UAM Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

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Sección Territorial de Madrid



2026

ART WITHIN YOUR CRYSTALS

RSEQ
Real Sociedad Española de Química

Sección Territorial de Madrid

The Royal Spanish Society of Chemistry (RSEQ) aims to promote, develop, and disseminate the discipline of Chemistry, both as a pure science and in its applications, throughout Spain. The RSEQ is the successor in the field of Chemical Sciences to the Royal Spanish Society of Physics and Chemistry, founded in 1903, and its purpose is to facilitate the advancement and improvement of scientific, teaching, research, and professional activities in the fields of Chemical Sciences and Chemical Engineering. As a non-governmental, non-profit scientific institution, it seeks to provide the means to meet the scientific needs of its members.

It publishes the journal Anales de Química de la RSEQ quarterly and shares news through the RSEQ Bulletin every two weeks. In addition, it participates in the European journal consortium Chemistry Europe and is a member of EuChemS.

The structural contest “Art within your Crystals” has been sponsored by Sección Territorial de Madrid RSEQ with an outreach grant.

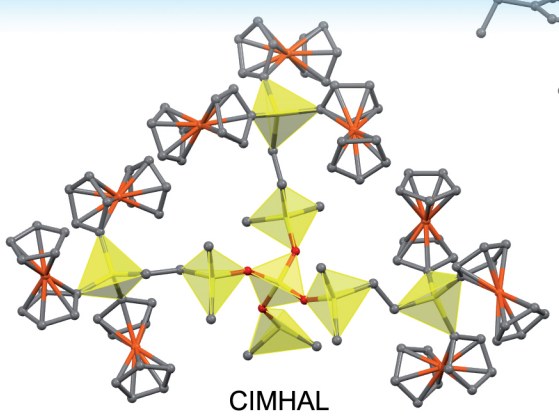


CCDC

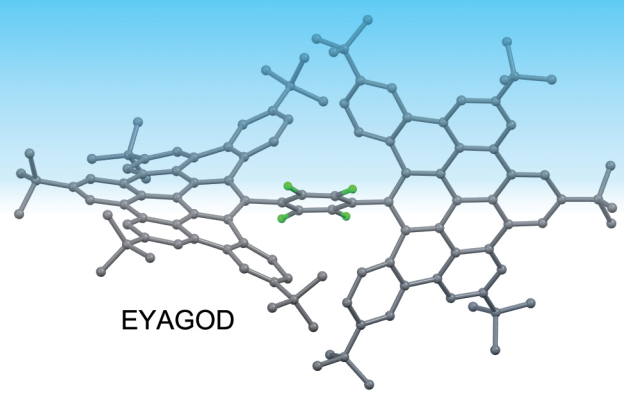
advancing structural science

The Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre (CCDC) are world-leading experts in structural chemistry data, software, and knowledge for materials and life sciences research and development.

The contest and resulting calendar have been supported by a CCDC Engagement Grant. As part of our mission to advance structural science for the public benefit, we support education in the chemical sciences. Through the CCDC Engagement Grants, launched in 2022, we aim to enable more people to create engaging resources for the next generation of scientists.



CIMHAL



EYAGOD

Crystal structures solved at Single Crystal X-Ray Diffraction Laboratory SIdI-UAM and deposited with the CSD.

CCDC
Engagement
Grants

Engage, inspire, share!

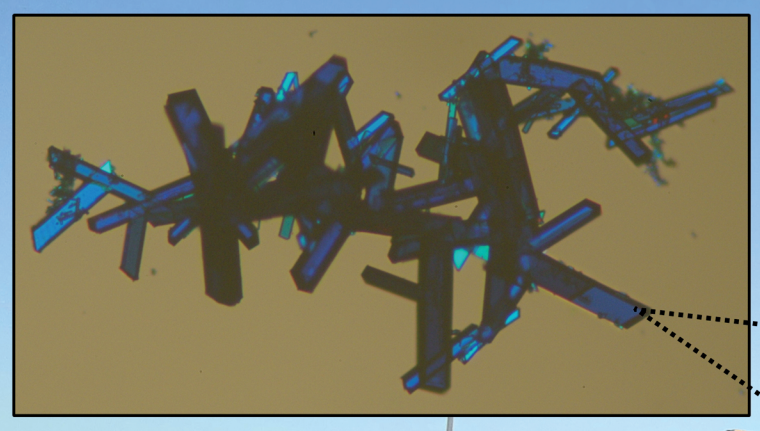
www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk

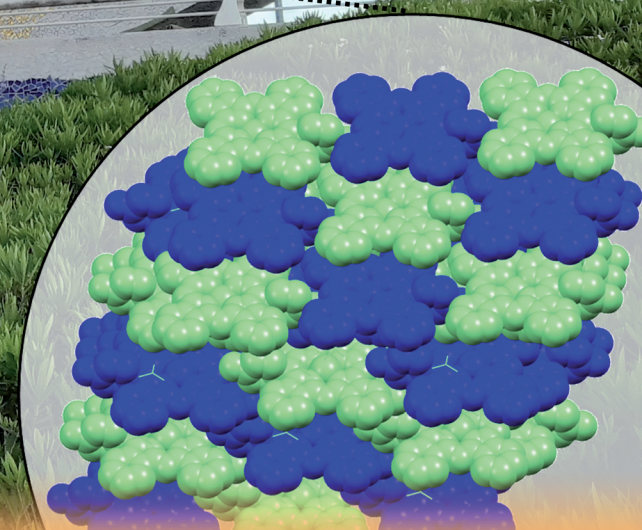
The Cambridge Structural Database (CSD) has been curated from community contributions since 1965, and now a global network of scientists use it every day to discover, develop, and advance science. As a non-profit organisation, our mission is to advance structural science for the public benefit — and that includes supporting the scientific community to do great work by maintaining and curating this data and providing tools to make it more usable.

CCDC data, software, and services are trusted by academic and industrial institutions around the world with tens of thousands of active users from top 10 pharma to leading research institutions.
Explore our products, from software for drug discovery and design, to protein-ligand docking algorithms, to in silico tools to evaluate solid materials stability, and, of course, the world’s largest database of small-molecule organic and metal-organic crystal structures.

