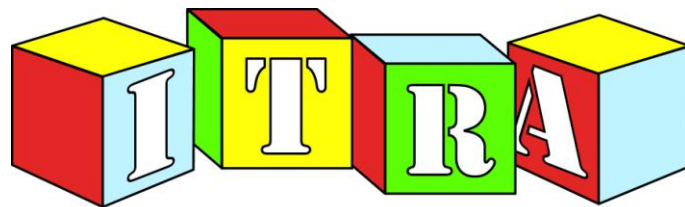


ITRA NEWSLETTER

International Toy Research Association

Vol. 23 No. 2 Winter 2019

<http://www.itratoyresearch.org>



**INTERNATIONAL TOY
RESEARCH ASSOCIATION**

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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, 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, a list of publications, 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,



It is my great pleasure to announce, on behalf of the International Toy Research Association Board, that the 9th ITRA World Conference will be held 7th - 9th July 2021 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, at ASCA (Amsterdam School for Cultural Studies). Joyce Goggin – who was profiled in the *Spring 2019 ITRA Newsletter* – will take the role of Conference Chair. Joyce has already secured meeting rooms, equipment and currently arranging, with great enthusiasm, the social program and various events. The current plan is to issue the Call-for-Papers in May 2020, which will include the conference theme, submission and review deadlines. Further details will be issued as they become available.

Regarding the ongoing saga of the ITRA bank account transfer, from Greece to France, there is little progress to report; however, Cleo Gougoulis and Gilles Brougère have continued in their endeavours, for which, I would like to offer my ongoing thanks.

Since 1993, the International Toy Research Association has organised eight international conferences, held in; Halmstad, Sweden (1996 & 1999), in London, England (2002), in Alicante, Spain (2005), in Nafplion, Greece (2008), in Bursa, Turkey (2011), in Braga, Portugal (2014), and the most recent in Paris, France (2018). Amsterdam (2021) promises to be another wonderful opportunity to meet old research friends, make new acquaintances, update and share experiences regarding plaything research with passionate, fellow-minded toy researchers. Do not forget to check our website www.itratoyresearch.org for updated information on the conference

In the meantime, I would like to wish you all a memorable festive period and an even better 2020!

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MEMBER PROFILE – Kathleen Alfano



A Child Development and Play Specialist, Kathleen Alfano holds several degrees in Elementary Education: a Bachelors Degree from Daemen College, a Masters Degree from Buffalo State University College and a Doctorate from the State University of NY at Buffalo, as well as a Masters Degree in Business Administration from Niagara University. With thirty-five years in the toy industry, she is a world-renowned expert in the field of early childhood, child development, play patterns, age grade determinations of toys and children's products, and trends in play and parenting.

As Senior Director of Child Research at Fisher-Price, Alfano evolved their Play Lab into a world-renowned and often emulated research centre on child development and play. She possesses a keen understanding and awareness of cultural similarities and differences that impact behaviour and attitudes through world travel to over forty countries, leading ethnographic studies observing children at play in everyday life-at-home. Author of numerous articles in parenting magazines worldwide, she is also a sought after speaker at national and international conferences. As global ambassador for Fisher-Price, Alfano developed and communicated the philosophy of early learning through play. She is a founding member of the International Toy Researchers Association.

Kathleen's publications include: *It's Never too Early to Read to Your Child* (Harper Collins Children's Conference Proceedings), *Making Toys for a Global Market* (Chapter in Toys in Educational and Social – Cultural Context; A Selection of Papers Presented at the International Toy Research Association Conference – Halmsted University, Sweden), *Mouthing Habits of Children 6 - 18 Months of Age* (Journal of Paediatrics), and numerous articles written for the Fisher-Price website include: *Bath Time and Water Play*, *Pour on the Learning*, *Benefits of Outdoor Play*, *Boys will be Boys*, *Building Skills with Toys*, *Family Play*, *Let's Play... Revisiting the Importance of Play*, *Making Time for Family Play*, *Play is a Child's Work*, *Play + Moving = Learning*, *Pretend Play Develops Real-Life Skills*, *Stocking the Essential Toy Box*, *Summer Time Fun – Transitioning from Indoor to Outdoor Play*, *Tips for Tummy -Time Play*, *Tips to Get the Most Out of Play*, *Tips to Promote Imaginative Play*, and *Tips: Why Play is So Important*.

