

# 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 9<sup>th</sup> ITRA Conference, to be held in Rochester, USA, 2023, 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,



It is almost unbelievable to me now that it is well over two years that the Covid-19 global pandemic started influencing most of our lives so severely. While the immediate impact may be waning in some regions, undoubtedly the effects individually, communally and economically will be felt for some time to come. With that in mind, I trust this finds International Toy Research Association members, both past and present, and Friends of ITRA, safe and well.

Just when it appears humanity is in the process of traversing one crisis, we find ourselves thrust into another; here I am thinking of the conflict in the Ukraine. While most of us may not be directly in the battle – our thoughts go out to those innocently caught up in the fighting – the ethical and economic ramifications in terms of loss of lives, homes, food, energy and an increased cost-of-living will be felt right across the globe. As toy scholars have long noted, times of crisis such as these provide fertile ground for the function of toys and play as balms for the soul, tools for education, and radical care. A couple of items in this newsletter's 'Miscellaneous News' section describe these comforting effects of toys, play and care within the conflict zone and for escaping refugees.

Regarding this edition of the newsletter, a number of ITRA members provided updates on the effects and struggles of Covid-19, both personally and academically. On a more positive note, we also received information regarding exciting new research ventures, publications both pending and in print, and the submission of PhD theses. These developments and much more can be found in this newsletter's 'Members' Forum' section.

I am pleased to be able to reiterate that the 9<sup>th</sup> ITRA World Conference will be held 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> August 2023 in Rochester, New York, USA, at The Strong National Museum of Play. The conference theme is *TOYS MATTER: The Power of Playthings*. Greta Pennell and her organising committee 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 Call-for-Papers was issued earlier this month and includes an end of year 2022 submission deadline.

Do not forget to check out our website, [www.itratoyresearch.org](http://www.itratoyresearch.org), and [Facebook](#) page for updated information on conference plans and all other ITRA matters.

I trust all ITRA members are taking good care, as we globally and individually navigate through these continued uncertain times.

Hope to see you in Rochester next August.

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# INTERNATIONAL TOY RESEARCH ASSOCIATION 9<sup>th</sup> WORLD CONFERENCE

## *TOYS MATTER: The Power of Playthings*

The Strong National Museum of Play  
Rochester, New York, USA, 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> August 2023



The 9<sup>th</sup> World Conference of the International Toy Research Association will be held in collaboration with the Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, New York, USA.

The **International Toy Research Association (ITRA)**, founded in 1993, will celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary during the 9<sup>th</sup> World Conference. ITRA is an interdisciplinary organization devoted to the scientific study of toys in all their facets, bringing together toy researchers from around the world to discuss research, collaborate on international projects and exchange information with other researchers, students and leaders in the toy industry (see [www.itratoyresearch.org](http://www.itratoyresearch.org) for more information). More than 80 international delegates attended our 2018 meeting in Paris, France.

**The Strong National Museum of Play** ([www.museumofplay.org/](http://www.museumofplay.org/)) is a highly interactive, collections-based museum devoted to the history and exploration of play. It is one of the largest history museums in the United States and one of the leading museums serving families. The Strong houses the world's largest and most comprehensive collection of historical materials related to play and is home to the International Center for the History of Electronic Games, the National Toy Hall of Fame, the World Video Game Hall of Fame, the Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play, the Woodbury School, and the *American Journal of Play*. Together, these enable a multifaceted array of research, exhibition, and other interpretive and educational activities that serve a diverse audience of adults, families, children, students, teachers, scholars, collectors, and others around the globe.

## CONFERENCE THEME

The overarching theme for the 9<sup>th</sup> ITRA World Conference is ***TOYS MATTER: The Power of Playthings***.

From ITRA's beginning, the idea that toys mattered was a fundamental principle that put the toys themselves on centre stage. During the first world conference, ITRA co-founder Brian Sutton-Smith highlighted the importance of toy research, quipping that, "we're not just toying around here." Rather, he argued that toys and toy research mattered because it was only by carefully examining the contexts in which we find toys, the worlds of discourse created from them, and their power to shape our private and collective imaginations that we could comprehend the power of the toys with which we play.

As the tools of serious fun, toys have the power to inspire, to promote learning and skill development, to forge and maintain connections with others, and to open new worlds of possibilities. At the same time, it is not always fun and games in Toyland. Toys are also used to grieve, to console, and to cope. They can afford comfort during lockdowns or in the aftermath of natural and human-made disasters.

In the face of social unrest or geopolitical turmoil, they can be transformed into instruments of protest and resistance. The power of playthings is multi-layered and multi-faceted. Toys empower and heal. However, they can also oppress and harm. From safety concerns, to environmental and psychological impacts, to the question of who is represented and how, the quality and characteristics of toys matter.

The 9<sup>th</sup> ITRA World Conference provides opportunities to not only reflect on the last 30 years of toy research but to also look forward in order to broaden the scope of what counts as a toy, and to expand our understanding of the power of playthings and the many ways they matter – for both children and adults. This conference is a timely opportunity for toy researchers, designers, inventors, advocates, archivists and other toy professionals to discuss the role toys play in our individual and collective identities, and the various ways they reflect and shape our worlds (both positively or negatively), as well as the impact of technology, environmental concerns and societal/cultural crises on toy design, manufacture and use. We invite work that examines the power of playthings both historically and in our ever-changing worlds, especially as we navigate these precarious and even perilous times.

All play objects, whether physical, digital or hybrid, are included in the scope of toys to be discussed at this conference. This includes games, as well as indoor and outdoor play spaces.

The scientific committee encourages submissions of abstracts that relate to the main conference theme from all disciplines, as well as other toy related topics including but not limited to:

- Art & Artistry of Toys
- Collecting, Collections & Preservation – from Toy Boxes to Exhibitions
- Indigenous and Folk Toys
- Intersectionality, Inclusivity and Intergenerational Toys
- Games and Gamification
- Multi-modal Toys, the Metaverse and Hybridization
- Outdoor Toys, Playspaces, and Toys in Nature
- People behind Playthings
- Socialization, Identity, and Development through and with Toys
- Toy Advertising, Markets & Trends
- Toys As and Through History
- Toy Design, Safety & Sustainability
- Toy Innovations, Transitions, and Subversions
- Toys for Teaching, Learning, and Social Justice
- Toys and Technology including Digital, Electronic and Virtual Toys & Games
- Toys Throughout the Lifespan
- Trauma Responsive and/or Therapeutic Toys

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

## **TO SUBMIT A PAPER, SYMPOSIUM, OR POSTER**

To present a paper, organize a symposium/panel or workshop, or present a poster please submit a complete abstract in English, with all requested information as described below by **31<sup>st</sup> December 2022**. All submissions must be made within our online portal at: <https://app.oxfordabstracts.com/stages/3899/submitter>

The first time you access the submission portal you will be asked to register as a user. Please note that the contact information entered in the registration process will only be used by ITRA for the purposes of managing your submission and contacting you about its status. Only complete submissions will be considered for acceptance to the conference. Questions or issues regarding the submission process should be directed to the Conference Chair, Greta Pennell ([gpennell@uindy.edu](mailto:gpennell@uindy.edu)).

### **Papers**

This submission category is intended for individual papers that are being submitted independently by its author(s). Papers that are part of a panel/symposium should be submitted as a package by the session organizer (see below). The abstract must include a brief introduction or purpose statement, concise description of the methodology/inquiry approach, data/results, discussion and/or conclusion (400 word limit). Please note, that in the case of projects still in progress, tentative or anticipated findings should be described. In addition, the title of the abstract, names, affiliations and email addresses of all authors/contributors must be provided. Authors should also provide up to 3 keywords that best describes their paper. Keywords are used to organize presentations into appropriate sessions, so please choose words that clearly describe the focus of your work. Paper presentations are limited to 20 minutes, with an additional 10 minutes for questions and comments. Submission deadline: **31<sup>st</sup> December 2022**.

### **Symposia/Panels**

Symposia/Panels are designed to address an important topic, issue and/or to highlight new advances, methods/approaches, or emerging areas of interest. Symposia generally feature 3 – 4 presentations by people from different institutions, perspectives, and/or traditions in toy research, design and/or industry. Sessions will be limited to 2 hours and must include dedicated time for question/answer and discussion. Submissions should include an overall title for the symposium. The abstract should clearly communicate the importance of the main topics addressed, overall goals for the session, and brief description including each participant's contribution to the symposium and individual titles if appropriate (400 word limit). Submission Deadline: **31<sup>st</sup> December 2022**.

## Workshops

Workshops are highly interactive sessions focused around an activity or problem-based discussion that provides useful and/or tangible takeaways for participants. Submitted abstracts for workshops must describe the workshop's importance/relevance, outline its overall structure, learning objectives/goals, and intended audience and key takeaways (400 word limit). In addition to the abstract, a list of expendable materials and/or any special requirements (e.g., space or equipment) is also required. Workshop leaders should plan on providing all materials needed for the workshop. Workshop activities must be able to be completed within a 2-hour session. Submission Deadline: **31<sup>st</sup> December 2022**.

## Posters

Posters are 2-dimensional displays with a high level of visual interest presented during a 90-minute, regular session. Poster presenters are expected to be at their poster throughout the session to interact with and address questions from interested conference attendees on a one-to-one basis. As with submissions of papers, the abstract must include a brief introduction or purpose statement, and concise description of the methodology/inquiry approach, data/results, discussion and/or conclusion (400 word limit). In addition, the title of the abstract, names, affiliations and email addresses of all authors/contributors must be provided. Authors should also identify up to 3 keywords that best describes their paper. Keywords are used to organize posters into appropriate sessions, so please choose words that clearly describe the focus of your work. Submission Deadline: **31<sup>st</sup> December 2022**.

The scientific committee will review your abstract or proposal for its suitability to the conference. You will receive a reply by **1<sup>st</sup> March 2023**. Conference registration opens on **1<sup>st</sup> March 2023**.

Participants must register for the conference prior to the deadline of **1<sup>st</sup> May 2023** in order to take advantage of the early registration fee. Registration closes **1<sup>st</sup> July 2023**.

## PUBLICATIONS

Conference proceedings will be published in the open archive HAL. HAL is an online scientific research document repository. It is on this platform that the proceedings of the 8<sup>th</sup> ITRA World Conference (Paris 2018) have been published. They can be found at: <https://hal-univ-paris13.archives-ouvertes.fr/ITRA2018/>

Participants who wish to have their full paper published in the HAL must submit it to Greta Pennell ([gpennell@uindy.edu](mailto:gpennell@uindy.edu)) by **15<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

Additional publication opportunities in the form of special issues within a journal may be possible as well. Conference presenters will be notified of any additional publication opportunities that become available.

## REGISTRATION AND FEES

Registration for the conference will be available online only, opening in spring 2023. The conference fee must be paid in connection with the registration through an online portal hosted by The Strong Museum at: <https://store.museumofplay.org/Webstore/shop/ViewItems.aspx?CG=ITRA&C=ITRA2023>

Secure electronic payment may be made by credit card (VISA, MasterCard or American Express). Please make sure you have your credit card on hand before you start the registration process as the portal may timeout after a certain amount of time has passed. Your registration will not be valid until you have successfully completed the entire process and received confirmation of registration and payment.

- |                                                                            |            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| • Early registration until 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2023                        | US\$350.00 |
| • Late registration until 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2023                        | US\$425.00 |
| • Student (status confirmation required *) until 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2023  | US\$175.00 |
| • Student (status confirmation required *) until 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2023 | US\$225.00 |
| • Single Day Professional/Student/General Public **                        | US\$90.00  |

\* Student fees are applicable only to full-time high school/university or college students who present a copy of a valid student ID or an official certificate of their student status signed by their supervising faculty member when they arrive at the conference.