Dragon scales

Alejandro Díaz Moscoso



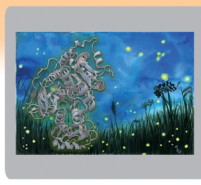


Porphyrins and phthalocyanines are molecules based on a large, flat aromatic ring composed of four (benzo)pyrrole units. These macrocycles can host metal atoms at their centre, much like chlorophyll in plants or the haem group in blood. Their ability to absorb light and transform its energy in different ways makes them valuable compounds for a wide range of technologies, from developing dyes and inks to organic solar cells and even pathogen or cancer treatments through photodynamic therapy.
The crystals depicted here are formed by a benzo-aza-porphyrin, a compound that bridges the structural and functional features of porphyrins and phthalocyanines. In solution, it displays a deep blue hue with greenish undertones, reminiscent of ocean depths. Upon crystallisation, its molecules arrange themselves in layered, partially overlapping sheets, an elegant pattern that evokes the scales of marine creatures, the armour of some terrestrial beasts or, perhaps, the shimmering scales of a mythical marine dragon able to perform photosynthesis.

REFERENCES



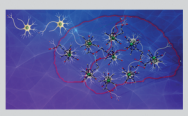
Dragon scales
Alejandro Díaz Moscoso
Unpublished dataset.



A Midsummer Night's Light
Henar Mateo de la Fuente
Nakatsu *et al.*, Nature, 2006, vol. 440, n. 7082, p. 372-376.
2nd PRIZE



Breaking the ice, one crystal at a time
Jaclyn Parnell
Unpublished dataset.



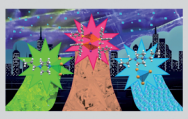
Synapses in the lattice
Alejandro Martín Hoyas
Unpublished dataset.



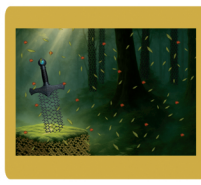
Portrait of Women in Science: Rosalind Franklin
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Alireza Amiri
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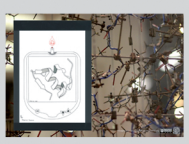
The Powerpuff hybrid organic-inorganic metal halides
Ricardo Garsed Corral
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Unpublished dataset.



Crystalybur "The lattice blade"
Victoria Martín Quiles
Unpublished dataset.
1st PRIZE



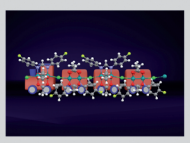
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Johana Herrero Aceituno and Borja Luis Sánchez Redondo
Lange, P. W. Naturwissenschaften, 1939, 27, 133-134.



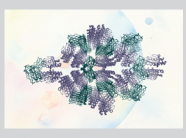
Portrait of Women in Science: Dorothy Crowfoot Hodgkin
Henar Mateo de la Fuente
Baker *et al.*, Biological Sciences, 1988, vol. 319, n. 1195, p. 369-456.



Molecular Butterflies: Chemistry Taking Flight
Laura Moreno Rodríguez
Unpublished dataset.
3rd PRIZE



The diruthenium molecular train
Lourdes del Álamo
Unpublished dataset.



Signs of Hope
Alba Garay-Álvarez
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***Arabidopsis* à la belle étoile**
Sylvia Herrero Desvoyes
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Crystals are fascinating. Their macroscopic beauty and symmetry are caused by the inner order in their atoms. We admire the outer perfection of the crystals, but their crystal structures, solved by diffraction techniques, are even more exciting.

After the success of the three previous editions of the crystal structure representation contest Art within your Crystals, we are proud to present the results of this new edition. In this 2026 calendar, the 14 finalist works are shown, depicting an artistic point of view of the crystal structures represented. This edition has been sponsored by the Cambridge Crystallography Data Centre with an Engagement Grant, and also by Sección Territorial de Madrid de la Real Sociedad Española de Química. The entries submitted to the contest were kindly evaluated by five scientists related to crystallography: Sol López Andrés (UCM), Laura León Reina (UMA), Juan Rubio Zuazo (ESRF), Marta Martínez Belmonte (ICIQ) and Agustín Molina Ontoria (IMDEA Nanociencia).

We want to thank the participants for their great works, the members of the jury for the difficult task of choosing the finalists and winners, and our sponsors for giving us their support. We also want to thank all the people that have encouraged us to continue with this contest, that began in 2014 to commemorate the International Year of Crystallography.

The image in the cover shows the crystallization of a $CuSO_4 \cdot 5H_2O$ aggregate from an aqueous solution: a crystal of hydrated copper sulfate was used in 1912 by Laue, Friedrich and Knipping in one of the first X-ray diffraction experiments, and it is also a compound that many of us have crystallized during our school years. We have included in the calendar the birthdays of some prominent scientists that contributed to the growth of crystallography, so we can remember and celebrate them.

We hope that you enjoy these crystal structures and all the crystalline materials around you during 2026!

Paloma, Kike, Josefina and Mario
Organizers of the 4th Edition of Art within your Crystals

Breaking the ice, one crystal at a time

Jaclyn Parnell

From nature, we have learned that the shape, color, and size, of a crystal are dependent on the environment in which they were synthesized. Similarly, each snowflake is unique due to the environment it was crystalized and the path it takes falling from the sky. The represented cobalt(II) tris(4-(tetrazol-5-yl)phenyl)amine metal organic framework has a hexagonal crystal structure, akin to that of a snowflake. Being a thermochromic crystal, it has the ability to switch from orange to blue based on the temperature it is exposed to. This change in colors is a result of the spin change in the metal center and is represented in the crystal structure with a larger Co-N bond length in a high temperature environment and a small Co-N bond length in a low temperature environment. Since the presented crystal structure was measured at -173°C, the wintery background was chosen to highlight the low spin, dark blue state of this crystal.

JANUARY 2026

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1	29	30	31	1	2	3	4
2	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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4	19	20	21	22	23 P. P. Ewald	24 D. Shechtman	25
5	26	27	28 K. Lonsdale	29	30	31	1