In 1993, the International Toy Research Association was established with the primary aim of making toy research more easily accessible for those interested in that particular field of research. Kathleen Alfano was invited to the meeting, which was held in Utrecht, The Netherlands, as a representative from the toy industry having joined Fisher-Price Toys, Inc. some ten years earlier. Upon seeing the distinguished list of participants from that first ITRA meeting, Kathleen commented that she felt a sense of awe and excitement to be included among the many famous authors of the play studies research literature she had been reading. To be among the leaders of toy and play research from around the world, Kathleen found inspiring.

Kathleen first became involved in toy research when she joined Fisher-Price Toys, Inc. in 1979, as an early childhood teacher in their Research & Development Department. She came to Fisher-Price after directing several child care centres where she was responsible for purchasing toys within a constrained budget. This previous experience in understanding the importance of play in child development and the role of strategic toy selection to enhance play served her well at Fisher-Price where the company ran a play-based program for preschool children, primarily to enable designers and engineers to observe how children interact with toys. Shortly after joining Fisher-Price, Kathleen was placed in charge of their preschool program ("Play Laboratory") helping it grow it into a state-of-the-art research facility, with increased enrolment and research services, while continuing her advanced studies in education toward her doctoral degree. It was during this phase that she began to research play more deeply and read many scholarly articles and books, becoming familiar with the names of the authors and key influencers in the field of play and toy research.

It was around this time that Kathleen was invited to the meeting in Utrecht and describes the connections she made at that first event as having been integral and meaningful to her research in toys and play for many years to come. Such a dedicated and interesting group of toy research scholars and authors has enriched Kathleen's life and in many instances informed the direction her research took and as a result she is thankful for having been given such a wonderful opportunity.

Kathleen describes her research at Fisher-Price as primarily observational in nature - studying how children, in over forty countries, play with toys both alone and within group settings. Over the course of her career, she has observed children of all ages, from babies, of only a few months old, through kindergarten and early grade school children. Always accompanied by a translator, Kathleen sought to understand what the children were saying and to communicate with parents and teachers. Kathleen is astounded by the similarities of how children,

from across the globe, play with toys and with one another, explaining that, “other than speaking a different language, their play patterns are quite similar. If a child is pretending to talk on the phone, it is most likely a ‘conversation’ with a parent. When a child pretends to be cooking, it usually involves a welcoming invitation to sit down and ‘enjoy’ the fruits of their labour. That is one of the most common play themes encountered in every country though with subtle cultural differences. In some countries the children would offer tea, in another, coffee, and another it may be soup – whatever was popular in their home - but, always a warm greeting involving their hospitality.”

Similarly, Kathleen found common play themes based around familiar home environments, for example, children pretending to be a parent or caring adult, taking care of household chores, and generally mimicking what they see in daily life. She found that children, regardless of country, use toys creatively to express themselves, while engaged in familiar play scenarios. Another popular theme Kathleen observed is ‘emergency’ play, involving fire rescue, police assistance or hospital care, during which children engage in developing storylines, giving orders as to who is to do what, switching roles during the play and continuing with their adventures. Kathleen has no doubt that children playing with toys or objects, as props, is a universal way for them to communicate with one another while exploring their real worlds or creating imaginary ones.

Although Kathleen officially retired five years ago, after working in the toy industry for 35 years at Fisher-Price, she remains involved in the field of early childhood education and play. Her current roles include being a board member for various institutions – for example, for an elementary school, a university-based early childhood research centre, and a children’s museum – and a consultant and advisor for a number of toy companies and the toy industry in general. Kathleen keeps abreast of current toy trends, as well as reading studies involving toys and play – she observes that ITRA newsletters have been helpful in this pursuit.

