

# THE POETIC ENCHANTMENTS OF SCIENCE

Margaret Wertheim



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**2.00 pm–4.00 pm**

Presented by the Faculty of Arts and Education

Deakin Downtown  
Level 12, Tower 2, Collins Square  
727 Collins Street, Melbourne

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# The Poetic Enchantments of Science

The Welsh writer Merrily Harpur has written that: “The duty of artists everywhere is to enchant the conceptual landscape.” It may not be the duty of scientists to produce conceptual enchantment, but in the latest seminar offered as part of the REDI Seminar Series, Margaret Wertheim will propose that this is one of the goals scientists and mathematicians achieve.

In 2003, Wertheim founded the Institute For Figuring (IFF), a collaborative enterprise with her artist twin sister Christine that is dedicated to “the poetic and aesthetic dimensions of science and mathematics.” The IFF can be conceived of as a “play tank” – a new kind of practice for exploring creative engagement with topics ranging from geometry and topology, to physics, computation, and biological form. Here, Margaret will discuss the methodologies she has developed for shaping and sharing imaginative speculative play practices that provide insight into the realms of math and science.

From a worldwide project to model coral reefs using the art of crochet, to building giant fractals from tens of thousands of fluorescently colored business cards, Wertheim’s practice offers experiences for playing with ideas.

## Margaret Wertheim



Margaret Wertheim is an internationally noted 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*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Guardian*, *New Scientist*, *Washington Post* and *Aeon*. She is a contributing editor at *Cabinet*.

Through the IFF, Margaret has designed exhibitions for galleries and museums in a dozen countries, among them the Hayward Gallery, London, and the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History, Washington D.C. The IFF’s “Crochet Coral Reef” project – created by Margaret and twin sister Christine – is the largest participatory science-and-art endeavor in the world, and has been shown at the Andy Warhol Museum (Pittsburgh), Science Gallery (Dublin), New York University Abu Dhabi, and elsewhere. Through an unlikely conjunction of handicraft and geometry, the Crochet Coral Reef offers a window into mathematics while addressing the issue of reef degradation due to global warming. Margaret Wertheim is a PhD candidate in Deakin University’s Faculty of Arts and Education.

Register online by 17 April: [bit.ly/2mNDiuA](https://bit.ly/2mNDiuA)

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