

# A PLAY OF BOOKS - COMPUTATI ONAL OBJECTS IN A WORLD OF DATA

Friday, December 9, 2016  
12:00 – 13:30

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This talk was given in the ATTP Lunch Talk series.

Events in this series are irregular, and they take place in the department's library at Wiedner Hauptstrasse 7, 1040 Vienna.

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WORLD OF DATA.

WHAT IF BOOKS HAD FACES? HOW WOULD THEY  
BEHAVE?

We are beyond representation; our abstract objects are symbolic; figures, fugues, faces, masks, atoms, elements, characters, avatars, indexes. It is about infusing, narrating, doping, context, information and masterful articulations. Concepts become spectrums; they live like the memory or traces of things that have been; they are not documents — they are animate. They don't have individual faces — they define zones of probability. It is a multiplicity of ciphering that makes them possible in every sense and direction. Examples can be found all around our world. Brands inhabit symbolical spaces of myths; simulacra are expressing a different environment populated by differences which are not copies of a model. They don't merely represent, they have lives of their own. Mathematics, especially algebra, does not emphasize representation but rather the symbolization of abstract concepts. It is not natural, but a part of a specific nature. Programming languages show us a nature different from natural languages.

This novel language is a language of noise and entropy. It has left the archive and dwells on the Internet. The question is not anymore how to classify the archive, but how to articulate the generic notion of the web. Noise and entropy are not peripheral any more, they are the generic ground. We have once again inverted the world. Instead of trying to find the basic laws of nature, we are on a quest to discover pockets of life in the entropic, that is, how to articulate out of the white noise when it is observed to have a flat spectrum over the range of probabilities relevant to the

context.

We are not comparing or deconstructing in the entropic, since everything is on its way towards achieving a balance. In a world where everything is connected, in which each actor has many roles and can be rendered in many ways, we are left with the question how to find stability... how to make masterful articulations?

This is going to be a computational drama, a comedy, a noisy play without a random function. Like a drama of sounds at the sea. A vessel for exploring this new plateau is composed out of text and images. There are certainly other vessels available (mathematics, music...), but this play has already started, and vessel is on its way. Both text and images are old and abstract formats; they have seen the ancient Greece, made friends with Gutenberg, witnessed the industrial serialization and are the main protagonists of the digital. But how has the digitized environment changed them? What are figures and faces of images and books in the world of data, not seen as data visualization, but as an articulation that challenges mimetic representation and goes beyond it. What is their character, how do they behave and what are they made of? This drama is going to be a play of books in a world of data.

**MIRO ROMAN** is an architect, a researcher, an artist, a designer, and none from the stated. His main focus is at the overlap of information technologies and architectural articulations.

Miro holds a Master of Advanced Studies degree in Computer Aided Architectural Design from ETH Zurich, and a Master in Architecture degree from the University of Zagreb. Since 2004 he is collaborating with Luka Vlahović on project romanvlahovic. From 2013 to 2015 he was a part of the Future Cities Laboratory, interdisciplinary research programme of the Singapore ETH Centre for Global Environmental Sustainability (SEC). Currently he is a PHD researcher at the Chair of CAAD at ETH Zürich.

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