FEBRUARY 2026

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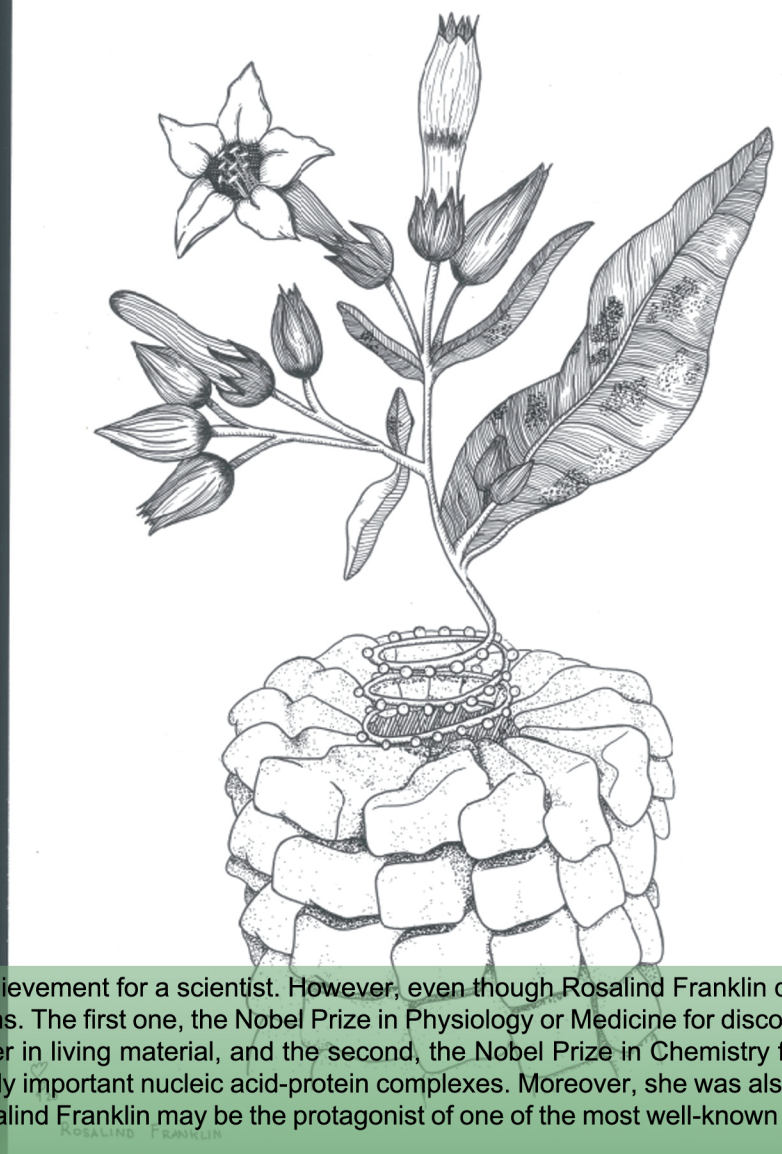
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Portrait of Women in Science: Rosalind Franklin

Henar Mateo de la Fuente





CC BY

Making a scientific discovery remarkable enough to be awarded a Nobel prize is a difficult achievement for a scientist. However, even though Rosalind Franklin did not get this recognition during her lifetime, she participated in two Nobel prize winning investigations. The first one, the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for discoveries concerning the molecular structure of nucleic acids and its significance for information transfer in living material, and the second, the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for the development of crystallographic electron microscopy and its structural elucidation of biologically important nucleic acid-protein complexes. Moreover, she was also able to elucidate the crystalline structures of the polio virus and the mosaic tobacco RNA virus. Rosalind Franklin may be the protagonist of one of the most well-known cases of misogyny in science.

Inspired by one of Rosalind Franklin's works, the image not only shows the three-dimensional structure of one of the pieces the mosaic tobacco virus but also how these proteins assemble around a RNA strand leading to a tubular structure that resembles the pot of a plant. In the original artwork made in ink on paper, the RNA strand attached to the tubular structure grows into the stem of an ill tobacco plant, as evidenced by the spots on its leaves.

FEBRUARY 2026

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MARCH 2026

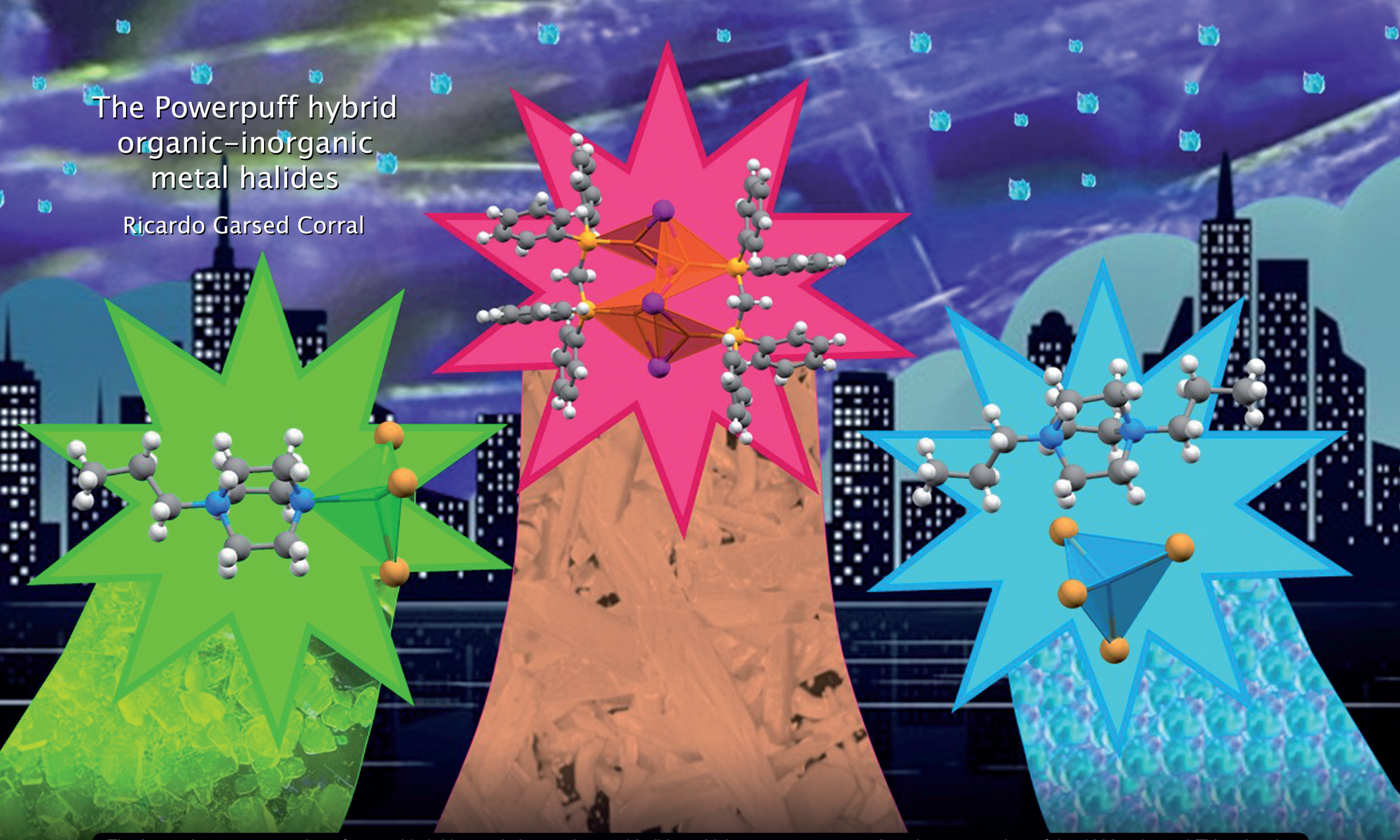
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The Powerpuff hybrid organic–inorganic metal halides

