

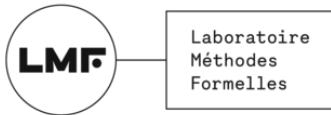
# Discrete and Continuous Models for Concurrent Systems

## 4. Advanced Topics

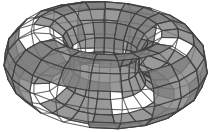
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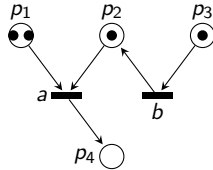
POPL 2026 Tutorial, Rennes, France



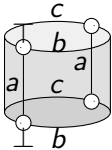
# 1. The geometry of concurrency



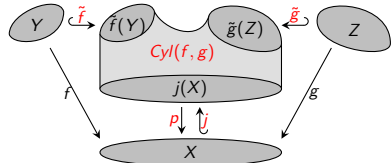
# 2. Concurrent semantics of Petri nets



# 3. Languages of higher-dimensional aut.



# 4. Advanced topics

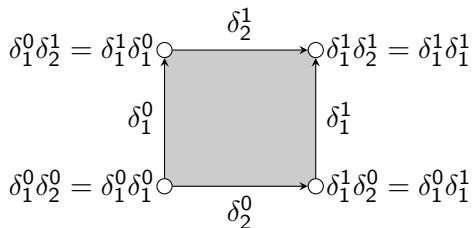


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- 4 Concurrent Kleene Algebra
- 5 Birkhoff Duality & Path Objects
- 6 Conclusion

# Geometric Realisation

## Definition

A **precubical set** is a graded set  $X = \{X_n\}_{n \geq 0}$  together with **face maps**  $\delta_i^0, \delta_i^1 : X_n \rightarrow X_{n-1}$ , for  $i = 1, \dots, n$ , satisfying  $\delta_i^\nu \delta_j^\mu = \delta_{j-1}^\mu \delta_i^\nu$  for  $i < j$ .



## Definition

The **geometric realisation** of a precubical set  $X$  is the d-space  $|X| = \bigsqcup_{n \geq 0} X_n \times \vec{I}^n / \sim$ , where  $\sim$  is the equivalence generated by  $(\delta_i^\nu x, (t_1, \dots, t_{n-1})) \sim (x, (t_1, \dots, t_{i-1}, \nu, t_{i+1}, \dots, t_{n-1}))$ .

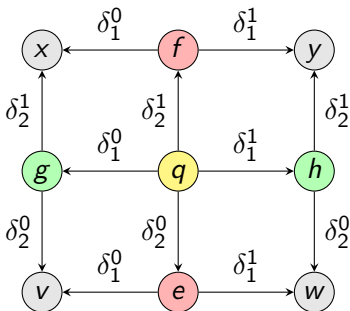
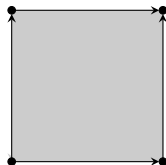
# Geometric Realisation

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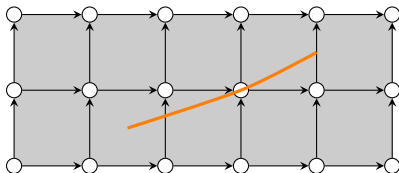
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$$(\delta_i^\nu x, (t_1, \dots, t_{n-1})) \sim (x, (t_1, \dots, t_{i-1}, \nu, t_{i+1}, \dots, t_{n-1})).$$

- usual **coend** definition; left adjoint to **singular precubical set** functor
- actually,  $|X|$  is an **lpo-space**



# Dipaths in Geometric Realisations

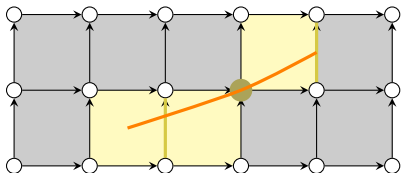


Let  $p : \vec{I} \rightarrow |X|$  be a dipath in the geometric realisation of precubical set  $X$ .

