

ITRA NEWSLETTER

International Toy Research Association

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<http://www.itratoyresearch.org>



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PROLOGUE

The International Toy Research Association Newsletter is designed to keep members up to date with research in the fields of toys and play. In this issue, readers will find a note from our President, information for the 8th ITRA Conference, to be held in Paris 2018, a Member's Profile, the Members' Forum, various publications, conference and exhibition previews and reviews. The newsletter has been formatted to allow the document to be read in either printed form or as a soft copy, which can be found on the ITRA website.



The ITRA website (<http://www.itratoyresearch.org>.) covers the following: a description of ITRA, a brief history of the association, how to become a member, and a catalogue of downloadable newsletters.

Those of you who promised material that never arrived... send it again. For those who made contributions, without which there would be many more blank spaces, a massive thank you.

Enjoy the Newsletter.

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GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT OF ITRA

Dear ITRA colleagues and friends,



The next exciting International Toy Research Association (ITRA) conference is soon to be upon us. Gilles Brougère and his organising and scientific committees have been hard at work and the conference promises to be another wonderful opportunity to meet old research colleagues, make new acquaintances, update and share experiences regarding all things toy, with passionate, fellow-minded toy researchers and friends. The 8th ITRA World Conference is due to be held 11th –13th July 2018 in Paris, France, the main theme being *Toys and Material Culture: Hybridisation, Design and Consumption*. More information can be found in this newsletter regarding the program and conference logistics.

Gilles and his team of industrious conference organisers have secured an exciting venue, the newly developed Conference Centre at the MSH (Human Sciences House) in Paris-Nord. They have also been working tirelessly on arranging the two keynote speakers, completing the symposia and presentation program, updating the financial aspects of the event and registration processes, and coordinating a stimulating schedule of toy-related social activities to accompany the scientific program. Beyond the conference, delegates will be able to experience Paris, one of the most influential European capital cities – historically, traditionally and culturally.

Do not forget to check our website, www.itratoyresearch.org, for updated information on the conference and although the submission deadline has closed, there is still time to book a place, as the 8th ITRA Conference in Paris will be an event that simply cannot be missed!

Hope to see you in Paris in a couple of months!

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International Toy Research Association 8th World Conference

***TOYS AND MATERIAL CULTURE:
Hybridisation, Design and Consumption***

11th-13th July 2018
Paris, France



experice

Centre de Recherche Interuniversitaire Expérience Ressources Culturelles Education

UNIVERSITÉ PARIS 13

U^SPC
Université Sorbonne
Paris Cité



International Toy Research Association 8th World Conference

TOYS AND MATERIAL CULTURE: *Hybridisation, Design and Consumption*

Paris, France, 11th-13th July 2018

The 8th World Conference of the International Toy Research Association will be held in conjunction with *Experice* (Experience, cultural resources and education) and *Labex ICCA* (Cultural Industries and Artistic Creation) of the Paris 13 University – Sorbonne Paris Cité University.

The **International Toy Research Association** (ITRA), founded in 1993, is devoted to the scientific study of toys in all their facets. ITRA brings together toy researchers from all corners of the globe (see www.itratoyresearch.org for further information). This is our 8th World Conference to discuss research, collaborate on international projects and exchange information with other researchers, students and leaders in the toy industry. More than 80 international delegates attended our previous meeting in Braga, Portugal in 2014.

The **Experice** ([//experice.univ-paris13.fr/](http://experice.univ-paris13.fr/)) research centre focuses on education outside school, informal learning, play and childhood material culture. It participates in the Labex ICCA.

The ITRA conference will be held at a newly developed Conference Centre, accessible via metro, known as the MSH (Human Sciences House) in Paris-Nord. The Centre is situated at Avenue George Sand in La Plaine Saint Denis (part of the Grand Paris conurbation) and is 2 minutes from the “Front Populaire” station of line 12 of the Paris Metro. The MSH is situated four to six stations from the famous Parisian area of Montmartre.

Conference Themes

The predominant theme for the 8th ITRA Conference is *Toys and Material Culture: Hybridisation, Design and Consumption*.

Beyond toys, the conference will explore the place of tangible objects and novel forms of material culture in play. What are the similarities and the differences, the relationships, between toys and other material devices, such as board games, cards, digital games and media-connected objects? Are there, in play, or in the trans-mediated toys themselves, new forms of materiality?