Ricardo Garsed Corral



The image is a representation of several hybrid organic-inorganic metal halides which appear represented as the protagonists of the 1998 animated TV series the Powerpuff Girls. Blossom would be represented by the copper compound $Cu_4I_4(bppm)_2$ while Bubbles and Buttercup are seen as the manganese compounds $(pr_2\text{-ted})[MnBr_4]$ and $MnBr_3(pr\text{-ted})$ respectively. $MnBr_3(pr\text{-ted})$ can be found as two different polymorphs, where polymorph α is shown making up the night sky and polymorph β is represented as Buttercup.

MARCH 2026

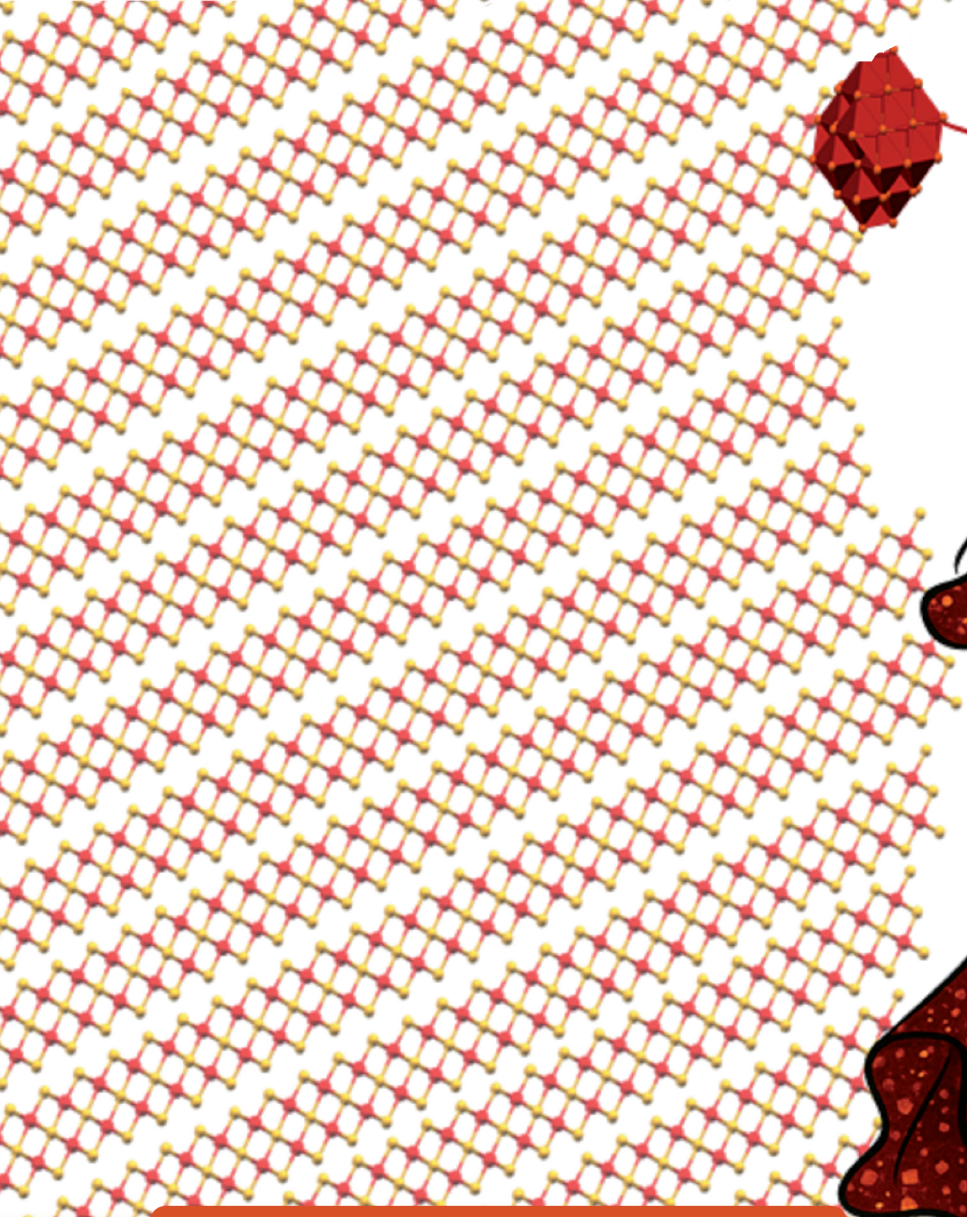
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	30	W. L. Bragg 31					

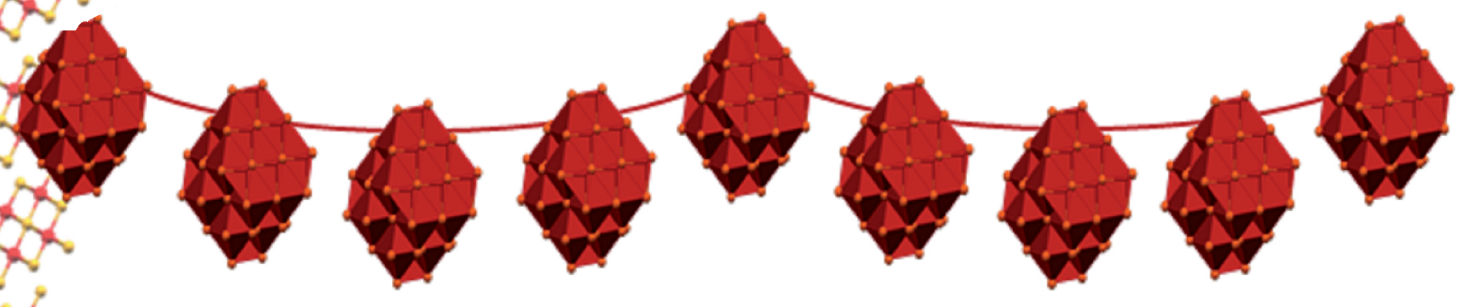
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FLAMENCO THROUGH 2D CRYSTALS





Borja Luis Sánchez
&
Johana Herrero

The unusual 2D crystals of Bi_2Te_3 are topological insulators and near-room-temperature thermoelectric materials. Flamenco impresses with its rhythmic precision, the same rhythmic conversion of phonons to electrons as thermoelectric materials use to convert waste heat into electricity. Both systems convert vibrations into useful forms of energy. The singularity of a topological insulator awakens at its edges, just as a flamenco singer pushes emotions to the limit with his art.

