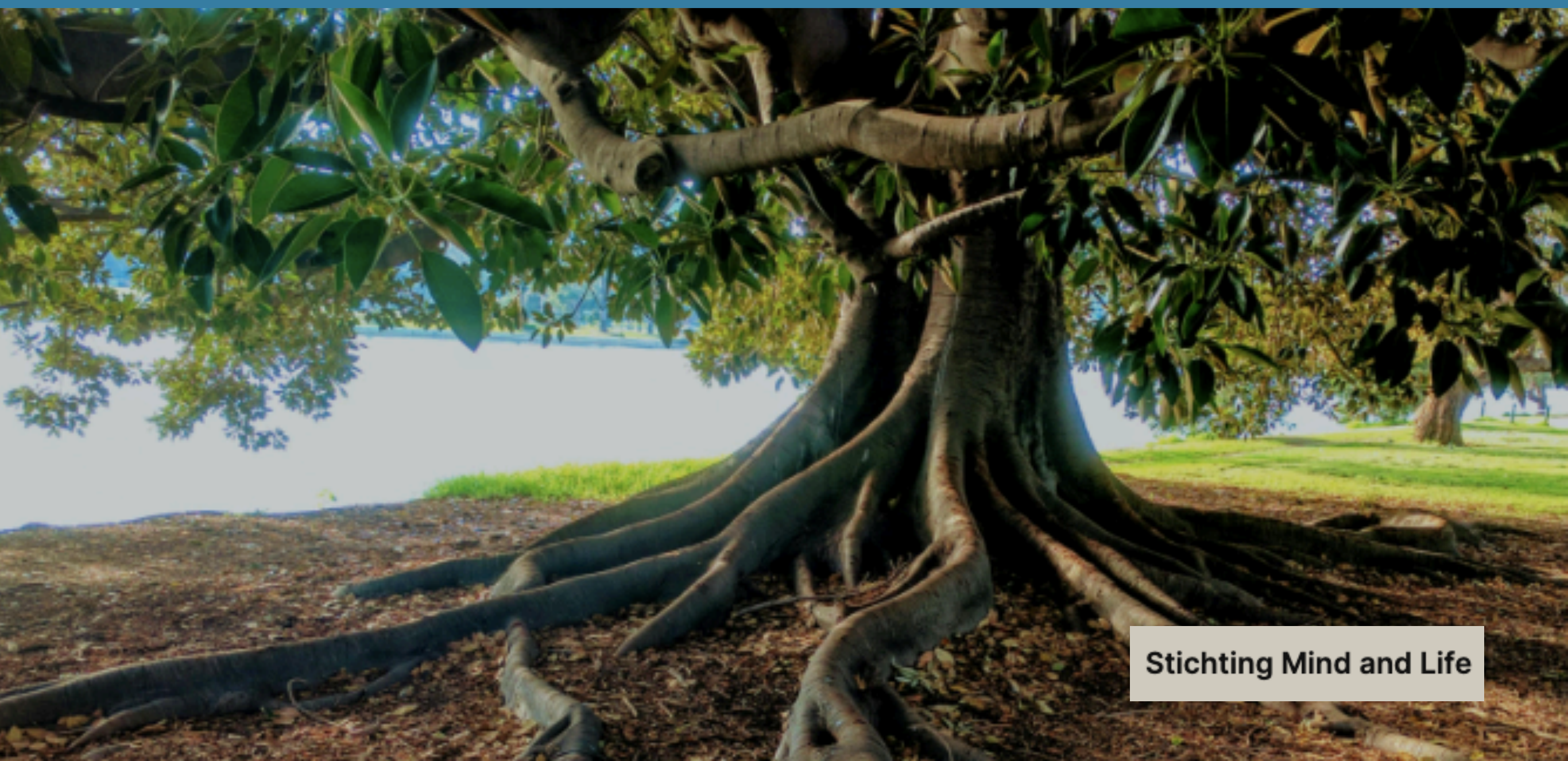


Activity Report 2023



Stichting Mind and Life

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Who Are We?

FACILITATING AND PROMOTING DIALOGUE



Stichting Mind and Life is a foundation governed by the laws of the Netherlands, having its registered seat in the municipality of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and its office address at Fongersplaats 43, 9725 LC Groningen, the Netherlands. It is registered on the Commercial Register of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce (KvK number: 67382908), and with the Dutch tax authorities (RSIN: 856959947).

The goal of the foundation is to facilitate and promote a dialogue between sciences, humanities, and contemplative traditions, thus furthering the field of contemplative sciences, with the aim of contributing to human flourishing, well-being, and the common good.