\*\* Single Day registration does not include lunch or evening programming and is only available space permitting. Single day registration does not open until 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2023.

Registration fee includes all conference sessions, conference materials, daily lunches, refreshments at breaks, the



special anniversary dinner, and membership to ITRA. The fee does not include accommodations, travel expenses or optional pre/post conference excursions (details regarding these events are forthcoming, watch the conference website for more information).

Online transactions might not always go as planned. Payments by bank transfer directly to ITRA are accepted ONLY in exceptional circumstances. If you are unable to register through the Strong Museum store with your credit card, please contact the conference chair: Greta Pennell ([gpennell@uindy.edu](mailto:gpennell@uindy.edu)).

## **SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY EVENT**

During the 2023 World Conference, ITRA will be celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding. All fully registered conference attendees are invited to join us at a special dinner the evening of Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> August 2023 at The Strong Museum. Dinner is included in the full conference registration fee for both professionals and students. Fully registered conference attendees may purchase an additional guest registration for the anniversary dinner (US\$65 including tax), space permitting, during the online registration process.

In conjunction with the Anniversary Dinner, participants will have the opportunity tell their toy stories to become part of the collection at The Strong. Participants are invited to bring a toy/game from their home country or childhood along with a written story about what makes the toy special. These personal toy stories are especially important for archival purposes, to bring the toys to life, and for preserving elements of play history around the world. The donated toys and stories will be prepared for display for a Festival of Toys “gallery walk” during the anniversary dinner.

If you have pictures from past ITRA conferences, we’d love to include them in our celebration. Kindly send them to Greta Pennell ([gpennell@uindy.edu](mailto:gpennell@uindy.edu)).

## **THIRTY YEARS AGO**

The International Toy Research Association was founded by an energetic and innovative group of 16 toy scholars from 11 countries in 1993. Led by Professor Brian Sutton-Smith, Professor Jeffrey Goldstein, and Jorn-Martin Steenhold the founders recognized the rich and well-established tradition of play research. However, research focused on the toys themselves, their material qualities, their role in development, play, and society itself was limited. Further, the gap was especially notable for toys from developing worlds. The founders recognized the need for a multi-disciplinary network of researchers, designers, and other toy industry professionals who together could expand knowledge about toys and play materials with an aim of informing development of good toys, games and other playthings/spaces. And so ITRA was born. Three years later the first world conference was held in Halmstad, Sweden.

Over the years we have lost three of ITRA’s founders, Birgitta Almqvist from Sweden, Greta Fein from the USA and, most recently, Brian Sutton-Smith, born and raised in New Zealand and worked and lived in USA for many years during his long career. They left an impressive body of work and a firm foundation for future scholars to build upon. We are inspired by their passion, collegiality, creativity, and ever-questioning minds. Looking forward, ITRA intends to continue and nurture the study of toys by connecting and supporting new and established researchers in all phases of their work, promoting toy study and design through our world conferences and newsletters, and extending our reach to more parts of the world.

## **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

Limited financial support is available to participants for whom registration fees and travel costs would present a hardship. Please submit your request for financial consideration before **31<sup>st</sup> December 2022**, along with your abstract to the ITRA Board, by emailing Greta Pennell ([gpennell@uindy.edu](mailto:gpennell@uindy.edu)).

## **CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY**

Cancellations must be made through the same system that was used to register for the conference. Cancellations received prior to **1<sup>st</sup> July 2023** will receive a full refund, less a small administration fee. No refunds will be made for cancellations after this date or for no-shows.

## CONFERENCE DEADLINES

Proposal/Abstracts Submission Deadline for all papers, posters, symposia, & workshops – **31<sup>st</sup> December 2022**  
Request for financial assistance – **31<sup>st</sup> December 2022**  
Response from review committee – **1<sup>st</sup> March 2023**  
Early registration until – **1<sup>st</sup> May 2023**  
Late Registration until – **1<sup>st</sup> July 2023**  
Cancellation Deadline for full refund – **1<sup>st</sup> July 2023**  
Hotel Reservation for special conference rate until – **15<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

## HOST CITY DETAILS - ROCHESTER, NY

The family-friendly city of Rochester is built on a long history of innovation and activism. Its nickname as “The Flower City” stems from the 1850s, when it boasted the world’s largest seed company and is evident in its more than 12,000 acres of parks, some designed by famed landscape architect Fredrick Law Olmsted, who is perhaps most well known for his design of Central Park in New York City. The influence of other industry leaders like George Eastman and Kodak can be seen throughout the city via the Eastman School of Music, the Eastman Theatre, and Eastman Museum. Rochester has a rich history of social justice activism. Home to abolitionist Frederick Douglass and suffragette Susan B. Anthony, their legacy provides a bridge to our conference as expressed by Douglass’ famous quote that, “It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”



Rochester is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest metropolitan area in New York State and the cultural capital of upstate New York. Its premier universities such as the University of Rochester and the Rochester Institute of Technology are drivers of innovation and research. Rochester also serves as the gateway to the Finger Lakes, home to the Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-o-SAW-nee), a group of Native American tribes. The Finger Lakes is a famous wine-growing region. With so much to see and do within the city and its surrounds why not consider coming early and/or staying a few days after the conference.

## TRAVEL INFORMATION

Rochester is located in upstate New York, USA about 75 miles (120 km) east of Niagara Falls and Buffalo, New York. The city is situated at the intersection of the Erie Canal and Genesee River on the southern bank of Lake Ontario. Frederick Douglass Greater Rochester International Airport (ROC; <https://rocairport.com>) is currently served by American, Delta, Frontier, Southwest, JetBlue, United, and Allegiant Airlines with nonstop service to major hubs in the USA including Chicago, Minneapolis/St. Paul, and Atlanta.



Rochester may also be reached by train (Amtrak/Via Rail) or by bus (Greyhound or Trailways). Please be advised that most of these routes do NOT connect directly to major international airports like JFK or Newark; and generally run only a few times per day.

Most visitors travel to Rochester by air or personal car. For those staying at the conference hotel, a free shuttle bus from the Rochester airport will be provided. Others may take a bus or cab to get to their lodging from the Rochester airport.

Conference attendees are advised to take out adequate personal insurance to cover travel, cancellation and personal effects.



## ACCOMMODATION

The Hampton Inn & Suites in the *Neighborhood of Play* next door to the Strong is offering special conference room rates of US\$159/night excluding taxes. The hotel is offering this special rate for up to 2 days before and 2 days after the conference. The rate includes free wi-fi and breakfast. The hotel will also provide a free airport shuttle and shuttle to local attractions for guests. Conference participants will book their rooms directly with the hotel starting in 2023. Details on this process will be provided with conference registration materials.

A limited number of dormitory rooms at a local university may be available. More information on alternative accommodations will be provided closer to the date of the conference.

## COMMITTEES

### Scientific Committee

Mark Allen, Serious Fun Research Labs, UK  
Anna Beresin, University of the Arts, Philadelphia, USA  
Doris Bergen, Miami University, USA  
Gilles Brougère, University Sorbonne Paris Nord, France  
Véronique Dassen, University of Fribourg, Switzerland  
Miriam Forman-Burnell, University of Missouri-Kansas City, USA  
Jeffrey H. Goldstein, University of Utrecht, The Netherlands  
Cleo Gougoulis, University of Patras, Greece  
Stephen Kline, Simon Fraser University, Canada  
Greta Pennell, University of Indianapolis, USA  
Jeffrey Trawick-Smith, Eastern Connecticut State University, USA

### Organizing Committee

Greta Pennell, Conference Committee Chair & ITRA Board Member, University of Indianapolis, USA  
Mark Allen, ITRA President, *ex officio*, Serious Fun Research Labs, UK  
Suzanne Seriff, ITRA Board Member and Secretary; University of Texas at Austin, USA  
Kathleen Alfano, University of Buffalo Early Childhood Research Center Advisory Board, USA  
Chris Bensch, The Strong National Museum of Play, USA  
Mary Couzin, Chicago Toy & Game Group *doing business as* People of Play (POP), USA  
Kati Heljakka, University of Turku, Finland  
Steve Jacobs, Rochester Institute of Technology, USA  
Karl Rosengren, University of Rochester, USA  
Guangyu Tan, State University of New York-Fredonia, USA

### Contact us

Email Greta Pennell: [gpennell@uindy.edu](mailto:gpennell@uindy.edu)  
Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/itra2018/>  
And on the web at: [https://www.itratoyresearch.org/2023\\_Rochester.php](https://www.itratoyresearch.org/2023_Rochester.php)

# 2023 ITRA PRIZE FOR OUTSTANDING TOY RESEARCH

The ITRA Prize has been established with generous support from the British Toy and Hobby Association (BTHA; [www.btha.co.uk/](http://www.btha.co.uk/)). The first ITRA-BTHA Prize was awarded in July 2008 during the 5<sup>th</sup> ITRA conference in Nafplion, Greece.

ITRA expects to give two awards at each ITRA World Conference. One award of US\$650 will be given for the best student research on toys and one award of US\$1,300 to a senior scholar or practitioner on the uses, design and effects of toys.

The Prize recipients will also receive a travel stipend of US\$600 each toward the ITRA Conference and will present their research at that conference.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the ITRA Prize is to recognize 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 in 2018 and be submitted by the researcher or nominated by a member of ITRA.

## ELIGIBILITY

Papers, either published or unpublished, in any area of toy research, are eligible. Submissions should be in English (original or translation). Research on the uses, design, and effects of toys in child development, education, science, and medicine will be considered for the awards. Theoretical and historical papers will also be considered as long as these are linked to potential research.

Submissions of postgraduate dissertations or books are also welcome. These should be accompanied by a summary of 2500-3000 words. Hard copies of books should be provided to each prize committee member upon request.

## SUBMISSIONS

ITRA Prize papers should be submitted directly to Greta Pennell ([gpennell@uindy.edu](mailto:gpennell@uindy.edu)) as a PDF attachment before **31<sup>st</sup> December 2022**. The Awards Committee consists of Mark Allen (UK), Barry Kudrowitz (USA), Koumudi Patil (India), and Lieselotte van Leeuwen (Sweden).

## EVALUATION

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 2023 ITRA prizes will be awarded at the 9<sup>th</sup> ITRA World Conference in Rochester, New York USA 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> August 2023.*

## MEMBERS' FORUM

Please remember when you do submit items for inclusion in the ITRA newsletter to send them in a downloadable form. The views expressed by International Toy Research Association members do not necessarily represent those of the Association.

### ARGENTINA

**Stela Maris Ferrarese**, sent us an update from the 'Allel Kuzen' Ethnic Toy Museum:

The Team from the 'Allel Kuzen' Ethnic Toy Museum in the city of Neuquén, presented the book *Ethnoludic Study of the Pulled Dice in the Haichol Cave and Free Time in that context, Province of Neuquén*. This publication reflects 22 years of ethnographic research by the institution's lead researcher and founder, Stela Maris Ferrarese, about the possible games played during by boys and girls who lived in Northern Patagonia Argentina +/- 7000BC. Based on archaeological evidence found in the excavation of this site directed by Dr. Jorge Fernández in the 1970s, such toys were thought to have been played during a child's free time with their families. This study is part of a larger archaeological study led by Dr. Fernández that focuses on board games practiced in the South American Andean enclave before the territorial invasion carried out by the different European kingdoms. In this way, old games of chance, agrarian ritual recreation, funerary traditions, etc. are made visible, in the Andean enclave dominated by the Inca.

