



## CALL FOR PAPERS

**Institute of Conservation [ICON] Dynamic Objects Group 2025 Symposium & AGM**

**Automata: Then - Now - Future**

**Thursday, January 16th 2025**

**Online & St. Mary-at-Hill Church, Lovat Lane, London EC3R 8EE**

**Deadline for abstracts: 30th September 2024**

In recent years, several famous eighteenth century automata have been the focus of large scale conservation projects. They have been repaired, reinterpreted, presented to wider audiences, and returned to levels of operation designed to balance wider demands with museological requirements for long-term preservation.

This symposium provides an opportunity to discuss the various challenges of the treatment of mechanical objects including automata, toys, robots, and the many technologies involved in machine and instrument work.

The Dynamic Objects Group welcomes the submission of abstracts for either 20, or 40-minute presentations of case studies that extend our view of what automata 'are', and what their future and long-term care involves. We welcome presentations about the care of automata, whether in public institutions or private collections, whether the objects are mechanically active or working in other ways. We welcome applications from students and all allied fields.

Abstracts should be no more than 300 words, and be accompanied by a short bio of no more than 50 words. Presentations may be delivered in person or online.

Please indicate whether your presentation is designed for a 20, or a 40-minute slot and whether you intend to deliver the presentation in-person or on-line.

The symposium will be recorded and presentations uploaded to the ICON YouTube channel.

The event is organised with the support of the Antiquarian Horological Society (<https://www.ahsoc.org/>).

Presentations are invited to cover:

- Current conservation and curatorial practices relating to historic automata, and how these practices can meet the challenge of preserving automata for the future
- Approaches to the care of contemporary art automata
- Case studies of practical aspects of treatment
- Novel or experimental treatments making use of modern technology
- Ethical or practical considerations around continued use, approaches to forms of 'work' policies and application of risk assessments
- How to evaluate the success of approaches - object safety, social impact etc.
- Specific considerations for loans and transportation of complex mechanical objects
- Options for bringing historic and contemporary automata to wider audiences
- Conceptual explorations of how audience experience can be maximized, including when function is compromised or limited
- Ways in which the various understandings of what automata 'are' relates to their treatment, and how choices about treatment contribute to these understandings

**Please submit abstracts on or before 30th September 2024 to:**

[icondynamicobjectsgroup@gmail.com](mailto:icondynamicobjectsgroup@gmail.com) with the subject title: *2025 Symposium Abstract*