

Icon Dynamic Objects Group – Symposium 2025



Automata



Then - Now - Future

Thursday, 16th January 2025

10.00 - 16.00 GMT

Programme

[St. Mary-at-Hill Church](#), Lovat Lane, London EC3R 8EE / online

Registration:

<https://www.icon.org.uk/events/automata-then-now-future.html>



From historic automata to contemporary art using time-based media, artificial moving figures have been a subject of fascination across centuries, generating a variety of objects now considered as part of our cultural heritage.

[The Institute of Conservation](#) Dynamic Objects Group established this symposium to provide a perspective on the various challenges in the understanding, conservation, display and use of mechanical objects such as automata, robots, animated models or performing art pieces, and in the approach to the often overlapping technologies involved in their operation or 'working'.

This day-long event will cover presentations of case studies that extend our view of what automata 'are', what their future and long-term care may involve, reflecting on how modern technologies may offer opportunities to better share understanding and preservation.

With a panel of speakers from a variety of conservation and academic backgrounds, discussing topics ranging from 18th century automata to contemporary art, each of the proposed sessions will lead us toward a thought-provoking final panel discussion.

The lunch break will include the Annual General Meeting of the Icon Dynamic Objects Group.

The symposium will be followed on site and online by an evening event from our event partner,

[The Antiquarian Horological Society](#)

[Separate booking is essential to attend this free AHS event](#)



#dynamicobjectsconservation #time-basedmedia #horology #automata #industrialheritage
#conservationethics #digitalheritage #restoration #making #Repair #Heritage #Museum #Craft
#Curator #Clock #contemporaryart

Programme

10.00 Arrival and coffee
10:20 - 10:30 Welcome and opening remarks

10:30 - 11:45 **Session 1**

Chair Dr James Nye, AHS Chairman

Rachel Wicaksono UK - University of East London Matthew Read UK - Clockmaker-conservator	<i>A cross disciplinary reflection on 'what things are' and how this question relates to our responsibilities as conservators of historic dynamic objects</i>
Manon Abt UK - University College London	<i>Reconstructing the Senster: Preserving Authenticity in Cybernetic Automata</i>
Raquel Racionero Núñez Emanuel Sterp Moga Alicia Sánchez Ortiz Spain - Faculty of Fine Arts, UCM, Madrid	<i>Recreating The Lost Functionality Of A 19th Century French Musical Box Using 3d Digital Technologies</i>

11:45 - 13:00 Lunch and AGM for the Dynamic Objects Group

13:00 - 14:15 **Session 2**

Chair Françoise Collanges, D.O.G. Group Chairwoman

Jonathan Betts UK – Horological scholar	<i>The Waddesdon Elephant automaton : Forever, for Everyone</i>
Christopher King UK - Tate	<i>Control Systems in Contemporary Art Work</i>

14 :15 - 14 :35 Break

14:35 - 15:25 **Session 3**

Chair Keith Scobie-Youngs, Icon ACR and AHS Trustee

Tabea Rude Austria - Vienna Clock Museum	<i>A Shared Secret: Developing an Augmented Reality Escape Game for the Vienna Clock Museum</i>
Marie Ducimetière Kristof Efferenn Germany - Museum Ludwig, Köln	<i>Restoring Motion: The Conservation of Andreas Siekmann's Kinetic Artwork Die Exklusive – Zur Politik des ausgeschlossenen Viertels</i>

15:25 - 16:00 **Panel discussion and closing remarks.**

Chair Jonathan Ashley-Smith, researcher and writer

Speakers

Manon ABT

PhD student in the History of Art Department of UCL, conducting research on the preservation of early computer-based art (1960-1991) under the supervision of Prof Pip Laurenson.

Jonathan ASHLEY-SMITH (Chair - Panel discussion)

Researcher and writer in the field of cultural heritage risk. He worked as a metalwork conservator, analytical scientist and Head of Conservation at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) London. His recent work has highlighted his concerns about the decline in practical conservation skills and the unthinking rigidity of conservation ethics. His current obsession is 'uncertainty'.

Jonathan BETTS MBE

Horological scholar and author.

Marie DUCIMETIÈRE

Independent contemporary art conservator-restorer and founder of Mains D'Oz (2023). With degrees in preventive conservation (2018) and conservation-restoration (2021), she has worked at Museum Ludwig in Köln, Lausanne's Collection de l'Art Brut, and as a private conservator in France, Italy, Korea, and Switzerland.

Kristof EFFERENN

A trained Time-Based Media Conservator, working for the Museum Ludwig in Cologne Germany since 2019. After his Bachelor in Museums Science in 2013, Efferenn attended the master program of Conservation of New Media and Digital Information at the Stuttgart Academy of Art and Design.

Chris KING

Works as an assistant time-based media conservator at Tate where he often focuses on the conservation of complex control system-based artworks. He has contributed to Tates Software-based Art Preservation Project and technical analysis of Tate's Net Art commissions published as part of Reshaping the Collectible: When Artworks Live in the Museum. Chris has presented papers and delivered workshops at the AIC annual meeting and NACCA.

Raquel RACIONERO NÚÑEZ

Associate professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts UCM, Madrid, Spain.

Matthew READ

Clockmaker-conservator and YouTuber working primarily within the Museums and Heritage domain. Mathew curates the brand *How to repair pendulum clocks* that includes publications and free-to-access on-line content.

