

BOOK LAUNCH SYMPOSIUM

THINKING MACHINES - MACHINE THINKING

14 February 2019 - EPFL ArtLab



Nicolas Ducimetière

Vice director Fondation Martin Bodmer, Cologne



Macarios Jabbour

Executive director Maronite Library Aleppo, Syria



Béla Kapossy

Dean of the EPFL College of Humanities



Sarah Kenderdine

Director of the EPFL ArtLab

Lead of the EPFL Laboratory for experimental museology eM+



Bill Sherman

Director of the Warburg Institute and Professor of Cultural History in the University of London's School of Advanced Study



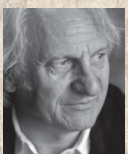
Roland Tormey

Coordinator of the EPFL Teaching Support Centre



Amador Vega

Professor of Aesthetics and Art Theory at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona



Siegfried Zielinski

Michel Foucault Professor of Media Archaeology and Techno-Culture at the European Graduate School in Saas-Fee (CH)

MORNING

9:00 **Welcome**

Guided tour through the exhibition: "Thinking Machines. Ramon Llull and the ars combinatoria"

9:45 **Introduction**

Béla Kapossy, EPFL CDH & **Sarah Kenderdine**, EPFL ArtLab

10:00 **What Does Llull's Ars Combinatoria Mean for Art?**

Amador Vega, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona

The ars luliana took root in the European intellectual milieu thanks to thinkers such as Nicholas of Cusa and Giordano Bruno, before falling into decline with Descartes, the Enlightenment, and the advent of modern philosophy. In the wake of the Modernist avant-gardes, poets, writers, and artists found in this fourteenth-century ars inventiva a powerful if unlikely model for their own grammars of creation. Yet what legacy of Ramon Llull's combinatorial system, a method for religious conversion, endures in the minds and praxes of contemporary creators? Given the specificities of its cultural context, how might we establish an analogy between Ars and Art?

10:45 **Ramon Llull as a Modern Media Thinker**

Siegfried Zielinski, Saas-Fee Switzerland and UDK Berlin

Ramon Llull's intellectual universe is presented as an ideal media world in the late European middle ages and as an interface to pre-modernity, which profited a lot from the knowledge cultures of the Middle East. Llull's paper machines are discussed as an early example of priest's mechanics (Priestermechanik). The whole project on Llull will be presented as an advanced investigation in Prospective Archaeology. Within this methodological and conceptual framework prominent aspects of our book will be introduced, especially the idea of a chrono-topological presentation of Llullism.

11:30 **Coffee Break**

11:45 **Computational Thinking**

Roland Tormey, EPFL

The fourth industrial revolution (i4.0) is changing the way in which people live, work and interact with each other and with technology. The rapid pace of change means that items which were the subject of study only a few years ago are now commonplace. The iPhone, for example, was launched only ten years ago but today mobile connectivity is the pervasive norm throughout much of the world, with an estimated 2.32 billion smartphone users worldwide. This transformation has enormous impacts on the way people teach, learn and work. This is evident in scientific fields but also in the way people work in social, artistic and cultural fields. Social and cultural evolutions also require educational evolutions; just as the industrial revolution was associated with the growth of public education, the fourth industrial revolution also necessitates educational change. One such change is a focus on computational thinking, defined as the "conceptual foundation required to solve problems effectively and efficiently (i. e., algorithmically, with or without the assistance of computers) with solutions that are reusable in different contexts". How can such thinking become part of the foundation for an education fit for contemporary challenges?

12:30 **Q & A**

13:00 **Lunch Break**

Launch of the publication* "DIA-LOGOS Ramon Llull's Method of Thought and Artistic Practice"

AFTERNOON

14:30 **A Tale of Two Machines: From the Printing Press to the Enigma Machine**

Bill Sherman, The Warburg Institute

At first glance, the Printing Press and the Enigma Machine represent different periods and opposing places on the spectrum from openness to secrecy. But in this illustrated lecture, I will suggest that the Renaissance invention of printing and the modern science of encryption have much more in common than meets the eye.

15:30 **Q & A - Coffee Break**

16:00 **Les manuscrits maronites d'Alep** (in French)

Macarios Jabbour, Executive Director of the Maronite Library of Aleppo

16:45 **Préserver et montrer: la numérisation comme remède au paradoxe du conservateur?** (in French)

Nicolas Ducimetière, Vice Director of the Bodmer Foundation

La mission d'une bibliothèque patrimoniale a toujours été ambivalente : gardienne d'un patrimoine aussi fragile que précieux, elle doit pourtant en assumer la communication (aux chercheurs), voire la présentation (muséale). L'arrivée des techniques de numérisation a permis de répondre à ces demandes tout en ménageant les documents d'époque. Et loin de faire baisser l'intérêt pour les originaux (comme certains pouvaient le craindre), elle a au contraire permis d'améliorer les travaux scientifiques tout en attirant l'attention du grand public. Nous nous proposons d'examiner ces enjeux à travers l'exemple de la Fondation Martin Bodmer, qui, par divers projets et partenariats (notamment avec l'EPFL, mais aussi avec l'UniGe ou le programme national « e-Codices »), est devenu un pôle de référence sur ces matières en Suisse.

17:30 **Q & A**

18:00 **Aperitif**

[ONLINE REGISTRATION TO THE SYMPOSIUM](#) (free of charge)

Contact: giulia.bini@epfl.ch



The poster features the title "Thinking Machines" in large white font on a dark blue background. Below the title, the dates "03.11.18–10.03.19" are displayed. On the right side, there is a 3D illustration of a complex, multi-layered structure made of yellow blocks, resembling a stylized letter 'M'. The blocks are labeled with various Latin words: Gloria, Veritas, Bonitas, Magnitudo, Durans, Bonum, Virtuosum, and Verum. At the base of the structure is a wireframe globe. The URL "http://thinkingmachines.world" is located at the bottom left of the poster.

* The publication DIA-LOGOS Ramon Llull's Method of Thought and Artistic Practice was generously supported by Ernst von Siemens Stiftung.

