Special Issue

The Statistical Physics of Generative Diffusion Models

Message from the Guest Editor

Generative diffusion models and related methods have become state-of-the-art in image and video generation. While these methods were inspired by the physics of out-of-equilibrium systems, recent work revealed deep connections between generative diffusion models and equilibrium statistical mechanics. For example, it was recently shown that the generative diffusion process is punctuated by spontaneous symmetry-breaking events that correspond to splits between semantic classes or visual features. Similarly, memorization in generative diffusion is the result of 'glassy' phase transitions in the average free energy. Moreover, the connections between spin glasses sampling and generative diffusion have been investigated using the concept of stochastic localization of measures. These developments have the potential to drive a large inflow of physical theory and techniques to the study of generative machine learning models, which could lead to radical insights on the nature of learning and intelligence.

Given these fascinating developments, we are excited to launch a Special Issue aimed at connecting research in statistical physics and generative diffusion modeling.

Guest Editor

Dr. Luca Ambrogioni

Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition, and Behaviour, Radboud University, 6525 XZ Nijmegen, The Netherlands

Deadline for manuscript submissions

closed (15 October 2025)



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Impact Factor 2.0 CiteScore 5.2 Indexed in PubMed



mdpi.com/si/208518

Entropy
Editorial Office
MDPI, Grosspeteranlage 5
4052 Basel, Switzerland
Tel: +41 61 683 77 34
entropy@mdpi.com

mdpi.com/journal/ entropy





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Editor-in-Chief

Prof. Dr. Kevin H. Knuth

Department of Physics, University at Albany, 1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222, USA

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