Three words can summarize this topic:

- **Hybridisation:** the mix between toys and other playthings or supports; the trans-media franchising and circulation of characters, contents, fictions, and cross-connected toys; the mix between video games and toys; the relationships between toys and technology; and the question of virtual toys.
- **Design:** the conception of toys and the relationship with other trans-mediated objects addressed to, or of interest to children. Since Experice, the university’s research centre, operates in conjunction with a FabLab specialising in toys and games, known as Ludomaker ([//fr-fr.facebook.com/ludomaker/](http://fr-fr.facebook.com/ludomaker/)), we are particularly interested in encouraging proposals from other FabLabs around the world that also specialise in toys and games.
- **Consumption:** the marketing, distribution, and use of toys, and their relationship with different kinds of play objects, including the recycling and transformation of everyday objects into playthings.

In addition to the main theme of the conference, other topics relating to toys and material culture are welcome. This includes, but is not limited to, the following topics:

- Toy collecting and toy libraries
- Toys, education, health and environment
- Toys and gender influences
- Toys and intercultural communication
- Toys in history
- Trans-generational toys
- Toys, signs and meanings

We welcome abstracts of completed research, case studies and development projects, as well as incomplete or proposed research or ideas for future research in order to generate discussion and feedback.

Publications

Conference proceedings will be published in the open archive HAL ([//hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/](http://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/)). Participants who wish to have their full paper published are required to submit it to Gilles Brougère (brougere@univ-paris13.fr) by **15th September 2018**.

Registration and Fees

Registration for the conference will be available online only, opening in early 2018. The conference fee must be paid by credit card. Your registration will not be valid until you have successfully completed the entire process and received a confirmation of registration and payment. If you are unable to register online via credit card, please contact Gilles Brougère (brougere@univ-paris13.fr).

There will be two registration periods, early and regular. Student fees are applicable only to full-time university students who can present an official certificate of their student status the first day of the conference.

- | | |
|---|------------|
| • Early registration until 1 st May 2018 | 300.00 EUR |
| • Late registration after 2 nd May 2018 | 340.00 EUR |
| • Student early registration until 1 st May 2018 | 200.00 EUR |
| • Student late registration after 2 nd May 2018 | 230.00 EUR |

Payment by credit card (MasterCard and Visa only) can be made at <http://monintranet.univ-paris13.fr/paiement/itra/>.

Registration fee includes all conference sessions, conference materials, scheduled meals, refreshments at breaks. It also includes a trip to the *French Museum of Playing Cards* (www.museecarteajouer.com/) on the evening of the 12th July 2018. Museum entry fee, demonstration and meal inclusive of registration fee.

The fee does not cover accommodation and travel expenses.

Conference deadlines

Abstracts of papers - **8th January 2018**

Proposals for symposia - **8th January 2018**

Abstracts of posters - **8th January 2018**

ITRA-BTHA prize submissions - **8th January 2018**

Request for financial assistance - **8th January 2018**

Response from review committee by - **15th March 2018**

Early registration until - **1st May 2018**

Venue Details

The conference will be held at MSH (Human Sciences House) Paris-Nord, a new and interesting building dedicated to research in human sciences close to a new university campus for human sciences under construction.

The conference centre is situated at 20 Avenue George Sand in La Plaine Saint-Denis (part of the Grand Paris conurbation) and is a two minute walk from the "Front Populaire" Paris Metro station (Line 12). It is situated 4 to 6 stations from the famous Parisian area of Montmartre.

Travel Information

Paris is easily accessible from anywhere around the world and is served by two international airports (Orly and Charles de Gaulle). It is worth noting that some low cost flights (for example Ryanair) arrive in Beauvais Airport, which is 85 km from Paris (approximately a 75 minute bus journey).

High Speed trains (Eurostar, Thalys, Lyria, and TGV) connect Paris to various other major continental cities and an efficient road system makes travel to Paris, by car or coach, a viable option from other European countries.

The Paris Metro has a well developed rail network which means the conference centre is around 15 to 30 min from downtown Paris.

Accommodation

The conference centre at MSH Paris Nord is situated on a university campus which is currently under construction which limits the availability of cheap student or hotel accommodation. Conference attendees are advised to book hotels in areas in close proximity to the Paris Metro Line 12. This includes the Montmartre, Pigalle, Grands Boulevards and Grands magasins, Opera, Tuileries, the fashion district and Sèvres-Babylone areas, all of which are within 15 to 30 minute Metro journey to the MSH conference centre (see www.plandeparis.info/paris-metro/metro-map.html).