- let  $C_p = \{x \in X \mid \text{im}(p) \cap |x| \neq \emptyset\}$  – all cells touched by  $p$
- organize  $C_p$  into a sequence  $c_p = (x_1, \dots, x_m)$  s.t.  $\forall i$ :

$$x_i = \delta_{+}^0 x_{i+1} \quad \text{or} \quad x_{i+1} = \delta_{+}^1 x_i \quad (\text{iterated face maps})$$

# Dipaths in Geometric Realisations



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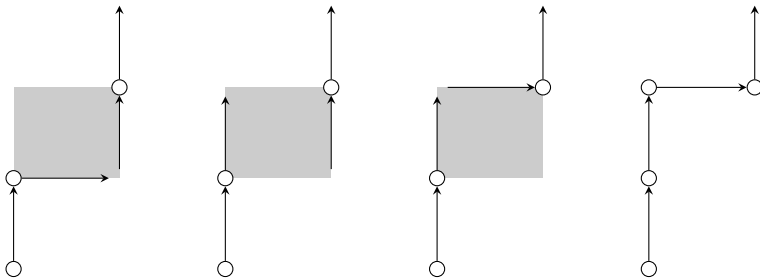
$$x_i = \delta_+^0 x_{i+1} \quad \text{or} \quad x_{i+1} = \delta_+^1 x_i \quad (\text{iterated face maps})$$

$\Rightarrow$  the **carrier sequence** of  $p$ : a **combinatorial path**

## Lemma

- any combinatorial path  $c$  gives rise to dipath  $p_c$  (non-unique) with  $c_{p_c} = c$
- if  $c_p = c_q$ , then  $p$  and  $q$  are **dihomotopic**

# Combinatorial Homotopy



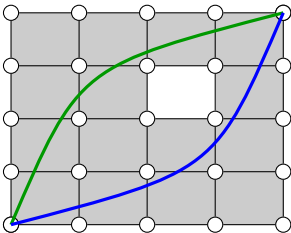
- equivalence relation on combinatorial paths generated by **local replacements**

## Lemma

- *dipaths  $p, q$  are dihomotopic iff  $c_p$  and  $c_q$  are homotopic*
- *combinatorial paths  $c, d$  are homotopic iff  $p_c$  and  $p_d$  are dihomotopic*

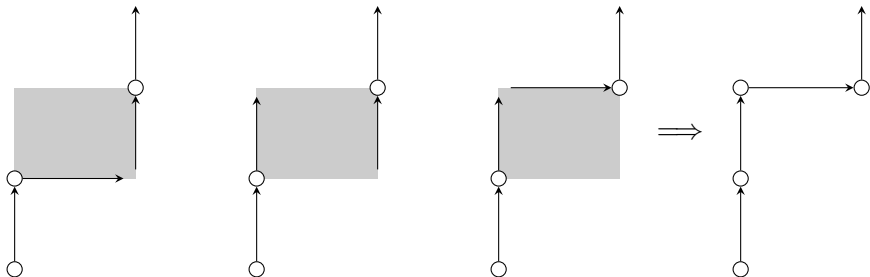


# Summing Up



- precubical sets: combinatorial models of directed spaces
- linked to directed spaces via geometric realisation
- dipaths  $\hat{=}$  combinatorial paths  $\hat{=}$  executions
- dihomotopy  $\hat{=}$  combinatorial homotopy  $\hat{=}$  equivalence of executions

# Combinatorial Homotopy vs Subsumption



- subsumption  $\sqsubseteq$ : **preorder** generated by local replacements

$\Rightarrow$  combinatorial homotopy  $\simeq$  is the equivalence relation generated by subsumption

## Lemma

- $\alpha \sqsubseteq \beta \implies \text{ev}(\alpha) \sqsubseteq \text{ev}(\beta)$

???  $\alpha \simeq \beta \implies \text{ev}(\alpha) ??? \text{ev}(\beta)$

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# Precubical Sets?

## Definition (5 mins ago)

A **precubical set** is a graded set  $X = \{X_n\}_{n \geq 0}$  together with **face maps**  $\delta_i^0, \delta_i^1 : X_n \rightarrow X_{n-1}$ , for  $i = 1, \dots, n$ , satisfying  $\delta_i^\nu \delta_j^\mu = \delta_{j-1}^\mu \delta_i^\nu$  for  $i < j$ .