Kathleen continues to find research involving toys and play to be highly interesting, extremely meaningful and helpful in understanding more about how we think and interact. She also appreciates the ways in which current research, continues to confirm for her the importance of toys and play in all our lives, and in particular, in the lives of children – as they learn about themselves and how to interact with others through play, and specifically, playing with toys, alone and with others. Kathleen informally gathers information from parents of young children about what keeps their child’s interest and attention and what toys they like to play with and what toys they’re asking for – a case of once a researcher, always a researcher.

Kathleen strongly urges up-and-coming researchers to follow their passions and interests as she did. The possibilities, she notes, are wide open and there is so much more to learn and uncover. She is also quick to offer a piece of advice from her own experience while completing her doctoral research: take the time to follow up on lists of further studies and bibliographic sources that may prompt new and creative modes of thought and inspire you in new directions.

Talking of recommendations, Kathleen also aims to follow her own advice, to find time to be active and engage in some form of play every day, as that helps bring joy and balance to life. So, since her retirement, with additional time and energy to spare, she has become involved in a number of playful endeavours, from outdoor sports – swimming, rowing, tennis and golf – to dance and gym exercise classes such as yoga, pilates, zumba, and barre.

Although she was unable to attend the two most recent ITRA conferences, held in Braga, Portugal, 2014, and Paris, France, 2018, with the extra time on her hands since retirement, Kathleen hopes to be able to attend the next one and looks forward to reconnecting with colleagues and making new connections. We look forward to welcoming back one of the International Toy Research Association’s founding members at the next conference.

MEMBERS' FORUM

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

INDIA

Surabhi Khanna sent us the following.

I was invited as a Mentor (tutor) to a workshop on Toy Design and Inclusive Play in Berlin. Twenty three participants from Germany, Belgium, Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Colombia, USA, Thailand, Japan, Philippines, Lithuania, Russia, India, and Israel were a part of 18th UNESCO - International Creativity workshop, conceptualized and organized by Fördern durch Spielmittel from 14th to 28th January 2019.



This was a unique event as designers, psychologists, social development consultants interacted with people with special needs, ranging from children to senior citizen. Toys, games and playful products were designed and developed during the two week intensive workshop. The final exhibition was followed by discussion on how each outcome could be reproduced. This special program is part of Siegfried Zoels' lifetime work in the area of toys for special needs.

A short video may be found [here](#) . I hope you will find it worthwhile to view.

THE PHILIPPINES

Jean-Pierre Rossie sent us a review of his recent research activities.

My first contact with archaeological research dates back to 2013 when I was asked by Haris Procopiou, professor at the Université Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne, Institut d'Art et d'Archéologie, if I could assist her doctoral student Argyris Fassoulas in doing research in the Moroccan Anti-Atlas. I gladly accepted this proposal as I viewed this as an opportunity to share the information on North African and Saharan children's play and toy cultures with the archaeology of childhood and play. Argyris conducted his research on rural children's creation of clay toys over several weeks in 2013 and 2016. The fieldwork results were integrated in his PhD thesis, titled, *De la fabrication à la fonction des figurines néolithiques de la Thessalie* (Paris: 2017).

The ethnographic part of Argyris' thesis will be published with the title, "The manufacture of clay toys in the Anti-Atlas region" in the forthcoming book *Saharan and North African Play and Toy Cultures: Make-believe play among children of the Moroccan Anti-Atlas* (online publication, second half of 2020, 638 colour photos). In 2016 I began another collaboration with Véronique Dasen, professor of classical archaeology at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland) who invited me to give a lecture at the conference *Regards croisés sur le jeu à travers les âges et les civilisations* at the University of Caen-Normandie (13-14.10.2017) and at the conference *Jeu et Apprentissage* at her university (26-27.10. 2017). The PowerPoint slides are available on academia.edu (<https://www.academia.edu/34870178> and <https://www.academia.edu/34977361>). These events took place within her European Research Council's Advanced Grant 2017-2022, *The Cultural Fabric of Play and Games in Classical Antiquity* (<https://locusludi.ch>).