APRIL 2026

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
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Molecular Butterflies: Chemistry Taking Flight

Laura Moreno Rodríguez



In this image, science and nature meet in a moment of imagination. From a flask held by a gloved hand, colorful "butterflies" emerge—yet these are not ordinary creatures. Their wings are built from molecular structures known as paddle-wheel complexes, transformed here into delicate symbols of life and creativity. The scene evokes a spring meadow where chemistry releases beauty into the world, reminding us that molecules are not only the building blocks of matter but also a source of wonder and inspiration. This artwork celebrates the harmony between scientific discovery and the natural world, showing how research can give wings to new ideas.

MAY 2026

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JUNE 2026

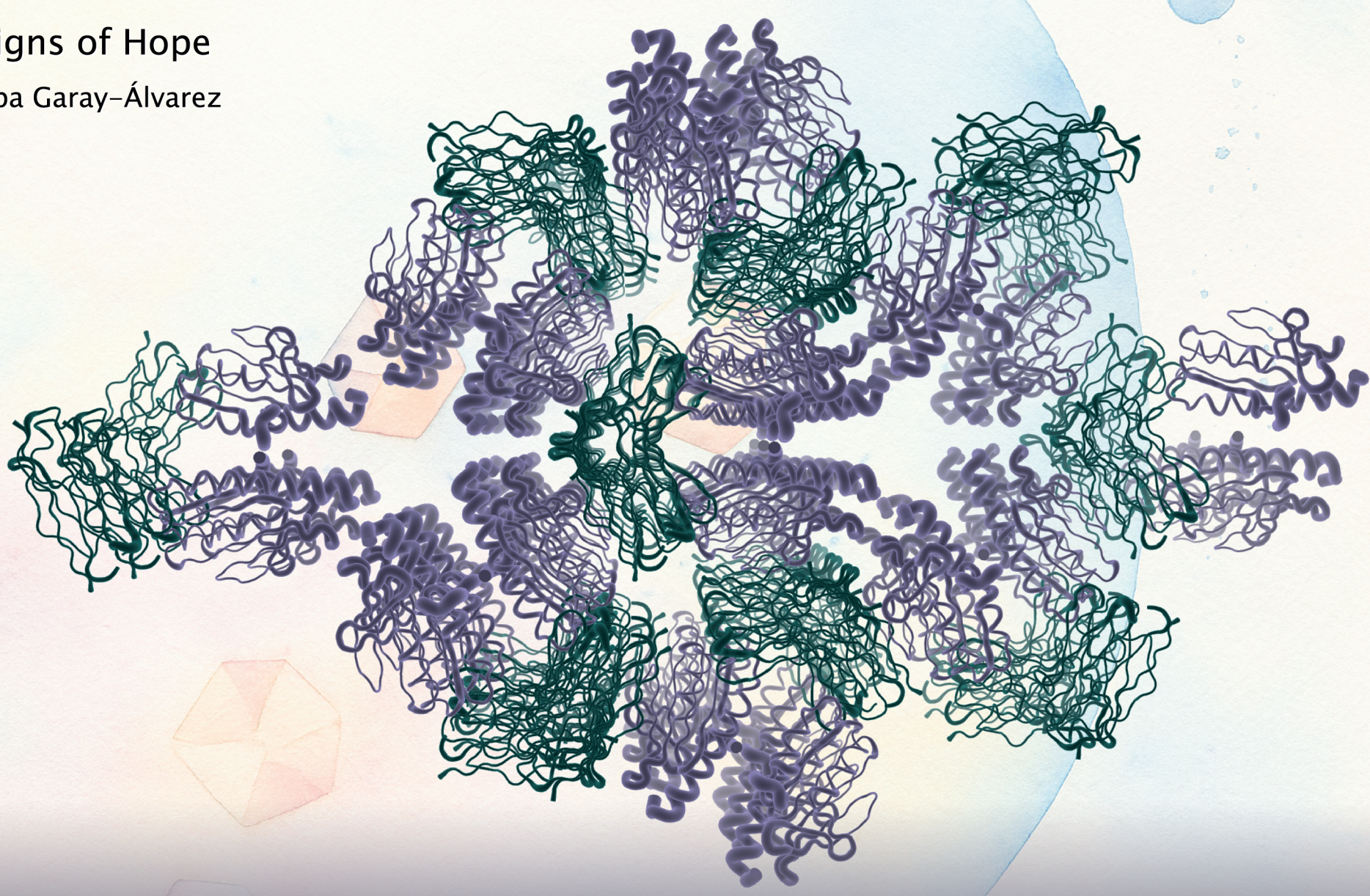
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Signs of Hope

Alba Garay-Álvarez



The crystal structure unfolds in the shape of an arrow, with each vertex reflecting the complexity of the protein complex, symbolizing a potential future therapy for Friedreich's ataxia. Its tip marks direction and purpose, while its body reveals intricate molecular interactions, evoking both the story of the disease and the promise of therapeutic intervention. It is not just a geometric object: it serves as a visual bridge between molecular biology and hope, where each facet catches the light and transforms atomic rigidity into a symbol of transformation and the future.

JUNE 2026

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JULY 2026

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A Midsummer Night's Light

Henar Mateo de la Fuente

During the warm midsummer nights, fireflies brighten the woods with their shiny abdomen. The so-called bioluminescence process, that presents a mating purpose for these insects, consists of a chain of chemical reactions facilitated by the luciferase enzyme that results in the emission of a bright light. In most cases, the observed colour is green-yellow however, there exist some species that can produce a red light. This change arises from differences in the sequence of amino acids of the luciferase protein. However, although the sequence of the bioluminescent chemical reactions is well stablished, the factors or the colour modulation are still unclear. This information is crucial since a clear understanding of this behavior would allow the scientific community to enhance the large number of medical applications of this interesting system. The presented image shows a watercolor painting of an after-dusk field with fluttering fireflies and the crystalline structure of the Japanese firefly luciferase, that is crucial to study this colour change since it emits a green light in its wild type form while, after the mutation of just one of its amino acids, the emitted light turns to red.