The book, *Ancient and Contemporary Games of South America*, published in collaboration between the Ethnic Toy Museum and the Games Museum, was presented at the VII International Meeting of Traditional Rivera del Duero Culture and Wine Games from 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> May 2022, held in Aranda de Duero, Spain. This text summons scholars of anthropology, history and physical education to narrate and make visible games of the different cultures in South America. The text is a South American journey that began with the publication of the book by Stela Maris Ferrarese on the different board games made with dice before the invasion of the European kingdoms to the South American lands. The book includes articles from: Argentina – Stela Maris Ferrarese, Christian Vitry; Brazil – José Ronaldo Fassheber, Fabio José Cardias; Paraguay – Marcos Ybañez; Bolivia – Genaro Huarita; Chile – Victoria Castro, Mauricio Uribe; Perú – Denise Pozzi, Rommel Angeles Falcon; Ecuador – Elsa Rosario Sinchi, Miguel Ángel Novillo, Carlos Morocho; Colombia – Humberto Gómez; USA – Frank Salomon; and, Canadá – Lidio Valdez.



News about our Annual Exhibition 2022 Ephemeral Toys: An ephemeral toy is one that is built with certain materials from the environment: sticks, seeds, leaves, flowers, wood, sea shells, etc. It is meant to be played with for a certain period of time, which can be one or several days, at the end of which it usually deteriorates due to the fragility of the material or is simply abandoned because another toy appears to replace it. If the toy or its parts are left on earth, it is reunited with nature that allows this evolution. When the game of which it was a part is resumed, another similar or improved one will possibly be made depending on the child's creativity or the influence of the environment. Outdoor play has been a human heritage since time immemorial. Today, new technologies have led human beings to lock themselves in rooms from which they play alone or with other people. The toys featured in this exhibition on ephemeral toys vary from those made with natural materials from the environment, to those made with plastic, from children's or adult clothing, to the toy industry added to the cultural industry (Adorno-Horkheimer, 1947).

In this temporary exhibition, one can explore toys and games that project us from the distant past to the most immediate present, allowing our imagination to give rise to our own memories of making toys as well as to think about the playful life of the first infants. The pineapples fall from the pines so that their fruit gives rise to the birth of another tree. A child picks up that pineapple and creates an animal around him. In another part of the world it is spring and a tree blooms. From those flowers helicopters emerge that amuse and fill the infinite space with laughter. Corn also provides the raw material for hours of fun for both children and adults alike. In one part of the world, a ball is made with green chala and stuffed with the beard of the cob. And in another part of the world, a toy bird is made from a cob of corn, with feathers that the birds lose in their evolutionary change. The cosmos watches the game and waits for the return of these ephemeral objects that have amused humanity to feed and once again give rise to new toys and new peals of laughter once again.

Ephemeral toy construction workshops are held in conjunction with the temporary exhibition each Wednesday. A number of additional workshops, conferences and exhibitions have also been planned throughout the year 2022 with different ephemeral toys from the peoples of the world. The toys themselves come from the private collection of the Alle Kuzen Ethnic Toy Museum. This exhibition is the product of seven years of work in the cultural heritage of the indigenous peoples and cultures of the world that have migrated to Argentina.

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Facebook: Museo ETnico (Del Juguete)

YouTube: Museo del Juguete étnico Allel Kuzen

Email: [museodeljugueteetnico@gmail.com](mailto:museodeljugueteetnico@gmail.com) / [originandojuegos@yahoo.com.ar](mailto:originandojuegos@yahoo.com.ar)

**Daniela Pelegrinelli**, Director, Museo del Juguete de San Isidro, wrote:

Reports say that 82% of the population is immunized with the full two-doses of the vaccine. Of those, 43% have received a third booster jab. Children are included in that scheme. Right now, older people and people with certain medical conditions are receiving a fourth vaccine. The use of face masks continues in public spaces and schools but is not mandatory in open places. We had a high number of cases just after Christmas and because of the summer holidays, but there was no steep rise in mortality. At the same time, tourism helped to ameliorate our economic crisis. Our frontiers are opened to receive tourists so come on over!

In the last week the contagiousness climbed slowly again. I just hope we can stop it.

Schools are fully open, all students returned to face to face classes, but there is a lot of inequality. It is going to take a long time to recover lost educational lessons, and re-engage students who have been forced to drop out of school.

On the other hand, cultural activities are returning to normal, and people are recovering their social life. The city of Buenos Aires has suffered important changes as other big cities in the world. Remote work has replaced or made flexible the office-centred workforce. Some neighbourhoods – as some habits – are changing quickly. Personally, at the moment, I am finishing my book on the doll Marilú and teaching at normal school. I was also invited to work as a consultant in an interesting exhibition called *Scale 1/43* that will be inaugurated at the Parque de la Memoria in Buenos Aires. This exhibition is part of a larger project, entitled “Cold War Toys: Material Cultures of Childhood in Argentina (2022 – 2023)” which is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) in the UK and based in the department of Communication and Media at the University of Liverpool. The project provides a cultural, political, and affective history of Argentine toys between the emergence of Peronism in the 1940s and the end of the last civic-military dictatorship in 1983.

The project team is comprised of Jordana Blejmar (Principal Investigator), Erika Teichert (Research Associate), Daniela Pelegrinelli (Consultant), Natalia Fortuny (Consultant), Martín Legón (artist-in-residence), Michelle Henning (mentor), an advisory board, and two institutional partners in Argentina: the Remembrance Park-Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism and the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory.

Among other items, visitors at the *Scale 1/43* exhibition will be able to see building blocks distributed by the Fundación Eva Perón, toys made and sold during the Malvinas/Falklands War, and toy-art, photographs and installations commemorating those disappeared during the military dictatorship. For more information please email: [coldwartoys@gmail.com](mailto:coldwartoys@gmail.com)

Best wishes to all the members of ITRA.

Daniela

## FINLAND

**Katriina Heljakka**, Play Expert at Mannerheim League for Child Welfare wrote:

*Many “toyful” greetings to everyone from Finland!*

This year, I’m working as play expert for the Mannerheim League of Child Welfare for the central office in Helsinki. My main responsibility is to organize the yearly Playday, which this year, took place on 24<sup>th</sup> April.

Other tasks related to my play work as a play expert are to develop the ‘Play Bank’ (an Internet-based resource and search tool with over 1000 ideas for different playful activities, including some with toys! The Playday program has similarities to Toy Industry Association’s Genius of Play program, of which I am also a part as a Play ambassador. I also take care of the Playday network’s social media, answer inquiries on play behaviour, and am part of a team planning, designing, and organizing a play seminar. Last year we had a webinar focusing on “Transforming Play.” This year the theme for the research symposium to be organized in November is “Sustainable Play.”

In April, I was very fortunate to participate in the US Play Coalition Conference held at Clemson University in South Carolina, where I presented on digitalization of play and so-called ‘pseudo museums’ (such as selfie museums) as playscapes for adult players. Publications on these topics will follow later this year. It was great to travel internationally and to make new friends, which are the result of my work with playful learning, playgrounds, and various sorts of play equipment. I was the one and only toy researcher participating in the conference. I also met with Dr. Stuart Brown, whose writings I have consulted in many of my research projects, and who I also asked his thoughts about adults who play with toys. His response was simple, yet profound: “I think that they are better off than adults who don’t play with toys. Depends on the toy and whether they are joyful afterwards or if they are obsessive about it.”

In 2022, I contributed two entries to a new book edited by S.S. Muthu and published by Springer, entitled *Toys & Sustainability*. The first, for which I was the sole author, is a chapter called *On Longevity and Lost Toys: Sustainable Approaches to Toy Design and Contemporary Play*. In: Muthu S.S. (eds.) *Toys and*





Sustainability. Environmental Footprints and Eco-design of Products and Processes. Springer, Singapore. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-9673-2\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-9673-2_2).

For the second, I collaborated with two game research colleagues, Mikko Meriläinen and Jaakko Stenros, for a chapter titled, “*The Pile of Shame: The Personal and Social Sustainability of Collecting and Hoarding Miniatures.*”

During the past years I have been part of the editorial team for the latest special issue for the International Journal of Child-Computer Interaction. The special journal issue focuses on “smart toys”: Cristina Sylla, Katriina Heljakka, Alejandro Catala, Arzu Guneyisu Ozgur.

(2022) *Smart Toys, Smart Tangibles, Robots and other Smart Things for Children.*

International Journal of Child-Computer Interaction, 2022, 100489, ISSN 2212-8689,

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijcci.2022.100489>.

In May, a book was launched for which I have acted as editor along with Usva Friman, Jonne Arjoranta, Jani Kinnunen and Jaakko Stenros. The book, called “*Pelit kulttuurina*” (“*Games as Culture*”) is a product of research collaboration in two projects between the University of Turku, University of Tampere, and University of Jyväskylä, namely the Ludification and Emergence of Playful Culture and Centre of Excellence in Game Culture Studies, both funded by the Academy of Finland. My chapter in the book focuses on contemporary forms of play outside of games, in particular, in the context of adult play.

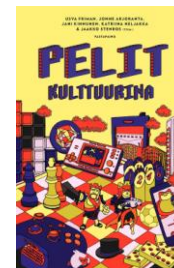
I have also collaborated with Finland’s brand new “*Museo Leikki*” (Museum of Play) in Espoo, Finland – the former Lelumuseo Hevosenkentä, which opens its brand-new facilities and exhibition on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May. I worked as part of the design team on their first special exhibition called “*Ruutuhyppy*,” which translates both to ‘screen jump,’ referring to digital play, and the traditional play pattern of hopscotch.

I look forward to many new and exciting things happening on the toy research front during this year. Many publications are in process, and new research is coming out almost every month. I’m actively sharing more information on my social media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn, so stay tuned for updates.

Last, but not least: Thank you, ITRA Board, for taking our next conference to The Strong Museum. I can’t wait to be part of the organizing committee and of course later on, to share my work at the conference! Finally, I’m happy to introduce new participants to this conference – the interest in toys, play, and adult toy play in particular is gaining momentum!

Thanking the editors of the ITRA Newsletter, Mark and Suzy, for inviting me to share the latest news, and wishing everyone a playful summer,

Kati



## FRANCE

**Emilie Thibaut**, Research Associate at the University of Amiens, wrote:

I took part in two seminars organized by Véronique Dasen and Marco Vespa. The first took place during the fall 2020 seminar “*Toys as Cultural Artefacts in Ancient Greek and Roman Cultures*,” on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020. I had titled my presentation “*Miniature offerings for the Etruscan gods: ‘toys to grow?’*”

The second seminar was an international conference organized again by Marco Vespa and Véronique Dasen, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021, entitled “*Toys as Cultural Artefacts in Ancient Greece, Etruria and Rome.*” For this seminar, I expanded on the conversations that had begun the previous seminar. An article should appear this year at the end of these two seminars.

I also contributed an article entitled “*Women and weasels: a medico-religious approach to maternity in a Republican city of Lazio*”

Best regards,

Emilie

## GERMANY

**Volker Mehringer**, from Augsburg University, wrote:

Our semester started a few weeks ago and it is chaotic and busy as always. At the moment I am preparing for a research project which will investigate the relationship between the quantity of toys and the effects on the quality of play. We did our first pre-tests on the research design, and we plan to start in the second half of the year. I hope I can present preliminary results at the next ITRA conference in 2023.

