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RHYTHMOLOGY - « Rhythm as knowledge : a transdisciplinary symposium » - Faculty of English, Sidgwick Site, Cambridge - Jul 2 and 3, 2024

mardi 28 mai 2024, par [Rhuthmos](#)

[« RHYTHM AS KNOWLEDGE : A TRANSDISCIPLINARY SYMPOSIUM »](#)

Faculty of English, Sidgwick Site, Cambridge

2 Jul 2024 - 3 Jul 2024



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Convenors :

- Susannah Browne (Department of Public Health and Primary Care, Wolfson College)
- Satinder Gill (Centre for Music and Science, University of Cambridge)
- Pinar Sefkatli (Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, University of Amsterdam)
- Daniela Scalvo (Department of History and Philosophy of Science, Darwin College)
- Carolyn Smith (Department of Geography, Wolfson College)
- Lucy Thompson (Department of Geography, Trinity College)
- Mia Wroe (Department of Geography, Newnham College)

Keynotes :

- Caroline Nevejan (Chief Scientific Officer City of Amsterdam, Professor of Cultural Sociology and Designer)
- Sirishkumar Manji (Tabla Maestro, Musical Artist and Composer)

Summary :

The Rhythm Of Life is a powerful beat
 Puts a tingle in your fingers and a tingle in your feet
 Rhythm in your bedroom
 Rhythm in the street
 Yes, The Rhythm Of Life is a powerful beat !

Cy Coleman & Dorothy Fields, (1966) 'The Rhythm of Life'. Sweet Charity [Musical] New York.

Rhythm is beginning to emerge as a research paradigm : as a pathway to not only study but to actively engage with social, economic, cultural, medical and environmental phenomena (c.f. Sefkatli and Nevejan, 2020).

Rhythm asks us to listen and explore the incremental tuning process of learning to move-with (potentially non-human) others. Collective compositions are inherently flexible, capable of holding combinations of multiple, even contrasting, rhythms simultaneously ; it is within these compositions that it is possible to hear both similarities and differences ; conflicts and consensus. If we can understand rhythms, we can make choices about mutual co-adaptation - without the need for complete control of all the variables. In healthy social relationships, this flexibility allows us to retain a sense of ourselves (identity) and our priorities (agency) whilst also being part of a collective ; key research has shown that rhythmic engagement forms the basis of social cohesion, trust, and survival

(c.f. Foubert, Gill and Backer 2022). Rhythm doesn't just keep us safe, it enables empathy through intersubjectivity (Rabinowitch, 2017), and facilitates creativity.

The implications are significant as we face the 'wicked problems' of our time : from co-adaptation strategies to manage the ecological breakdown of our planet, to fostering cohesive communities that support us to live healthier, happier lives for longer ; to defining new insights to address chronic illnesses and cellular processes. These challenges require more-than-human, intercultural and trans-disciplinary creativity ; rhythm offers the potential for a horizontal, communicable and collaborative paradigm to understand patterns of interconnection. If we can (re-)learn how to embrace *The Rhythm Of Life*, perhaps we can find new ways to live 'in-tune' with ourselves, our societies, and life of/on our planet Earth.

Programme overview :

Everywhere there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is rhythm.

Henri Lefebvre, (2013 [1992], p. 25).

Ask the best orators, negotiators and teachers and they will tell you that communication is not just a didactic transmission of language, but an engagement with your audience that shapes not only *what* you say, but *how* and *when*. We believe that rhythm represents an epistemological 'turn' that moves from investigating what we know, beyond interrogating how we know it, to understanding that 'knowing *when*' is just as important (Gill, 2015) : *time is part of knowledge*. Engaging with rhythm (as a form of knowledge) allows us to move beyond traditional, exclusive epistemologies ; to instead study processes in time and understand how different elements interact, co-exist and co-adapt.

This innovative two-day symposium explores rhythm as a paradigm for transdisciplinary learning and connection ; as a common coordinate to enable meaningful communication between disciplines, and beyond the bounds of academia. There is scope for significant creative interactions between the physical and social sciences as we move to understand the co-emergent forces which shape us, our societies and our world.

The programme will explore :

What engaging with rhythm means in different environmental, disciplinary and cultural contexts, and across multiple scales.

How rhythm might aid transdisciplinary communication – as a common metaphor or mechanism for engaging with change.

How rhythm might inform new methodologies for agency through design.

The symposium will be hybrid in format, with performances and presentations from a range of disciplines and creative practices. Collaborative workshops by Sirishkumar Manji (tabla maestro, composer and artist) and Amanda Kelleher (performer, clown and mental health practitioner) will foster transdisciplinary understanding(s) through creative encounters with rhythm specialists.

Programme to be finalised in June :

Tuesday 2 July 9:30 – 18:00

Weds 3 July 10:00 – 16:30

Get involved :

Applications for participants, speakers and creative practitioners are [now open, and the deadline has now been extended to the 7 June 2024](#).