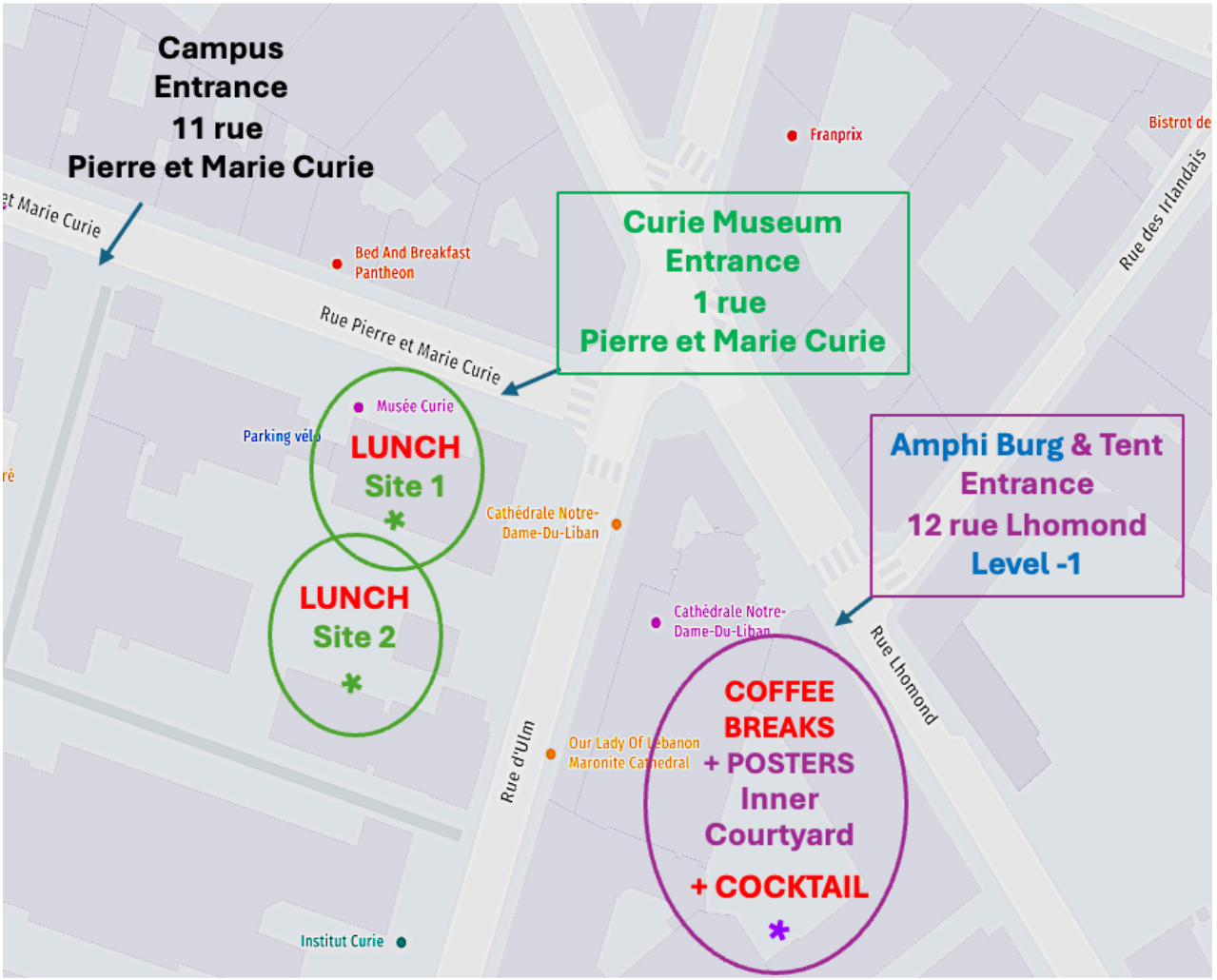
We thank all our sponsors for their support

Map of the event venues



Program
Symposium "Stroma, Immunity and Cancer"
June 23rd 2026 - Institut Curie, Paris, France

