

# Economia – The Limited Edition, 2020

## Call for papers & artworks.

15, 16 May 2020, NatLab, Eindhoven, The Netherlands.

Economia – The Limited Edition is a conference taking place at Natlab, the former Philips physics laboratory, aiming to invent new avenues for playful and imaginative future developments in Economics. The first Economia festival, organised in 2017 by Baltan Laboratories pushed the boundaries of our thinking about the economy. On 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of May 2020, we will explore new ideas and delve into the ways in which we could meet the needs of everyone within the means of our (human) resources. Economia – The Limited Edition will examine alternative value systems, such as abundance and scarcity, and growth and degrowth.

The theme of the conference derives from Homo economicus, a concept in which man is first and foremost an economic being, directed towards the satisfaction of his needs in an efficient, rational and logical manner. Economia will examine which systems maintain this deeply held belief and prevent real change. Moving away from a world driven by profits over everything else, Homo economicus could fulfil its role as an economic being in relation with the world, exploring the new ideals of saving the planet, preventing the exploitation of people and fantasising about inverting the paradigm of unlimited growth.

Economia – The Limited Edition is a laboratory of ideas; a place where, for a while, we can step out of the existing frame and approach Economics in an unexpected, playful and fundamental manner. Let's take another look at our economic system and globalised society with the fresh and sometimes detached view of the visitor, researcher, gamer, alien and artist. Let's reclaim the economy as a social and cultural construct that we created, ridding us of the idea of the economy as an inevitable law of nature.

### About Economia

Anyone who occasionally watches Sci-Fi knows that the living conditions on Mars are a far cry from the current conditions on Earth. The hardships that humanity would have to face to survive on other planets would be huge. The question should not therefore be whether we can survive on a Mars-like planet, but instead how to prevent Earth turning into such an inhospitable place. How can we change our economic paradigm of endless growth, in an era in which human activity impacts Earth's environment so profoundly?

The biosphere of the Earth is as big as it gets. There is no room to expand; thus, economic growth ultimately comes at the expense of the living space of others. If you look at the Earth from space, it turns out to be a zero-sum game; as humanity continues to grow, we take up more space, leaving less for other species. Even if we all go organic, become vegan and use only renewable energy, our continuously increasing prosperity and ever-growing population means we will slowly but surely make life impossible for ourselves and other species.

In any other natural process, growth stops as soon as it encounters a limitation. Since the dawn of humanity, our technological abilities have enabled us to overcome these limitations. We will have to intervene in our own growth if we don't want to end up on a Mars-like planet.

This kind of intervention requires a fundamental shift in our thinking. Economics reduces the various approaches to understanding our complex and unpredictable economic behaviour into one comprehensive theory, the neoliberal model, which has a huge influence on our ideas, hopes and dreams; the way we see ourselves; and how we organise society. Although a growing number of critical views exist, it is striking how little imagination many of these alternative approaches invoke.

To give an example, Economics has no equivalent for multiple universes, singularity or space travel. The strange lifeforms in the depths of the ocean or on other planets; or artificial or eternal life. Economics is astoundingly prosaic, and rather than exploring and pushing the boundaries of its own domain, it seems to move inward in precisely the opposite direction.

## Call for Papers & Ideas

In the search for new economic insights and alternatives to the current model, why not start by treating the economy like any other social and cultural construct, taking ownership so that we can reshape and rework it as we see fit? We welcome academic researchers, designers, artists, scientists, students, scholars, (social) entrepreneurs, visionaries and other creative thinkers and practitioners to submit proposals for *Economia – The Limited Edition* with regards to the following themes:

**1. The economy as evolution**

In human activities, it is virtually impossible to find such optimal allocations of resources, development and co-operation as those found in nature, such as the bee hive, the ant hill and the coral reef. Can we design a system inspired by nature – or with nature – that strives to move beyond human aspirations and endless growth? Can we image ourselves as being part of nature instead of above? This theme explores what we can learn from nature's *modus operandi* and how to apply it in everyday life.

**2. The economy as a game**

Just like any other type of relationship, the system of economic relationships adheres to certain laws and regulations. Gaming is about learning the rules and exploring what the current system has to offer in terms of winning and losing. This theme explores the underlying mechanism(s) that define a game. What kinds of rules define our economic system? What happens when the existing rules are no longer valid? Can we have an economic system without winners and losers?

**3. The economy as magic**

We can buy things through the exchange of goods, services or money, or by the exchange of trust – the promise of a later payment. The economy, and more specifically finance, can bend or expand time, bringing money from the future to the present. It can create and destroy value(s) with the help of signatures, algorithms and phrases in contracts. This theme explores the economy as a form of exchange based on trust, speculation, value creation and value extraction in the context of abundance and scarcity or growth and degrowth. Can we prompt new forms of economic exchange? Can value be redesigned?

