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# BOOKS & ARTS

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## Books and Arts

*Nature* **436**, 27 (7 July 2005)

### Exhibition: Apollo in the lab

Why is Apollo at the bench? This textbook engraving was designed by the nineteenth-century natural scientist Emil Du Bois-Reymond, a founder of electrophysiology. It was based on a photograph he took of his brother (inset).



### BERLIN MUSEUM OF MEDICAL HISTORY

Du Bois-Reymond was well schooled in the classics and was a member of a new school of scientists, which held that biological tissues were subject to the laws of physics. He also believed that experimentation has its own aesthetics.

He worked closely with instrument-makers, for example in developing his *Multiplikator*, a precision galvanometer that could detect the small transient currents in human muscles when flexed. He believed that the researcher must, through athletic training, become an experimenting Apollo, a part of his instrument. He himself worked out in a makeshift gym in his home where he originally had his laboratory. He became the director of the Physiological Institute in Berlin, but he was unhappy at having less day-to-day control of the experimental work carried out there.

An exhibition of the life and work of Du Bois-Reymond can be seen at the Berlin Museum of Medical History at the Charité Hospital until 2 October.

**Alison Abbott**