In July there will be a conference on the fascination of play in Salzburg, Austria (in German:

[https://www.plus.ac.at/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/20220713-IPWT-2022\\_Flyer.pdf](https://www.plus.ac.at/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/20220713-IPWT-2022_Flyer.pdf)). I will be doing a workshop there on the topic, ‘quality and selection of toys.’ At the same time there will be an issue of the German journal ‘ImpulsKita’ on play. I will publish an article on the same topic in it.

Finally, the German toy association DVSI founded a new advisory board on play, consisting of researchers in this field and I was invited as one of the members. The main aim of this advisory board is to gain more attention for the value of play in politics, in public and in the toy industry.

Best wishes,  
Volker

**Siegfried Zoels**, Managing director of Fördern durch Spielmittel e.V. (Toys for Children's Rehabilitation), wrote:

*A Method of Innovation – Workshops and Toy-Making*

Having handed over my role as managing director of the association "Fördern durch Spielmittel e.V." (Toys for Children's Rehabilitation) to the next generation, allow me to take a look back on our work with toys as play materials – and a lot more. In discovering the potential of both users and toys themselves, we developed a number of different kinds of workshops including those

- where participants learned during the design process from people with disabilities, and
- where we motivated and encouraged people with disabilities to design toys.

We also explored the use of toys as facilitators and accelerators in social and learning processes. Let us start with discovering the potential of the user.

A) My first area of my interest: Creativity

1) What is Creativity? How does one arrive at new toy ideas? This question has always been of interest to me and fortunately, step by step, the answers became clearer through our research:

- It is necessary to create the unique conditions for stimulating ideas for new toys
- Toys turn out to be one of the best tools to motivate and train people to be creative

2) How could we incorporate people with special needs in this process of new toy design? In my younger years I was given the opportunity to work among children with disabilities for a period of two years and learned a lot from them. Later, I was responsible for building up a training program for designers. In my opinion it seemed best to have the designers, alone or in groups of two, spend time with people with disabilities and learn about their abilities and their ways of enjoying every-day life. Spending days around disabled children or adults would be an important prerequisite for students wanting to design their own toys. In this way, participants really get to know the individual person, see what they are able to do and what they need, and find out about objects that will encourage their abilities and may even have an extra therapeutic value. I witnessed the development of student behaviour from acting in isolation to recognizing the value of an approach marked by acceptance, inclusion and learning from each other.

3) What is the context of the development of design? What role does the user play? Our methodology in exploring this question was to attempt to understand people's conditions and create opportunities for them to be creative.

4) How does democracy work? How is it possible to include all people – in a way that enhances social justice and equality? I learned that everyone could learn from each other. Nobody is a 'nobody'! (I saw this saying on the background of the Peaceful Revolution in East Germany in 1989)

B) My second area of research interest: Methodology, in particular, how to make methods of toy design available to large groups of academic and non-academic users.

1) First Method – Creativity Workshops for End-Users with Disabilities. Our basic assumption was that experts with different professional backgrounds and areas of expertise (interdisciplinary) can be guided to innovative solutions when they face extraordinary situations. We were quite surprised to see that completely new ideas for toys were created in a context in which the end-users (children and adults with disabilities) were an integral part of the design process. Those participating in a series of two-week workshops produced new, innovative concepts and ideas based both on the disabilities and the abilities of the individual their work was designed for. These ideas were given practical forms, tested and improved under the guidance of experienced tutors so that prototypes could be presented to the public during the final exhibition. We soon started to invite not only designers with various backgrounds but experts from a number of different fields to participate in the workshops and to design and produce toys and other objects on their own: therapists, teachers, engineers, toy-makers and artists, among others. We discovered that everyone profited from this interdisciplinary situation; people give and learn when it comes to developing ideas and producing prototypes for new toys. Users with special needs are taken seriously as autonomous partners and become part of the process. However, the most important partners remain the 'real' users: individual children or adults with disabilities. They are the ones who test the ideas and help to improve them and, because they will have final say in each prototype, some ideas will simply fail that test. And, surprisingly to some, the products that have to live up to these high expectations turn out to be of exceptional quality for all people, with or without disabilities. Either the object works well under these tough conditions or it does not. And it benefits from the intensive exchange amongst various fields of expertise. The solution for a social problem lies at the heart of the activities.

In summary, we could name the essential points of our UNESCO-sponsored Creativity workshop method as follows: 20 participants from 15 countries live in an institution for people with disabilities for two weeks. During this rather short period of time, they work together to create around forty new toys – from the idea to the prototype. The most interesting innovations are later duplicated, tested and described in DIY instructions. We



have organized 18 Creativity Workshops in 8 countries and published 5 books containing instructions on how to build a number of assorted toys. The result: In a remarkably short time an impressive number of design solutions have been found. Some of them are real innovations. One good example is the “Krabbeltiere” (moving animals). A workshop participant visited a child with spastic motor control problems. The child could not hold things and moved her arms in an uncoordinated manner. The design solution: a rubber band fixed to the bottom of the animals. The toy could be fixed on the arm of the girl – and the child becomes part of the game and is no longer excluded. Even more: The negatively perceived spastic arm movements are now positive – the bird needs to fly moving in the air. Other animals have paws, coming to life by the finger play of children; others carry little bells creating tunes for the ears. The surfaces are made of soft materials. So, make your own decision: Are these ‘special’ toys for ‘special’ need users? Surely not! These toys are especially good toys, designed together with children with special needs. The designer learned from the child’s “abilities,” unlocked her potential and transformed the negative assessment to a positive one. And that is – we think – the meaning of the word “inclusion” (the word we did not know at that time): to see people with special needs as equal partners, to learn from each other, to co-create design solutions, which are interesting and stimulating for every human being.

2) Second Method - The Method of Inclusive Creativity: Our next question was how we can provide assistance to people with disabilities to develop their own ideas and to translate these ideas into action. We developed a method of “Inclusive Creativity” since we share the conviction that everyone can be creative and productive. The basic assumption is that everyone is creative. The important part is to create conditions for problem solutions. Objects and ideas– once again regarding toys – are introduced to people with special needs. These people will be encouraged to develop them into new ideas and solutions and make use of their so far often unused and underrated resources. Everybody can participate. We have organized workshops with people on the margins of society and productivity, people in ‘special situations’: People with disabilities; people with mental illnesses; long-term unemployed; juvenile offenders; and, senior citizens interacting with children. The tasks are carefully prepared and the participants are helped by assistants. It is amazing to notice that these users with special needs develop and put into effect a whole host of solutions within a short period of time. These workshops on “Inclusive Creativity” have taken place since 2000. The tasks are ‘real’ problems: creating ideas for toys; games; social processes; or, communication processes. The participants gain motivation and self-confidence in the process. Very different results are obtained, some of them real innovations.

C) My third area of research interest: interactive design – broadening the idea of “user”. If design means grasping the living world in all of its complexity, and not only intellectually, our research shows that people with disabilities may actually teach the designer a broader, holistic perspective on life and give inspirations for innovative solutions.

The workshop method we employ to illuminate this concept is one we call ‘interactive design.’ Instead of being the object of analysis, the user becomes the subject of this process, thus broadening the concept of ‘holistic design.’ The creativity methods employed in this set of workshops include a multitude of elements relating to a holistic perspective. Basically this is a contribution to the intricate relationship of theory and practice. During the workshops the designer is enabled to becoming a ‘catalysing agent.’ Aspects of globalisation are experienced intensively and in a rather positive sense.

D) Summary of results and effects: In the 18 UNESCO Creativity Workshops held between 1990 and 2019, a total of 400 people from 61 countries took part. We commissioned a video documentary of the creativity workshop in 2019 (runtime: 12 minutes; file size 1600 MB): [https://www.spielmittel.de/images/Audio-Video/KWS-2019\\_subbed.EN.mp4](https://www.spielmittel.de/images/Audio-Video/KWS-2019_subbed.EN.mp4)

In 2021, the National Institute of Design NID, Ahmedabad, conducted two online conferences, lasting several days each, commissioned by the Indian government, on the subject of "Toy Innovation. Play – Learn – Design" with the goal of establishing an Indian central export line. We were invited to give talks at the conference. Dr. Gayatri Menon subsequently wrote: “Your reflection on democracy and social change was very interesting. My experience with Creativity workshops really helped in developing Design for Special Needs courses. Now, all Industrial Design students go through it. Furthermore, each year a number of students work on the subject of rehabilitation in their master theses.” One of the results of these conferences in India was that the government representative suggested the creation of toy museums in India and the establishment of an institute for toy quality - a suggestion that we, Sudarshan Khanna and Siegfried Zoels, have repeatedly made over the past 25 years.

**Steffen Wittig**, Research assistant in the field of general educational science Universität Kassel, wrote:

The last few months have been insane. I actually co-founded a working group around games, digitality and gamification, which has produced quite interesting results and will continue to do so. We are planning some publications and are currently exploring a project.

Best regards from Kassel/Leipzig  
Steffen

**Artemis Yagou**, Research Associate at the Deutsches Museum, wrote:

Dear ITRA friends,

It seems that finally we are getting out of the Covid-19 tunnel and we will start meeting each other face to face! After more than two years of online events, I expect to present my paper 'Politics Shaping Childhoods through

Construction Toys' in the International Conference Understanding Childhood and Construction of National Identities in Central and Eastern Europe from 18<sup>th</sup> Century until the Beginning of the Second World War. The conference was postponed at least twice, but hopefully it will take place at the National Library of Lithuania, Vilnius, on 16<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> June 2022. The event is organised by the Branch Office of the German Historical Institute Warsaw in Vilnius.

As far as publications are concerned, in 2021 I had two chapters in edited volumes:

• *'Play, Design, Politics: Technical Toys, Design Policies and British-German Exchanges in the First Half of the Twentieth Century'*, in: Lucy Wasensteiner (ed), *Sites of Interchange*, London: Peter Lang, 2021, 9-29. <https://www.peterlang.com/document/1143227>

• *'Building a Mini-Parthenon: Experiences of Users'*, in: Christoph Kühberger (ed), *Mit Geschichte spielen*, Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2021, 339-356. <https://www.transcript-verlag.de/978-3-8376-5358-8/mit-geschichte-spielen/>

Looking forward to more play-related exchanges in the future!

Greetings from Munich,

Artemis Yagou

## GREECE

**Domna Kakana**, Professor in the Department of Early Childhood Education, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, wrote:

We carried out research about "academic teachers' burnout and job satisfaction during the Covid-19 pandemic entitled, "A comparative analysis of teachers' perspectives located in Greek and Dutch institutions." Our research is not published yet. The authors of this research are Sophia Georgiadou, Nikolaos Misirlis & Domna Kakana. Sofia and I are both from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, and Nikolaos Misirlis is from HAN University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands.

