

APS Fellow Fei Xu Receives Guggenheim Fellowship

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APS Fellow Fei Xu, who studies cognitive and language development in infants and children, was recently selected as a 2018 Guggenheim Fellow. Awarded by the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the prestigious fellowships are appointed on the basis of prior achievement and exceptional promise.

A psychology professor at the University of California, Berkeley, Xu uses behavioral experiments and computational models to understand how young children learn so fast and so well, and what kind of domain-general learning mechanisms explain children's learning. In the last few years, she and her colleagues, collaborators, and students have developed a new approach to the study of cognitive development, *rational constructivism*. Xu argues that human learners begin with a set of proto-conceptual primitives, and three types of learning mechanisms – language and symbol learning, Bayesian inductive learning, and constructive thinking – support belief revision, genuine conceptual change, and the development of intuitive theories.

Guggenheim fellowships are one-time-only grants that allow scholars, artists, and scientists the time and creative freedom to complete their research, book, or other projects. The 2018 group of 173 Fellows were chosen from nearly 3,000 applicants.