Our History

Stichting Mind and Life was founded on the 30th November 2016 in Amsterdam. We have been collaborating with our original founder organisation, Mind & Life Europe (MLE) in Switzerland, to bridge and integrate contemplative wisdom and practices with modern research capabilities and bring a new wave of initiatives into the European science community. After some restructuring between 2021-2023, today we operate as an independent foundation in order to develop collaborations and partnerships with like-minded organisations in the Netherlands and throughout the European Union.

Board Members



AMY COHEN VARELA
Board Chair
France



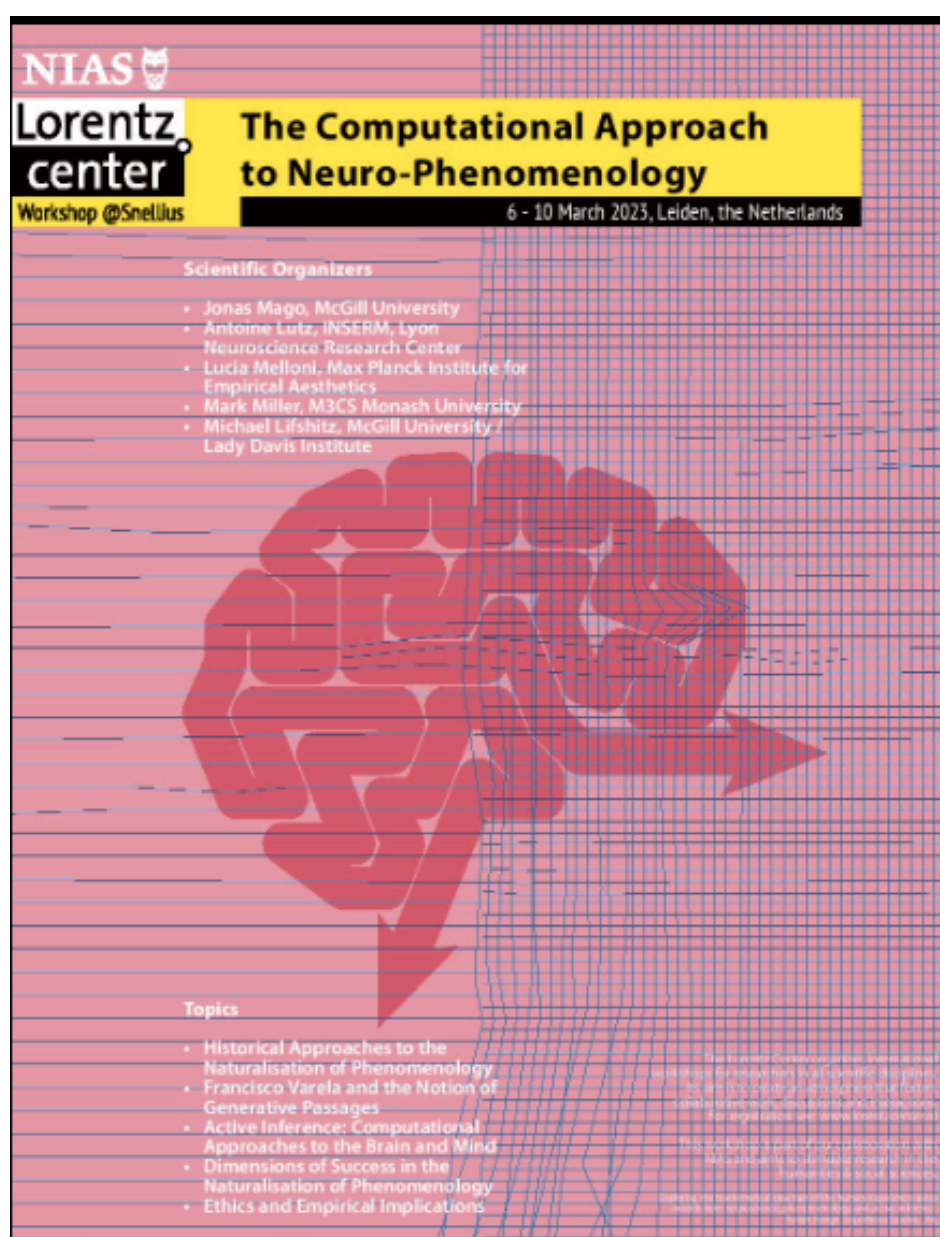
GÁBOR KARSAI
Hungary

Summary of Partnership Events in 2023

- 1. The Computational Approach to Neuro-Phenomenology workshop (6th-10th March, The Lorentz Center, Leiden, The Netherlands)**
- 2. Varela International Symposium: *Worldmaking/ Sensemaking: Intersubjectivity, Cooperation, Precariousness* (25th-28th May, Upaya Zen Center, Santa Fe, New Mexico, US, hybrid event)**
- 3. Cortona Week 2023: Science and the Wholeness of Life (16th-23rd July, Certosa di Pontignano, Italy)**
- 4. Enactive Ethics of Responsibility Workshop (25th September, University of Pardubice, Czech Republic)**
- 5. 1st International Conference on Environmental Mindfulness (ICEM) (13th-16th November, Rome, Italy)**