Here is a brief abstract: The Covid-19 pandemic undoubtedly affected all aspects of our daily lives worldwide. Each country in the world has set its own standards on how to best protect – and restrict the freedom of – the individual to be protected. In this regard, distance work and education have been significantly utilized. However, several studies show that these changes have created psychological and social problems in the population. In this paper, we examine the perspective of academic teachers concerning distance education during the pandemic. In addition, we examine the burnout level of the teachers and their overall academic satisfaction. Our sample consists of academic teachers residing in Greece and in The Netherlands, to carry out a comparative study between the two countries. 207 respondents participated (n: 112 Greeks, m: 95 Dutch) by answering a 54-statement survey regarding job satisfaction and burnout levels. Each statement is rated on a five-point scale. The results of the research show quite high overall satisfaction (46.4%) levels and expectations from the work (66.2%). Some problems have been noted with burnout levels since more than 77% (for both Greek and Dutch affiliations) scored high on that point. Interestingly, 39.1% of teachers reported never or rarely feeling nervous, while 18.9% reported often or always feeling nervous. Depression was never or rarely felt by 71.5% of respondents, while 6.2% often or always felt it. At the same time, 35.8% of the sample often or always felt hopeful, while rarely or never 21.2% of the sample. We believe that the importance of this research could pave the way for similar surveys with a larger population and be taken into account by those responsible for future critical issues and decisions. After all, it seems that the emotional and behavioural health of academic teachers is something that should be taken into account to better understand or address how teachers might behave or feel the day after the pandemic ends.

Best regards

Domna

**Vassiliki Riga**, Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Sciences and Early Childhood Education, University of Patras, wrote:

Life in Greece has now returned to normal and everyone is happy. We are already overwhelmed by tourists and the good weather helps a lot.

Concerning my research work, for the last few months I have been working on the following three topics:

- psychomotor play for enhancing executive functioning skills in children
- movement play during the learning process in the classroom, and
- the importance of physical literacy

All these topics have been presented at various international conferences.

I wish to all ITRA members a lovely summer!

Regards,

Vassiliki

## **GUADELOUPE**

**Lamprini Chartofylaka**, PhD student at the Université des Antilles (Pôle Guadeloupe), wrote:

I submitted my thesis this week (week of 1<sup>st</sup> May). I was also involved in a research project 'TiNum,' which took place in Guadeloupe, aimed at introducing cyber-security issues (more specifically password's robustness) to primary school students while using the playful approach of storytelling. The interview, which I did in January, is only available in French at the link:

<https://ludocorpus.org/tinum-ou-comment-initier-les-enfants-a-la-securite-informatique/>

Kind regards,

Lamprini Chartofylaka

## **INDIA**

**Surabhi Khanna**, designer, educator and consultant based in New Delhi, wrote:

I am currently recovering from minor surgery and have started an Ayurvedic doctor's advice now - it's a wholesome care of oneself. I also read *The Perfect Health*, by Deepak Chopra, which is helping me understand how our basic nature determines what food, what kind of rest, what activities and what work are best for us to live a happy life.

My parents have been here in NIDH Kurukshetra with me. In the post Covid-19 time, we are able to stay in a quiet environment, waking up to the sounds of birds every morning.

Work is going well. I am taking courses like Systems Thinking, Nature and Form, Simple Product Design, Elective on Gameful and Gainful Design and am involved in academic administration - coordinating industrial design, and trying to fulfil student expectations post-pandemic.

Warm regards,

Surabhi

## **ISRAEL**

**Marco Vespa**, from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, wrote:

Since October, I have been in Jerusalem, working in another ERC project dealing with ancient science and anatomy, where I'm in charge of Aristotle's biological treatises, so it has been quite a change to come here and this caused many delays in my research time and work.

The most important information I would like to share is the preparation of the volume *Toys as Cultural Artefacts in Ancient Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Cultures*. It will be published by the end of this year and collects the proceedings of a web conference held in June 2020 in Fribourg (...on Skype to be honest).

This is the bibliographical reference: Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (eds), *Toys as Cultural Artefacts in Ancient Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Cultures*. Archaeological and Anthropological Approaches, Mergoïl, 2022.

I hope this volume will be of interest to many of you. The edited volume contains a chapter by Cleo Gougoulis.

I am very enthusiast to continue to work on play and toys despite my new job at the Hebrew University.

Best wishes,

Marco

## **THE NETHERLANDS**

**Joyce Goggin**, Senior Associate Professor at University of Amsterdam wrote:

Hope everyone is doing well as things get vaguely back to normal – you would not believe how busy it is in Amsterdam now! I am currently organizing a conference on Crete: *Women, Money and Markets: 1600-1900*, to be held 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at the Institute for Mediterranean Studies, Rethymnon, Crete.

I hope this finds everyone well!

Joyce

## **THE PHILIPPINES**

**Jean-Pierre Rossie**, socio-cultural anthropologist and co-founding member of ITRA, wrote:

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> April I opened the first session of the Worldwide Network of Teachers and Researchers of Traditional Games and Sports (TSG) that has been created in March 2022. The network is promoted by INEFC with the cooperation of ITSGA and AEJeST President Pere Lavega. This network aims to generate synergies between people and organizations from any part of the world that focus their field of action on the use and study of TSG and their social values as intangible cultural heritage.

I wish ITRA colleagues good health and all the best,

Jean-Pierre

## POLAND

**Dorota Michulka**, Associate Professor in the Department of Methodology of Teaching Language and Literature from the University of Wrocław, wrote:

I have to share three of my last publications connected with toys and play in children's culture, about engaged literature also one text based on books of Polish famous author of science - fiction - Stanisław Lem:

- "*Zabawki w książkach dla młodego odbiorcy. Świat dziecięcej wyobraźni wobec wyzwań edukacji humanistycznej (rekoncesans badawczy)*" In *Folklor, literatura dziecięca i nie tylko*. Księga jubileuszowa dedykowana profesor Jolancie Ługowskiej / ed. by B. Bednarek, A. Gemra and R. Waksmund. - Wrocław : Oficyna Wydawnicza Atut - Wrocławskie Wydawnictwo Oświatowe, 2021. - p. 187-197
- "*Homo Futurus i modelowanie świata. Twórczość Stanisława Lema w szkolnej edukacji polonistycznej - doświadczenie lektury*" In: *Stanisław Lem. Fantastyka naukowa i fikcje nauki* / ed. by D. Heck. - Warszawa : Narodowe Centrum Kultury, 2021. - (Jubileusze - Narodowe Centrum Kultury). - p. 299-316
- "*Little Women: Contemporary Polish Novels for Girls as an Example of Engaged Literature*". In *Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature*. - Vol. 60, nr 1 (2022), p. 4-15

With best regards,

Dorota

## SPAIN

**Oriol Vaz**, University of Barcelona, wrote:

I can announce that I am preparing a national exhibition for 2023-2024 at the Toy Museum of Catalonia (Figueras), the largest in Spain, on "*Artist's Toys: Apollo and Dionysus in Dialogue*", with Spanish and international artworks that cover a period from late nineteenth century to the present day.

On the other hand, I have requested to the University of Barcelona a small research project to study the paintings, drawings and engravings by Spanish artists of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, in which toys and children's game are represented. This will be the first time that such an investigation has been carried out in Spain. With these "art history" materials we could extract new drawings and technical studies of traditional playthings, mostly lost today, and thus be able to recreate and reinterpret them with digital 3D technology and craft resources in the workshops of the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Barcelona. By the way, some members of ITRA are included in this ARSLUDI Project: Michel Manson, Véronique Dasen, Marco Ginouliac and Esther Alsina (my wife).

In another order of things, I have published some articles and chapters that could be of interest for the Newsletter:

- Paper (2022): "*Juguetes de madera o el palimpsesto del árbol: vasos mitopoiéticos en las culturas del Mediterráneo antiguo/Wooden Toys or the Tree Palimpsest: Mythopoetic Vessels in Ancient Mediterranean Cultures*".
- Proceedings on the Toy Museum of Catalonia (2021): "*Un Grano de mostaza: el Museu del Joguet de Catalunya, sus precedentes europeos y sus pioneros poetas/A mustard seed: the Museu del Joguet de Catalunya, its European precedents and its pioneering poets*".
- Paper (2020): "*Juegos infantiles en los ciclos de las Edades de la vida. Una conquista de la pintura europea entre los siglos XIV y XVII/Children's games in the Ages of Man cycles: Conquering European painting from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries*".
- Book Chapter (2018): "*La naturaleza en juego. Poéticas del juguete artesanal en el arte europeo/Nature at stake. Poetics of handmade toys in European art*" pp. 35-64).

Finally, I have in hand a wonderful editorial and exhibition project, on which I have been working for many years, on the representation of toys in Western art, from Antiquity to the our days. The works selection is practically completed, with more than 1,200 examples from all artistic languages and historical periods. However, Véronique Dasen, Michel Manson and myself, parts of the editorial team, would like to know if there would be any publisher in the United States interested in publishing this beautiful book, a pioneer in the world, or if there is the possibility of converting it into an art exhibition with an illustrated catalogue.

Regards from Barcelona!

Oriol Vaz-Romero Trueba

## SWITZERLAND

**Véronique Dasen**, Archaeologist and Professor in Classical Archaeology and Art History at the University of Fribourg, wrote:

Here is the news from the ERC Project, *Locus Ludi. The Cultural Fabric of Play and Games in Classical Antiquity*.

New publication:

- Caré, B., Dasen, V., Schädler, U. (eds), *Back to the Game: Reframing Play and Games in Context*. XXI Board Game Studies Annual Colloquium, International Society for Board Game Studies, April, 24-26, 2018, Benaki



Museum – Italian School of Archaeology at Athens (Board Games Studies Supplement), Lisbon, Associação Ludus, 2021 (Board Game studies journal 16, 1, 2022, open access: <https://www.sciendo.com/issue/BGS/16/1>). Some initial reviews about how ancient education could be playful: [https://www.sciencesetavenir.fr/archeo-paleo/archeologie/voici-la-plus-ancienne-representation-d-une-lecon-de-maths-datant-de-la-grece-antique-et-vous-allez-tout-comprendre\\_163309](https://www.sciencesetavenir.fr/archeo-paleo/archeologie/voici-la-plus-ancienne-representation-d-une-lecon-de-maths-datant-de-la-grece-antique-et-vous-allez-tout-comprendre_163309)

How to play with a very polysemy toy, astragaloi? Reconstructions of three games to play online: <https://elearning.unifr.ch/astragaloi/>

Our webinar series continues: <https://locusludi.ch/locus-ludi-webinar/>

- 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022. Véronique Dasen, Fribourg: News about Locus Ludi: research, workshops and publications. Barbara Carè, Milano, Astragalomania. Ada Nifosi, Kent, Knucklebones in Ancient Egypt.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022. Achim Lichtenberger, Münster University, A gaming piece or dice (or something else)? A late antique stone object from Jerash; Olivia Marie Graves, Cornell University, Modeling a Non-Hellenocentric Koine: Inscribed Gaming-Boards in Multicultural Delos
- 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022. Véronique Dasen, La morsure ludique. Enquête sur les fausses apparences d'un "cannibale", 12h15-13h15, Geneva University, Seminar Actualité de la recherche (H. de Riedmatten), hybrid.
- 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022. Hariklia Brekoulaki, Athens, Poikiloi astragaloi: A scientific investigation of their polychromy
- 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022. Véronique Dasen, Fribourg/ERC Locus Ludi, "Agôn fatal", dans le cadre des séminaires "Représentation et politique : Figures du politique en Grèce ancienne" et "Religions de Rome et du monde romain" organisés respectivement par Vincent Azoulay et Francesca Prescendi Morresi. Hybride. Programme Online link
- 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022. Walter Crist, Maastricht University, ERC Digital Ludeme Project update and ludus latruncularum. Thomas Daniaux, ERC Locus Ludi, Plateaux de jeu sur terres cuites architecturales ?
- 13<sup>th</sup> April 2022. Ambra Mortellaro, Rome, Fortune tellers, worshippers or players? Images of girls with knucklebones and their interpretation
- 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022. Barbara Carè, Milano/ FNS scientific exchange, Of Knucklebones and Kairos: new observations on the astragal-shaped base from Olympia
- 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022. 17h15. Oksana Ruchysnka, Kharkiv/Fribourg, Vasil Karazin Kharkiv National University, War and Ancient History
- 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022. 17h15. Marie-Lys Arnette, Fribourg/ERC Locus Ludi: A Community of Players. Boardgames at Deir el-Medina.
- 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022. Oana Cojocaru, Tampere, Play in the Middle Byzantine period.

