

Systems At Play

A Self-Organising Symposium On Self-Organisation

International ArtScience Symposium
15-18 February 2023
Vrije Universiteit Brussel

clea.research.vub.be

CLEA

Center Leo Apostel for
transdisciplinary research
Vrije Universiteit Brussel

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OPEN CALL

Introduction

The Center Leo Apostel for Transdisciplinary Studies (CLEA) at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), organises its first international arts/science conference: *'Systems At Play: The Self-Organising Symposium on Self-Organisation'*, taking place in Brussels from February 15th until 18th, 2023.

The *'Systems at Play'* symposium starts from the understanding that art and science are mutually beneficial means of perception and insight creation. It thus provides a transdisciplinary contact zone for artists and scientists to meet, exchange, think, share, take time, and, ultimately, play together.

Then, what shall we talk and play about? Well, it's up to you where it ends up, but our starting points are the ideas of 'emergence', 'self-organisation', and 'goal-directedness'.

As far as goals go, the symposium invites you to tackle creative challenges collectively. During the symposium, participating artists and scientists will together create 'embodied models of emergence' in the form of live games, scores, presentations, conversations or small algorithmic performances. We will offer inputs to this process in the form of presentations, talks and workshops during the day; as well as an evening programme of immersive and interactive performances and film screenings.

A Self-Organising Symposium on Self-Organisation

To be true to the self-organisation and emergence of goal-directedness as thematised in the symposium, we need to recognise that we cannot fully predict all the processes or the end goal of the conference itself. Nor do we want to.

Rather than organise a symposium simply *about* self-organisation, we are attempting to *organise a self-organising* symposium, one that determines its own final goals through all our interactions together. To facilitate this, we will provide an open space with some supportive structure, knowing very well that we can't force it, and that we must let go of any preconceptions of what is success or failure. We want to allow uncertainty to enter, and let the goal of the conference find itself.

Otherwise, we shall repeat that which we already know, only to end up where we have already been. The self-organising symposium will thus become a shared research object, a unique immersive environment and experiment, as well as a strange loop in which topic and method merge and multiply.

To feed the symposium, we will tap into the enormous resources of experience which we collectively have, drawing upon scientific expertise, mathematical modelling, algorithmic theatre, musical composition, choreography, collective thinking, the global brain and noosphere research, collective mindfulness practices, play, ritual and mythological research, and much more besides.

Play - physically, intellectually, creatively - will be the guiding principle: we are free to play and propose ideas while nobody is obliged to collaborate or participate. There will be plenty of space to wander off, take a coffee break, and perhaps come up with alternative suggestions for activities you feel appropriate to the moment. Together we create a self-organising ecosystem of actions adaptive to our interests, abilities and expectations throughout our time together. We are excited and curious to find out how people and ideas will come together during the symposium.

Sponsors

The Symposium is funded by the John Templeton Foundation as part of CLEA's Origins of Goal Directedness project, and by the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB).

Curatorial team

The Symposium is curated by artist Orion Maxted together with Francis Heylighen, Tomas Veloz, Karin Verelst, Jasmine De Bruycker, and the CLEA artscience research group.



Open Call

We invite participation and contributions from artists and scientists alike through two interconnected open calls:

1. Open Call for attending

Deadline 31st January 2023

This is not a traditional 'call for papers' format. It is possible, indeed encouraged, to simply turn up and join the symposium without a pre-formed, concrete idea in mind of what you might like to happen since the process of the symposium allows for processes and ideas to emerge.

2. Open Call for presentations or performances

Deadline 20th January 2023

This is the call for participating artists and scientists to *also* propose short pre-existing talks and artworks that directly or tangentially address emergence and goal-directedness, which will act as input to the self-organizing symposium.

Example formats:

- A short performance (participatory, music, improvisation, theatre, performance art)
- An idea for a participatory game
- A short talk or a performance lecture
- A short workshop
- A short film
- etc

Further information and registration

For detailed information and application details please go to our website.

<https://clea.research.vub.be/en/clea-international-art-science-symposium-february-15-18-2023>