Accommodation should be booked directly with the hotel. Useful websites include:

- <http://www.lastminute.com/hotels/paris.html>
- <https://www.booking.com/>
- <http://www.hoteldirect.co.uk/paris/>
- <https://www.hostelbookers.com/hotels/france/paris/>
- <https://uk.hotels.com/de504261-qu0/cheap-hotels-paris-france/>
- <https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/HotelsList-Paris-Cheap-Hotels-zfp20355.html>

Committees

Scientific Committee

Mark Allen, Serious Fun Research Labs, Woking, UK
Vincent Berry, Université Paris 13 – Sorbonne Paris Cité, France
Gilles Brougère, Université Paris 13 – Sorbonne Paris Cité, France
Jeffrey H. Goldstein, University of Utrecht, The Netherlands
Cleo Gougoulis, University of Patras, Greece
Luisa Magalhães, Catholic University of Portugal, Braga, Portugal
Greta Pennell, University of Indianapolis, USA
Suzy Seriff, University of Texas at Austin, USA
Lieselotte Van Leeuwen, University of Gothenburg, Sweden
Inès de la Ville, University of Poitiers, France

Organizing Committee

Mark Allen, Serious Fun Research Labs, Woking, UK
Vincent Berry, Université Paris 13 – Sorbonne Paris Cité, France
Gilles Brougère, Université Paris 13 – Sorbonne Paris Cité, France
Nicolas Pineros, Université Paris 13 – Sorbonne Paris Cité, France
Nathalie Roucoux, Université Paris 13 – Sorbonne Paris Cité, France

2018 ITRA PRIZE FOR OUTSTANDING TOY RESEARCH (sponsored by the BTHA)

The ITRA Prize has been established with generous support from the British Toy and Hobby Association (www.btha.co.uk). The first ITRA-BTHA Prize was awarded in July 2008 during the 5th ITRA conference in Nafplion, Greece. ITRA expects to give two awards at each ITRA World Conference. One award of £500 will be given for the best student research on toys and one award of £1,000 to a senior scholar or practitioner on the uses, design and effects of toys.

The Prize recipients will also receive a travel stipend of £500 each toward the ITRA Conference and will present their research at that conference.

Purpose

The purpose of the ITRA-BTHA Prize is to recognise outstanding research in the field of toy research. To qualify for the Prize, the work must have been conducted or published since the previous ITRA Conference and be submitted by the researcher or nominated by a member of ITRA.

Evaluation

The Awards Committee consists of Mark Allen (UK), Gilles Brougère (France), Cleo Gougoulis (Greece), and Greta Pennell (USA).

The Awards Committee of ITRA will evaluate applications on the basis of originality, the significance of the work, creativity, methodology, clarity of presentation, and importance.

The 2018 ITRA prizes will be awarded during the 8th ITRA World Conference in Paris, France, 11th-13th July 2018.

Draft Programme



Maison des Sciences de l'Homme Paris Nord
20 avenue George Sand – Saint-Denis
[Metro Front Populaire - Line 12 – Terminus]

Wednesday 11th of July

9:00 – 10:15 Registration [RdC] and coffee [1st floor]

10:15 – 11:00 Open session – Auditorium [1st floor]

11:00 – 12:00 Keynote 1 – Auditorium [1st floor]

Thibaud Clément: “Narrative placemaking”, material culture and play at the Happiest Place on Earth

12:00 – 13:30 Lunch and Poster Session – Salle Panoramique [4th floor]

13:30 – 15:30 Session 1

Three streams:

- 1) Symposium 1 – “Hybrid toy research”
- 2) “FabLabs, GameLabs, ToyLabs”
- 3) “Diversity of toys and practices”

15h30 – 16h00: Coffee Break [1st floor]

16h00 – 17h30: Session 2

Four streams:

- 1) Symposium 2 – “Toy multimodality and childhood”
- 2) “Hybrid play with toys”
- 3) “Toy history 1”
- 4) “Preschool and toys”

17:45 – 18:30 Tribute to Brian Sutton-Smith – Auditorium [1st floor]

19:30 Welcome by the municipality Plaine Commune [to be confirmed]

Thursday 12th of July

9:00 – 11:00 Session 3

Four streams:

- 1) Symposium 3 – “Toy design”
- 2) “Toy play during breaks”
- 3) “Board games”
- 4) “Toy collections”

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee Break [1st floor]

11:30 – 13:00 ITRA Prize for Outstanding Toy Research (sponsored by the British Toy and Hobby Association) – Auditorium [1st floor]

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch – Salle Panoramique [4th floor]

14:00 – 15:30 Session 4

Four streams:

- 1) Symposium 4 – “Toys and girlhood identity”
- 2) “Toy semiotics”
- 3) “Toy design and education”
- 4) “Intergenerational toys”

