

SENSING CHANGE

Festival

Rhythms of Change:

The Perception and Mapping of Dynamic Processes

Saturday, Oct 18, 2025

4:00 – 7:00 PM

Symposium Registration: [RSVP](#) by Thursday, 10/16, 12 PM

Venue: Parsons School of Design
66 5th Ave, New York, NY 10011
Saturday, October 18, 2025, 4 - 7 PM
Parsons School of Design | The New School | Sheila C. Johnson Design
Center | Anna-Maria and Stephen Keller Auditorium Room N101
66 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10011

We are delighted to invite you to the symposium *Rhythms of Change*, organized in collaboration with the Synthetic Ecosystems Lab and Parsons School of Design. Together, we will explore the perception and mapping of dynamic processes through a series of talks and discussions.

The symposium focuses on life as a dynamic process, unfolding across geological, technological, ecological, and cultural dimensions. It examines planetary tipping points and nonlinear feedbacks shaping Earth's history, convergences between living systems and technology, and the entanglement of ecological processes with human infrastructures. It also brings critical perspectives on resilience, adaptation, and poetic ecological imaginaries that reframe life as an ever-transforming force.

This symposium is part of ***Sensing Change Festival***, a citywide Festival presented by **Art Switch Foundation** and **Transparent Eyeball**. This year's edition explores how humans and more-than-humans perceive and participate in change – exploring ecological systems and geological shifts to embodied knowledge and cultural transformation.

PROGRAM

Introduction: 4:00 – 4:15 PM

Adam Vackar (Transparent Eyeball), Johanna Rietveld & Anika Schroter (Art Switch Foundation), and Harpreet Sareen (Synthetic Ecosystems Lab, Parsons School of Design)

The afternoon begins with a welcome by the organizers. Together, they will introduce the symposium's conceptual frame. Building on the festival's engagement with process philosophy and resilience thinking, this session invites the audience to consider how change is not only observed but also embodied—across physical systems, living organisms, and speculative infrastructures.

Session One: 4:20 – 4:45 PM

Poetic Ecology and Subjective Knowledge
Andreas Weber (zoom)

Biologist and philosopher Andreas Weber presents his theory of “poetic ecology,” in which organisms are seen as sentient, meaning-making beings. Rethinking the biosphere not as a system of inputs and outputs but as a realm of subjectivity and feeling, Weber proposes an ecology grounded in empathy, imagination, and embodied experience. His work deepens the notion of sensing to include inner worlds and emotional intelligence across species boundaries.

Session Two: 4:50 – 5:30 PM

Paces of Persistence: Life and the Imbalance of Nature
Keynote by Daniel H. Rothman

Lorenz Center, Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Science, MIT

Prof. Daniel H. Rothman's lecture explores how life and the environment have never been in balance. Extinctions occur when the pace of change exceeds the capacity to adapt, while microbial life persists by slowing its metabolism and keeping the environment from ever reaching equilibrium. Together, they reveal an Earth where the imbalance of nature and the persistence of life are inseparable.

Short Break**5:30 – 5:50**

Session Three: 5:50 – 6:15 PM***Hybrid Systems and Convergent Ecologies*****Harpreet Sareen**

Designer and researcher Harpreet Sareen introduces his research into biohybrid systems and convergent design. Drawing from electronics, plant biology, and material science, Sareen develops living sensors and responsive interfaces that reconfigure the boundaries between natural and synthetic. His work demonstrates new possibilities for designing in collaboration with living organisms, offering an embodied and ecological model for technological innovation.

Panel Discussion with Q&A: 6:20 – 7:00 PM**With Daniel H. Rothman, Harpreet Sareen, Tega Brain, Abigail Perez Aguilera****Moderated by Abigail Perez-Aguillera**

The symposium concludes with a collective conversation among the speakers and the audience. Reflecting on the themes of planetary transformation, biological agency, poetic attention, and techno-ecological design, the discussion asks: What new forms of perception do we need in order to live with change? How do we cultivate practices of sensing that are not only empirical but also imaginative, ethical, and responsive?

About the speakers:**Daniel H. Rothman**

Professor of Geophysics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Co-Director of the Lorenz Center, where he studies how life and the physical environment co-evolve through the lens of mathematics and nonlinear physics. His work focuses on the carbon cycle, climate dynamics, and the emergence of global biogeochemical patterns, offering fundamental insights into the forces shaping Earth's past, present, and future. Rothman joined MIT initially to strengthen its seismology program—only to carve new ground in

complex systems, from fluid dynamics and pattern formation to mass extinction events. His models reveal how instabilities in the carbon cycle relate to planetary tipping points, contributing a theoretical framework to pressing environmental questions at planetary scale.