Finally, I want to share with my ITRA colleagues my collaboration with the project *Locus Ludi's International Expert Network* as an associated researcher. As part of this collaborative effort, I donated twenty-six toys to the Musée du Jouet de Moirans-en-Montagne which are on display in the exhibition *LUDIQUE – Jouer dans l'Antiquité*, which ran from 20th June to 1st December 2019, at LUGDUNUM - Musée & Théâtres romains in Lyon (France.. I wrote a short article, included in the exposition catalogue, and held a lecture on "Cultures Ludiques amazighes et nord-africaines et de l'Antiquité gréco-romaine. Recherche interdisciplinaire sur des millénaires" at LUGDUNUM Musée & Théâtres romains in Lyon (26.10.2019 – PowerPoint <https://www.academia.edu/41158576>).

For a doctoral study program associated with the ERC Locus Ludi project, which took place on 23rd – 25th October 2019 at the University of Fribourg, I developed a new direction in my research, namely a comparison

between rural North-African children's play and toys and children's play and toys in Greek and Roman Antiquity. The Word document and PowerPoint are available in French (<https://www.academia.edu/41314393> and <https://www.academia.edu/41314802>). A translation in English will follow soon.

In the introduction of this document I explained the reason for this new approach. My research addresses the question, "Is it possible and useful to compare the tangible and intangible play cultures of Greco-Roman antiquity and of the North African and Saharan rural world and to find a similarity between the play activities of these two worlds separated by so many centuries and differentiated by natural and human environments, beliefs, customs and social organizations?" In developing this document I started from the assumption that this might be possible and following the analysis of the differences and similarities of games and toys in their material and socio-cultural context. During the course of my studies, I noticed quite a number of affinities proven both by descriptions and by images.

Can we sometimes speak of continuity? I think this is possible because historically during Antiquity contacts between the Greco-Roman civilization and the Amazigh (Berber) civilization existed. But, it seems to me that proving such a continuity or direct influence is difficult to do and probably cannot go beyond the level of hypothesis because the evidence seems lacking. However, the interest also lies in seeing how each culture transformed this patrimony in the course of time according to religious and societal changes.

This new interdisciplinary approach between ethnological research and archaeological research has received a favourable opinion from the archaeologists present at this doctoral program. Some archaeologists of classical antiquity have already expressed the opinion that this comparison offers new and challenging ways of analysing and interpreting some archaeological objects and images. This gives me hope that this attempt to compare games and toys from Greco-Roman antiquity with traditional games and toys from the North African rural world will develop in collaboration.

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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

January 2020

Kids@Play/Family Tech Summit, will be held at the Venetian, Las Vegas, USA, 7th – 10th January 2020.

Digital natives are now raising families of their own. They expect tech to fit seamlessly into their lifestyles. Both legacy brands and new thought leaders in the kids and family tech arena will introduce the next generation of devices and services including STEM and tech-toys, IoT devices at home and on-the-go, smart home and voice-enabled devices, plus a look at what AI means to family life.

For more info:

<https://www.ces.tech/conference/28339.aspx>



March 2020

Play For All, 2020 Conference on the Value of Play, will be held at Clemson University in Clemson, South Carolina, USA, 29th March – 1st April 2020.

Play For All will explore play across the lifespan and address universal issues of access, equity, inclusion, health and more. The latest research and practices in the field of play will be presented at the play conference, which brings together play researchers, park and recreation professionals, educators, health scientists, architects, landscape architects, business and community leaders, psychologists, physicians, museum professionals, students and parents from across the U.S. and beyond. At the Conference on the Value of Play, we have long relied on scholars, practitioners and industry leaders to share their expertise on various aspects of play.

For more information visit:

<https://www.playgroundprofessionals.com/play/play-all-call-presentation-proposals>



PAST CONFERENCES

September 2019

Toy & Game Design Conference 2019 was held at Stamford Bridge, London, United Kingdom, 9th September 2019.