Burg Amphitheater (Level -1, 12 rue Lhomond, Paris 5th)

8:30 AM - Badge distribution at 12 rue Lhomond, Paris 5 - Level -1

*Poster installation under the tent, inner courtyard + quick coffee**

· *9:00 AM - Introduction by the organizers*

· *9:15 AM - Fatima Mechta-Grigoriou, I. Curie (20 min + 10 min Q&A)*

Mapping stromal heterogeneity & therapy resistance in Cancer

· *9:45 AM - Hélène Salmon, I. Curie (20 min + 10 min Q&A)*

Understanding and Using Cancer-Associated Fibroblasts in Clinical Oncology

· *10:15 AM - Danijela Vignjevic, I. Curie (20 min + 10 min Q&A)*

Fibroblast mechanics shape antigen-sampling niches in colonic lymphoid structures

*10:45 AM - Coffee break (20 min) + Posters**

· *11:05 AM - **Keynote: Alexandra Naba**, U. Illinois Chicago (35 min + 10 min Q&A)*

The matrisome project: from proteomic exploration of the extracellular matrix to matritherapies

. *11:50 PM - Short talk: Pierre-Alexis Da Costa, CRC (10 min + 5 min Q&A)*

Deciphering the mechanisms driving Tertiary Lymphoid Structure organization and functions in Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer

. *12:05 PM - Cédric Gaggioli, IRCAN (20 min + 10 min Q&A)*

A Journey within the Tumor Microenvironment reveals STAT3 as a Central Hub for Fibroblast Heterogeneity in Squamous Cell Carcinomas.

*12:35 AM - 2:00 PM - Lunch (1h25)**

· *2:00 PM - Lucie Peduto, I. Pasteur (20 min + 10 min Q&A)*

Perivascular stromal niches in tissue homeostasis and cancer

· 2:30 PM - Short talk: Nicolas Captier, Roche (10 min + 5 min Q&A)
Distinct Myofibroblastic and Macrophage Niches Predict Response to Atezolizumab in Early and Metastatic Triple-Negative Breast Cancer: Biomarker Analysis of IMpassion031 and IMpassion130

*· 2:45 PM - **Keynote: Bart Lambrecht**, VIB (35 min + 10 min Q&A)*
Chitinase-like Proteins as Amplifiers of the Immune-Stroma Interaction

· 3:30 PM - Karin Tarte, U. Rennes (20 min + 10 min Q&A)
Follicular Lymphoma cell Niches: a key role for stromal cells

*4:00 PM - Coffee break (30 min) + Posters**

· 4:30 PM - Corinne Bousquet, CRCT (20 min + 10 min Q&A)
Decoding cancer-associated fibroblast heterogeneity in correlation with pancreatic cancer aggressiveness

· 5:00 PM - Short talk: Simge Yücel, EPFL (10 min + 5 min Q&A)
Elucidating the Roles of Stromal FMRP Expression in the Programming of CAFs to Support Immune Evasion

· 5:15 PM - Matthew Krummel, UCSF (20 min + 10 min Q&A)
Manipulating Fibroblast-based Multicellular Movements

· 5:45 PM - Closing remarks by the organizers

*6:00 PM - **Cocktail** together + Posters**
8:30 PM - End of symposium

*** Under the tent, entrance by the 12 rue Lhomond or 25 rue d'Ulm Paris 75005*
** In front of the Curie Museum and in the Curie parc just behind by the 1 rue Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris 5*

SPEAKERS

CORINNE BOUSQUET

AFFILIATION (Institution)	Cancer Research Center of Toulouse
CITY - COUNTRY:	Toulouse - FRANCE

TALK TITLE:

Decoding cancer-associated fibroblast heterogeneity in correlation with pancreatic cancer aggressiveness

ABSTRACT/ BIOSKETCH:

The MICROPANC team led by Dr Corinne Bousquet is dedicated to deciphering how the tumor microenvironment drives pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma (PDAC) invasiveness and chemoresistance. PDAC is marked by a dense desmoplastic stroma enriched in heterogeneous cancer-associated fibroblast (CAF) subsets that fuel tumor progression.

