International Toy Research Association
CALL FOR PAPERS

Toys Matter:
**THE POWER
OF PLAYTHINGS**
9th ITRA World Conference

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

Submission Deadline: 31st December 2022

https://app.oxfordabstracts.com/stages/3899/submitter

INTERNATIONAL TOY
RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

ITRA 9th World Conference
TOYS MATTER: The Power of Playthings

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

The overarching theme for the 9th ITRA World Conference is ***Toys Matter: The Power of Playthings.*** The conference also marks the 30th anniversary of ITRA's founding.

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 9th 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.

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. 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

To submit a paper, symposium, workshop, 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 31st 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).

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: **31st December 2022**.

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: **31st December 2022.**

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: **31st December 2022**.

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: **31st December 2022.**

The scientific committee will review your abstract or proposal for its suitability to the conference. You will receive a reply by **1st March 2023**.

Conference registration opens on March 1, 2023. Participants must register for the conference prior to the deadline of **1st May 2023** in order to take advantage of the early registration fee. Registration closes **1st July 2023**.

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

Committees
Scientific Committee
Mark Allen, Serious Fun Research Labs, UK
Anna Beresin, University of the Arts, Philadelphia, USA
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Organizing Committee
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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

For more conference information see the full CfP at: www.itratoyresearch.org/2023_Rochester.php
Follow us on Facebook for conference announcements and updates: www.facebook.com/itra2018/
For questions about the conference contact: Greta Pennell via email: gpennell@uindy.edu