JULY 2026

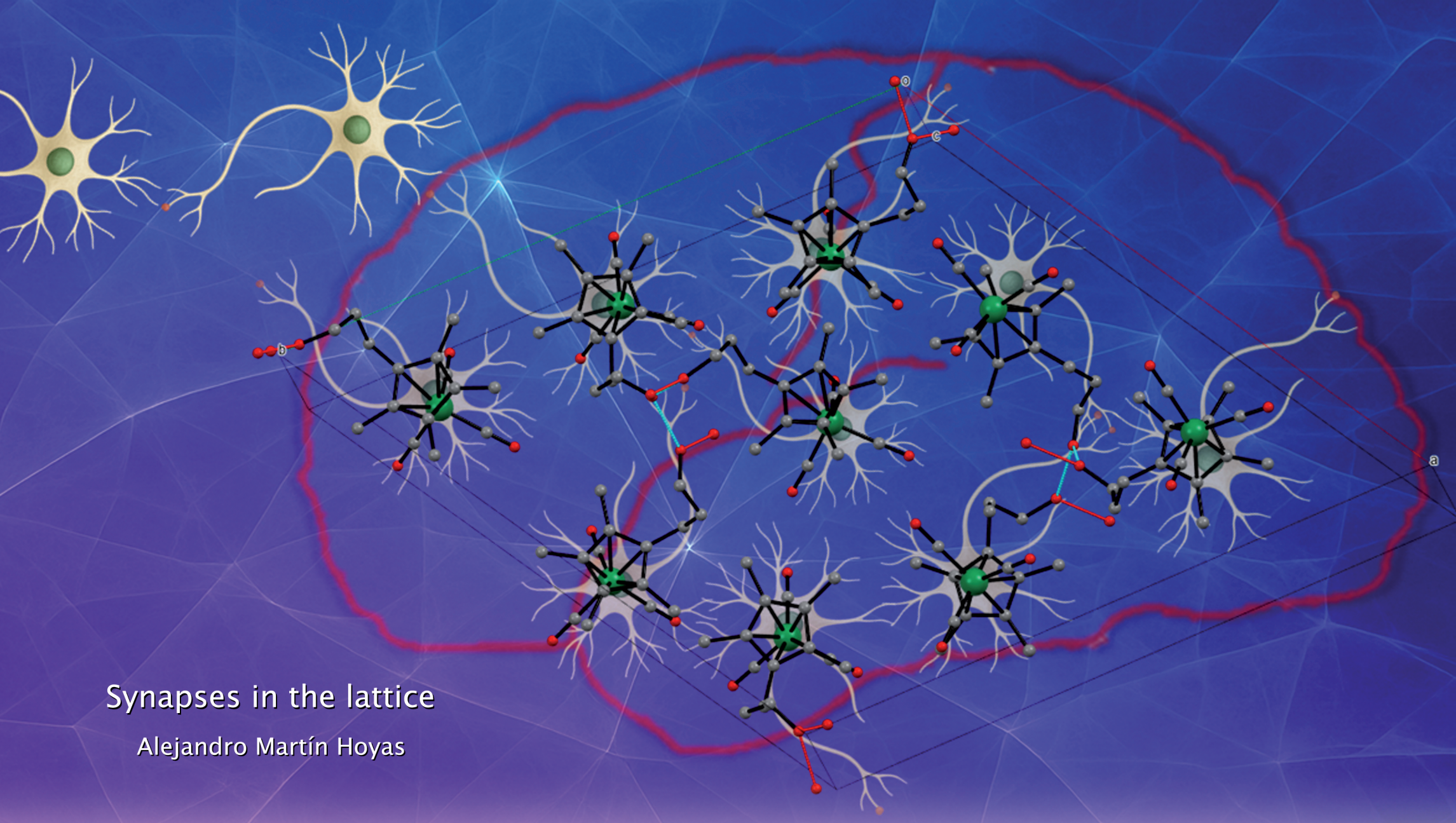
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30	20	21	22	23 A. L. Patterson	24	25 R. E. Franklin	26
31	27	28	29 D. M. C. Hodgkin	30	31	1	2

AUGUST 2026

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Synapses in the lattice

Alejandro Martín Hoyas

This crystalline lattice consists of rhenium monomers organised in a trigonal system under the *P*32 space group. Remarkably, its arrangement reminds me of the connectivity of a neural network: individual units communicate not through direct contact but via synapses. Here, rhenium monomers are linked through intermolecular forces, primarily hydrogen bonds between -OH groups, forming a wonderful network of molecular conversations, where chemistry and architecture meet in perfect harmony.

AUGUST 2026

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
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32	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 R. W. G. Wyckoff
33	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
34	17	18	19	20	21 N. Steno	22	23 A. Bravais
35	24	25	26 J.-B. L. Romé de l'Isle	27	28	29	30
	31						

SEPTEMBER 2026

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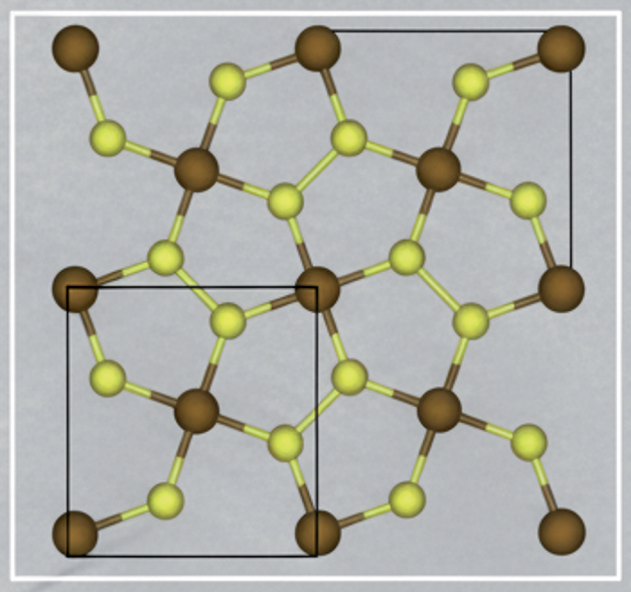
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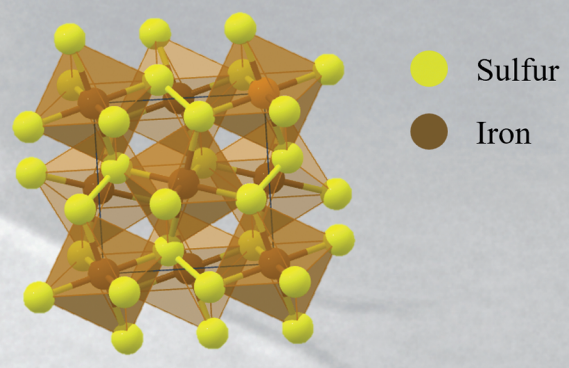
An Isolated Flake of 2D FeS_2 (Fool's Gold) Captured by TEM

