

# Interview with James Sharpe

**Q: Have you always been interested in science?**

**JS:** Yes in a nutshell. I was – for some reason I just got very interested in science from an early age. I first got interested in the natural world and biology in that sense; the nature and animals and the amazing kind of creatures all around us, but that very quickly just led on to a general interest in science. Since being at high school I guess, there was no question of what I wanted to do, but I've been very lucky that I've been able to do what was kind of my dream from being a teenager.

**Q: What do you like personally about being a scientist?**

**JS:** The thing that I like about being a scientist actually is the acknowledgement of the idea that at some level we're all living in the same universe. What I mean is that if I try and do a certain experiment here in Barcelona as I am now and describe what I did and describe what the result was – if someone in Japan reads that description and tries to do the same thing, if they do the same thing and if I've described it well enough, they will come up with the same results. It's a type of truth that we're after, it's not the only kind of truth because I think there are other kinds of truth, but this particular kind of truth, this objective truth about the universe and the fact that things are – there are certain laws and certain principles that will be the same everywhere is kind of a wonderful thing because it then means that this whole community of totally different people from different cultures and different languages can all join together in one single endeavour, this is just something that's very appealing to me.

**Q: Regarding any other artistic or creative outlets, is there anything else that you would say that you enjoy?**

**JS:** I have always been quite into photography, I enjoy images personally and I think this has contributed as to why when I've for example been developing this new imaging technology, I've allowed myself let's say to indulge in actually making the images as nice as I could as well, even though you could say that was not strictly speaking the scientific part of the process, but it was the bit that I enjoyed as much as the scientific bit.

**Q: How important would you say that creativity is in the kind of work that you're involved in?**

**JS:** Without creativity, science would really not get very far at all. I mean my personal, maybe biased, opinion is that creativity is what distinguishes maybe science from technology let's say, or science from sort of a technical endeavour. It's not too hard to make small incremental improvements to what we know or what we can do, but to really generate new ideas and new knowledge does require a degree of creativity and that's the level at which I actually think for example, science and art are quite similar actually.