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee Break [1st floor]

16:00 – 17:30 Session 5

Four streams:

- 1) “Toys and material culture”
- 2) “Toys and design”
- 3) “Toy history 2”
- 4) “Toys and narratives”

19:00 Visit and dinner at the French playing card museum

Friday 13th of July

9:00 – 11:00 Session 6

Three streams:

- 1) Symposium 5 – “Toys in design education”
- 2) “Greek and Roman toys”
- 3) “Toys and education”

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee Break [1st floor]

11:30 – 13:00 Session 7

Three streams:

- 1) “Toy design and education”
- 2) “Re-thinking the toy”
- 3) “Toys and video-screens”

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch – Salle Panoramique [4th floor]

14:00 -15:00: Keynote 2 – Auditorium [1st floor]

Mark Steinberg: “Delivering Toys: The Convenience Store as Media Mix Hub”

15:00 – 16:30 Closing ceremony and ITRA General Meeting – Auditorium [1st floor]

17:00 – 18:30 ITRA Board meeting – [Room 408]

MEMBER PROFILE – Mathieu Gielen



Mathieu Gielen is Assistant Professor of Design for Children's Play at the Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering at TU Delft, The Netherlands. Mathieu was awarded his BSc. and MSc. Industrial Design Engineering, from TU Delft, graduating in 1994.

Mathieu worked as an independent designer for over two decades, specialising in the domain of toys, games, playgrounds and other playful objects. He currently lectures on design for children's play – toys, playgrounds, games – and researches methods for exploring children's worlds of experience, developing tools and techniques for co-design with children.

Mathieu has co-authored a number of journal papers and book chapters, including; *Design for rebellious play* (2018), *Ambiguity as a virtue in design for play* (2016), and *Found in translation: Bringing reversal theory to design for play* (2014).

Mathieu studied in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a period in which TU Delft primarily concentrated on industrial interests. While 'user-centred design' existed – with a preoccupation placed on 'user comfort' – the recent focus on 'social design', with the aim to improve social relationships and emotional wellbeing, was in its infancy. Mathieu decided for his final undergraduate project to focus on the inclusion of people with physical challenges, which led him to a local children's institute and the design of a novel swimming-pool plaything.

During this project, Mathieu discovered the world of children's motivations, perspectives, play needs, and the whole discourse around play – its roots in child development, psychology and sociology. He felt that 'play' was a gateway to new perspectives on the essence of human flourishing and subsequently decided to specialise in designing for children's play. Although some may have considered Mathieu misguided in pursuing such a niche discipline, he started his one-person-design-studio, creating playthings, playground sets and board games on behalf of industrial partners, municipalities, and schools. Through this enterprise he met Lieselotte van Leeuwen, who introduced him to play research, toy professional networks and literature on play theory.

His first journal paper described creative techniques in toy design for children with varying physical abilities. This work formed the basis for his presentations and workshops at the Nordic Centre for Research on Toys and Educational Media (NCFL) at the University of Halmstad, Sweden. Mathieu found publishing and discussing play, in the design context, helpful in developing his own thinking and methodologies. Along with Lieselotte and Diane Westwood, he explored the use of theories and models from psychology in design for play resulting in further publications. Although not a conscious decision, he found himself involved in toy design and research.

It was through Lieselotte that he attended the 2005 ITRA Conference in Alicante, Spain. For years he had watched, along with his design students, documentaries on research and development of children's toys – Brian Sutton-Smith and Kathleen Alfano were two of the principal contributors. At the Alicante conference, he describes being awestruck on meeting Brian and Kathleen, getting his photograph taken with them and later sharing the experience with his students.

From his first ITRA introduction, Mathieu found the community to be open and welcoming with many opportunities for the exchange of ideas and dialogue. In addition, ITRA covers a wide range of academic disciplines and inclusive of business interests. From a design research perspective, working in design innovation, he was struck by the focus on past and classic toys and the apparent absence of innovative toys. He wondered whether the integration of state-of-the-art technology in play and toys may be introduced at future conferences.

Mathieu's teaching broadly involves two streams 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' approaches to design. The 'bottom-up' perspective includes children as pivotal in toy creation by informing designers of children's viewpoints, needs and preferences. The 'top-down' approach provides toy designers new insights and design processes based on play and child developmental theory. Both approaches offer more empathic insight in children's needs and together produce a real impact on the design of facilities and objects for play.

One of Mathieu current research activities involves managing a project focussed on co-design within the classroom, in primary education. The dual aims to inform designers of children's wishes and foster children's creative skills, furthering insights into co-design techniques, co-research and contextual inquiry with children.

