

## **KONF: The Automated Condition. Manifestations and Narratives in Art, Literature and Culture, Princeton NJ (11.05. - 13.05.2022)**

Discussion published by Dennis Schäfer on Wednesday, April 20, 2022

The Automated Condition. Manifestations and Narratives in Art, Literature and Culture, Princeton NJ

Interdisciplinary Graduate Conference at the Department of German, Princeton University in collaboration with the FWF-funded project "Co-operative Art Techniques" at the Center for Cultural Studies, University of Graz

REGISTER HERE: <https://bit.ly/3r7KPIm>

Keynote: Joanna Zylińska (Media Philosophy & Critical Digital Practice, King's College London)

Driverless cars, social credit systems, or Twitter poetry bots: our increasingly technologically optimized and algorithmically organized existence informs an automated condition, a mode de vivre centuries in the making, in which spontaneity, ingenuity, and exceptionality are re-defined through the standardization of processes of labor, production, and consumption. Concomitantly, the flipside of the Fordian promise of total automation has become a bitter and unavoidable reality where automated systems upend the foundations of social interaction and artistic production alike. That this is the inevitable fate and triumph of the animal laborans would be the argument posited by Hannah Arendt, who warns in "The Human Condition" (1958), like many others, how such advancements in automation, spearheaded by the industrial revolution and invention the steam engine, could result "in the deadliest, most sterile passivity history has ever known". Moving within a variety of manifestations and narratives, this interdisciplinary graduate conference wishes to both connect and cross-pollinate historical case studies on automation with theoretical perspectives on the conditions it produces. Collectively, literature, art, and culture can provide vital points of entry into the interrogation of life in the automated condition, question whether it is truly a fatal form of passivity, and offer a nuanced and holistic understanding of its promises and its possibilities.

PROGRAM (in EST)

WEDNESDAY MAY 11 [ZOOM]

12.00 OPENING ADDRESS

Robert Felfe (Art History, University of Graz)

Co-operative Art Techniques — before and at the Beginning of Modernism

Moderated by Carolyn Yerkes (Art and Archaeology, Princeton)

1.30 LUNCH BREAK

2.30 WORKSHOP FOR CONFERENCE PRESENTERS

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Grant Wythoff (Digital Humanities, Princeton)  
Writing with AI

THURSDAY MAY 12 [EAST PYNE 012 / ZOOM]

9.15 PANEL I / AUTOMATING LIFE

Sean Lambert (German, Berkeley)  
Kleist's Brood: Graceful Automata from the Mechanical Turk to Digital Dali

Rebecca Uliasz (Media Studies, Duke)  
Larger than Life: Automation and Influence in the Wake of Creative AI

Fabian Ebeling (Media Studies, Eichstätt)  
Nicolas Schöffers' Aesthetic Machines as Prefigurations of Smart Environments

Moderated by Mary-Grayson Brook (German, Princeton)

10.45 BREAK

11.00 PANEL II / AUTOMATED LIFE

Elisa Riga (German, Boulder)  
The Art Instinct in Animals

Yorick Joshua Berta (Art History, Linz)  
Automated Endings: Transient Art in the 1960s

Moderated by Ameli M. Klein (Art History, Graz/Collective Rewilding)

12.00 LUNCH

12.45 PANEL III / AUTOMATED LABOR

Dennis Schäfer (German, Princeton)  
From Script to Print: The Scales of Automation

Livia Foldes (Design and Technology, Parsons)  
NSFW Venus: Archives, Automated Censorship, and the Encoded Gaze

Moderated by Diana Little (English, Princeton)

1.45 BREAK

2.30 ARTIST TALK

Aarati Akkapeddi, in conversation with Mona Schubert (Art History, Cologne/Graz)  
Tender Taxonomies: Reflections on Working with Personal Materials as Training Data

FRIDAY MAY 13 [EAST PYNE 012 / ZOOM]

9.15 KEYNOTE LECTURE AND FILM SCREENING

Joanna Zylińska (Media Philosophy & Critical Digital Practice, King's College London)  
AUTO-FOTO-KINO: Imaging after Cinema and AI

Moderated by Nikolaus Wegmann (German, Princeton)

10.45 BREAK

11.00 PANEL IV / (NON-)HUMAN AUTOMATIONS

Paul Labelle (Music, Bonn)

(Re)discovering the Human in History through Machine Learning — Jennifer Walshe's A Late Anthology of Early Music Vol.1

Mona Schubert (Art History, Cologne/Graz)

Open Circuits. Conceptual Art and the Agency of the Camera

Moderated by Elisa Purschke (German, Princeton)

12.00 LUNCH BREAK

12.45 PANEL V / PSYCHOLOGY OF AUTOMATION

Manuela Mohr (French, Montpellier)

A Life other than Human: The Evolution of Psychological Automatism in mid-19th century French Fantastic

Marie-Louise James (German, Princeton)

Automatism Meets Intermediality: On the Cutting Table of Max Ernst's "La femme 100 têtes" (1929)

J.C. Moran (Gender Studies, Cambridge)

Clouds of Desire: Automating Love as Narrative Promise

Moderated by Xiaoyao Guo (German, Princeton)

2.00 BREAK

2.30 PANEL VI / AUTOMATION ANXIETIES

Hagen Schmitz (Politics, Berlin)

Friedrich Pollock on Automation: Critical Thought on Technical Progress Between Karl Marx and

Aldous Huxley

Verena Wolf (German, Berkeley)

Narratives of Risk: Control and Automation in Christa Wolf's "Störfall"

Julia Irwin (Media Studies, Berkeley)

Object Recognition, 'Cratology,' and the Discursive Field in the Making of Cold War Military Image Intelligence

Moderated by Florian Endres (Comparative Literature, Princeton)

3.45 BREAK

4.00 FINAL DISCUSSION / ROUNDTABLE

For further questions please reach out to Dennis Schäfer ([dennis.schaefer@princeton.edu](mailto:dennis.schaefer@princeton.edu)) and Mona Schubert ([mona.schubert@uni-graz.at](mailto:mona.schubert@uni-graz.at)).

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