## Definition (30 mins ago)

A **precubical set** is a set  $X$  together with a mapping  $\text{ev} : X \rightarrow (\text{conclists})$  and with **face maps**  $\delta_A^0, \delta_A^1 : X[U] \rightarrow X[U \setminus A]$  satisfying  $\delta_A^\mu \delta_B^\nu = \delta_B^\nu \delta_A^\mu$  for  $A \cap B = \emptyset$ .

# Presheaves Presheaves Presheaves

(augmented) precube category $\square$	large (augmented) precube category $\square^\bullet$
<b>objects</b> $\{0, 1\}^n$ for $n \geq 0$	<b>objects</b> totally ordered finite sets
<b>morphisms</b> injections of 0s and 1s	<b>morphisms</b> $A, B$ -injections
<b>skeletal</b>	isos are <b>unique</b>

## Lemma

The inclusion  $\square \hookrightarrow \square^\bullet$  is an **equivalence** of categories with a **unique** left inverse.

## Corollary

The presheaf categories  $\text{Set}^{\square^{\text{op}}}$  and  $\text{Set}^{\square^{\bullet\text{op}}}$  are **uniquely naturally isomorphic**.

- **precubical sets**:  $\text{Set}^{\square^{\text{op}}}$  or  $\text{Set}^{\square^{\bullet\text{op}}}$ ; makes no difference

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- **precubical sets**:  $\text{Set}^{\square^{\text{op}}}$  or  $\text{Set}^{\square^{\bullet\text{op}}}$ ; makes no difference
- (but, no labels in  $\square^\bullet$ ; **fundamental theorem** takes care of this:  
For  $\mathcal{C}$  a presheaf cat and  $\Sigma \in \mathcal{C}$ , also the slice  $\mathcal{C}/\Sigma$  is a presheaf cat.)

# Context

(augmented) precube category $\square$	large (augmented) precube category $\square^\bullet$
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# Context

<p>(augmented) <b>precube</b> category <math>\square</math></p> <hr/> <p>objects <math>\{0, 1\}^n</math> for <math>n \geq 0</math>          morphisms injections of 0s and 1s          skeletal</p>	<p>large (augmented) <b>precube</b> category <math>\square</math></p> <hr/> <p>objects totally ordered finite sets          morphisms <math>A, B</math>-injections          isos are unique</p>
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# Context

(augmented) <b>precube</b> category $\square$ objects $\{0, 1\}^n$ for $n \geq 0$ morphisms injections of 0s and 1s skeletal	large (augmented) <b>precube</b> category $\square$ objects totally ordered finite sets morphisms $A, B$ -injections isos are unique
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augmented <b>presimplex</b> category $\Delta$ objects $\{1 < \dots < n\}$ for $n \geq 0$ morphisms order injections skeletal	large augmented <b>presimplex</b> category $\Delta$ objects totally ordered finite sets morphisms order injections isos are unique
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category of <b>ordinals</b> objects $\{1, \dots, n\}$ for $n \geq 0$ morphisms permutations skeletal	category of <b>combinatorial species</b> $\mathbb{B}$ objects finite sets morphisms bijections isos are <b>not</b> unique

# The Zoo of Cubes (It's HoTT!)

precubical set: graded set  $X = \{X_n\}_{n \geq 0}$  plus **face maps**  $\delta_i^0, \delta_i^1 : X_n \rightarrow X_{n-1}$

- plus **degeneracies**  $\epsilon_i : X_n \rightarrow X_{n+1}$ : **cubical** set
- with **connections**  $\gamma_i^0, \gamma_i^1 : X_n \rightarrow X_{n+1}$
- with **transpositions**  $\sigma_i : X_n \rightarrow X_n$
- with **diagonals**  $\Delta : X_n \rightarrow X_{n-1}$
- many subsets of these are in use
- all are presheaves
- diagonals are important in **cubical homotopy type theory**
- cubical  **$\omega$ -categories** with connections are equivalent to **globular**  $\omega$ -categories

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# Monoids, Semirings, Kleene Algebra