Mathieu concludes that a significant by-product of his toy and play research is what he has learnt about himself. He recalls reading about people with playful versus serious dominance in their character and through self-reflection was 'suddenly' aware what a fundamentally profound truth this encapsulated – and the impact on his professional and personal relationships with others. Play is at the core of human flourishing, so to study it, to teach it and to design for 'this little niche' is a most fulfilling form of play.

MEMBERS' FORUM

Please remember when you do send items for inclusion in the Newsletter to send them in a downloadable form.

Norway

Tore Gulden wrote to share an article he felt suitable for the newsletter:

The aim of this paper is to rethink games and game design within the theory of self-producing interaction systems. With this research, I seek to identify several dynamics of play and engagement elicited by games that, by extension, can serve as game design parameters. The research is oriented toward an analysis of football (soccer) and Pokémon GO within the context of Niklas Luhmann's (2002/2012) theoretical framework of autopoiesis (i.e., self-producing interaction systems). The theoretical discussion of play situations in the two games reveals five concentric interaction systems through which games motivate play and engagement. These game dynamics are continuing simultaneous communication, multiple observations, double expectations, system autonomy, and unexpectedness through system coupling. The study further shows that when a game succeeds in eliciting these dimensions, functional, continuous, and changing structures allow for the emergence of numerous behaviours and the production of new interaction systems.

The full article can be found here:

<http://humantechnology.jyu.fi/archive/vol-14/issue-1/gulden>



CONFERENCES & EXHIBITIONS

This section covers current, up-coming and past conferences and exhibitions. Hopefully mentioning past events will not induce depression as to what you may have missed, while we trust previews of future events will whet your appetite to attend. Previews and reviews of conferences are sought for the next edition of the ITRA Newsletter.

FUTURE CONFERENCES

September 2018

Toy & game design conference 2018, will be held at Emirates Stadium, London, UK, 10th September 2018.

The Toy and Game Design Conference 2018, taking place within the inaugural Play Creators Festival, is a day set to inspire, enlighten and wow the industry's creative backbone. With a line-up of exciting speakers from across toys, games, tech and the wider worlds of design, our conference will unite the global toy and game inventor community and leave your creative juices flowing.

For more information visit:

<https://toyandgamedesignconference.com/>



January 2019

Kids@Play will be held at Venetian, Las Vegas, USA, 10th January 2019.

The **Kids@Play Summit** re-imagines the next generation's reality from toy box to backpack with AR/VR, robotics and IoT toys and games. **FamilyTech** helps parents and kids find balance by redefining their relationships with the tech they use to keep connected, safe and engaged in the smart home and elsewhere. Top Three Topics: The changing business of play and learning; Future-ready kids; Mobile Natives: Entertaining and parenting; Taking back your time with tech.

For more information visit:

<https://www.ces.tech/Conference/ConferenceProgram/Conference-Tracks/Kids@Play-Summit-FamilyTech-Summit.aspx>



Gamification, 52nd Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences HICSS, will be held at Grand Waile, Maui, Hawaii, USA, 8th – 11th January 2019.

During the last decade, games have become an established vein of entertainment, consumer culture, and essentially, a common part of people's daily lives. In the United States alone 59% of the population plays computer games while revenues of the computer games industry exceed US \$15 billion. However, in addition to the increased penetration of games, the ways in which people play and employ games have also become more varied. There are more different kinds of games available for a multitude of different platforms, mediated through different technologies that cater for differing gaming needs for widening audiences and which use a wide variety of business models. Relevant topics include (but are not limited to): users, education, media, commerce, work, technology, and toys & playfulness (toys, playfulness, Internet of Toys).

For more information visit:

<https://www.tut.fi/Gamification/2018/03/14/call-for-papers-52nd-annual-hawaii-international-conference-on-system-sciences-hicss-2019/>

PAST CONFERENCES

January 2018

Kids@Play was held at Venetian, Las Vegas, USA, 10th January 2018.

Adults focus on the digital world while kids see less distinction. Ninety percent of parents report introducing their kids to technology before school ever starts. Since the mid-00's, tech and smart toys have dominated the industry's growth. Smartphones, wearables, tablets, robots, connected toys, and the Internet of Things took centre stage in a world where kids saw screens and tech as just one of life's digital extensions.

For more information visit:

<http://miniaturescene.com/Fair-Dates>

February/March 2018

The Association for the Study of Play International Conference was held at the Crowne Plaza Melbourne, Florida, USA, 28th February – 3rd March 2018.