International lectures of the team Locus Ludi:

- <https://locusludi.ch/lectures-locusludi-team/>

Interviews:

- Ludocorpus D'entrée de jeu, 12.4.2022 : <https://ludocorpus.org/d-entree-de-jeu-12-edition-du-12-avril-2022/>

Next conferences, University of Fribourg

- 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> June, Workshop doctoral CUSO Gender Studies: Jeux et jouets: le genre en jeu
- 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> June, International Conference: Roman Articulated Dolls in Context. Typology, Technique,

Provenance and Representations

Kind regards,

Véronique

## THAILAND

**Apirom Kongkanan**, King Mongkut University of Technology, Thonburi, wrote:

Teaching toy design during Covid-19 lock down: the pain and the insight into online learning for the future of design education.

Covid-19 started in April 2020 since which time classes have been both online and off line interchangeably. From August 2021 until December 2021 the Covid-19 situation in Bangkok, Thailand, was at its peak which left online class as the only means of teaching. From January 2022 until July 2022 a hybrid between on site and online was introduced. August 2022 onward onsite classes will be back for studio class and online for lecture classes.

Thanks to the Covid-19 situation and online technology like Zoom and MSTeams, online learning has put to test whether it will be fit as a new future approach for learning. For almost three years of Covid-19, the online design teaching method has diversified and adjusted according to the changing situation. Covid-19 has forced all teachers, from kindergarten to university level, to teach online effectively. The result of online teaching has shown both the pros and cons of predominately online education and how technology can enhance the learning horizon, as well as diminish the learning curve and classroom interaction.

I have witnessed two different scenarios. The first involves those who have been taught online since the start of the university year until the present time. The second group consists of those who have been taught online during their second/ third year. For the first group, students who went online from their freshman year have suffer the consequences of prolonged online learning, resulting in poor learning, lack of motivation, and depression due to



the lack of physical interaction among students and teachers and overwhelming sense of isolation and computer fatigue. Home started to feel like either a prison or a safe haven depending on the individual personality and family relationship. Parents may have been involved or intervened too much due to time spent together with their children at home. Those students whose parents were perceived as monitoring their academic performance too closely felt the difficulty of having to explain their every move 24/7 regarding their study and all.. The group who were taught online since their freshman year found it difficult to catch up with the required skills which online classes cannot deliver in terms of design training.

For the second group, the group which has been taught online during their second/ third year, going back home to study with parents and not in the dormitory environment created tension between family members and intensified the family conflict in some families. Family conflict becoming an issue for some resulted in depression, including severe mental problems for some students who needed to seek mental health consultations, mostly without parent acknowledgment. The 4<sup>th</sup> year students who were forced to change to online learning during their 4<sup>th</sup> year fared the best, as they were already equipped with the design skills and self-direction to be effective with online learning.

The solution was that some onsite classes had to be introduced for some students who specifically requested such as an outlet to their personal mental health.

When Covid-19 entered during a student's third year, research showed that a combined course of online and onsite learning was an effective compromise. While some enjoy coming to onsite classes, others find going back to school onsite to be a tiresome experience. This was especially the case for those students living at home who found that environment to be relaxing, laid back and comfortable. The study found that a long period of online learning encouraged more of an inactive study pattern, especially for those students who were less motivated and for whom this teaching method was felt not to be exciting. Studying online and staying at home can create both an overwhelming sense of monitor fatigue and lack of physical human interaction. For an introvert type, this may be a golden opportunity, while extroverts prefer to go off line. In one case, I observed a hyper functioning autistic student who focussed better online due to less interference from other classmates. Yet he preferred to meet his friends in person, rather than online. Thus he comes to school to learn online most of the time, whether or not there are classes.

Fortunately, most of the students who enrolled in the toy design classes were in their fourth year and had had previous training in the Industrial Design process. Since the toy design process is similar to that of industrial design (in terms of moving from research to ideation, testing and prototyping), these students had the requisite skills to be successful. Some steps in the toy design process are distinct, however, such as early prototyping and yearly user concept testing via prototyping. This is the case because the users of toys are mainly children and therefore it is more difficult to evaluate the design concepts through sketch tests alone.

Thus the hardest challenge during the Covid-19 lockdown was being able to effectively conduct the user design research and user testing for the idea and prototyping. This makes sense since parent permission is required to gain access to children in order to test and prototype the concepts, and parents were particularly protective of their children during the pandemic.

The second challenge was how to keep students motivated throughout 15 weeks' span of classes without being able to directly observe children at play prior to the toy design phase, or take field trips to such places as the toy safety testing lab or the toy manufacturers. This took the fun part out of the class. When onsite classes cannot be allowed, we have found it challenging for both students and teachers to communicate effectively. This is especially the case when students have been taught online for almost two consecutive years.

The third challenge of online teaching during the pandemic has involved the severe limits placed on direct interactions between class members and teachers. Students have missed the idea exchange and interaction with each other that comes from in person learning, even though there are tools on Zoom for some degree of interaction. Yet our research showed that the usual generation of new ideas and peer-to-peer and teacher-to-student feedback is minimized, and the feeling of learning in isolation is more profound. Fortunately, most 4<sup>th</sup> year students were able to pick up the process and adjust to the precarious background much more quickly than those in earlier years of their schooling.

The fourth issue arising from Covid-19 involved the compounded effects of both learning opportunities and challenges for students with hyper functioning autism. With one student, online learning seemed to actually be a bonus since he was able to concentrate better without the usual interruptions by others which might normally affect or bias his behaviour. The online learning environment provided a safe zone for him to interact with the material and answer questions without having to worry what others might think, or about "reading" others' body language. On the other hand, the design aspects of the course seemed like a challenge.

Fifth, while teaching toy design theory online seemed to work well, once the course would have involved hands-on experiences and field trips to test toys or see children at play, the isolation of online learning was more critical. Yet with enthusiasm and experience students were still able to learn the lessons of both toy design and process. How to navigate the thorny and practical aspects of online and on-site learning may be the new normal for teaching toy design. Field trips to toy companies, in person toy testing, and observation of children at play are the missing components, yet we have definitely found that it is still possible to achieve a satisfying result despite all the obvious limitations.





Interestingly for the student with learning difficulties, online learning seemed to be more focused for him, although he would have preferred to be in the physical class. Yet I can see a tremendous improvement in his focus and learning with online lectures than in the physical classroom setting. Since he is not interfered with by other students, he can have his focus better in the home environment and enjoy participating in class the same or even more than the physical class.

In conclusion, our research found that hybrid teaching of both online and off line can yield the same result as fully off line classes especially when applied to the more senior years of schooling, such as fourth year students. Online class proved to be more efficient and more focused for the lecture portion of the class, but not the practical part. Some toy design teaching aspects such as how to make sure that the toy designs fit the age group for which they are designed is a challenging issue to teach without being able to directly observe children at play such as in a nursery or kindergarten. Due to Covid-19 it has been especially hard to demonstrate this part of toy design without entering the closed facilities. Online class has proved that it will be the last alternative choice for studio-based classes. But teaching design through online classes requires more tools to make certain aspects of design teaching understandable and enjoyable. Overall, we found that online is fit for lecturing purposes but should not be used as a sole teaching tool, especially for a long period of time, if it can be helped.

## UNITED KINGDOM

**Amanda Gummer**, Founder and CEO of the Good Toy Guide, wrote:

The research we presented at the last ITRA Conference on intergenerational play with connected toys has been developed upon, with collaboration between us and The Open University, looking at intergenerational play across the internet. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-sypGvc2rZo>. We are looking to continue this research further so watch this space for updates.

Alongside this, [goodplayguide.com](http://goodplayguide.com) has added more guides - good baby guide being the most recent and we're looking into how play and toys benefit even the youngest babies. Historically, it's been felt that toys for babies are unnecessary as the infants themselves don't have sufficient muscle control or cognitive or social development to engage, but anecdotal findings from our work suggest that interactions between the baby and other people, especially close family members, is key to supporting healthy development. In turn, toys for babies make the other people more playful and increase the likelihood that they will interact with the baby. The toys, therefore, have a strong positive benefit for babies' development, not because the baby plays with the toys but because the toys prompt other people to interact playfully with the baby.

I'm heading to the US at the end of May and will be there until early July (Vegas, Los Angeles, New York) so if any stateside ITRA members fancy catching up in person I'd love to hear from them.

For more information see: [www.goodtoyguide.com](http://www.goodtoyguide.com)

Best,

Amanda

## USA

**Kathleen Alfano**, child development and play specialist, co-founding member of ITRA, wrote:

Currently, as a retiree, I've been spending the winters in central Florida, and return to my home in western New York State to enjoy the beautiful summer and fall weather. My extra time allows more opportunities for me to participate in physical activities such as yoga, pilates, swimming, tennis, biking, golfing, rowing crew and dragon boat racing. So, now, I've come to realize, I tend to consider it my full-time job to be physically active enjoying fun, playful and challenging activities. Of course, I try to keep up on current research in the field of child development and play. I also do a little bit of consulting on those topics, as well.

I'm looking forward to the 2023 ITRA conference in Rochester, NY.

Sincerely,

Kathleen

**Christopher Bensch**, Vice President for Collections, at The Strong, Rochester, USA, wrote:

The biggest news from The Strong is probably the announcement this week of four games that were inducted into the World Video Game Hall of Fame: <https://www.museumofplay.org/press-release/world-video-game-hall-of-fame-inductees-for-2022-announced/>

The second interesting item is that we also recently opened a maker space:

<https://www.museumofplay.org/press-release/the-strong-opens-dedicated-maker-space-the-play-lab/>

Best,

Chris

**Sarah Curtis**, Director of European Studies, San Francisco State University, USA, wrote:  
In February I published an article entitled "*Model Girls and Model Dolls in Nineteenth-Century France*" in  
*French Historical Studies* (vol. 45, no. 1, February 2022, pp. 87-120).

Best,  
Sarah

**Greta Pennell**, Professor Emeriti from the University of Indianapolis and current ITRA Vice-President, sent us  
the following information on three online museum exhibits:

*Toys Ahoy: A Maritime Childhood*, a new permanent exhibit at the Mariners' Museum and Park, Newport News,  
Virginia USA <https://www.marinersmuseum.org/toys-ahoy/>

Toy Worlds Museum Basel, Germany – has over 1000m<sup>2</sup> on four levels and is considered a one of a kind in  
Europe. For those who can't travel in person to visit its physical located in the heart of downtown Basel, the  
museum offers virtual video tours. You can find them at: [https://www.spielzeug-welten-museum-  
basel.ch/museum/tour-movies/](https://www.spielzeug-welten-museum-basel.ch/museum/tour-movies/)

Museum of International Folk Art in Sante Fe, New Mexico USA has an online searchable database of its  
collection including almost 30 folk toys from around the world. More information may be found at:  
<http://collection.internationalfolkart.org/search/toys>

## CONFERENCES & EXHIBITIONS

This section covers current, up-coming and past conferences and exhibitions. Previews and reviews of conferences are sought for the Spring Edition of the ITRA Newsletter. Due to the current international Covid-19 pandemic many conference organisers have placed their conference plans on hold. More information will be published once it becomes available.