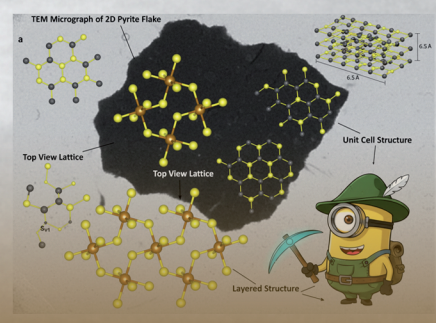
Alireza Amiri

An Isolated Flake of 2D FeS_2 captured by Transmission Electron Microscopy (TEM)









A cheerful Minion plays **Saboteur** in a quest for gold--unaware he's about to find **fool's gold (pyrite)**.

Two-dimensional FeS_2 (pyrite) is an ultrathin form of iron disulfide in which Fe atoms are coordinated by S in puckered networks; common 2D polymorphs include S-FeS_2 and T-FeS_2. It is earth-abundant and low-cost, with semiconducting behavior whose bandgap can be tuned by thickness, strain, and defect density. These properties make 2D FeS_2 promising for photocatalysis, photoelectrochemistry, photovoltaics, electrocatalysis, energy storage, and sensing, though sulfur vacancies and edge terminations strongly influence performance. The image shows a 2D FeS_2 flake in plan view under TEM, consistent with a thin single or few-layer sheet on a support. The top inset displays a top-view ball-and-stick model with the unit cell outlined to connect lattice symmetry to the specimen.

SEPTEMBER 2026

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
36	31	1	2	3	4	5	6
37	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
38	14	15	16	17	18	19 C.-V. Mauguin	20
39	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
40	28	29	30	1	2	3	4

OCTOBER 2026

			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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Crystalybur “The lattice blade”

Victoria Martín Quiles

Hidden deep within the rock lies a sword forged not by blacksmiths, but by the symmetrical order of atoms. This piece reimagines the legendary Excalibur not as a sword of kings, but as a structure of knowledge: a crystalline formation awaiting the worthy — not the strongest, but the most curious.

At its core is a one-dimensional coordination polymer: a precise chain where each copper(I) atom, both forged and forger, adopts a distorted tetrahedral CuI_2S_2 geometry, bound to two iodide ions and two sulfur atoms from thioamide-type ligands. Like Excalibur, glowing with otherworldly light, this polymer exhibits photoluminescence and the ability to melt — as if shaped by science itself, which, when wielded with understanding, is sharper than any blade. As such, there is no anvil, nor hammer, only a lattice blade.

OCTOBER 2026

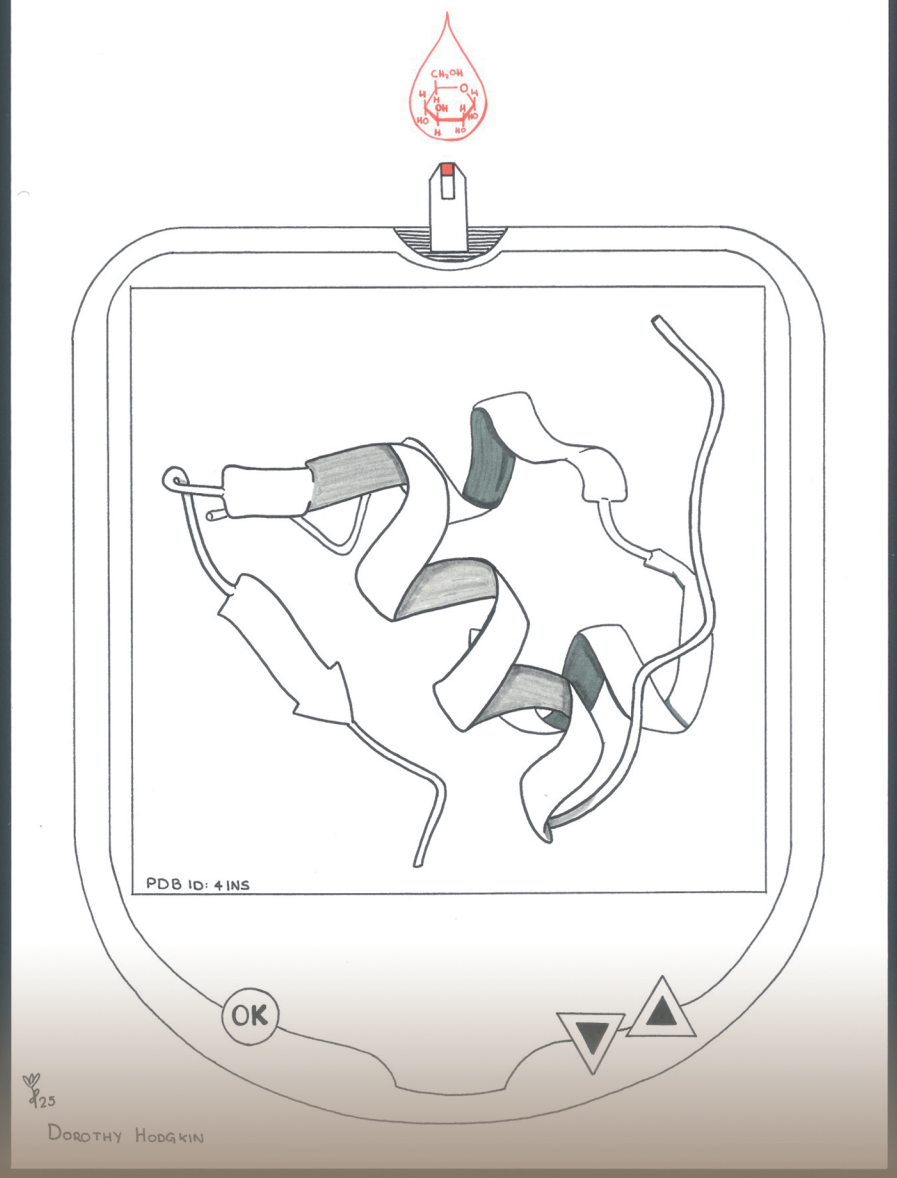
	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
40	28	29	30	1	2	3	4
41	5	6	7	8	9 M. T. F. von Laue	10	11
42	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
43	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
44	26	27	28	29	30	31	1