The Toy and Game Design Conference 2019, took place within the Play Creators Festival. It was 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, the conference was intended to unite the global toy and game inventor community.

For more info:

<https://toyandgamedesignconference.com/>



The inaugural **Colloquium on Visual Semiotics and Multimodality Research (I CPSM)**, was held at the Universidade Federal da Paraíba Brazil (UFPB), João Pessoa, Paraíba, Brazil, 24th – 25th September 2019.

The I CPSM featured linguistic research carried out on the interface between multimodality and childhood studies. The colloquium brought together academics, undergraduate, MA and PhD students and researchers from other disciplines to exchange their findings and insights on the following theme: "Dialogues in Multimodality and Childhood."

For more information contact: cpsmcologuio@gmail.com



December 2019

Designing for Children with focus on 'Play and Learn' was held at the **IDC School of Design, India Institute of Technology Bombay, Mumbai, India, 6th – 8th December 2019.**

This international event was aimed at deliberations and discussions concerning design issues related to children. The event threw light on the role of designing for children as related to design of objects, media and environment

with focus on ‘play and learn.’ The event provoked lively, interactive and thought provoking discussions and provided a great opportunity to listen to and interact with leaders, researchers and visionaries in the field of toy and play design for children.

For more info:

<http://www.designingforchildren.net/>

CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

America at Play, is being held at The Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, New York, USA.



Dive into the past and explore more than 300 years of play and pastimes at *America at Play*—a permanent exhibit at The Strong. Through a blend of rare artefacts and hands-on activities, learn how play influenced America’s cultural history, including; rare board games, dolls, and toy vehicles.

For more information visit:

<https://www.museumofplay.org/exhibits/america-play>

LEGO: Building The Bowes Museum, is being held at The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, Co Durham, UK, 25th May 2019 – 23rd February 2020.

Calling all LEGO® fans and families! Follow an exciting trail of 15 of our most loved objects including the Silver Swan recreated by Brick This’ Steve Mayes and have a go at making them too!

For more information visit:

<https://www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk/Exhibitions/2019/Lego-Building-The-Bowes-Museum>

Parlour Performances: Theatrical Toys for Home Play, is being held at The National Museum of Toys and Miniatures, Kansas City, USA, 19th October 2019 – 16th August 2020.



This special exhibit features a variety of toys, dating primarily from 1880 to 1980, that were designed to facilitate home shows. Since this specific type of home entertainment is no longer part of our culture, visitors will learn how these toys historically enabled performance play in the home. Visitors will also enjoy staging their own plays using an interactive toy theatre within the gallery space.

For more information visit:

<https://toyandminiaturemuseum.org/current/>

Play Well is currently being held at the Wellcome Collection, Euston Road, London, UK, 24th October 2019 – 8th March 2020.

‘Play Well’ explores how play transforms both childhood and society. Using displays of historic toys and games, artworks and design, this exhibition investigates how play develops social bonds, emotional resilience and physical wellbeing. The exhibition includes: images of children at play in the street, in playgrounds and beyond; makeshift and commercially produced toys; digital games and a larp (live-action role play) space by artist Adam James. The exhibition is open to all ages, but there are limited opportunities for interaction and handling objects.

For more information visit:

<https://wellcomecollection.org/exhibitions/XSg-7xEAACcAGVXc>

Folk Toys, permanent online exhibit with searchable database of images and information hosted by Folklife in Louisiana, The Creole State Exhibit, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA.

Folk Toys, like other folk crafts, are produced in households where people make the things they need for work and play. Many folk toys actually train children for work. Clearly, the ox-and-wagon model and toy pirogues suggest that many children once grew up to use the real thing, just as children play with everything from toy bulldozers to computers.

The online exhibit, with searchable database of images and information, may be found at:

http://www.louisianafolklife.org/ImageBase/CSE/Creole_Toy

FUTURE EXHIBITIONS

From February 2020

The Lost World of Dragons, will be held at The Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, New York, USA, commencing 8th February 2020.



