

NATASCHA TURETZEK

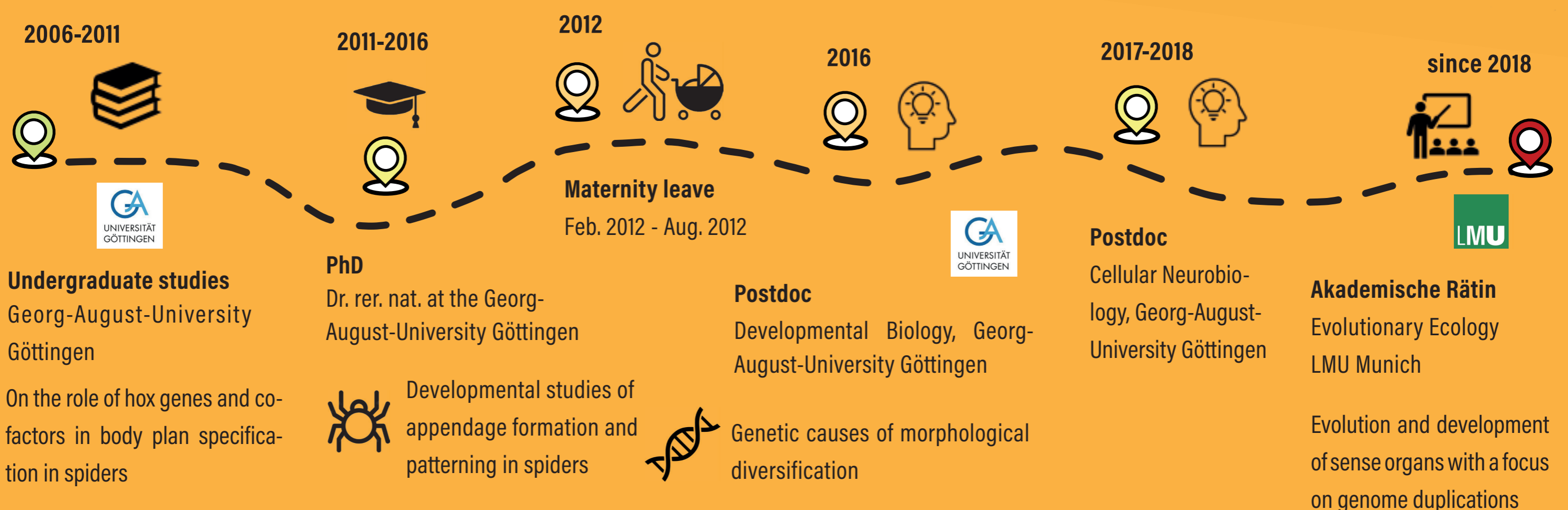
ABOUT

Natascha is a molecular biologist from Germany with specialization in evolutionary developmental and neural biology. She works as a akademischer Rätin and currently habilitates at the LMU Bio-center. Her team investigates the genetic basis driving phenotypic diversification on the example of arthropod appendages and sense organs using several spider and insect model species. Together with colleagues from Göttingen, Gießen and Cologne she is a project leader of the DFG Priority program SPP 2349 „Genomic Basis of Evolutionary Innovations (GEvol)“, systematically studying the link between genome evolution and evolutionary innovations in insects with spiders as outgroup. Beside her research she is teaching several practical and seminars in the Bachelor program and Master programs MCB and EES. Beyond her professional life she has one daughter and was a single mum for five years but now lives happily in a patchwork family having many pets.



WHAT TO TELL STUDENTS
„Life is a rollercoaster, it is ok to be scared and stressed but never forget to enjoy the ride!“

CV TIMELINE



KEY EXPERIENCE

Early in my career I had doubts if an academic career would be the right path for me witnessing how much stress and toxic environments junior group leaders and PhDs were facing and how little scientific spirit was left in some biological disciplines. Luckily, I found my niche in evolutionary developmental biology and a home in a wonderful and friendly community of zoologists. During my PhD our department and also the scientific meetings I attended and co-organized were characterized by real scientific curiosity, passion and an intense but friendly discussion culture. My PhD supervisor always gave me the freedom to follow my own project ideas and scientific interests. Working in such an amazing scientific environment and being supported by great mentors, supervisors and amazing colleagues (from which many are still close friends and collaborators) made it easy to give more than 100%. Meeting more and more lovely colleagues and passionate and fair scientists on the way helped me to push through challenging phases, hoping to spread this scientific spirit to future generations of students.

MAJOR SCIENTIFIC FINDING

I was part of the i5K Initiative and the SpiderWeb consortium publishing one of the first high-quality spider genomes showing that spiders, like vertebrates and many plants, had a whole genome duplication. In the same year I could functionally prove that the lag gap gene *dachshund* underwent neofunctionalization after duplication and is required for the formation of an evolutionary novel leg segment, which is still one of the very few examples functionally linking neofunctionalization with phenotypic innovation in an animal study system.