Tabea RUDE

Trained as a watchmaker in Germany followed by an MA in Clocks and Dynamic Objects Conservation at West Dean College, UK. After two years of self-employment in London, I joined the Vienna Clock Museum as a conservator in 2017. Since 2018, I have additionally taken on the curatorial responsibilities.

Alicia SÁNCHEZ ORTIZ

Professor, Faculty of Fine Arts, UCM, Madrid, Spain

Emanuel STERP MOGA

PhD Assistant, Faculty of Fine Arts, UCM, Madrid, Spain

Rachel WICAKSONO

Professor of Education, and Executive Dean of the School of Childhood and Social Care at the University of East London, UK. She is co-editor, with Christopher J. Hall, of 'Ontologies of English: Conceptualizing the Language for Learning, Teaching, and Assessment', 2020, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Organizations

Icon

The Institute of conservation is an independent Charity, representing around 2300 members and institutions, that raises awareness of the cultural, social and economic value of caring for heritage and champions high standards of conservation.

<https://www.icon.org.uk/>

Icon Dynamic Objects Group

The Icon (The Institute of Conservation) Group supports the conservation of all objects that have a dynamic element, ranging from books to bicycles, kinetic art to clocks of all sizes. The Group aims to promote an integrated view on conserving the dynamic nature of cultural objects.

Created in 2017 as an Icon Network, the group evolved in 2024 to a longer-term structure.

All cultural heritage objects may be described at some level as dynamic i.e. when new or in an earlier 'use' context, they moved as either a primary or secondary part of their purpose or function. The Group's interests cover all objects that have a dynamic element, ranging from books to bicycles, kinetic art to clocks of all sizes. The Group aims to promote an integrated view on conserving the dynamic nature of cultural objects.

The cultural, technical, and social values of dynamic objects evolve and change from their time of production. The conservation of such artifacts calls for skills and knowledge that are often challenging to align within professional practice frameworks.

The group is managed by a temporary board during its transition from a network to a group.

Chair: Françoise Collanges, senior clock and preventive conservator (Brussels, BE)

Secretary: Mostyn Gale, freelance horological conservator-restorer (Santa Barbara, CA).

Treasurer: Dale Sardeson, horological conservator and collections consultant, ACR (UK).

Digital Officer: Matthew Read, Senior clock conservator, ICON Trustee (UK).

<https://www.icon.org.uk/groups-and-networks/dynamic-objects.html>

Contact: icondynamicobjectsgroup@gmail.com

Antiquarian Horological Society

Are you interested in the story of time? The AHS is for you. We're a lively, welcoming society open to all. We run a diverse programme of talks, meetings and visits around the UK and overseas. We publish a quarterly learned journal as well as a wide range of books, and we support education, conservation and research through bursaries, prizes and awards.

<https://www.ahsoc.org/>

<https://www.ahsoc.org/blog/>

AHS London Lecture Thursday 16 January 2025

Nikos Gorgoraptis, A French revolution in watchmaking: LIP and the experience of workers' self-management

LIP was founded by Emmanuel Lipmann in 1867 in Besançon, the epicentre of French horology at that time. It rapidly became a thriving manufacture and by the 1930s it was the largest watchmaker in France. Under the management of Fred Lip (grandson of the company's founder), 1500 workers at LIP were producing over 500,000 watches a year in the 1960s, sold through a well-established distribution network in France and abroad.

In 1973, having acquired a majority stake, Swiss giant Ebauches SA - ASUAG decided to liquidate LIP and planned massive layoffs. The workers refused to accept that fate. Inspired by the events of May 1968, they occupied the factory, seized a 'war treasure' of 65,000 watches, and under the slogan 'we produce, we sell, we pay ourselves, it's possible', they resumed production without managers. Their struggle was organised by trade unionists but led by an 'Action Committee', where decisions were made collectively by all workers. Women, who formed over 50% of the workforce at LIP, led a 'revolution within a revolution', questioning traditional gender relationships at the workplace.

They were able to sustain themselves through a prolonged period of negotiations, from which they emerged victorious: LIP reopened under the management of 'left wing boss' Claude Neuschwander and all workers were rehired by December 1974. This marked a period of remarkable creativity, with designers such as Roger Tallon and Isabelle Hebey putting forward innovative watch designs which became both popular and influential.

Nikos Gorgoraptis is a London-based member of the AHS Wristwatch Group. He is interested in the intersection between horology and the labour movement.



However, a new government under Giscard d'Estaing decided that LIP 'must be punished' to serve as an example. Key public sector contracts and loan agreements were therefore cancelled, LIP found itself in difficulty again and it filed for bankruptcy in February 1976. The workers occupied the factory again, resumed production, and formed the co-operative *Les Industries de Palente*, which continued manufacturing watches until the mid-1980s.

Using an unusual timepiece as a starting point, parallels will be drawn between the struggle of the workers at LIP and historic events in Greece at the same time. The legacy of 'the LIP affair', as it lives on today in self-managed organisations around the world, will also be examined.

Attending London Lectures

We run our 2025 London Lecture Series as hybrid events, available live both online via Zoom and in-person at St Mary-at-Hill Church, Lovat Lane, London. Whether online or in-person, those wishing to attend lectures must register in advance at www.ahsoc.org/events/london-lectures. If you have questions or difficulties please email events@ahsoc.org.