Calling all adventurers! Be whisked off to a fantastical land when *The Lost World of Dragons* exhibit swoops into The Strong. Come face to face with animatronics versions of these magical, mythical creatures.

For more information visit:

<https://www.museumofplay.org/exhibits/the-lost-world-of-dragons>



From March 2020

Play, Work, and Build, will be held at the National Building Museum, Washington DC, USA, commencing March 2020.



Research has shown how important play can be to a child's development. But, play is not only for kids. Through this exhibition, visitors begin to see the connections between play, design, and the work of building professionals like architects and engineers. Only at the National Building Museum can the concepts of *Play, Work, and Build* be combined to create an exhibition that enthralls kids and adults alike. Conceived in partnership with the internationally renowned design firm the Rockwell Group, this exhibition combines a presentation of the Museum's world-class Architectural Toy Collection, a hands-on block play area, and an original digital interactive that allows visitors to fill an entire wall of the exhibition with virtual blocks - and then knock them down.

For more information visit:

<https://www.nbm.org/exhibition/play-work-build/>

PAST EXHIBITIONS

From January 2019

Toytopia, was held at the Wood Museum of Springfield History, Springfield, Massachusetts, USA, 12th January – 7th July 2019.



This immersive special exhibition was intended to rekindle the wonder and delight of the visitors' favourite childhood moments. The exhibition included: The World's Largest Etch-A-Sketch (almost 8 feet tall!), retro Arcade Area (with working classic games), a life-size Doll House (with engaging play areas), life-size Monopoly Car and game board, LEGO® Play Area/LEGO Wall and train layout, and a signature Jack-in-The-Box explores the science of toys, from Furby® to radiometers, plus magnetic interactive play walls.

For more information visit:

<https://springfieldmuseums.org/exhibitions/toytopia/>

ToyMaker 3000: An Adventure in Automation, exhibition was run at the Museum of Science+Industry, Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois, USA.

During the *ToyMaker 3000* exhibition, robots assembled custom toy tops and every step of the way, from parts to packaging, were demonstrated. The speed and precision was quite a show in itself and included dancing robots and drawings.

For more information visit:

<https://www.msichicago.org/explore/whats-here/exhibits/toymaker-3000-an-adventure-in-automation/>

From February 2019

Doc McStuffins: The Exhibit, was held at The Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, New York, USA, and ran until summer 2019.

Doc McStuffins: The Exhibit was based on Disney Junior's Peabody Award-winning television series during which six-year-old Dottie "Doc" McStuffins, cared for broken toys and stuffed animals.

For more information visit:

<http://www.museumofplay.org/exhibits/doc-mcstuffins-the-exhibit>

Paw Patrol: Adventure Play Exhibit was held at the Children's Museum in Indianapolis, Indiana USA, from 23rd February – 28th July 2019.

The heroic PAW Patrol pups needed your help in Adventure Bay! Visitors joined Marshall, Rubble, Chase, Rocky, Zuma, Skye, Everest and Tracker to explore their unique abilities, overcome challenges and helped friends.



For more information visit:

<https://www.childrensmuseum.org/exhibits/paw-patrol-adventure-play-exhibit>

From May 2019

Giddy Up: Children Take the Reins was held at the Pasadena Museum of History, Pasadena, California, USA, 5th May – 15th September 2019.

The PMH galleries were filled with a dizzying array of more than thirty-five smaller scaled carousel horses and exotic creatures which visitors, of all ages, were able to see – and touch. A selection of ride-on horses and animals which rocked, bounced, and/or rolled, along with a wide variety of animals and carousel themed toys, were also on view. These 'interactive' toys and amusements were specifically designed to spark children's

imaginations, encouraging youngsters to “take the reins and create their own unique stories and fictional characters as they pretended to be their favourite cowboy film stars or other fictional characters.”

More information at:

<https://pasadenahistory.org/exhibits/current-exhibition/>

The Art of the Brick, the world’s most elaborate display of LEGO art, was held at the Peoria Riverfront Museum, Peoria, Illinois USA, 25th May – 1st September, 2019.



