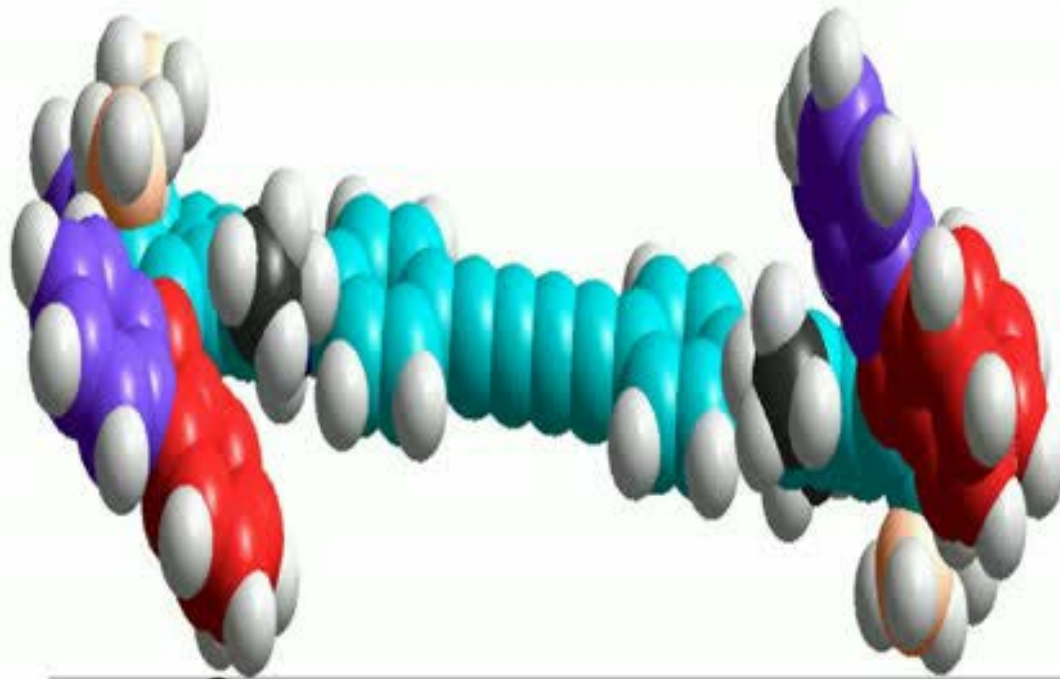
**How to convert rotary motion into translational motion???**  
**Single molecule motion!!!**

# *Molecular Car*

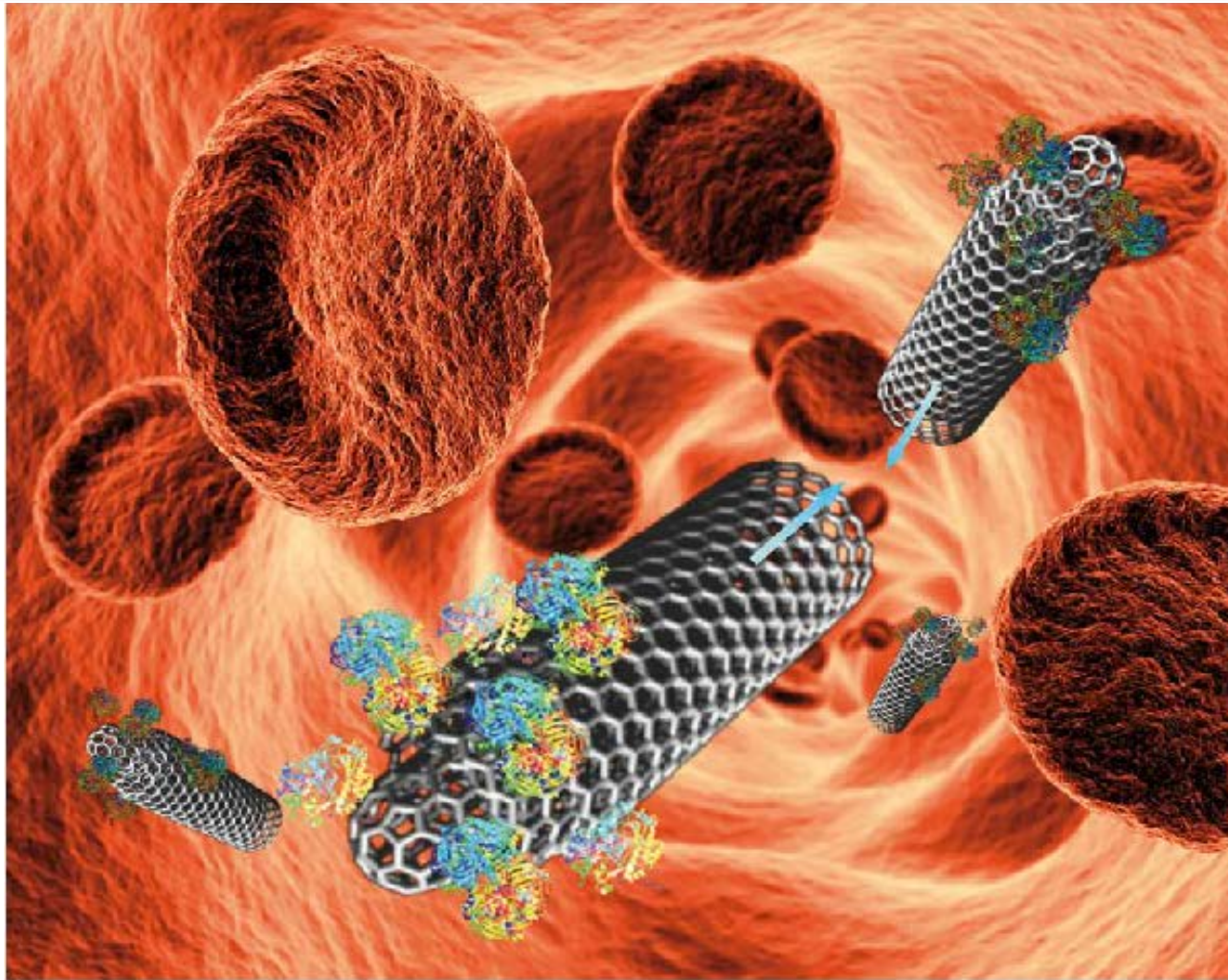
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# *Single Molecule Nano Car on Surface*



