

## **“WE” & “THEY”: CROSS CULTURAL CONVERSATIONS ON IDENTITY**

IRAS, the Institute on Religion in the Age of Science, will have its 67<sup>th</sup> Conference

**June 26 to July 3, 2022, on Star Island**

Please join IRAS at our flagship event, a weeklong conference in which intellectual dialogue, the beauty of nature, and new friendships encourage rejuvenation on historic Star Island, off the coast of Portsmouth, NH.

Theme:

“Who am I? How do I fit into the world around me? How am I different?” Questions like these are central to the elusive notion of identity—to how we establish and maintain perceptions of “self” and “other,” “we” and “they.” Identifying ourselves and others in categories defined by gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, economic status, physical and mental abilities, and other markers stimulate a sense of “we-consciousness.” They influence our choices about who we trust and consider part of our “tribe,” in biological, socio-cultural, and “ultimate” terms. How we perceive and enact our identities influences how we love, create, and discover, and whether we construct systems of oppression and war.

Through multi-religious and scientific frameworks including biological, psychological, sociological, and anthropological considerations, this conference will explore core concepts of identity. We invite you to engage in cross-cultural conversations and participate in envisioning a global cultural transformation in which the presence of diversity need not provoke disharmony.

Questions include:

- (1) Are there prevailing scientific understandings of self, and if so, what are they?
- (2) How do specific world religious traditions understand individual and social identities and otherness?
- (3) In our dynamically interconnected global society, how can science and religion help us comprehend the limitations and purposes of identity?
- (4) What influences the formation of blind spots and biases? How can we engage in cross cultural conversations that transcend the “allergy to the other,” increase respect and understanding, and contribute to justice and peacemaking?

We look forward to your joining us in the beautiful environs of Star Island for this rich exploration. Registration is now open: <https://starisland.org/programs/>.

Some conference plenary sessions will also be available online. Please see [www.iras.org](http://www.iras.org) for updates on registering for these online sessions, our 2022 conference speakers, financial assistance possibilities, the Archi Pelagos youth program, and Covid safety policies.

Conference Program Chairs: Anindita N. Balslev, C.J. Love, & Jennifer E. Whitten