The Art of the Brick, was a captivating exhibition and featured more than 100 intriguing works of art made exclusively from one of the most recognizable toys in the world, the LEGO brick! This critically acclaimed collection of creative and inspiring sculptures was created by renowned contemporary artist Nathan Sawaya. Designed to inspire ingenuity and creativity, the collection highlighted original pieces as well as re-imagined versions of some of the world's most famous masterpieces made exclusively from LEGO bricks, such as van Gogh's "The Starry Night" and Da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" and a gallery showcasing an innovative, multimedia collection of LEGO brick-infused photography produced in tandem with award-winning photographer Dean West.

For more information visit:

<https://www.peoriariverfrontmuseum.org/exhibits-collections/exhibits/the-art-of-the-brick-the-worlds-most-elaborate-display-of-lego-art>

From June 2019

Wild Kratts: Ocean Adventure! Was held at The Strong, National Museum of Play, Rochester, New York USA, 8th June – 8th September 2019.

Visitors dived into an underwater world in the *Wild Kratts: Ocean Adventure!* The exhibit was based on the popular PBS Kids’ series, exploring ocean habitats, meeting fascinating creatures, and used the powers of science and teamwork to solve problems, helping marine animals, and foiled the villains’ nefarious plans.

For more information visit:

<https://www.museumofplay.org/exhibits/wild-kratts>



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.

Brabazon, T. (Ed.) (2019). *Play: A Theory of Learning and Change*

This book examines the question of why 'play' is a happy and benevolent verb in childhood, yet a subjective label of behaviour in adulthood. It studies the transformation of the positively labelled term 'child's play,' used to refer to our early years, into an aberrance or deviation from normal social relationships in later life, when we speak of playing up or playing around. It answers the question by proposing play as a theory of learning, an ideology that circumscribes behaviour, and a way of thinking. Written by scholars of early childhood, adolescent, and higher education, the book presents research on play enacted in a way that arches beyond the specificity of age groups or predictive, normative patterns. It is international in its focus, moving beyond insular, inward and parochial educational standards and limitations in one city, province, state or nation. Finally, it demonstrates the value of play to educational policy and theories of learning.



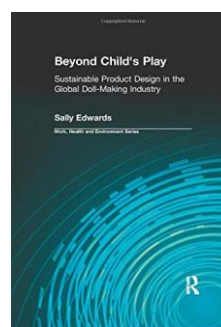
Cohen, D. (2018). *The Development of Play*

Why is play so important in child development? Are children in today's society suffering from a lack of time for *free* play, with the emerging dominance of screen play? Can play therapy help to uncover, rescue and rehabilitate children living in abusive environments, or even in war-torn countries? Is play also important for adult development? Play is a learning experience and a crucial component to childhood development as it allows children to emulate the behaviours of those around them and to develop their social skills. In this engaging book, David Cohen examines how children play with objects, language, each other, and their parents to reveal how play enables children to learn how to move, think independently, speak and imagine. Cohen suggests that much of our formative experiences of play informs our future selves, and explores how play can help us to become better parents. This new edition of *The Development of Play* offers a fascinating review of the importance of play in all our lives. It includes the latest research on the impact of digital technology, brain development, cultural differences in play and toys, and also looks at why parents sometimes choose different toys for girls and boys. The book also provides advice and guidance on how parents can play creatively and imaginatively with their children. It is essential reading for Early Years, health care and education professionals as well as undergraduate students in developmental psychology and education.