Using RNA expression profiling of an *in-house* cohort of patient-derived CAF lines, the team identified distinct CAF subsets defined by specific ligand-receptor pairs and localized to discrete spatial niches in patient PDAC tissues. These subsets display unique molecular programs and differ in their propensity to shift toward established CAF states (myofibroblastic, inflammatory, or antigen-presenting) through defined signaling pathways.

The team also uncovered mechanisms of stroma-driven secondary chemoresistance using patient-derived xenografts. They identified a stromal gene signature associated with favorable prognosis, reflecting inactive stroma features and innate immune engagement. A key stromal factor within this signature reprogrammed CAFs toward a chemosensitive state by preventing chemotherapy-induced senescence-associated secretory activity, thereby reducing orthotopic tumor growth in treated mice. However, this CAF state attracted and was subsequently cleared by NK cells, creating a detrimental innate-immune feedback loop that promotes chemoresistance.

This work was supported by charities (LNCC, ARC), and national & european programs (PAIR-Pancreas, INCa-PLBio, Plan-Cancer & Transcan-3).

CEDRIC GAGGIOLI

AFFILIATION (Institution)	IRCAN, Inserm U1081
CITY - COUNTRY:	Nice, France

TALK TITLE:

A Journey within the Tumor Microenvironment reveals STAT3 as a Central Hub for Fibroblast Heterogeneity in Squamous Cell Carcinomas.

ABSTRACT/ BIOSKETCH:

Cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma (cSCC) is the second most prevalent type of skin cancer, marked by the oncogenic proliferation of squamous keratinocytes within the epidermis. Its progression and invasive capacity are influenced by the tumor microenvironment (TME), where carcinoma-associated fibroblasts (CAFs) play crucial roles in promoting metastasis, angiogenesis, and resistance to therapy. Therefore, CAFs have emerged as compelling therapeutic targets in the treatment of skin carcinomas.

Within the TME of skin carcinomas, at least two distinct CAF subtypes have been identified: myofibroblastic CAFs (myCAFs) and inflammatory CAFs (iCAFs), which coexist but perform divergent functions. Our findings suggest that the secretome of cSCC cells preferentially induces the emergence of iCAFs during early tumor development, while simultaneously suppressing the myCAF phenotype differentation.

Mechanistically, this CAF subtype imbalance appears to involve distinct signaling pathways, with STAT3 activation playing a central role in the fate of CAF differentiation.

Unravelling the molecular mechanisms governing CAF heterogeneity and their respective contributions to cSCC progression may pave the way for novel anti-cancer and anti-metastatic therapies targeting specific CAF subpopulations differentiation and functions.

FATIMA MECHTA-GRIGORIOU

AFFILIATION (Institution)	Institut Curie
CITY - COUNTRY:	Paris - France

TALK TITLE:

Mapping stromal heterogeneity & therapy resistance in Cancer

ABSTRACT/ BIOSKETCH:

F. Mechta-Grigoriou is an internationally recognized expert investigating the impact of tumor heterogeneity in immunosuppression, metastatic spread and resistance to treatment. Her lab has identified different Cancer-associated fibroblast (CAF) populations in several cancer types. Importantly, she revealed that some specific CAF populations are involved in immunosuppression and resistance to immunotherapies. Moreover, her lab also demonstrated the dual effects of Reactive Oxygen Species. Although they are pro-tumorigenic, they can also improve sensitivity to chemotherapy, such as Taxanes. Thus, by combining studies on human patient cohorts, models in 3D using primary cells isolated from patients and functional assays, her lab established key findings on tumor micro-environment and oxidative stress in immuno- and chemotherapy resistance, highlighting the clinical relevance of her findings.

Her main recent publications as last author are: *Nature Communications 2026, 2024 (x3), 2020, 2018, 2017, 2016; Cancer Research 2026; Cancer Cell,* 2022 (Review), *Cancer Discovery*, 2020; *Cell Metabolism 2019; Cancer Cell,* 2018; *EMBO Mol Med 2016; Autophagy 2014; Nature Medicine 2011.* F. Mechta-Grigoriou has several reviewing activities and institutional responsibilities. She is also the PI of the CASSIOPEIA RHU (France 2030 PIA) program providing new diagnostic and

therapeutic strategies to triple-negative breast cancer patients. Recently, she has been nominated scientific coordinator of the Women's cancer Institute.