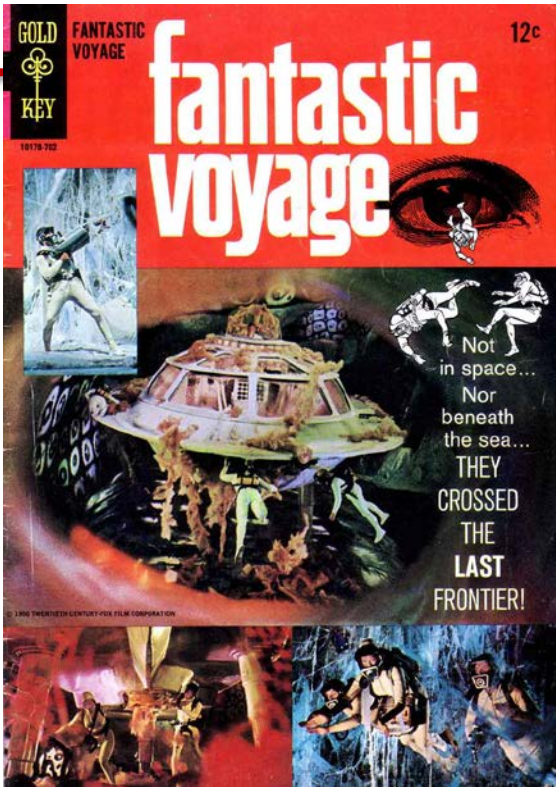
# *Autonomous Propulsion System*



**Chemical Catalysis**

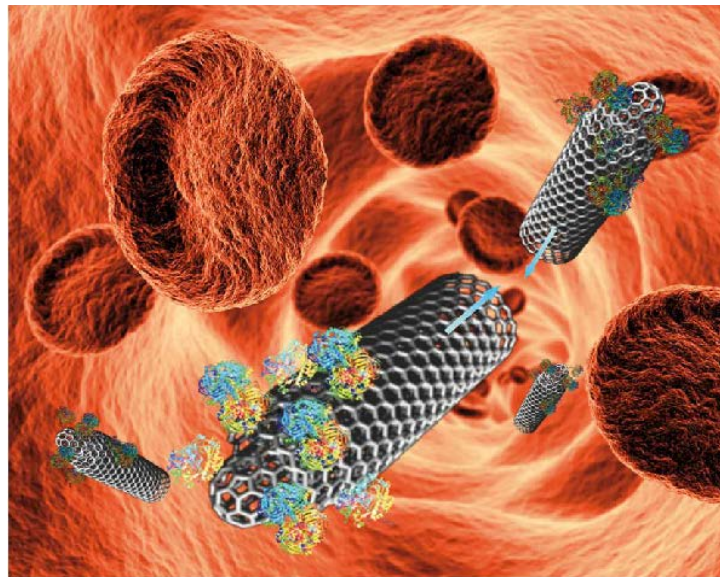
**Glucose as fuel ?**





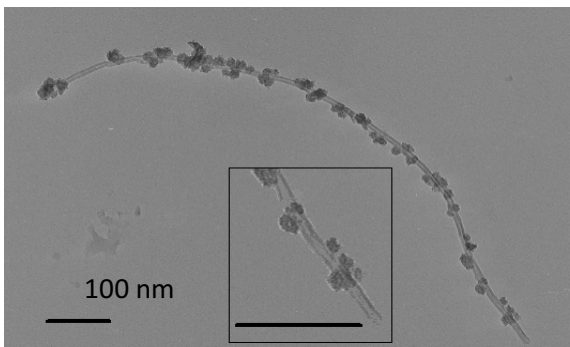
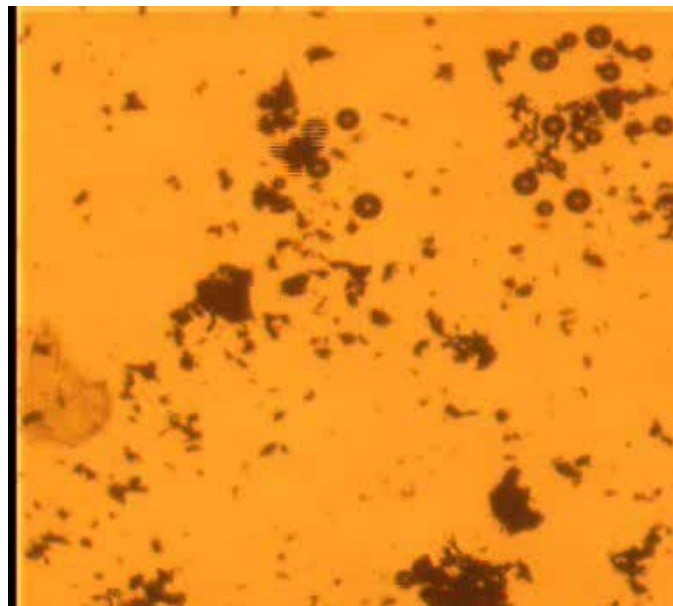
# Fantastic Voyage

## Nano-Swimmer



**Fuel:** sugar

**Applications:**  
roving sensors  
delivery systems  
micro-nano-robots





# *Nanorobots, science or science fiction*



*“The best way to predict the future is to invent it.”*

Alan Kay

# The Art of Building Small

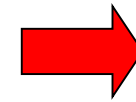
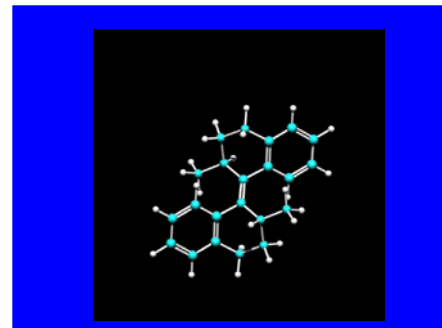
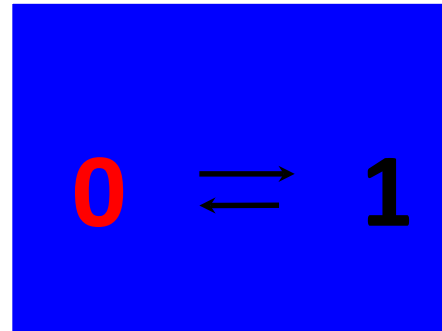
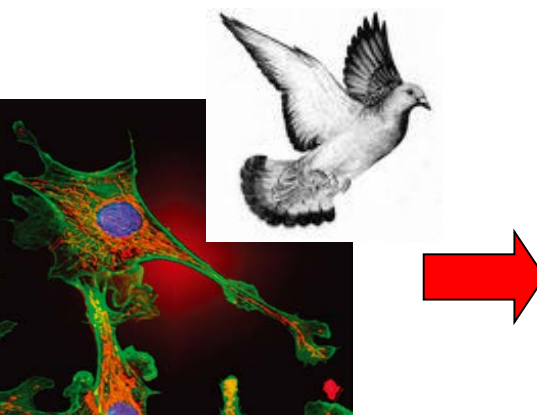
programming molecules

→ responsive & adaptive functions

→ motion

→ dynamic systems