Edwards, S. (2019). *Beyond Child's Play: Sustainable Product Design in the Global Doll-Making Industry*

Sustainable product design is more than eco design: it goes beyond 'green' to consider the work environment, community impacts, consumer health, and economic viability, as well as environmental attributes. "Beyond Child's Play" explores the concept of sustainable product design in the context of the global doll-making industry. To initiate this research, the author reviewed eco design parameters and developed criteria for sustainable product design in the doll-making industry. Using this framework, she conducted three case studies of doll making: the American Girl doll produced in China, the Kathe Kruse doll produced in Germany and the Q'ewar Project doll produced in Peru. Themes emerged from this research that have relevance beyond the doll-making industry: the value of making a product with care; designing work for human dignity; intention and vision for sustainability; the implications of materials choices; and, transparency and sustainability. Sustainable product design calls for fundamentally new thinking. By connecting the term 'sustainable' to 'product', we raise expectations for a radically different approach to design, production, and consumption. This framework integrates the eco design principles of detoxification and dematerialization with the principle of 'humanization,' to ensure that the work environment where the product is made is safe and healthy and that local communities benefit from production. This approach places increased responsibility on the industrial designer and decision-makers throughout the supply chain, including governments, corporations, and citizens. Sustainable product design can be implemented effectively only when systems are in place that support sustainable production and consumption.



MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

- 1) The highest YouTube earner this year? An eight-year-old
<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/dec/20/youtube-highest-earner-eight-year-old-guan-ryans-world>
- 2) Mum makes 'jail' for toys her kids leave on floor - and it keeps the house tidy
<https://www.mirror.co.uk/lifestyle/family/mum-makes-jail-toys-kids-21106094>
- 3) Mattel eyes 100 per cent recycled and recyclable toys by 2030
<https://www.businessgreen.com/bg/news/3084765/childs-play-mattel-eyes-100-per-cent-recycled-and-recyclable-toys-by-2030>
- 4) Family raises £16,000 to gift son, five, green 'Hulk' prosthetic arm for Christmas
<https://www.itv.com/news/2019-12-17/family-raise-16-000-to-gift-son-five-green-hulk-prosthetic-arm-for-christmas/>
- 5) Toy stores emphasizing play
<https://www.journalgazette.net/business/20191221/toy-stores-emphasizing-play>
- 6) Police department finds furry culprit behind toy theft
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-50879192>
- 7) The bear is listening: the high cost of smart toys
<https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2019/12/12/1098720-the-bear-is-listening-the-high-cost-of-smart-toys/>
- 8) The women who are teaching kids how to play again - by taking away their toys
<https://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/women-who-teaching-kids-how-17403339>
- 9) Which vintage girls' toys are most collectable?
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-48693303>
- 10) 8 of the best 80s toys that never went away
<https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/parenting/big-kids/five-to-ten/118236895/8-of-the-best-80s-toys-that-never-went-away>
- 11) Toy Story 4: wrong toys or the right play?
<https://eandt.theiet.org/content/articles/2019/06/toy-story-4-wrong-toys-or-the-right-play/>
- 12) Is Barbie's makeover working?
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-50829046>
- 13) Toys began being marketed for gender in the 1940's; now a movement is pushing back.
<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/12/19/health/toys-gender-conversation-wellness/index.html>
- 14) 'What kind of fancy a - child' plays with a Fisher-Price charcuterie set?
<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/what-kind-of-fancy-a---child-plays-with-a-fisher-price-charcuterie-set-2019-12-20>
- 15) This toy store invites children to play. But will it sell anything?
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/19/nyregion/toy-store-camp-nyc.html>
- 16) Educational gifts for kids who want to do more than just play
<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/educational-gifts-for-kids-202439135.html>
- 17) Children's LEGO magazine is branded sexist for saying girls would 'stick out like sore thumbs' amongst scientists
<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-7809057/Childrens-LEGO-magazine-says-girls-stick-like-sore-thumbs-scientists.html>
- 18) Nostalgia: Festive toys from the 70s, 80s and 90s
<https://www.gazette-news.co.uk/news/18109680.nostalgia-festive-toys-70s-80s-90s/>



ITRA 2020 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 8th ITRA conference in Paris, France, 2018 have been exempted from paying ITRA dues for the years 2019 through 2022.

If you were not able to attend the conference in Paris, you must submit your annual membership fee for 2019 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, events or research you would like to recommend, or if you 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 spring edition in May 2020. 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.

Regards
Suzy & Mark

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