MATTHEW KRUMMEL

AFFILIATION (Institution)	UCSF ImmunoX
CITY - COUNTRY:	San Francisco - USA

TALK TITLE:

Manipulating Fibroblast-based Multicellular Movements

ABSTRACT/ BIOSKETCH:

Non-immune cells and immune cells function in harmony with one another in patterns or states that we refer to as archetypes. Fibroblasts play a key role in these, facilitating the transitions between states. We track and manipulate co-incident changes in fibroblast and immune biology in what appear to be evolutionary coded and coordinated multicellular movements of gene expression. By tapping into such movements, we intend to sequentially transition tissues out of one archetypal state (e.g. disease) and into health.

BART LAMBRECHT

(Keynote speaker)

AFFILIATION (Institution)	VIB-UGent
CITY - COUNTRY:	Belgium

TALK TITLE:

Chitinase-like Proteins as Amplifiers of the Immune-Stroma Interaction

ABSTRACT/ BIOSKETCH:

Prof. Dr. Bart N. Lambrecht is a leading expert in pulmonary medicine, asthma, allergy, and respiratory infections. His research has significantly advanced our understanding of lung immunity, shaping new treatment strategies for respiratory diseases.

He earned his MD and PhD in Medicine at Ghent University (UGent) and specialized in Pulmonary Medicine at Erasmus University Medical Center in Rotterdam. Today, he is Professor of Pulmonary Medicine at both ErasmusMC and UGent and Director of the VIB Inflammation Research Center, where he leads 400 scientists.

He is a multiple ERC grant awardee, has authored over 400 scientific papers, and serves on the editorial boards of Trends in Immunology and the Journal of Experimental Medicine. Together with Prof. Hamida Hammad, he leads a 36-member research unit, focusing on antigen-presenting cells (APCs) in asthma and respiratory infections. Their work has advanced the scientific understanding of how dendritic cells, macrophages, and epithelial cells drive immune responses in the lung.

By collaborating with biotech and pharma, he actively drives breakthroughs from the lab to the clinic, advocating that scientific discoveries reach patients. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, he has led large multi-center trials investigating novel immunotherapies, advancing the fight against respiratory diseases.

ALEXANDRA NABA
(Keynote speaker)

AFFILIATION (Institution)	University of Illinois Chicago
CITY - COUNTRY:	Chicago - USA

TALK TITLE:
The matrisome project: from proteomic exploration of the extracellular matrix to matritherapies

ABSTRACT/ BIOSKETCH:
Alexandra Naba is an Associate Professor in the Department of Physiology and Biophysics at the University of Illinois Chicago and a member of the University of Illinois Cancer Center.
Alexandra received her Ph.D. from the Curie Institute, where she studied the role of the membrane-cytoskeleton linker, ezrin, in cell adhesion under the supervision of Monique Arpin and Daniel Louvard.
For her postdoctoral training, Alexandra joined the laboratory of Richard Hynes at MIT, where she developed the first proteomic and bioinformatic pipelines to comprehensively characterize the extracellular matrix (ECM), thereby defining the concept of "matrisome" and pioneering the field of ECM proteomics.
In 2016, Alexandra established the Naba Lab for ECM Research. Her team focuses on understanding the roles of the ECM in development, health, and cancer. Alexandra has published over 60 papers and has received numerous prestigious awards, including the Herb Tabor Junior Investigator Award from the ASBMB, the Junior Investigator Award from the American Society for Matrix Biology, and the Rupert Timpl Award from the International Society for Matrix Biology.

In her talk, Alexandra will discuss the latest advances in ECM proteomics that have shed light on the roles of the ECM in different steps of cancer progression including metastatic dissemination, dormancy, and the modulation of the immune microenvironment. In the second part of her talk, Alexandra will discuss translational opportunities to normalize the tumor ECM to achieve therapeutic benefits.