The Computational Approach to Neuro-Phenomenology workshop

6th-10th March, The Lorentz Center, Leiden, The Netherlands



This workshop brought together 25 researchers in the fields of

phenomenology, neuroscience, philosophy, and

computational modelling to

discuss how the recent advancements in computational modelling—specifically **Bayesian mechanics** and the **active inference framework**—may inform the study of lived experience and vice versa.

The programme consisted of one or two keynote lectures per day,

discussion rounds, and working groups that aimed to translate the discussions into a special issue for the *Neuroscience of Consciousness* journal.

The event was held at The Lorentz Center in Leiden, The Netherlands. Mind & Life Europe was one of the sponsors of the event, alongside Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIAS)

Varela International Symposium: *Worldmaking/Sensemaking: Intersubjectivity, Cooperation, Precariousness*

25th-28th May, Upaya Zen Center, Santa Fe, New Mexico, US, hybrid event

Over the weekend of May 25th-28th, we co-organised the **Varela International Symposium** with the Upaya Institute and Zen Center. This online event was titled: ***“Worldmaking/Sensemaking: Intersubjectivity, Cooperation, Precariousness”***. It brought together a remarkable faculty to explore cutting-edge areas of science, philosophy, and contemplative practices.

In the programme participants had the opportunity to explore

the profound questions around ***making sense of our experience and our place in this very precarious world.***

Faculty members: Roshi Joan Halifax, PhD, Amy Cohen Varela, John Dunne, PhD, Evan Thompson, PhD, Adam Frank, PhD, Richard Davidson, PhD, Andreas Roepstorff, PhD, Melissa K. Nelson, PhD, Molly J. Crockett, PhD, Laura Candiott, PhD, Sensei Al Kaszniak, PhD

MIND & LIFE EUROPE

UPAYA ZEN CENTER

JOIN US ONLINE OR IN PERSON!

VARELA INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM:
Worldmaking/Sensemaking: Precariousness,
Connectedness, Cooperation
May 25th — May 27th, 2023

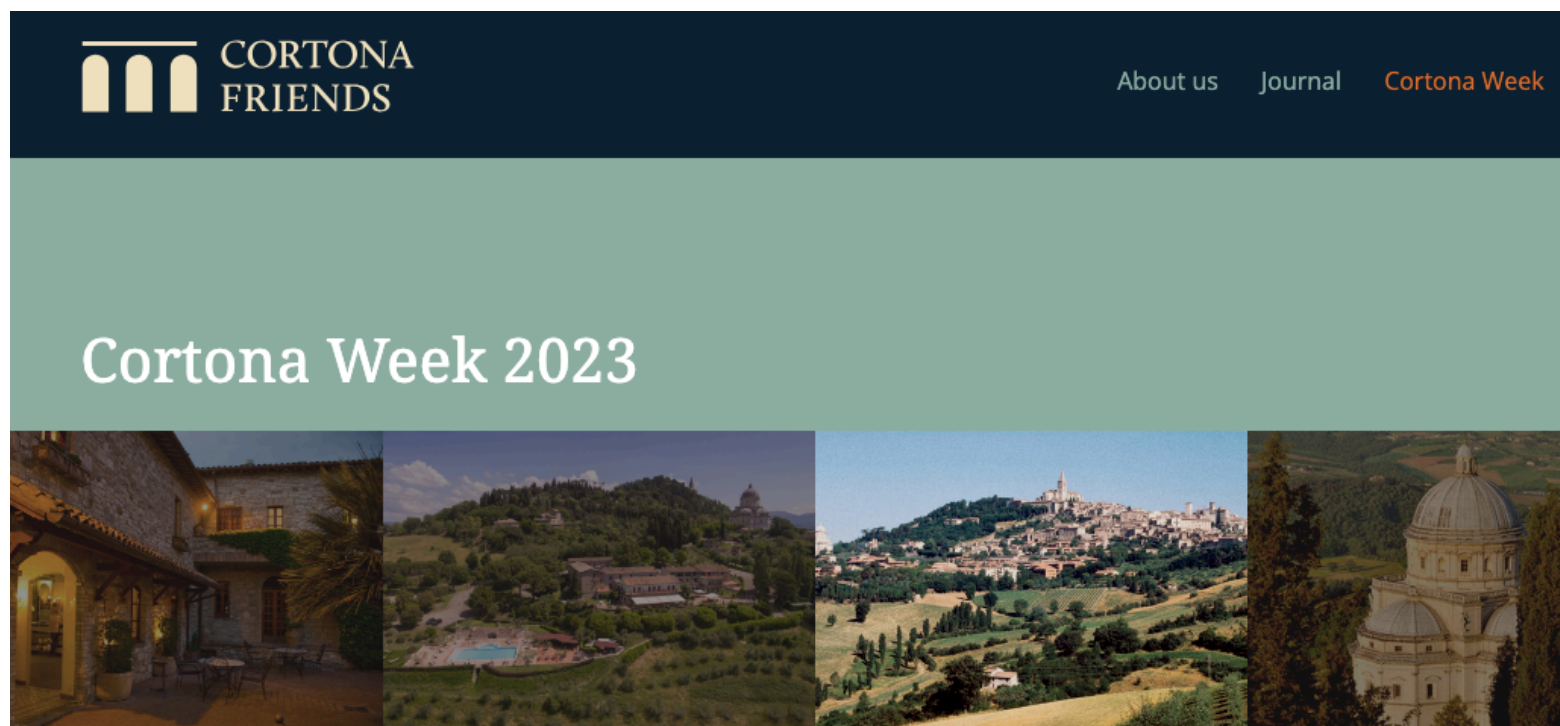
Cortona Week 2023: Science and the Wholeness of Life

