

# PUSHING BOUNDARIES

**2019 Ecsite Conference**  
Pushing Boundaries  
Copenhagen, Denmark  
6 - 8 June  
**#Ecsite2019**

## **Journalists' pack** **2019 Ecsite Conference**

6-8 June, Copenhagen, Denmark

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### **Practical Information**

- Website: <http://www.ecsite.eu/annual-conference>
- Programme: <http://www.ecsite.eu/annual-conference/programme>
- Twitter: [#Ecsite2019](#) and follow [@Ecsite](#)
- Instagram: [#Ecsite2019](#) and follow [@Ecsite\\_network](#)
- Pictures uploaded daily on the Ecsite [flickr account](#) during the conference, slideshow video published every morning on Twitter and Facebook.

Interviews can be arranged and media assistance is available on-site. The event will mostly take place at the [Experimentarium](#) science centre.

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## General media advisory, 20 May 2019

### 1,100+ science communicators to gather in Copenhagen, Denmark

Copenhagen, Denmark – Ecsite, the European network of science centres and museums, will draw up to **1,100 science communicators** from over 45 countries to its Conference. It is open to all professionals who engage audiences with science and technology, whether working in science centres, museums, research bodies, festivals, universities or companies, etc. The conference will be celebrating its **30<sup>th</sup> edition** and is hosted by and at the Experimentarium science centre, exceptionally closed to the public on 3-8 June in order to offer international science engagement peers an inspiring setting and professional playground.

The three-day event will run **6-8 June 2019** and showcase the latest research and developments in **public engagement with science** through dynamic sessions, debates, workshops and a **trade show** called the Business Bistro. Pre-conference meetings and workshops, held two days prior to the main conference (4-5 June 2019), will give in-depth insight into numerous aspects of the science communication field. Tours to local museums, cultural and educational venues are also included in the programme.

The programme offers a diverse mix of more than **90 sessions delivered by over 400 speakers**, ranging from science communication in the post-truth era to exhibition narratives. Other covered topics include climate change communication, inclusion and equity, touring exhibitions or virtual reality. The conference theme is “Pushing boundaries”, inviting the science engagement community to build on three decades of science communication and look ahead, pushing the boundaries of our field and practices.

High profile guest speakers will be:

- **Keynote speaker Margaret Wertheim**, science writer, artist and curator
- **Keynote speaker Audrey Dussutour**, slime mould specialist

More than **60 exhibitors** will be showcasing their latest products and services at the buzzing Business Bistro and participants will be able to get hands-on in **two workshop spaces**, the MakerSpace and the GameLab. Not to forget the many networking opportunities like the Gala Dinner & Show held at the Wallmans circus; the Nocturne, an evening of science entertainment at Experimentarium; and the Farewell Party, at Docken.

#### Quotes

“From 19-20 June 1990, the very first Ecsite Conference brought together a little fewer than 100 participants at Museon in The Hague. 30 years on, we are expecting...1,100 science engagement professionals in Copenhagen, for what has become the largest professional meeting of our field on the European continent. Over the past three decades, our community can be proud of having preserved and cultivated the conference's original spirit of openness, generosity, cooperation, professionalism and diversity. Whether this is your 1st or your 30th conference, you will meet enthusiastic peers and kind critical friends, curious to share, think, make business, tinker, play and party together.” **Herbert Munder, President of Ecsite / General Manager, Universum Bremen, Germany**

“As one of the founding members of Ecsite, Experimentarium is immensely proud to host the Ecsite Conference. And on a personal note, I simply can’t wait to see more than a thousand of the brightest minds in our field playing, learning and having fun in our brand-new exhibitions. The new Experimentarium opened in 2017 and was listed by TIME Magazine as one of the 100 World’s Greatest Places in 2018. We made Time Magazine’s list by pushing boundaries – and fittingly our conference theme is ‘Pushing Boundaries’, reflecting our shared desire, and the need, to evolve science communication to fit a new age.” **Kim Gladstone Herlev, CEO, Experimentarium, Copenhagen, Denmark.**

### **About Ecsite**

Ecsite is the European network of science centres and museums. Ecsite’s vision is to foster creativity and critical thinking in European society, emboldening citizens to engage with science. Its mission is to inspire and empower science centres, museums and all organisations that engage people with science, and to promote their actions. Founded almost 30 years ago, the network gathers more than 320 organisations in Europe and world-wide. [www.ecsite.eu](http://www.ecsite.eu)

### **About the conference host**

#### **Experimentarium**

At Experimentarium, we believe that you learn the best, when you’re are having fun. Our ambition is to transform the way children and adults experience and understand science and technology in context of their own lives. We are a non-profit organization with 150 employees.

The first version of Experimentarium opened in 1991 as Denmark’s very first science center. After a complete makeover, the new Experimentarium opened in January 2017. More than doubled in size, the new Experimentarium boasts four floors with 18 interactive exhibitions, designed and built almost entirely by Experimentarium. The 18 exhibitions are designed as separate universes each exploring specific scientific subjects or phenomena.

In 2018 world-renowned TIME Magazine listed Experimentarium among the 100 World’s Greatest Places. The list – the first of its kind – compiles the best and most innovative attractions from 6 continents and more than 40 countries.