AFFILIATION (Institution)	Institut Pasteur
CITY - COUNTRY:	Paris - France

TALK TITLE:

Perivascular stromal niches in tissue homeostasis and cancer

ABSTRACT/ BIOSKETCH:

The stromal microenvironment is increasingly recognized as an essential mediator of chronic diseases driven by immune dysregulation, including inflammatory conditions and cancer. Here, we will discuss emerging evidence implicating perivascular stromal niches in the maintenance of tissue homeostasis, with particular emphasis on their roles in anti-tumor immunity and response to inflammatory stimuli.

HELENE SALMON

AFFILIATION (Institution)	Institut Curie
CITY - COUNTRY:	Paris - France

TALK TITLE:

Understanding and Using Cancer-Associated Fibroblasts in Clinical Oncology

ABSTRACT/ BIOSKETCH:

Over the past decade, the tumor stroma has emerged as a promising therapeutic target in cancer. While preclinical studies have largely focused on cancer-associated fibroblast (CAF) repolarization, stroma-targeting approaches remain under active investigation, and their effects on the human mesenchymal compartment are still poorly understood. We evaluated dual PD-L1/TGFβ blockade with bintrafusp alfa in head and neck squamous cell carcinoma using paired pre- and post-treatment tumor samples from a window-of-opportunity phase II trial. Treatment resulted in a marked depletion of activated LRRC15^{+} CAFs rather than their repolarization. This was associated with increased CD8^{+} T-cell infiltration into tumor nests in immune-excluded tumors, yet also with a pronounced loss of the stromal compartment and a reduction in overall lymphocyte content in a subset of patients. Treatment-associated bleeding was additionally observed and correlated with increased angiogenesis and the presence of immature endothelial cells. These results demonstrate that activated CAF depletion is feasible in patients and can occur rapidly in the neoadjuvant setting. However, its consequences for vascular integrity, immune cell persistence, and tumor dissemination require further investigation.

I will also discuss findings in human early-stage non-muscle-invasive bladder cancer (NMIBC), showing an early cooperation between CAFs and rare invasive tumor cells that contributes to bladder cancer progression and provides a basis for risk stratification and therapeutic intervention in NMIBC.

KARIN TARTE

AFFILIATION (Institution)	Université Rennes
CITY - COUNTRY:	Rennes - France

TALK TITLE:

Follicular Lymphoma cell Niches: a key role for stromal cells

DANIJELA VIGNJEVIC

AFFILIATION (Institution)	Institut Curie
CITY - COUNTRY:	Paris - France

TALK TITLE:

Fibroblast mechanics shape antigen-sampling niches in colonic lymphoid structures

ABSTRACT/ BIOSKETCH:

How luminal antigens are sampled in the colon remains poorly understood. Here, we identify a specialized architecture in which entire epithelial crypts become engulfed within colonic lymphoid structures. These engulfed crypts are present at steady state, increase during inflammation, and acquire features of antigen-sampling epithelium, including an M-cell-like program and close association with bacterial material. We show that this process is regulated by the stromal microenvironment: loss of fibroblast contractility promotes crypt engulfment, remodels lymphoid structure architecture, and shifts the local immune landscape toward a more tolerogenic state. Together, our findings reveal engulfed crypts as fibroblast-regulated epithelial–immune interfaces that may enable controlled antigen sampling and immune tolerance in the colon.

Short talks

Pierre-Alexis Da Costa (PhD student) - Centre de recherche des Cordeliers, Paris - Isabelle Cremer team

Deciphering the mechanisms driving Tertiary Lymphoid Structure organization and functions in Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer

Nicolas Captier (Postdoctoral fellow) - Institut Roche, France

Distinct Myofibroblastic and Macrophage Niches Predict Response to Atezolizumab in Early and Metastatic Triple-Negative Breast Cancer: Biomarker Analysis of IMpassion031 and IMpassion130

Simge Yücel (Postdoctoral fellow) - Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), Switzerland - Douglas Hanahan team

Elucidating the Roles of Stromal FMRP Expression in the Programming of CAFs to Support Immune Evasion