### FUTURE CONFERENCES

#### September 2022

The **Play Creators Conference 2022** will take place within the Play Creators Festival, at Twickenham Stadium, London, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

With a line-up of exciting speakers from across toys, games, tech and the wider worlds of design, the conference sessions will unite the global toy and game inventor community and leave your creative juices flowing. The live event will take place at London's Twickenham Stadium on Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> September alongside the other Play Creators Festival in-person events including the Play Creators Summer Party, Play Creators Awards and the Mojo Pitch.

For more information see: <https://playcreatorsconference.co.uk/>

#### March 2023

The **Game Developers Conference** will be held in San Francisco, California, USA, 20<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2023. The Game Developers Conference (GDC) brings the game development community together to exchange ideas, solve problems, and shape the future of the industry across five days of education, inspiration, and networking. Attendees include programmers, artists, producers, game designers, audio professionals, and business leaders. Some key features of GDC include:

- The market-defining conference has a comprehensive selection of lectures, panels, and roundtable discussions.
- The GDC Expo showcases the latest game development tools and services from leading technology companies such as Amazon, Epic, Google, Intel, Nvidia, Oculus, and Sony.
- Dedicated community spaces where GDC attendees can take a break from all of the learning to relax and meet new people in themed areas for playable indie games, retro games, alternative controllers, and more.
- GDC hosts two awards ceremonies recognizing the creativity, artistry, and technical genius of the finest developers and games:

The Game Developers Choice Awards is the leading peer-based video game awards show celebrating the industry's top games and developers. The Independent Games Festival honours the most innovative and exemplary projects in indie game development. GDC also hosts semi-annual instalments of the GDC Masterclass program, which is comprised of day-long or multi-day, small-group virtual workshops that deliver in-depth, hands-on training around some of the most important challenges facing game developers today.

See the conference website: <https://gdconf.com/conference>

### PAST CONFERENCES

#### April 2022

**Value of Play: The Nature of Play**, was held at The Conference Center and Inn at Clemson University in Clemson, South Carolina 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2022.

The Play Conference, as it is commonly known, is an annual professional conference presented by the US Play Coalition. The latest research and practices in the field of play were presented at the conference, which brought together play researchers, educators, health scientists, architects, landscape architects, designers, planners, park and recreation professionals, business and community leaders, psychologists, physicians and parents from across the U.S. and beyond. "The Nature of Play" is a play on words, allowing for broad interpretation by presenters! As always, the play conference explored play across the lifespan, play in the workplace, play in the classroom, play in Nature and address universal issues of access, equity, inclusion and more.

See the conference website: <https://usplaycoalition.org/playconference22>



**DiGRA 2022: Bringing Worlds Together**, took place in Guadalajara, Mexico, at the Riu Plaza Hotel, 25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

The theme of the upcoming DiGRA 2022 was "Bringing Worlds Together," exploring games as spaces of speculative possibility, ambiguity and liminality. Game studies have always considered games – especially

digital ones – as hybrid forms, able to combine various cultural phenomena to create limned spaces of uncertain ontology. The tradition to perceive games through interferences, uneasy alliances, disturbing dissonances or outright conflicts is rich. Diverse worlds, literally and metaphorically, collide at play: technological infrastructures, cultural practices, political, ethical, aesthetic and ontological dimensions. These can manifest in a variety of research focus points, including: the way the physical body of the player is merged with the electronic components of the machine and the digital space; the collision of the fictive narrative and real rule-set, governing the way fiction can unfold; the tension between global production regimes and vernacular resistance practices; or the circulation of camaraderie and oppression in player communities. But above all, games are always embedded within broader existing value systems. They can reflect those or challenge their status quo, paving new ways of becoming in the world.

The past months of the worldwide pandemic have also shown the capacity of games and play to literally bring remote worlds together, whether as practices of intimate socialization otherwise hindered by lock-downs and physical isolation, spaces of political resistance or products of increased consumption able to distract from long hours of boredom.

For more information see: conference website: <http://digra2022.org>

**GamiFIN 2022: GamiFIN Conference 2022**, was held online and in-person at the PAIDIA Living Lab in Tampere, Finland, 26<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2022.

The GamiFIN conference is an annual academic conference which focuses on the development, implementation and dissemination of gamification research.

The conference brought together an international group of academics and aims to contribute to the overall development of gamification as a process and a tool.

GamiFIN was hosted by the Gamification Group in affiliation with the University of Tampere. The conference provided an excellent platform for multidisciplinary research, and encourages innovation, development of technology as well as networking among the leading scholars within the field of gamification, game studies, business-studies and human-computer interaction.

GamiFIN is already the leading conference related to gamification and is quickly becoming a prominent academic conference in the world on the interaction of economics and game research.

Conference website: <http://gamifinconference.com/>



## CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

### September 2021 – September 2022

**Dangerous games: Treacherous Toys We Loved As Kids**, is being held at the Napa Valley Museum, Yountville, USA until 25<sup>th</sup> September 2022 (extended from 13<sup>th</sup> February 2022 by popular demand).

It's hard to believe so many of us survived childhood, given the treacherous, toxic, yet tantalizing toys we played with as kids! We dove head-first onto slippery sheets of plastic called the Slip 'N Slide, plucked bugs (sometimes edible) called Creepy Crawlers out of plastic goop in searing hot moulds, dodged skull-piercing flying arrows called Lawn Darts, and played with explosives, molten hot glass, dangerous dyes – even radioactive material – all in the name of good clean fun.

Enjoy a blast from the past – literally – as you and your friends and family travel through our exclusive exhibition celebrating those wild, wacky, “whammo” wonders that were our childhood toys. Amuse yourself with our “Back to the Backyard” collection of Hula Hoops and other hands-on toys – safely of course. No dart guns or Red Ryder Rifles are allowed because “you’ll put your eye out!”

Includes an original audio tour narrated by “The Voice of Disney” Bill Rogers, and written by Laura Rafaty for the Napa Valley Museum Yountville, adapted in part from: “Wham-O Summer: Back to the Backyard.”

See the exhibition website: <https://napavalleymuseum.org/exhibition/dangerous-games-treacherous-toys-we-loved-as-kids/>



### February – June 2022

**Our Toy Story**, is being held at the Connaught Theatre, Worthing, UK, 12<sup>th</sup> February – 19<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

An exciting new exhibition using our wonderful toy collection to tell the story of how children and adults alike have entertained themselves through the years. From 18th century board games and Victorian clock-work insects, to Playmobil knights and castles, this display will chart the development of toys over the last two centuries. Look out for rare Hornby train engines, classic Airfix soldiers, traditional farm models and even some Teletubbies!

Please Note: This exhibition is free but donations are gladly welcomed. No need to book, just turn up.

Exhibition website: <https://wtm.uk/events/exhibition-our-toy-story/>



**Black Dolls Exhibit** is being held at the New York Historical Society Museum & Library, New York, USA, 25<sup>th</sup> February – 5<sup>th</sup> June 5, 2022.

The exhibit explores handmade cloth dolls made primarily by African American women between 1850 and 1940 through the lens of race, gender, and history.

More information may be found at: <https://www.nyhistory.org/exhibitions/black-dolls> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=prNuSUjWa00>

## February – September 2022

**The Art of the Brick**, is being held at the Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago, Illinois, USA, 10<sup>th</sup> February – 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2022.

*The Art of the Brick*, a captivating exhibition, featuring over 100 incredible works of art made from millions of LEGO® bricks re-imagining famous artistic masterpieces into LEGO form by renowned contemporary artist Nathan Sawaya.

Sawaya's original pieces and re-imagined pieces on display in the exhibition include:

- Fan favourite "Yellow", a life-size sculpture of a man pulling his chest apart with thousands of yellow LEGO bricks flowing from the cavity.

- Van Gogh's *Starry Night* and Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*.

- A multimedia collection of LEGO brick infused photography produced in tandem with award-winning photographer Dean West.

To celebrate the exhibition's Chicago debut, Nathan Sawaya has created several new pieces including a replica of Chicago Artist Hebru Brantley's "Flyboy."

*The Art of The Brick* is the first major museum exhibition to use LEGO bricks as the sole art medium. Sawaya transforms bricks into tremendous and thought-provoking sculptures, elevating the toy to the realm of art.

Sawaya's ability to transform this common toy into something meaningful, his devotion to spatial perfection and the way he conceptualizes action, enables him to elevate a toy beloved by generations into contemporary art.

For more information see: <https://www.msichicago.org/press/press-releases/the-art-of-the-brick/>

## May – October 2022

**America's Monsters, Superheroes, and Villains: Our Culture at Play**, is being held at The National Museum of Toys and Miniatures, Kansas City, USA, 21<sup>st</sup> May – 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2022.



Monsters, superheroes, and villains have always been part of America's cultural fabric: they scare us, thrill us, and help guide us through the most terrifying and exhilarating moments of our lives. More than simple "pop culture," characters such as Wolfman, Dracula, Wonder Woman, Luke Skywalker, the Joker, and others create a lens to examine complex subject matter in twentieth-century American history including the Cold War, rapidly accelerating possibilities of science and technology, and America's portrayal of women and people of colour in our popular media.

Comprised of more than 350 exceptional objects from the private collection of David Barnhill, the exhibition includes vintage toys, posters, packaging, TV commercials, and movie trailers. Visitors of all ages are sure to enjoy the nostalgic visual survey of American Identity in the 20th century.

More information may be found at: <https://toyandminiaturemuseum.org/event/supermonstercity/>

## FUTURE EXHIBITIONS

### July 2022

**May The Toys Be With You**, will be held at the New Walk Museum & Art Gallery, Leicester, UK, from 21<sup>st</sup> July 2022.



This summer, from a galaxy far, far away comes an absolute must see for fans of Star Wars and the silver screen...

One of the UK's finest collections of vintage Star Wars toys and original cinema posters is going on display in a stunning new exhibition at New Walk Museum & Art Gallery. Coalville was the base for Palitoy - the British company behind the iconic vintage toys – and this Summer Star Wars is coming home!

Back when the movie Star Wars broke box office records in 1977 no one could have predicted that the merchandising would go on to earn even more than the film itself. The toys of Star Wars took the world by storm and became the must-have playthings for an entire generation. From 1977 - 1985 an estimated 300 million action figures were sold, and this is a chance to discover the role Leicestershire toy company Palitoy played in this incredible global success story.

*May The Toys Be With You* is both a celebration of the now highly collectable vintage toy line and also of the iconic design work and art of the Star Wars movies. From X-Wing Fighters to lightsabers, these fantastical designs have fired our imaginations and stamped their place on our cultural landscape. For little kids and 'big





kids' alike this is an unmissable opportunity to view many rarely seen Star Wars treasures, and young Jedi may even have an opportunity to dress up and wield a lightsaber themselves!

For more information see: <https://www.visitleicester.info/whats-on/may-the-toys-be-with-you-p733311>

## PAST EXHIBITIONS

### April 2022

**Dolls-house Exhibition**, was held at the Newby Hall & Gardens, Ripon, UK, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.

Newby Hall is now the permanent home to one of the finest collections of dolls-houses and miniatures in the world, thanks to the generosity of collectors Caroline Hamilton and Jane Fiddick. For well over 40 years friends Caroline and Jane have shared a passion for dolls-houses and a talent for bringing the miniature world to life. With nearly 70 houses of all shapes, sizes, styles and ages this is also one of the most important private collections on display anywhere in the world. Visitors will be amazed by the attention to detail in each tiny room, arranged in clever and amusing scenes and peopled by extraordinary characters.