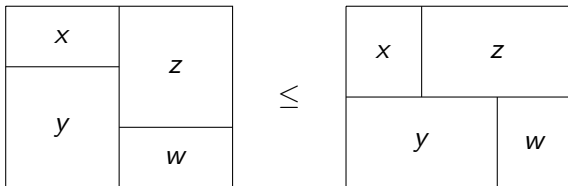
- a **monoid**: set  $S$ , operation  $\cdot$  on  $S$ , associative with unit  $1 \in S$ 
  - free monoid on  $\Sigma$ :  $\Sigma^*$ ;  $\cdot$  is **concatenation**
- a **semiring**: set  $S$ , operations  $+$  (associative, commutative, unit 0) and  $\cdot$  (associative, unit 1), plus distributivity  $(x + y)z = xz + yz$  and  $z(x + y) = zx + zy$ 
  - **idempotent** if  $x + x = x$
  - free idempotent semiring on  $\Sigma$ : **finite** subsets of  $\Sigma^*$
  - (powerset lifting; general principle of adding idempotent  $+$  to algebraic structure)
- a **Kleene algebra**: idempotent semiring plus (unary)  $*$  operation
  - $*$  “computes loops” / “computes least fixed points”
  - (different axiomatisations possible)

# Concurrent Kleene Algebra

## Definition

A **concurrent monoid**  $(S, \cdot, \parallel, 1, \leq)$ :

- $S$  set,  $\cdot$  and  $\parallel$  associative operations with **shared unit** 1
  - $\cdot$  concatenation,  $\parallel$  parallel composition
- $\leq$  partial order on  $S$  such that  $\cdot$  and  $\parallel$  are **monotone**
  - $x \leq y \implies x \cdot z \leq y \cdot z$  and  $x \parallel z \leq y \parallel z$  etc.
- and such that  $(x \parallel y) \cdot (z \parallel w) \leq (x \cdot z) \parallel (y \cdot w)$ 
  - **lax interchange:**

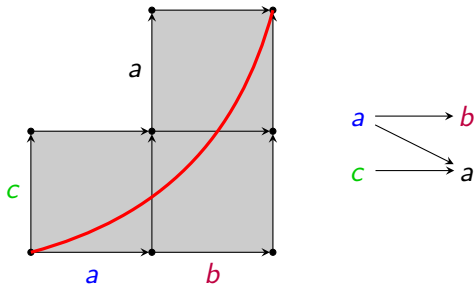


## Concurrent Kleene Algebra?

- concurrent monoid:  $(S, \cdot, \parallel, 1, \leq)$
- free concurrent monoid on  $\Sigma$ : **series-parallel pomsets**
  - pomsets obtained from  $a \in \Sigma$  by **series** and **parallel** composition
- Theorem (Valdes-Tarjan-Lawler '82): pomset  $P$  is series-parallel iff  $P$  contains **no induced N**

# Concurrent Kleene Algebra?

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  - pomsets obtained from  $a \in \Sigma$  by **series** and **parallel** composition
- Theorem (Valdes-Tarjan-Lawler '82): pomset  $P$  is series-parallel iff  $P$  contains **no induced N**
- but look we have N's:



$\Rightarrow$  standard CKA does not seem suited for HDA languages!

# Special ipomsets

## Definition

An ipomset  $(P, <, \dashrightarrow, S, T, \lambda)$  is

- **discrete** if  $<$  is empty (hence  $\dashrightarrow$  is total)
  - also written  ${}_SP_T$
- a **conclist** (“concurrency list”) if it is discrete and  $S = T = \emptyset$
- a **starter** if it is discrete and  $T = P$
- a **terminator** if it is discrete and  $S = P$
- an **identity** if it is both a starter and a terminator

$$\begin{bmatrix} \bullet a \\ \bullet b \bullet \\ a \bullet \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} a \\ b \\ a \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \bullet a \bullet \\ \bullet b \bullet \\ a \bullet \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \bullet a \\ \bullet b \bullet \\ \bullet a \bullet \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \bullet a \bullet \\ \bullet b \bullet \\ a \bullet \end{bmatrix}$$

## Lemma (Janicki-Koutny 93; reformulated)

*An ipomset is interval iff it has a decomposition into discrete ipomsets.*



# Decompositions

## Lemma (Janicki-Koutny 93)

A poset  $(P, <)$  is an interval order iff the order defined on its maximal antichains defined by  $A \preceq B \iff \forall a \in A, b \in B : b \not< a$  is total.