Tega Brain

Tega Brain is an Australian artist and environmental engineer born when atmospheric CO₂ was below 350ppm. Her work addresses issues of ecology, data, automation, and infrastructure and has taken the form of digital networks controlled by environmental phenomena, schemes for obfuscating personal data, and a wildly popular, online smell-based dating service. Through these provisional systems, she investigates how technologies orchestrate and reorchestrate agency. Her first book, *Code as Creative Medium* (MIT Press, 2021), is coauthored with Golan Levin. She is an Industry Associate Professor of Integrated Design and Media at New York University and also serves on the board for the School for Poetic Computation.

Harpreet Sareen

Harpreet Sareen is an Associate Professor at Parsons School of Design, where he leads research at the intersection of biology, electronics, and material science. His concept of Convergent Design explores hybrid systems—living materials, bionic substrates, and ecological sensors that reimagine interaction and environmental intelligence. A graduate of the MIT Media Lab, Harpreet has worked with Google Creative Lab, Microsoft Research, Ars Electronica, and others. He is a Berggruen Honorary Fellow, INK Fellow, and was named an MIT Innovator Under 35. His work bridges disciplines to shape responsive, nature-aligned technologies for the future.

Abigail Perez Aguilera

Environmental Scholar of Climate, Mobility, and Ecological Resilience. Assistant Professor at The New School, where she studies how environmental crises intersect with migration, toxicity, and territorial health across global contexts. Her work weaves together policy, ecology, and social transformation to examine how communities adapt and respond to the pressures of climate change and environmental degradation. Drawing from case studies in the Global South and beyond, she explores multispecies resilience, the politics of mobility, and embodied ecological knowledge. Through her teaching and research, she builds critical frameworks for understanding how systems—social, ecological, and political—respond to rupture, reconfigure, and endure.

Andreas Weber

Biologist, philosopher, and nature writer with degrees in Marine Biology and Cultural Studies. Having collaborated with theoretical biologist Francisco Varela, his work rethinks organisms as subjects and the biosphere as a poetic, meaning-creating reality. In books such as *The Biology of Wonder, Enlivenment* (MIT Press, 2019), and *Sharing Life* (Boell Foundation, 2020), he develops a “poetic ecology” that understands feeling as the principle of all life, proposing that subjectivity and imagination are the foundations of existence. He teaches at the University of the Arts, Berlin, and the Università delle Scienze Gastronomiche in Pollenzo, Italy.

About the Organizations:

About Art Switch Foundation

Art Switch Foundation is a NYC/Amsterdam-based nonprofit in the field of Art and Climate Action. We connect, educate, and engage with artists, scientists, academics, and art professionals. We are a trans-disciplinary platform centering on public programming with a focus on climate-forward and regenerative art practices.

Our activities are community-centered and future-forward to establish networks necessary for a systemic climate-conscious shift in the arts. Always curious about how the micro-level informs the macro and vice versa, our practice is fueled by crosspollination and an eagerness to bridge the gaps between theory and action.

About Transparent Eyeball

Transparent Eyeball is a transdisciplinary collaborative practice steered by artist Adam Vackar, together with biologist Jindrich Brejcha, supported by experienced administrator Bara Panikova. Our practice at the intersection of visual art and biology, with overlaps in botany, anthropology, landscape architecture, geology, and philosophy, aims to explore new paradigms of knowledge based on the understanding of the biological perspective of life and existence for both non-human species and humans. The fascinating processes underlying non-human life can contribute to a better understanding of human existence, behavior, and culture. We engage audiences with discussions, talks, and exhibitions.

About Synthetic Ecosystems Lab

Synthetic Ecosystems Lab focuses on post-human and non-human design. It is directed by Harpreet Sareen, designer, researcher, and artist, creating mediated digital interactions through the living world, with growable electronics, organic robots, and bionic materials. His work has been shown in museums, featured in media in 30+ countries, published in academic conferences, viewed on social media 5M+ times, and used by thousands of people around the world. He has also worked professionally in museums, corporations, and international research centers in five countries, and is currently an Associate Professor at Parsons School of Design in New York City.

***Sensing Change* festival is sponsored by the Ministry of Culture Czech Republic, Teiger Foundation, and 1014 - Space for Ideas.**