Caroline and Jane are well known and highly respected throughout the dolls-house world, exhibiting internationally for nearly 30 years. Their collection ranges from small 'room boxes' such as Grandmama's Parlour to the very grand Beagle House and Best House. In between, there are Victorian shops, rustic family homes, architectural classics and even a yuppie bachelor pad!

The Dolls-House Collection is located in the heart of Newby Hall's beautiful 25-acre garden, next to the Garden Restaurant, and is free to visit with a gardens admission ticket.

For more information see: <https://www.newbyhall.com/things-to-do/dollshouse-exhibition/>

### September 2021 – January 2022

**Murano Glass Toys**, was held at the Murano, Glass Museum, Venice, Italy, until 6<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

The Murano Glass Toys exhibition was opened to the public from 4 September 2021 to 6 January 2022 at the Glass Museum in Murano, an initiative, part of The Venice Glass Week, conceived with the aim of promoting the regional brand Vetro Artistico®

Murano. This was an ambitious project, characterized by an innovative setting: no longer a glass exhibition to "look at but not touch," but a real interactive and multimedia installation, a room where the visitor can play and be amazed. The project involved fourteen Murano glass masters from as many concessionary companies of the Vetro Artistico® Murano brand who have put themselves to the test for the occasion, addressing a theme far from their usual production. In Murano Glass Toys, glass lives, moves and interacts with the viewer: in this magical atmosphere, visitors can experience or relive the emotions related to their childhood and youth.

Exhibition website: <https://museovetro.visitmuve.it/en/mostre-en/mostre-in-corso-en/exhibition-murano-glass-toys/2021/08/19625/exhibition-murano-glass-toys/>



### December 2021 – January 2022

**Toys from Yesteryear**, was held at the Gladstone Regional Art Gallery Museum, Queensland, Australia, until the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2022.

*Toys from Yesteryear* was an exhibition for everyone; a special place for children and a nostalgic link to the past for adults. Objects from the Gallery & Museum's community collection were displayed, alongside treasured items loaned by local families.

Museum website: <https://gragm.qld.gov.au/exhibitions/toys-from-yesteryear>

### June 2021 - February 2022

**Play**, was held in the Gandel Atrium at the National Museum Australia, Canberra, Australia, until 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

There were several hundred toys or children's objects in the National Historical Collection. A smaller selection of these items is on display in *Play*, with each item chosen for its compelling history and strong association with a particular child. Children will always find a way to play, whatever their circumstances. Playing games, making and sharing toys, and telling stories is how they learn about the world around them.

Exhibition highlights: A toy tractor made from old banana boxes, scrap metal and a piece of string shows the childhood ingenuity of a young boy living in Australia during the Second World War; A much-loved toy pig with a missing tail connects the United States to Australia in the aftermath of the Second World War; A toy rocking horse which belonged to Andrew Gibson, who grew up at Burrungurroolung station near Goulburn, New South Wales, during the 1920s and 30s; and Hetherington doll's house - Eva Howie made this doll's house in the 1930s for her eldest daughter, Barbara Hetherington. The house is furnished with many tiny items, some of them handcrafted from bread dough.

More information available at: <https://www.nma.gov.au/explore/collection/highlights/toys>



## 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](mailto:itraneWSltr@gmail.com).

*Hybrid Play: Crossing Boundaries in Game Design, Players Identities and Play Spaces* (2020). **de Souza e Silva. A., Glover-Rijkse. R.** (eds.). Routledge. ISBN 9780367427788  
This book explores hybrid play as a site of interdisciplinary activity - one that is capable of generating new forms of mobility, communication, subjects, and artistic expression as well as new ways of interacting with and understanding the world.  
The chapters in this collection explore hybrid making, hybrid subjects, and hybrid spaces, generating interesting conversations about the past, current and future nature of hybrid play. Together, the authors offer important insights into how place and space are co-constructed through play; how, when, and for what reasons people occupy hybrid spaces; and how cultural practices shape elements of play and vice versa.

A diverse group of scholars and practitioners provides a rich interdisciplinary perspective, which will be of great interest to those working in the areas of games studies, media studies, communication, gender studies, and media arts.

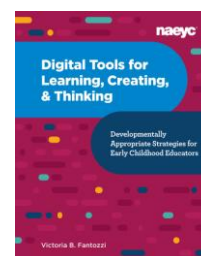


**Fantozzi, V.B.** (2022) *Digital Tools for Learning, Creating, and Thinking: Developmentally Appropriate Strategies for Early Childhood Educators*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.

Children are growing up with technologies as part of their daily lives at home and in school. For educators, it is important to understand how to use technologies to promote learning in developmentally appropriate ways. This book helps you make thoughtful, informed decisions that will enhance what you are already doing to support children's learning. Learn how to:

- Use technologies in ways that build on, not detract from, the learning children gain through play
- Introduce technologies using a gradual release of responsibility model
- Foster children's storytelling, reflection, early coding skills, and more
- Use technologies to enrich your partnerships with families and invite them into the classroom community
- Work with colleagues to develop a digital culture that supports the program's goals

With the guidance in this book, you'll be able to evaluate technologies and understand how to put them to their best uses in your program.

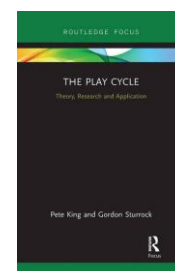


**King, P., Sturrock. G.** (2020) *The Play Cycle - Theory, Research and Application*. Routledge. ISBN 9780367728007

Twenty years after Gordon Sturrock and the late Professor Perry Else's 'Colorado Paper' introduced the Play Cycle, this theory of play now supports professional playwork practice, training and education. *The Play Cycle: Theory, Research and Application* is the first book of its kind to explain the theoretical concept of the Play Cycle, supported by recent research, and how it can be used as an observational method for anyone who works with children in a play context.

The book investigates the understandings of the Play Cycle within the playwork field over the last 20 years, and its future application. It addresses each aspect of the Play Cycle (metalude, play cue, play return, play frame, loop and flow and annihilation) and combines the theoretical aspect of the Play Cycle with empirical research evidence. The book also provides an observational tool for people to observe and record play cycles.

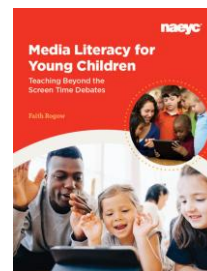
This book will appeal to playworkers, teachers, play therapists and professionals working in other contexts with children, such as hospitals and prisons. It will support practitioners and students in learning about play and provide lecturers and trainers with a new innovative teaching and training aide.



**Rogow, F.** (2022) *Media Literacy for Young Children: Teaching Beyond the Screen Time Debates*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.

Media literacy is about wonder and imagination, questioning and learning, thinking and reflecting! *Media Literacy for Young Children: Teaching Beyond the Screen Time Debates* is about all these things, and more importantly, it is about how early childhood educators and professionals can prepare children for their digital future.

This book is a first-of-its-kind guide for pre-service and currently practicing teachers and child care professionals looking for pedagogically sound and developmentally appropriate ways to help today's children navigate their media-rich world with confidence, curiosity, and critical thinking. Detailed descriptions of media literacy competencies, along with dozens of activities, strategies, and tips designed for children ages 2–7, demonstrate how to integrate foundational skills, knowledge, and dispositions into existing routines as well as experiment with new lessons.



## MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

- 1) Children with autism exhibit typical joint attention during toy play with a parent  
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-05-children-autism-typical-joint-attention.html>
- 2) Cardboard boxes can provide hours of imaginative play  
<https://www.irishnews.com/lifestyle/familyandparenting/2022/05/24/news/cardboard-boxes-can-provide-hours-of-imaginative-play-2716546/>
- 3) Barbie commemorates Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-61171913>
- 4) The European Commission plans for updating and strengthening the 2009 Toy Safety Directive (TSD)  
[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2022/698912/EPRS\\_ATA\(2022\)698912\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2022/698912/EPRS_ATA(2022)698912_EN.pdf)
- 5) Thousands of toys delivered to Ukrainian children have helped them 'shine'  
<https://www.independent.ie/world-news/and-finally/thousands-of-toys-delivered-to-ukrainian-children-have-helped-them-shine-41616991.html>
- 6) Nintendo's Kirby becomes gaming's surprise hero  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-61240325>
- 7) Traditional toys make a comeback driven by kidults  
<https://www.euronews.com/next/2021/12/08/traditional-toys-make-a-comeback-and-kidults-are-helping-drive-the-trend>
- 8) Mattel announces new sustainability goals  
<https://www.toynews-online.biz/2022/04/28/mattel-announces-new-sustainability-goals/>
- 9) Hot Wheels launches first remote-controlled wheelchair toy in partnership with Paralympian  
<https://edition.cnn.com/2022/05/07/business/hot-wheels-wheelchair-toy-trnd/index.html>
- 10) Toy safety and recalls  
<https://www.consumeraffairs.com/toy-safety-and-recalls>
- 11) Playing with dolls helps children talk about how others feel, says study  
<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/feb/06/playing-dolls-helps-children-talk-about-how-others-feel-study>
- 12) Couple donate 100 cuddly toys to charity they won in arcades  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/61330776>
- 13) Toys market is currently estimated at \$103.8 billion, has the potential to double itself by 2027  
<https://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/toys-market-is-currently-estimated-at-103-8-billion-has-the-potential-to-double-itself-by-2027-amr>
- 14) Mattel partners with comfort cases to contribute thousands of toys and games for youth in foster care  
[https://www.wfmz.com/news/pr\\_newswire/pr\\_newswire\\_entertainment/mattel-partners-with-comfort-cases-to-contribute-thousands-of-toys-and-games-for-youth-in/article\\_5e16adda-0b9c-5f00-b333-be012c870ea7.html](https://www.wfmz.com/news/pr_newswire/pr_newswire_entertainment/mattel-partners-with-comfort-cases-to-contribute-thousands-of-toys-and-games-for-youth-in/article_5e16adda-0b9c-5f00-b333-be012c870ea7.html)
- 15) Near Ukrainian border, Nebraskans offer play, comfort to child refugees  
[https://norfolkdailynews.com/near-ukrainian-border-nebraskans-offer-play-comfort-to-child-refugees/article\\_02a733a6-daa4-11ec-be46-3701bcbe7e9a.html](https://norfolkdailynews.com/near-ukrainian-border-nebraskans-offer-play-comfort-to-child-refugees/article_02a733a6-daa4-11ec-be46-3701bcbe7e9a.html)
- 16) Wellness culture gone wrong has come for kids  
<https://www.latimes.com/lifestyle/story/2022-05-17/kids-wellness-mental-health-toys-classes>
- 17) A new report shows the impact of pandemic playtime on American kids  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferpalumbo/2022/03/25/a-new-report-shows-the-impact-of-pandemic-playtime-on-american-kids/>
- 18) Exhibition gives insight into children's play in lockdown  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/20/exhibition-gives-insight-into-childrens-play-in-lockdown>

## ITRA 2022 Fees Notice

*Please note that, according to the ITRA Board's decision in Alicante, 8<sup>th</sup> August 2005, conference fees cover ITRA membership fees until the following conference. This means that conference participants who paid full registration fees for the 8<sup>th</sup> 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 2022 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](mailto: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](mailto:itranwsltr@gmail.com). We intend to publish a Winter edition in December 2022. 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 would like to wish all ITRA members a pleasant summer.

Regards  
Suzy & Mark

*We do not stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing.*

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)