

Kuramoto Orientation Diffusion Models

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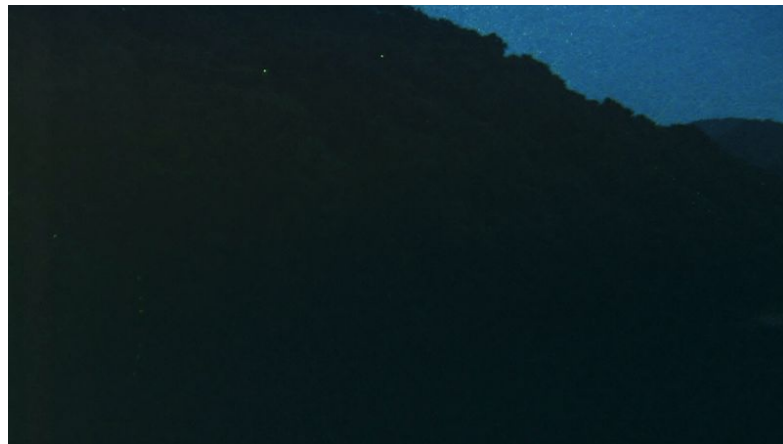
NeurIPS 2025

Synchronization in Nature

bird flock



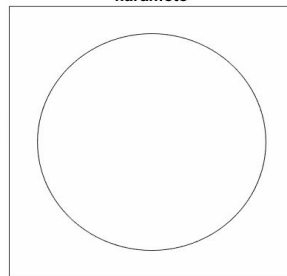
firefly



Phase synchronization in brains and physics:

Kuramoto model [1]:
$$\frac{d\theta_t^i}{dt} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{j=1}^N K(t) \sin(\theta_t^j - \theta_t^i)$$

kuramoto



[1] Yoshiki Kuramoto. "Chemical turbulence". Springer, 1984.

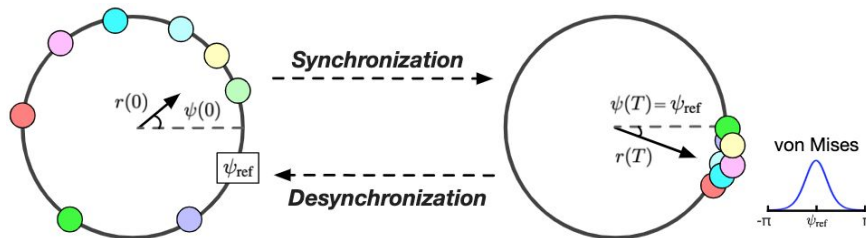
Kuramoto Orientation Diffusion Models

Forward SDE:

$$\frac{d\theta_t^i}{dt} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{j=1}^N K(t) \sin(\theta_t^j - \theta_t^i) + K_{\text{ref}}(t) \sin(\psi_{\text{ref}} - \theta_t^i) + \sqrt{2D_t} w^i$$

\downarrow
phase coupling
 \downarrow
reference attraction

$$\theta = (\theta + \pi) \bmod (2\pi) - \pi$$



Terminal distribution (von Mises):

$$p_{\text{st}}(\theta) \approx \frac{1}{Z} \exp \left(\frac{K(T)r(T) + K_{\text{ref}}(T)}{D_T} \cos(\psi_{\text{ref}} - \theta) \right)$$

$r(T)$: average magnitude.

Learning the Score Function

Score-based generative models [1]:

$$\text{Forward-SDE: } d\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{f}(\mathbf{x}, t) dt + g(t) d\mathbf{w}$$

$$\text{Reverse-SDE: } d\mathbf{x} = [\mathbf{f}(\mathbf{x}, t) - g^2(t) \boxed{\nabla_{\mathbf{x}} \log p(\mathbf{x})}] dt + g(t) d\bar{\mathbf{w}}$$

For linear drifts, $p(\mathbf{x}_t|\mathbf{x}_0)$ will be analytical Gaussian.

Kuramoto drift is highly non-linear; $p(\mathbf{x}_t|\mathbf{x}_0)$ is intractable.

