

Arlette Baljon grew up in The Netherlands, where she obtained a masters degree in mathematics and theoretical physics at the University of Utrecht. Her MS thesis, with G. t'Hooft as supervisor, was on black hole dyons. In 1988 she moved to the United States, to pursue a PhD program at the University of Chicago. There her research interest switched to polymer science. In 1993 she completed a PhD thesis on associating polymers with T. Witten as supervisor. This was followed by a postdoctoral position at Johns Hopkins, where she studied adhesion and friction by means of large-scale computer simulations of polymeric systems under the supervision of M. Robbins. Subsequently, she earned a fellowship to continue her research at the Supercomputer Center at Cornell. In collaboration with chemists, chemical engineers, and material scientists she studied the dynamics of polymers in confined spaces and the formation of polymer/silicate nanocomposites. In the summer of 1999 she joined the physics faculty at San Diego State University, where she studies the dynamics of associating polymers under the influence of a variety of externally imposed strains and stresses. In particular rhythmic patterns of dissociation and association and how memory is retained in them intrigues her. In addition, together with researchers at SDSU's Viral Information Institute she investigates how mucosal surfaces enhance phage infectivity and the importance of mucus to the human immune system. Together with dancers, she is exploring how art can be used as an alternative form of inquiry into natural phenomena. Finally, she coordinates SDSU's community on contemplative pedagogies and incorporates these pedagogies in some of the classes she teaches. In her free time she sings in a choir, enjoys the unexpected things of life, and teaches Tibetan monks. She is married and has three children. Kelda ('91) specialized in human-computer interaction and design; Jessalyn ('95) a PhD student in immunoengineering for medical applications; and Mendel ('99) a college student trying to figure out which major will prepare him to solve the world's most challenging problems and a former child actor.