NOVEMBER 2026

						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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Portrait of Women in Science: Dorothy Crowfoot Hodgkin

Henar Mateo de la Fuente

CC BY

It can be said that Dorothy Crowfoot Hodgkin has been crucial in avoiding many preventable deaths. In 1934, the insulin hormone captured her attention because of the intricate and wide-ranging effect it has on the body. However, at this stage X-ray crystallography had not been developed far enough to cope with the complexity of the insulin molecule. After spending many years improving the technique, Hodgkin's dream of unlocking the structure of insulin, depicted in the artwork, came finally true in 1969. Hodgkin's work and dissemination were instrumental not only in paving the way for insulin to be mass-produced and used on a large scale for treatment of both types of diabetes but also allowed scientists to alter the structure of the hormone to create even better drug options for patients going forward. Throughout her career, Hodgkin resolved many other biomolecular structures like that of vitamin B_{12}, for which she was awarded the Nobel Prize. This image shows an original artwork made in ink on paper of the cartoon of the crystalline structure of the insulin hormone solved by Dorothy Hodgkin inside a glucometer with a drop of blood with the glucose structure inside on top of the strip. In the background, there is a picture of an atomic model of the protein hormone.

NOVEMBER 2026

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
44	26	27	28	29	30	31	1
45	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
46	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
47	16	17 G. M. Sheldrick	18	19	20	21	22
48	23 / 30	24	25	26	27	28	29

DECEMBER 2026

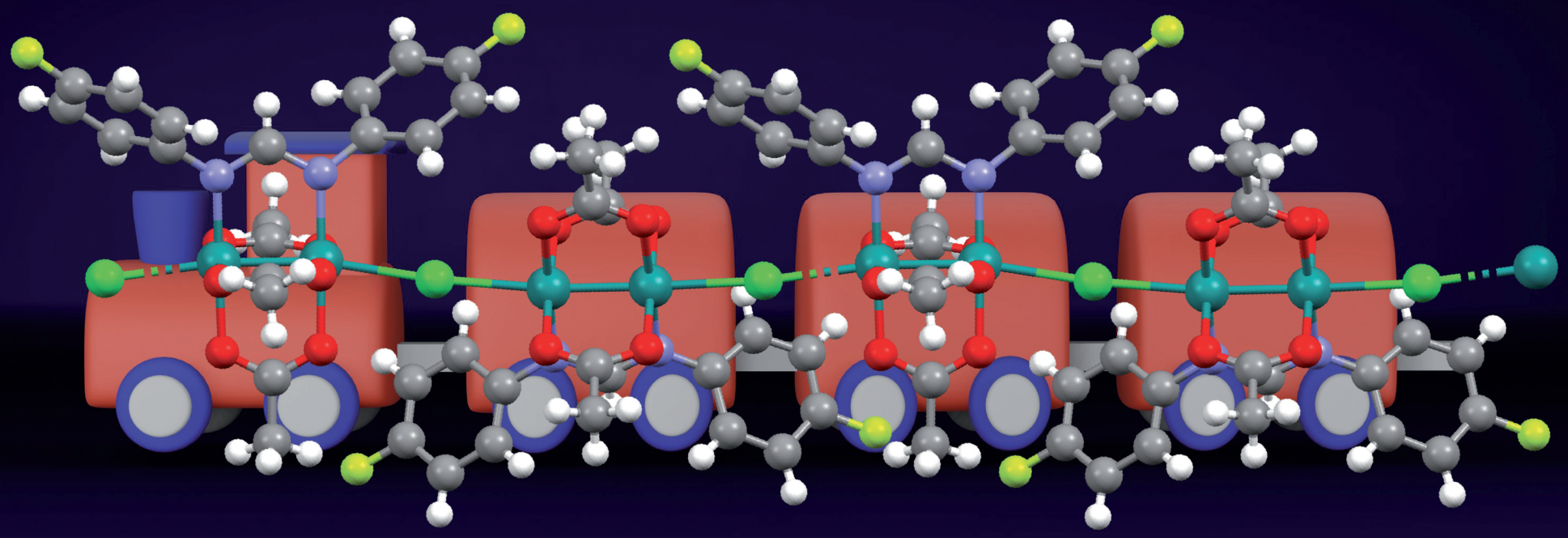
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The diruthenium molecular train

Lourdes del Álamo



How do we build large structures using small molecules? This artwork visualizes a fundamental concept in supramolecular chemistry: the spontaneous creation of bigger structures from individual components. Our image shows a perfectly constructed “molecular train” where diruthenium molecules act as the nanocarriages and the chloride atom acts as a “hitch”, ensuring that one carriage links to the next with flawless accuracy, creating a robust linear structure. By controlling these self-assembly processes, it is possible to direct the growth of perfectly ordered nanostructures, opening pathways to design new functional materials for future applications in technology.

DECEMBER 2026

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
49	30	1	2 I. Karle	3	4	5	6
50	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
51	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
52	21	22 E. S. Fedorov	23	24	25	26	27 J. Kepler
53	28	29	30	31	1	2	3

JANUARY 2027

				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Arabidopsis à la belle étoile

Sylvia Herrero Desvoyes

In this image, an *Arabidopsis thaliana* floats on water beneath the stars. For centuries, sailors relied on the constellations for guidance; today, *Arabidopsis thaliana* guides researchers into the mysteries of plant development. In the sky, the Cancer constellation appears alongside others that represent a diruthenium compound, capable of delivering anticancer drugs, as demonstrated in the *Arabidopsis* model.

2027

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JANUARY

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

FEBRUARY

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

MARCH

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
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29	30	31				

APRIL

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
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MAY

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
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31						

JUNE

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
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JULY

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
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AUGUST

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

SEPTEMBER

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
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OCTOBER

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
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NOVEMBER

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
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29	30					

DECEMBER

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
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27	28	29	30	31		

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