Local Score Matching [2]. Approximation by MC sampling from the local transition kernel:

$$\begin{aligned}\nabla_{\boldsymbol{\theta}_t} \log p(\boldsymbol{\theta}_t) &= \mathbb{E}_{\boldsymbol{\theta}_{t-1} \sim p(\boldsymbol{\theta}_{t-1}|\boldsymbol{\theta}_t)} \left[\nabla_{\boldsymbol{\theta}_t} \log p(\boldsymbol{\theta}_t|\boldsymbol{\theta}_{t-1}) \right] \\ p(\boldsymbol{\theta}_t|\boldsymbol{\theta}_{t-1}) &= \mathcal{WN}\left(\boldsymbol{\theta}_{t-1} + \mathbf{f}(\boldsymbol{\theta}_{t-1}, t-1), 2D_{t-1}\mathbf{I}\right)\end{aligned}$$

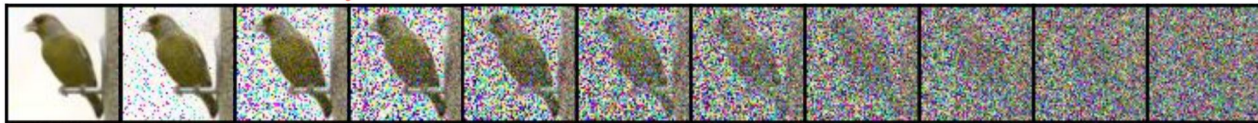
[1] Song, Yang, et al. "Score-based generative modeling through stochastic differential equations." ICLR (2021).

[2] Vincent, Pascal. "A connection between score matching and denoising autoencoders." Neural computation (2011).

Non-isotropic Noise Dynamics

Globally coupled Stochastic Kuramoto model with reference phase

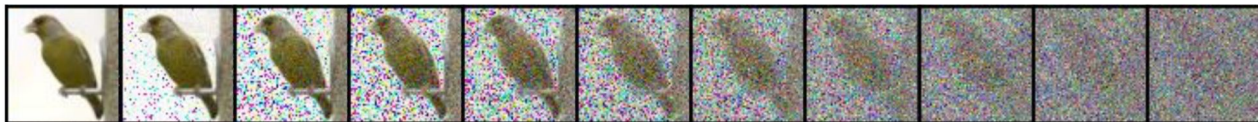
$$\left| \rightarrow \frac{d\theta_t^i}{dt} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{j=1}^N K(t) \sin(\theta_t^j - \theta_t^i) + K_{\text{ref}}(t) \sin(\psi_{\text{ref}} - \theta_t^i) + \sqrt{2D_t} \xi_t^i \rightarrow \right|$$



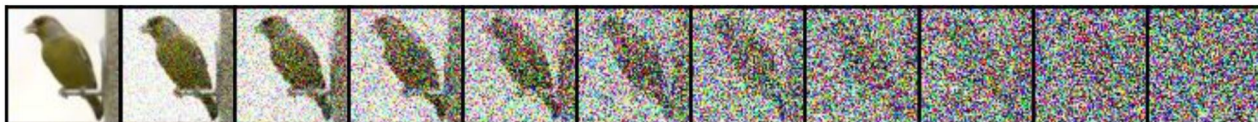
Time-reversed SDE

$$\left| \leftarrow \frac{d\theta_t^i}{dt} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{j=1}^N K(t) \sin(\theta_t^j - \theta_t^i) + K_{\text{ref}}(t) \sin(\psi_{\text{ref}} - \theta_t^i) - 2D_t \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta_t^i} \log p(\theta_t) + \sqrt{2D_t} \bar{\xi}_t^i \leftarrow \right|$$

