Toy Models

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Would you like to come see some toys?

“Toys” here have a special sense: objects of daily life which you can find or make in minutes, yet which, if played with imaginatively, reveal surprises that keep scientists puzzling for a while. We will see table-top demos of many such toys and visit some of the science that they open up. The common theme is singularity.

Tadashi Tokieda is director of studies in mathematics at Trinity Hall, University of Cambridge, and Poincaré Visiting Professor, mathematics, Stanford University. One of his lines of activity is inventing, collecting, and studying toys—simple objects from daily life that can be found or made in minutes, yet which, if played with imaginatively, exhibit behaviors so surprising that they intrigue scientists for weeks.