## Perspective

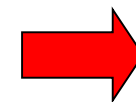


Information systems

Responsive materials

Smart surfaces

Self-healing materials

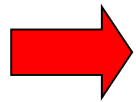


Delivery systems

Precision therapeutics

Adaptive catalysts

Roving sensors



NanoEnergy converters

Soft-robotics

.....

# Acknowledgment



generations students & co-workers, colleagues & staff, collaborators, mol machine comm, family



Koninklijke  
Nederlandse  
Akademie van  
Wetenschappen  
Alexander von Humboldt  
Stiftung/Foundation



university of  
groningen

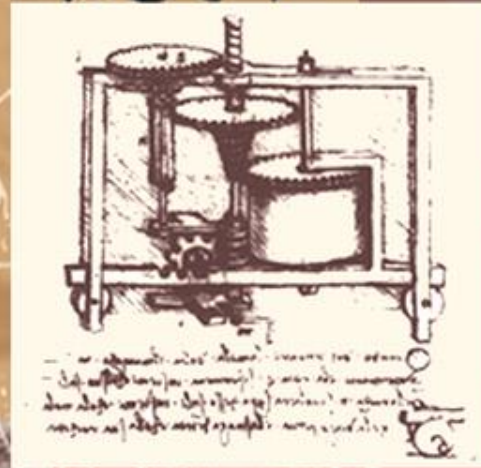


AC Cope Foundation



Leonardo da Vinci

*“Where Nature finishes producing its own species man begins, with the help of Nature, to create an infinity of species”*



Imagine the unimaginable