**4. The economy as a playground**

Since the Industrial Revolution, human creativity has played an essential role in the increasing automation of our world. Humans have the ability to connect seemingly unconnected dots to solve problems we have never seen before. Creativity can translate complexity into meaningful and tangible propositions. In times of increased human-machine competitiveness, resourcefulness becomes a crucial asset. This theme explores the vital role of creativity in the transition towards a sustainable creative economy.

**5. The economy as a caretaker**

Never before have we been as rich as we are today. Our economy progressed extensively over the past century. The accumulation of wealth is generally regarded as a universal method for achieving prosperity and progression; however, despite all this productivity and wealth, we are not necessarily happier. Increasing numbers of jobs bring no added value. In the context of increasing automatisisation, can an economy based on paid jobs be future-proof? This theme explores the types of transformation needed to thrive in a society which focusses on wellbeing rather than wealth.

**6. The economy of the commons**

In times of large-scale transitions, ecological decline and shifting (financial) infrastructures, we urgently need new models of governance. A different mindset is required, based on human solidarity, quality of life and ecological sustainability rather than private capital, globalisation and debt-based growth. This theme explores new types of governance for our globalised economy. How can self-organising communities manage resources based on mutual trust and cooperation?

## Proposal Requirements

Proposals should explore at least one (or more) of the proposed themes. The selected participants will be invited to present their paper/research as part of the conference in Eindhoven.

- Proposal requirements: max 400-word and a short 100-word biography.
- Deadline for submission: 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2019.
- Notifications of acceptance will be sent no later than the 20<sup>th</sup> of February 2020.

## Artwork proposals

We will select art projects based on quality, feasibility and the connection to the theme. We have limited budget to cover for artists fee, lodging and travel. Proposals for art projects (e.g. installations, performances, video, etc.) should contain:

- Description of the art project (max 400 words), 2 photos or/and a video
- Link to a portfolio, biography (100 words) and a budget proposal.
- Notifications of acceptance will be sent before 20<sup>th</sup> of February 2020.

All proposals should be submitted to: <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=economia2020>

## Conference Registration Fee

Early Bird: €30,00 until 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2020 / Full Price: €40.00.

Student Early Bird: €15.00 / Student Full Price: €20.00.

Early Bird registration will be open from the end of January, 2020.

## Conference Review Board Economia 2020:

<b>Anne Nigten, PhD</b>	Researcher & Founding Director of The Patching Zone, Rotterdam.
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<b>Ingrid Van Der Wacht</b>	Manager Public affairs at Dutch Design Foundation, Eindhoven.
<b>Jorge Alves Lino</b>	Professor Media, Interaction & Narration, Fontys Hogescholen, Eindhoven.
<b>Kristin Bergaust</b>	Professor at Technology, Art and Design, Metropolitan University, Oslo
<b>Olga Mink</b>	Director at Baltan Laboratories & Researcher Fontys, Eindhoven.
<b>Marco Bevolo, PhD</b>	Founder of Marco Bevolo Consulting, Eindhoven.
<b>Marlou Van der Cruijssen</b>	Program Leader at Baltan Laboratories, Eindhoven.
<b>Paolo Cirio</b>	Conceptual artist, hacktivist & cultural critic, NYC, USA.
<b>Peter Zuiderwijk</b>	Designer at Collective Works, The Hague.
<b>Luce Goutelle</b>	Artist at Unbewitched Finance Lab, Brussels.
<b>Reon Brand, PhD</b>	Senior Research Director Strategic Futures at Philips Design, Eindhoven.
<b>Ricardo Del Farra, PhD</b>	Director Centro de Exp. e Investigación en Artes Electrónicas, Argentina.
<b>Stephanie Rothenberg</b>	Artist & Professor at University at Buffalo SUNY, USA.
<b>Thom Aussems</b>	Writer & Former Director of Sint Trudo, Eindhoven.

## Travel and Accommodation

Participants are kindly requested to cover their own travel and accommodation costs (limited funding is available in some cases – see below). We will provide you with an official invitation letter, encouraging you to apply for travel support from your home university. During the conference, lunch and drinks will be provided.

## Funding for independent applicants

We have limited funding available to support the travel/ accommodation of independent artists/researchers. We also welcome proposals from countries outside the EU. For more information how to be eligible, please contact us after *acceptance* of your proposal.

## More information about Economia

The previous edition: <http://www.thinkeconomia.nl/>  
Economia review by Metropolis M.  
Publication: Economia: Methods for Reclaiming Economy  
Renewable Futures conference

## Contact Info

Baltan Laboratories  
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Economia – The Limited Edition, 2020 is organised by Baltan Laboratories. The concept has been developed by Wiepko Oosterhuis and Olga Mink.



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and kindly supported by:



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**Provincie Noord-Brabant**