
SHAPESHIFTERS
SYMPOSIUM
Plasticity – Here, There,
and Everywhere
UMC Utrecht
Utrecht University
WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITEIT
MAATSCHAPPIJWETENSCHAPPEN
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UNIVERSITY
TECHNOLO
CENTRE FOR
UNUSUAL
COLLABORATIONS
19–21 NOV 2026
UTRECHT, NL
Museum Speelkok & UMU

SHAPESHIFTERS SYMPOSIUM

Plasticity – Here, There, and Everywhere

A TRANSDISCIPLINARY EXPLORATION OF PLASTICITY

Plasticity — the ability to change, adapt and take multiple forms — is a central concept across the sciences, humanities and arts. Join researchers and artists to explore how plasticity is understood and experienced across disciplines. Keynotes, contributed talks and panel conversations connect these perspectives.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Suparna Choudhury
Concordia University (CA)

Heleen Slagter
Vrije Universiteit (NL)

Zakiyyah Iman Jackson
Duke University (USA)

Maurizio Meloni
Deakin University (AU)

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

THU 19 NOV
Museum Speelklok

Session 1 · Plasticity as Biological Memory: Traces, Inheritance and Transformation
Ralf Sommer, Mateo Sanchez Petrement, Onur Başak

Session 2 · Plastic Minds: Soul, Brain and Cognition
Jorge Ernesto Arjona Quintero, Igor Branchi, Yaron Caspi

SAT 21 NOV
University Museum Utrecht

Where do we go from here?

What do we want to leave behind for the concept of plasticity? In the peer discussion session, we will brainstorm in groups to think together about what we want plasticity to become in the future.

FRI 20 NOV
University Museum Utrecht

Session 3 · Malleable Selves: Plasticity, Identity and Power
Jamie Wolvekamp, Cecilia Strand, Ziyang Xie

Session 4 · The Limits of Plasticity: Form, Slowness and Refusal
Chiara Robbiano, Wim Noorduin, Ohad Ben Shimon

Session 5 · Plasticity in Context: Environments, Institutions and Education
Rahul Pandit, Mark Sterken, Heejung Ryoh

Each Thursday and Friday session concludes with an interdisciplinary panel Q&A.

ORGANISERS

Onur Başak, PhD Yaron Caspi, PhD Jenny Evang, PhD Ohad Ben Shimon, PhD Mark Sterken, PhD Sorcha Ní Bhraonáin

PROGRAMME & REGISTRATION

Scan the QR code to view the full programme and register for the symposium.

Communicating Plasticity Consortium · Centre for Unusual Collaborations · EWUU Alliance