Locally coupled Stochastic Kuramoto model with reference phase



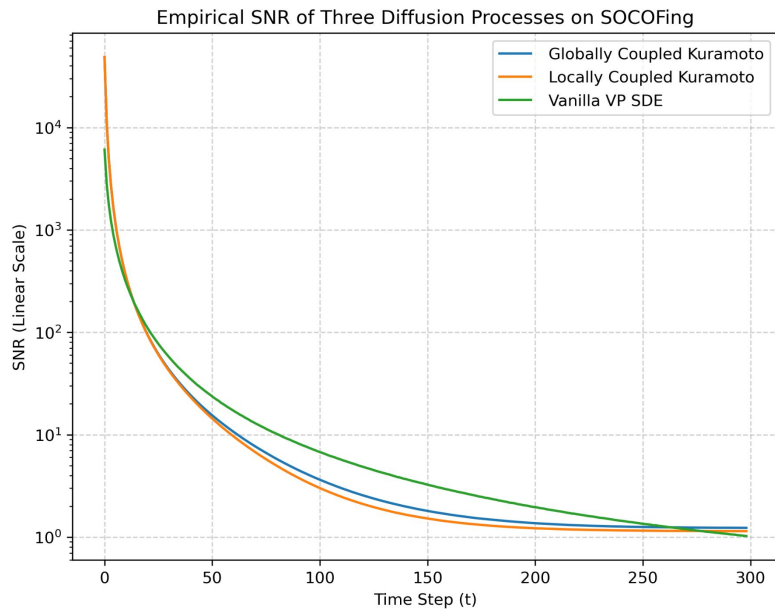
Standard Diffusion Models



Learning to reverse Kuramoto model benefit more directional datasets!

Structured Destruction

SNR of the forward simulation



Synchronization dynamics:

Higher initial SNR: better structure preserving.

Faster cvgc: fewer steps for generation.

Forward and Backward Processes

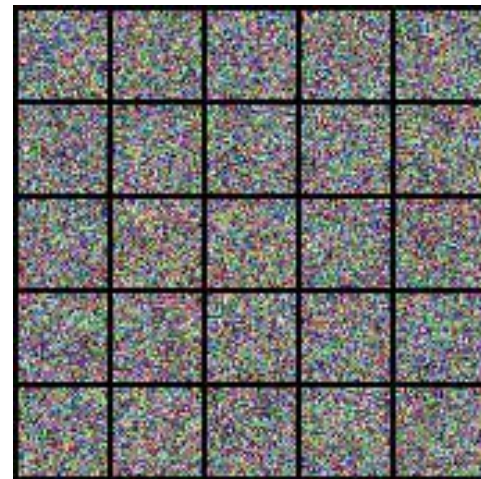
FP (Diffusion Model [1])



FP (Ours)



Learned BP (Ours)



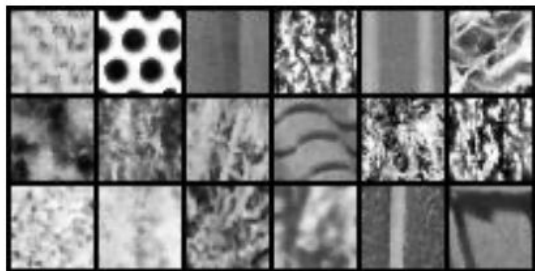
Orientation-dense Dataset

Brodatz Textures [1] (32x32)

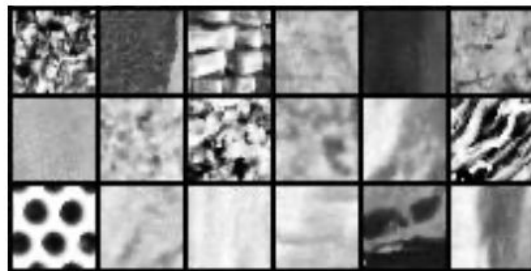
Table 2: FID Scores (\downarrow) on Brodatz texture dataset [1, 8].

Steps	100	300	1000
SGM [59]	38.33	22.40	20.37
Kuramoto Orientation Diffusion (Globally Coupled)	20.26	18.51	15.42
Kuramoto Orientation Diffusion (Locally Coupled)	18.47	15.93	14.19

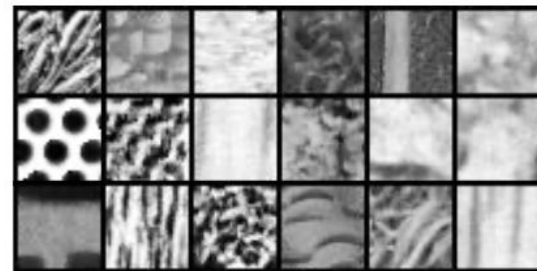
100 steps



300 steps



1000 steps



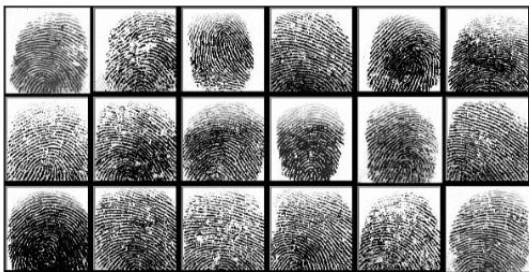
Orientation-dense Dataset

SOCOFing Fingerprints [1] (96x96)

Table 1: FID Scores (\downarrow) on SOCOFing fingerprint dataset [55].