## Corollary

An ipomset is interval iff it has a decomposition into discrete ipomsets.

## Lemma

Any discrete ipomset is a gluing of a starter and a terminator.  $\begin{bmatrix} \bullet a \\ \bullet b \\ \bullet a \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \bullet a \\ \bullet b \\ \bullet a \end{bmatrix} * \begin{bmatrix} \bullet a \\ \bullet b \\ \bullet a \end{bmatrix}$

## Corollary

Any interval ipomset has a decomposition as a sequence of starters and terminators.

$$\left[ \begin{array}{cc} a & b \\ c & a \end{array} \right] = \left[ \begin{array}{c} a \\ c \end{array} \right] * \left[ \begin{array}{c} \bullet a \\ \bullet a \end{array} \right] * \left[ \begin{array}{c} b \\ \bullet a \end{array} \right] = \left[ \begin{array}{c} a \\ c \end{array} \right] * \left[ \begin{array}{c} \bullet a \\ \bullet c \end{array} \right] * \left[ \begin{array}{c} \bullet a \\ \bullet a \end{array} \right] * \left[ \begin{array}{c} \bullet a \\ \bullet a \end{array} \right] * \left[ \begin{array}{c} b \\ \bullet a \end{array} \right] * \left[ \begin{array}{c} \bullet b \\ \bullet a \end{array} \right]$$

# Unique decompositions

Notation: **St**: set of starters  ${}_S U_U$   
**Te**: set of terminators  ${}_U U_T$   
**Id** = **St**  $\cap$  **Te**: set of identities  ${}_U U_U$   
 **$\Omega$**  = **St**  $\cup$  **Te**

## Definition

A word  $w = (S_1, U_1, T_1) \dots (S_n, U_n, T_n) \in \Omega^+$  is **coherent** if  $T_i = S_{i+1}$  for all  $i$ .

## Definition

A coherent word is **sparse** if proper starters and proper terminators are alternating.

- additionally, all  $w \in \text{Id} \subseteq \Omega^+$  are sparse
- so that's  $\text{Id} \cup (\text{St} \setminus \text{Id})((\text{Te} \setminus \text{Id})(\text{St} \setminus \text{Id}))^* \cup (\text{Te} \setminus \text{Id})((\text{St} \setminus \text{Id})(\text{Te} \setminus \text{Id}))^*$

## Lemma

Any interval ipomset  $P$  has a **unique** decomposition  $P = P_1 * \dots * P_n$  such that  $P_1 \dots P_n \in \Omega^+$  is **sparse**.

## Step sequences

Let  $\sim$  be the congruence on  $\Omega^+$  generated by the relation

$$sUU \cdot UT_T \sim sT_T \quad sSU \cdot UU_T \sim sS_T$$

- (compose subsequent starters and subsequent terminators)

### Definition

A **step sequence** is a  $\sim$ -equivalence class of coherent words in  $\Omega^+$ .

### Lemma

*Any step sequence has a **unique sparse** representant.*

### Theorem

*The category of interval ipomsets is isomorphic to the category of step sequences.*

# Categories?

## Definition (Category iiPoms)

**objects:** conclists  $U$  (discrete ipomsets without interfaces)

**morphisms** in  $\text{iiPoms}(U, V)$ : interval ipomsets  $P$  with sources  $U$  and targets  $V$

**composition:** gluing

**identities**  $\text{id}_U = {}_U U_U$

## Definition (Category Coh)

**objects:** conclists  $U$  (discrete ipomsets without interfaces)

**morphisms** in  $\text{Coh}(U, V)$ : step sequences  $[(S_1, U_1, T_1) \dots (S_n, U_n, T_n)]_{\sim}$  with  $S_1 = U$  and  $T_n = V$