16th-23rd July, Certosa di Pontignano, Italy

Cortona Week 2023 was an **interdisciplinary, international summer-school-retreat**, where students and other participants mingle with teachers and experts in physical and humanistic sciences, with ecologists, spiritual leaders, artists and musicians – a group from all over the world, **discussing fundamental questions about life and our world**. Workshops, lectures,

and discussions in the lavish setting of a beautifully restored old monastery in Tuscany offered a sublime diversity of perspectives to delve into, challenge and stimulate the emergence of new insights in a group of dedicated and curious minds, spanning disciplines, nations and generations. The aim was to form a new class of world leaders acquainted with a brighter awareness and an increased capacity to efficiently tackle the problems of our world today.

The 2023 Cortona Week took place between July 16th and July 23rd in the beautiful Certosa di Pontignano, near Siena, Tuscany, Italy. The Week's theme was **Science and the Wholeness of Life**.



Enactive Ethics of Responsibility Workshop

25th September, University of Pardubice, Czech Republic

An enactive perspective on the scope and possibility of human responsibility toward cultivating the collective good is more relevant today than ever, with the many crises and wars that are damaging and destroying the life of human and non-human beings worldwide. Fighting against the temptation of exemption, complicity, and inertia, an enactive approach to caring for life stresses that there is something that we humans can and should do together.

This workshop considered the value of enactive approaches for tackling human responsibility from an anti-individualistic perspective. New dialogues between enaction, situated affectivity, critical phenomenology, hermeneutics, practice theory, and metaethical constitutivism were explored to identify new conceptual tools and resources for thinking about shared responsibility and joint action in caring for life. For instance, we critically reflected on what it means to care for life from within our embodied shared sentience and what

the role of loving attention, empathy, and compassion is in caring for others' flourishing. We also focused on the role of interpretation, imagination, and critical thinking in the ethics of sense-making. The main aim of this workshop was to generate new questions and answers to further develop the research field of enactive ethics in a participatory and action-oriented manner.

Speakers:

- Carla Bagnoli (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, IT)
- Laura Candiotti (University of Pardubice, CZ)
- Geoffrey Dierckxsens (Czech Academy of Science, CZ)
- Antony Fredriksson (University of Pardubice, CZ)
- Gabor Karsai (Stichting Mind and Life, HU)
- Imke von Maur (University of Osnabrück, DE)
- Martin Weichold (University of Dresden, DE)

1st International Conference on Environmental Mindfulness (ICEM)

13th-16th November, Rome, Italy

MLE was a supporting partner of the **1st International Conference on Environmental Mindfulness (ICEM)**, which aimed to provide an opportunity for researchers and contemplatives to meet and share ideas on the subject of mindfulness and sustainable behaviours. It brought together a **community of environmental psychologists, mindfulness experts, and neuropsychological scientists** interested in those crucial topics to set the research agenda for the coming years.

ICEM aims not only to define the state-of-the-art research about mindfulness and environmental science, but also to create a community of passionate scientists, environmentally conscious people, and human beings.

Distinctive Features:

- Fostered dialogue between disciplines that have developed separately in the last decades, including **contemplative science and environmental psychology**.
- Each conference day began and ended with a guided meditation on the themes of human nature, connectedness and environmental engagement, to foster awareness and biophilic empathy in attendees.
- The conference was held in Rome and those attendees who could not attend in person were able to follow the conference remotely.