Diffusion Steps	100	300	1000
SGM [59]	104.92	62.66	23.84
Kuramoto Orientation Diffusion (Globally Coupled)	74.41	47.93	20.64
Kuramoto Orientation Diffusion (Locally Coupled)	67.49	43.57	18.75

100 steps



300 steps



1000 steps



Orientation-dense Dataset

Ground Terrain [1] (128x128)

Table 3: FID Scores (\downarrow) on the ground terrain dataset [67].

Diffusion Steps	100	300	1000
SGM [59]	114.90	56.72	33.79
Kuramoto Orientation Diffusion (Globally Coupled)	101.65	54.17	33.56
Kuramoto Orientation Diffusion (Locally Coupled)	92.86	49.68	30.62

100 steps



300 steps



1000 steps



General Image Dataset

CIFAR10 [1] (32x32)

Table 4: FID Scores (\downarrow) on CIFAR10 [34].

Diffusion Steps	100	300	1000
SGM [59]	38.04	25.76	3.17
Kuramoto Orientation Diffusion (Globally Coupled)	29.96	25.83	11.58
Kuramoto Orientation Diffusion (Locally Coupled)	28.17	24.86	10.79

100 steps



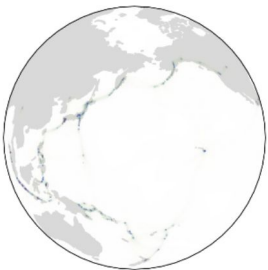
300 steps



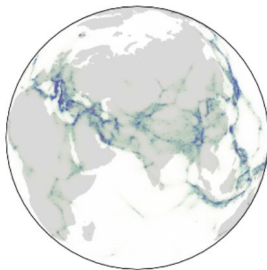
1000 steps



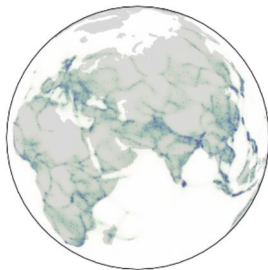
Earth and Climate Science Dataset (2D Sphere)



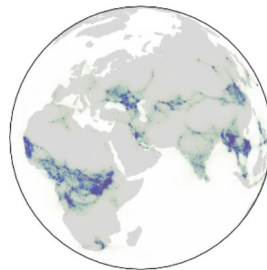
(a) Volcano



(b) Earthquake



(c) Flood



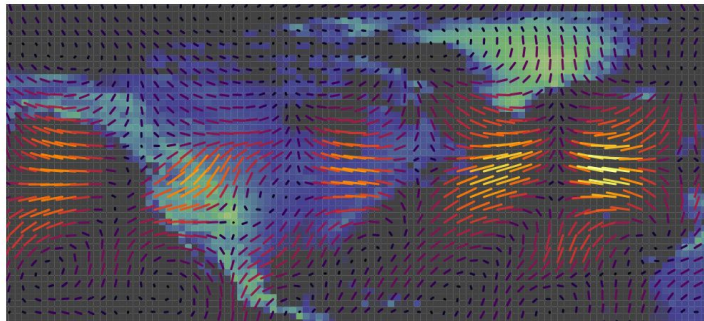
(d) Fire

Table B: Test NLL on Earth and climate science datasets averaged across 5 runs.

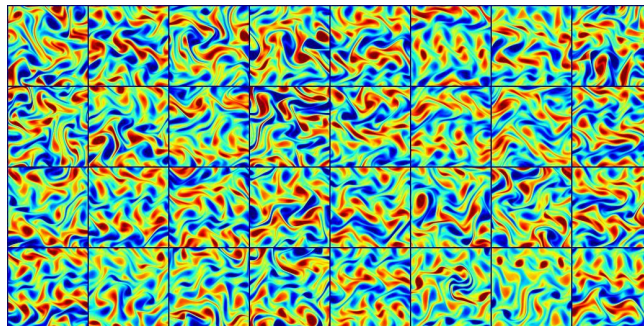
Dataset	Volcano	Earthquake	Flood	Fire
Riemannian CNF [10]	-6.05 ± 0.61	0.14 ± 0.23	1.11 ± 0.19	-0.80 ± 0.54
Moser Flow [13]	-4.21 ± 0.17	-0.16 ± 0.06	0.57 ± 0.10	-1.28 ± 0.05
CNF Matching [1]	-2.38 ± 0.17	-0.38 ± 0.01	0.25 ± 0.02	-1.40 ± 0.02
Riemannian score-based [4]	-4.92 ± 0.25	-0.19 ± 0.07	0.48 ± 0.17	-1.33 ± 0.06
Riemannian diffusion model [8]	-6.61 ± 0.96	-0.40 ± 0.05	0.43 ± 0.07	-1.38 ± 0.05
Riemannian flow matching [3]	-7.93 ± 1.67	-0.28 ± 0.08	0.42 ± 0.05	-1.86 ± 0.11
Our Kuramoto orientation diffusion model	-5.18 ± 0.17	-0.18 ± 0.06	0.49 ± 0.18	-1.44 ± 0.05