The theme was *Fulfilling the Promise of Play*, and proposals were encouraged from all academic disciplines related to play and from play practitioners and advocates. Formats included individual papers, workshops, roundtables, and posters. Presentations were organized according to three tracks: play from the past, play in the present, and play as part of the future. More details available at:

<http://www.tasplay.org/about-us/conference/>



CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

From June 2018

Artful Play! Games & Toys, i.d.e.a. Museum, Mesa, Arizona, USA, from 19th June 2018 onwards.

During play, children interact socially, build vocabulary, problem solve, exercise imagination and creativity and learn strategy. That learning continues into adulthood, too. The Artful Play! Games & Toys exhibition features paintings, sculptures, photographs, and other artworks. Art and hands-on activities will provide visitors a chance to develop ideas, learn about play in other cultures, go back in time to experience vintage games and explore the process of designing toys and inventing games.

For more information visit:

<http://www.ideamuseum.org/artful-play.html>



FUTURE EXHIBITIONS

July - September 2018

May The Toys Be With You, New Walk Museum & Art Gallery, Leicester, UK, will take place 21st July 2018 – 28th October 2018.

An exhibition for big kids and little kids alike, celebrating the iconic toys and artwork of the Star Wars films. The success of Star Wars, which broke box office records in 1977, was only surpassed by the sale of its merchandise. The toys, from lightsabers to X-Wing fighters, defined playtime for a generation of children. An estimated 300 million action figures were sold globally between 1977 and 1985, but rather than beginning in a galaxy far, far away, they were originally made by Palitoy in Coalville. This exhibition celebrates the Leicestershire company's role in the global phenomenon and brings together a wealth of highly collectable vintage toys and original film posters, many of them rarely displayed in public.

For more information visit:

<https://www.artfund.org/whats-on/exhibitions/2018/07/21/may-the-toys-be-with-you>

September 2018

Videogames: Design/Play/Disrupt, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK, from 8th September 2018.

The exhibition explores the medium since the mid-2000s, when major technological advancements, such as increased access to broadband, social media, smart phones and newly available means of making, profoundly changed the way videogames are designed, discussed and played. This change has opened the door to new voices and ideas, allowing the medium to break beyond its perceived boundaries and aspire to new horizons.

For more information visit:

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/about-videogames-exhibition>

Kaiju vs Heroes: Mark Nagata's Journey through the World of Japanese Toys, Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles, USA, 15th September 2018 – 24th March 2019.

Take a journey through the world of Japanese soft vinyl *kaiju* (monster) and hero toys, courtesy of toy designer Mark Nagata's unrivalled collection of vintage figurines. Born out of the cultural ashes of World War II, these distinctive toys became both a means for Japanese Americans to reconnect with their culture and an apt metaphor for post-war relations between the United States and Japan.

For more information visit:

<http://www.janm.org/exhibits/kaiju-vs-heroes/>



November 2018

Playing for Keeps: The VFW Marble Tournaments, 1947-1962, The National Museum of Toys/Miniatures, Kansas City, USA from 11th November 2018 – 6th January 2019.

Marble playing ruled playgrounds for much of the twentieth century.

Requiring only a handful of marbles and a patch of dirt, the game crossed all

economic and social barriers. In 1947, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) created a national marble tournament to positively influence young boys and re-engage WWII and Korean War veterans in civilian life.

The tournament, an annual event for 14 years, was a life-changing experience for the thousands of kids who participated. *Playing for Keeps* tells the firsthand stories of the players alongside their souvenirs, trophies, and marble memorabilia. Learn their stories and then knuckle down to experience the thrill of the game in a regulation-size marble ring.

For more information visit:

<http://www.toyandminiaturemuseum.org/current/>



PAST EXHIBITIONS

January 2018

Play!, The Autry Museum in Griffith Park, Los Angeles, USA.

Through more than 200 historic objects from the Autry's diverse collections, *Play!* explored the role of toys and games across cultures and over time. Featured dolls, board games, video games, outdoor activities, and more, the exhibition looked at the many ways children have played in the American West, the social values toys reveal, and how the West has inspired imagination. Beyond the displays, visitors were invited to get hands-on with games of the past and present—no assembly required.

For more information visit:

<https://theautry.org/exhibitions/play>

February 2018

Play: Toys Reimagined as Art, Taubman Museum of Art, Roanoke, Virginia, USA.

The exhibition highlighted artists who use toy-like materials to create magically transformative installations, videos and sculptures for “the kid in all of us.” The exhibition featured site-specific works by six artists working in diverse media from crayons to building blocks and inflatables. With its highly interactive and engaging artworks, *Play* focused on the similarities between how children and adults experience various playful habits of invention, such as curiosity, imagination, and problem solving.