[www.experimentarium.dk](http://www.experimentarium.dk)

## Highlight 1: Celebrating 30 years for Ecsite

Thirty years ago the European science centre field was a confidential but very rapidly growing stage. Convinced that learning from each would help them serve their audiences better, two dozen European science centres founded their own professional exchange hub: Ecsite, the European network of science centres and museums, was born in a process that took 2.5 years from October 1988 to January 1991.

In three decades, membership numbers, conference crowds and the Ecsite team were all multiplied by ten. Yet in spite of our network's and field's impressive growth and diversification beyond Ecsite's "historic" science centre and science museum membership, the founding values of cooperation, openness, professionalism, generosity and diversity are intact.

Mirroring the network's gestation that took multiple gatherings and several revolutions around the Sun, thirty years later Ecsite members decided to grant themselves the luxury of time: the whole science engagement field is invited to an anniversary season that started last autumn and is spanning several months.

This is an invitation to celebrate, reflect and act, under the unifying hashtag #Ecsite30. Of course we are taking pride in our accomplishments and cheered together at a beautiful festive moment at the 2019 Ecsite Conference this June. But we are also using this opportunity to look ahead and shape the future, building on our strategic insights and collective creativity.

How can we best serve the societies we live in in the next 30 years? The discussion is open.

A special anniversary edition

- This anniversary edition will surprise conference regulars: there will be more parallel sessions than in past editions, some of which will be taking place in unusual settings like Experimentarium's iconic helix coper staircase; participants will be able to choose between a "classic" seated lunch and a picnic wherever they want, including in exhibition spaces; plenary moments will be live streamed to almost a dozen spaces in Experimentarium, where participants will enjoy these moments with coffee, snacks or informal seating depending on the space they choose; etc.
- A short film on Ecsite's anniversary will be released at the Conference's opening on Thursday 6 June, 9.45
- There will be a special "Happy birthday" moment at the Nocturne, Experimentarium, Friday 7 June, 22.00

More on the Ecsite anniversary

- [Column](#) by the Ecsite President
- [Interviews](#) with five people who played a crucial role in founding and/or building Ecsite

## Highlight 2: 2019 Mariano Gago Ecsite Awards to be revealed at Opening ceremony (6 June)

### And the winners are...

The winners of the 2019 Mariano Gago Ecsite Awards will be announced at the Opening Ceremony of the Ecsite Conference in Copenhagen on 6 June (9.45-11.00) by Sharon Ament, Chairperson of the Jury and Director of the Museum of London. Representatives of winning organisations will be stepping on stage to receive their trophy and share a few words about their project.

Created in 2015, the Mariano Gago Ecsite Awards encourage creative and impactful work within the informal science education sector.

The awards are named after José Mariano Gago (1948 - 2015), a key figure of European science engagement. He was a founder of the Portuguese Ciência Viva network of science centres and an active contributor to Ecsite activities over the years.

Open to all Ecsite members, they provide an incentive and reward whose prestige contributes to the development of excellence in science engagement.

There were two categories this year:

The Sustainable Success category celebrates **long-lasting impact**: projects that embody the values of science engagement, that are visionary and socially relevant.

The Beacon of the Year Award celebrates **inspirational individuals** who have been contributing to our field and to the Ecsite network. The Award recognises innovative visionaries who are empowering and motivating their peers to reach a common goal: emboldening citizens to engage with science.

An organisation will also be getting a Special mention.

*Find out more on the [dedicated page](#).*

*Full news with quotes to be released on the Ecsite website very soon after the announcement.*

## More about the keynote speakers

### **Margaret Wertheim – Friday 7 June, 10.30**

[Margaret Wertheim](#) is an internationally acclaimed writer, artist and curator whose work focuses on relations between science and the wider cultural landscape. The author of six books, including *The Pearly Gates of Cyberspace* and *Physics on the Fringe*, she has written for the *New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Cabinet*, *Aeon* and many others. Margaret and her twin sister Christine are founders of the [Institute For Figuring](#), a Los Angeles-based practice devoted to the poetic and aesthetic dimensions of science and mathematics. The sisters have created exhibitions for the Hayward Gallery (London), Science Gallery (Dublin), Mass MoCA (MA) and elsewhere. Their [Crochet Coral Reef project](#) has been shown internationally including at the Andy Warhol Museum (Pittsburgh), Museum of Arts and Design (New York), Deutsches Museum (Munich), and the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History (Washington D.C.) Margaret has been awarded Australia's Scientia Medal for science communication and the American Association of Physics Teachers' prestigious Klopsteg Award for "conveying the excitement of physics."

### **Audrey Dussutour – Saturday 8 June, 10.30**

Audrey Dussutour is a Researcher at the Research Centre on Animal Cognition of Toulouse University, France. Her unit works on animal cognition, neuroscience, animal behaviour and computational biology. Audrey's most recent work focuses on proto-cognition in slime moulds, these intriguing single-cell eukaryotic organisms that, in line with this year's "Pushing boundaries" conference theme, don't really fit in a box. Her group's recent studies suggest that slime moulds may be an ideal model system in which to investigate fundamental mechanisms underlying the ground-floor of learning abilities, as they are able to learn and share knowledge without the help of a brain.