Complex diffusion models

Shallow water Eq. of wind velocity



Navier-Stokes Eq. of fluid vorticity



Data is always represented in Cartesian coordinates (v_x, v_y) .

What if we use polar form $\mathbf{s}_t = \mathbf{r}_t e^{i\theta_t}$?

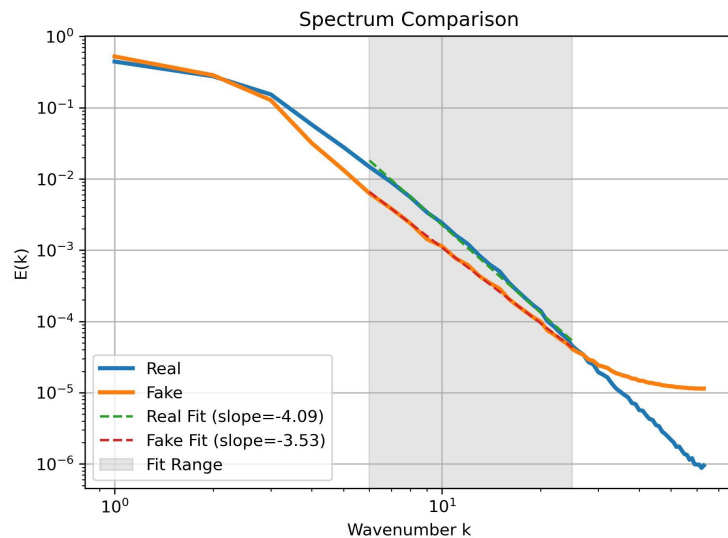
Magnitude: Standard Diffusion

Phase: Kuramoto Diffusion

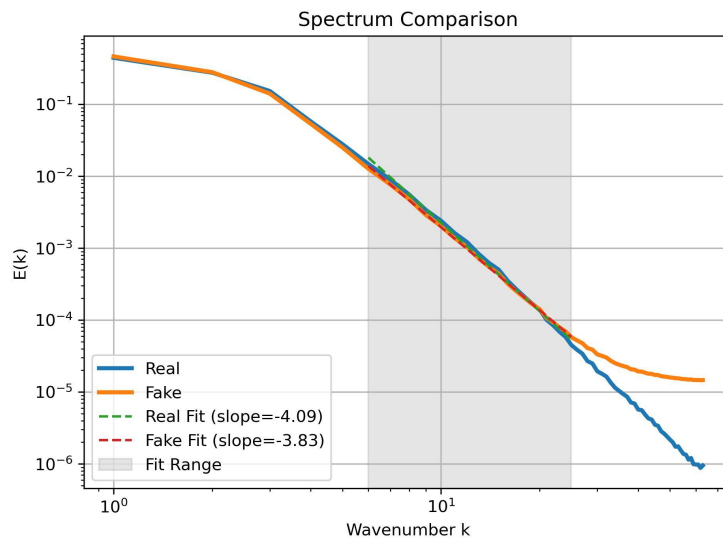
Preliminary Spectral Evaluation

Navier-Stokes Fluids

Diffusion Model



Complex Diffusion Model



Kuramoto Orientation Diffusion Models

Synchronization inductive bias:

- Non-isotropic noise dynamics;
- Structured destruction;
- Hierarchical generation process.

Empirical results:

- Higher sampling efficiency;
- Large gain on orientation-dense datasets;
- Competitive results on general benchmarks;
- Potential for vector-valued generative modelling.