For more information visit:

<http://www.taubmanmuseum.org/calendar/9554/play-toys-reimagined-as-art>

April 2018

Winnie-the-Pooh: Exploring a Classic, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK, from 9th December 2017 through till 8th April 2018.

This exhibition revealed the story behind the creative partnership of A.A. Milne and E.H. Shepard and the factors contributing to the phenomenal success and enduring popularity of Winnie-the-Pooh. Designed for both children and adults, visitors were led on a multi-sensory journey to rediscover these classic books such as discovering language as a child, and inspiring creativity with drawing.

For more information visit:

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/winnie-the-pooh-exploring-a-classic>



PUBLICATIONS & BOOKS

Book reviews, or book recommendations, are sought for the next edition of the ITRA Newsletter. Please submit these to the Editorial Team at itranewsltr@gmail.com. This edition also includes calls for papers on upcoming publications.

Brandow-Faller, M., & Yonan, M. E. (Eds.). (2018). *Childhood by Design: Toys and the Material Culture of Childhood, 1700-Present*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

By Lieselotte van Leeuwen

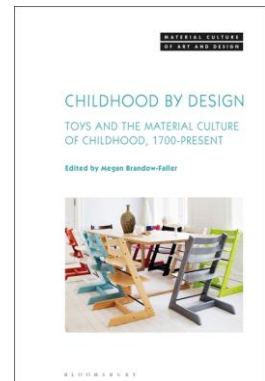
Research interest for the materialities of childhood have grown steadily in the last 30 years. Toys represent crossroads of multiple time-and place-specific discourses in society. Using a historical perspective *Childhood By Design: Toys and the Material Culture of Childhood* gives a vivid and multifaceted picture of diverse discourses. What makes this volume stand out is its multidisciplinary approach. Changing discourses on childhood are mapped to those of changing discourses in art history and design studies. Changes in material culture are captured from the 18th to the 20th centuries from numerous perspectives. The involved disciplines not only provide diverse viewpoints, they also introduce the reader to multiple methods of studying the material culture of children. In this way e.g. doubts about the explanatory power of adult-made artefacts as representing childhood can be productively discussed and integrated with studies of children's lived experience and agency. Both popular and academic divisions in terms of children vs. adults; the 'passive exploited' vs. the 'active empowered' child; making vs. consuming; society vs. individuals; play vs. work and past vs. present are questioned. Discourses originating from either side of these divisions are recognized as approaches representing different scholarly motivations, perspectives in society, source materials and as developing different questions. This integration allows an insight in how makers, buyers and users of toys are co-creating diverse material cultures and discourses. Topics range from children as consumers, the role of female designers of dolls, commodification of toys to Bauhaus education and the indoctrination of children through toys. The book is dedicated to three overarching themes:

Part I: Inventing the Material Child: Childhood, Consumption and Commodity Culture

Part II: Child's Play? Avant-Garde and Reform Toy Design

Part III: Toys, Play and Design Culture as Instruments of Political and Ideological Indoctrination

Students of design for play, history and social sciences should read and discuss this book together and become aware of their own and other's roles in creating, using and discussing the materiality of children's lives. This book creates awareness of diverse discourses surrounding toys and importantly also of a wide range of research methods. In the best tradition it enables learning about toys in a contextualized way as well as unlearning of simplified, one-dimensional approaches to toys.



The International Journal of Play

The journal welcomes: reports on research projects; papers concerned with theory-practice links; policy critiques and expositions; reviews and analysis of contemporary and historical publications; essays, memoirs, and other forms of reflective writing; writing that builds on the experience and voices of children and young people; and, theoretical position papers.

The International Journal of Play will appear three times a year and the contents of the first issue can be found at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rijp20/current>



MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

- 1) For the love of Playmobil: our home's toy stories
<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/jul/01/for-the-love-of-playmobil-our-home-toy-stories>
- 2) Toys 'R' Us fans devastated as Geoffrey the Giraffe leaves store for last time
<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/toys-r-fans-devastated-geoffrey-12828363>
- 3) Six attempts to make toys more inclusive
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-44637249>
- 4) A tiny version of this physics toy is revealing quantum secrets
<https://www.sciencenews.org/article/tiny-physics-toy-newton-cradle-revealing-quantum-secrets>
- 5) Dog gets jaw and tongue stuck in toy she only had for 30 minutes
<https://metro.co.uk/2018/06/25/dog-gets-jaw-tongue-stuck-toy-30-minutes-7657828/>
- 6) Kids are actually happier with fewer toys, science says
<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/parenting/a19853110/children-toys-study/>
- 7) Nazi UFO toy discontinued for historical inaccuracy
<https://www.indy100.com/article/nazi-ufo-toy-discontinued-revell-gmbh-germany-history-third-reich-8412051>
- 8) Beach Toy Library: Borrow a sand toy, leave a sand toy
<https://boingboing.net/2018/06/26/beach-toy-library-borrow-a-sa.html>
- 9) Prince George pictured playing with a toy gun and people aren't happy
<https://metro.co.uk/2018/06/11/prince-george-pictured-playing-toy-gun-people-arent-happy-7620782/>
- 10) Amazon will stop selling connected toy filled with security issues
<https://www.cnet.com/news/amazon-will-stop-selling-connected-toy-cloud-pets-filled-with-security-issues/>
- 11) Ghosts of Lithuania's past brought back by a child's toy
<https://www.politico.eu/article/lithuania-holocaust-ghosts-past-brought-back-by-a-childs-toy/>
- 12) Hot Wheels' new \$1 toy car has a GoPro mount
<https://www.theverge.com/circuitbreaker/2018/6/6/17434342/hot-wheels-die-cast-toy-car-go-pro-session-5>
- 13) Oops? Botched restoration turns Spanish sculpture into 'a toy'
<http://canoe.com/news/world/oops-botched-restoration-turns-spanish-sculpture-into-a-toy>
- 14) Product Design student wins international award for sustainable toy design
<http://www.dmu.ac.uk/about-dmu/news/2018/may/product-design-student-wins-international-award-for-sustainable-toy-design.aspx>
- 15) Popular soft toys full of toxic chemicals, analysis reveals
<http://cphpost.dk/news/popular-soft-toys-full-of-toxic-chemicals-analysis-reveals.html>
- 16) New Jello-O "toys" encourage kids to make dining rooms stickier, grosser
<https://thetakeout.com/new-jello-o-toys-encourage-kids-to-make-dining-rooms-1827208658>
- 17) Second-hand toys 'may pose toxic threat to children'
<https://www.nhs.uk/news/pregnancy-and-child/secondhand-toys-may-pose-toxic-threat-children/>
- 18) Lights, camera but no action figures: are movie toys going out of fashion?
<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2018/apr/05/lights-camera-but-no-action-figures-are-movie-toys-going-out-of-fashion>
- 19) Toy tiger sparks armed police stand-off on Scottish farm
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/02/06/toy-tiger-sparks-armed-police-alert-scottish-farm/>



ITRA 2018 Fees Notice

Please note that, according to the ITRA Board's decision in Alicante, 8th August 2005, conference fees cover ITRA membership fees until the following conference. This means that conference participants who paid full registration fees for the 7th ITRA conference in Braga, Portugal 2014 have been exempted from paying ITRA dues for the years 2015 through 2017.

If you were not able to attend the conference in Braga, you must submit your annual membership fee for 2018 to remain an ITRA member in good standing.

Annual membership: €50
Retiree// Student membership: €25

Payments may be made

a) through bank transfer to the following account number

International Toy Research Association,
National Bank of Greece, Pal. Phaliro branch 175
Account number: 175/480074.53
IBAN Number: GR16 0110 1750 0000 1754 8007 453
SWIFT: ETHNGRAA

b) by sending an International Money Order, payable to ITRA, to the Treasurer at the following address:

Cleo Gougoulis
73 Terpsihoris St.
P.Phaleron
17562 Athens
Greece

Please notify the ITRA Treasurer, Cleo Gougoulis, by sending an e-mail to: cleogougoulis@yahoo.gr, when you send your fees to the bank. It is important to mention what amount and in which currency you paid.

EPILOGUE

If you attended a conference this year - toy related, preferably - have anything to say, whether about yourself, publications you have read or would like to recommend to the ITRA membership, events, research or just anything, or would like to propose an ITRA member we could profile, do not hesitate to contact either Suzy or Mark, via itranwsltr@gmail.com. We intend to publish a winter edition in December 2018. In the meantime, the editors of the newsletter would like to thank everyone who contributed to this issue of the ITRA newsletter.

We would encourage you to feel free to send the editors articles, which we can share with the rest of the ITRA members. If English is not your first language, please do not let this be a hindrance to contacting the Editorial Team; we are more than happy to assist in editing items from contributors.

The Editorial Team look forward to seeing you at the Paris ITRA conference.

Regards
Suzy & Mark

We do not stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing.
Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)