**composition:** concatenation

**identities**  $\text{id}_U = {}_U U_U$

- Coh is category generated from (directed multi)graph  $\Omega$  under relations  $\sim$
- isomorphisms  $\Phi : \text{iiPoms} \leftrightarrow \text{Coh} : \Psi$  provided by
  - $\Phi(P) = [w]_{\sim}$ , where  $w$  is any step decomposition of  $P$ ;
  - $\Psi([P_1 \dots P_n]_{\sim}) = P_1 * \dots * P_n$  (needs lemma)

# Algebra?

- this is not cancellative:

$$a \bullet \begin{bmatrix} \bullet a \bullet \\ a \bullet \end{bmatrix} = a \bullet \begin{bmatrix} a \bullet \\ \bullet a \bullet \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} a \bullet \\ a \bullet \end{bmatrix}$$

- “categorical concurrent Kleene algebra”?
- (what to do about subsumptions? 2-categories?)

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# Path Objects

## Theorem

For every ipomset  $P$  there exists an HDA  $\square^P := X$  such that  $L(X) = \{P\}\downarrow$ .

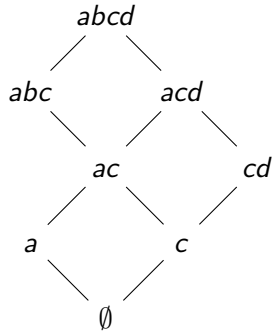
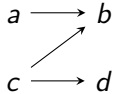
- the **path object** of  $P$
- ad-hoc construction

## Lemma (very useful!)

For any ipomset  $P$  and HDA  $X$ ,  $P \in L(X) \iff \exists f : \square^P \rightarrow X$ .

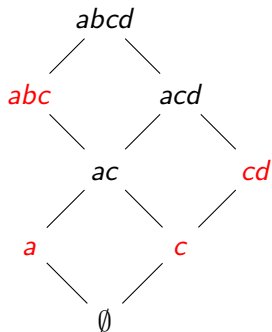
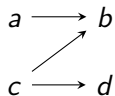
- express **languages** using **morphisms**

# Now Look At Those Down-Closed Subsets!



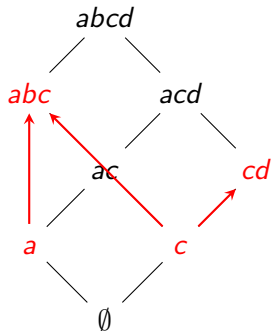
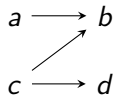


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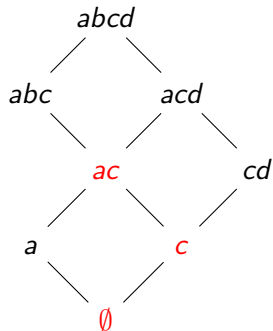
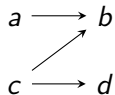
- **join-irreducibles**  $\hat{=}$  principal downsets

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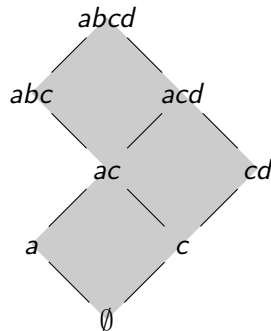
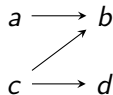
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- induced order **isomorphic** to  $P$

## Now Look At Those Down-Closed Subsets!



- join-irreducibles  $\hat{=}$  principal downsets
- induced order isomorphic to  $P$
- principal **strict** downsets **totally** ordered  $\iff P$  **interval** order

# Now Look At Those Down-Closed Subsets!



- join-irreducibles  $\hat{=}$  principal downsets
- induced order isomorphic to  $P$
- principal strict downsets totally ordered  $\iff P$  interval order
- **Conjecture:** path object  $\square^P \hat{=}$  CAT0-closure of subset lattice

# Conclusion

- ① The Geometry of Concurrency
  - ② Concurrent Semantics of Petri Nets
  - ③ Languages of Higher-Dimensional Automata
  - ④ Advanced Topics
- Geometry and topology of concurrency provide **intuition** and **methodology**
  - Petri nets are a nice and useful **model** for concurrent systems
  - Higher-dimensional automata are a powerful **model** for concurrent systems with a **nice language theory**
  - **Non-interleaving concurrency** is both nice and necessary
  - Categories, functors, and presheaves are **everywhere**

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