4th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON PERFORMANCE, PERFORMATIVITY AND MEDIA

November 19–20, 2014
Janáčkovo nám. 2a, room N21
Brno, Czech Republic

CONCEPT: JANA HORÁKOVÁ (CZECH REPUBLIC) & BARBARA BÜSCHER (GERMANY)
MEDIA – PERFORMANCE International Symposium is a platform for dialogue between theoreticians and artists whose research is situated on a border line between theory and practice of media and performance. In previous years we focused on “imaginary spaces” (2005), “ephemerality” (2007), and “memory” (2011). This time we chose “gesture” as an access point, from which we would like to approach the field of media / performance.

Vilém Flusser wrote on gesture:

“I will summarize: one way of defining ‘gesture’ is as a movement of the body or of a tool attached with the body, for which there is no satisfactory causal explanation. To understand a gesture defined in this way, its ‘meaning’ must be discovered. (...) The definition of gesture suggested here assumes that we are dealing with a symbolic movement.”

And he concluded:

“According to the hypothesis under examination here, the observations of gestures allow us to ‘decipher’ the way we exist in the world. One of the implications of this hypothesis is that modifications we can observe in our gestures allow us to ‘read’ the existential changes we are currently undergoing.”

Referring to Czech-German theoretician Vilém Flusser’s writings on gestures (Gesture, translated into English in 2014), we propose to question the crucial gesture of information societies, the gesture of programming, and its effects. The relationship between the gesture of programming and the performativity of code is in the core of our discourse, but its interpretation must include its context, its subjects and objects as well.

What exactly can be described as the gesture of programming? Is it, and if so, in which way, connected to the gesture of writing which Flusser regarded as a dominant way of intelligent beings’ expression even in the process of transformation into the new (technical and programmed) media?

What kind of relationship between the programmer and the world does this gesture establish? How can it be read or deciphered by the members of society who leave their decisions up to the control of programmed media? What are the rules of the game that today’s programmed and programming apparatuses impose on us?

If we follow Flusser’s analysis of photography for example, we can understand that he applies the notion “program” to every apparatus – digital or analogue. It controls its functioning and it controls those who are using its functions. He describes this relation as an “apparatus-operator complex”.

If we want to describe the changing of gestures as a sign and an outcome of the processes of transformation in general we can try to understand them as configurations between (human) body – apparatus / tool – symbolization / communication.

The gesture of listening is the second one of many others Flusser dealt with, that we want to examine more closely. We are facing our disability to see what is going on under surfaces of computational culture. The gesture of listening refers to our efforts to get in touch with the processes that are perceivable mostly in forms of signals and symptoms. Theorists, who are trying to get in touch with activities that are going on beyond our retinal world, need to listen to them. They are listening to the rhythms of computation (Shintaro Miyazaki), and searching for sounds whispering the “post-optical unconsciousness” (Inke Arns) of computer culture.

References also to:
Vilém Flusser, Towards a Philosophy of Photography, London 2000
11/19 WEDNESDAY PROGRAMME

10:00 OPENING LECTURE
JANA HORÁKOVÁ

10:30 GESTURE
TOMÁŠ RULLER

11:00 REUNION OF GESTURE AND VOICE IN MUSIC
JOZEF CSERES

12:00 LUNCH BREAK

14:00 HOW TO DO THINGS WITH BUTTONS
PROGRAMMING AS A GESTURE BETWEEN MAKING AND WRITING
STEFAN HÖLTGEN

15:00 'IMMERSING THE HAND IN REALITY'
VILÉM FLUSSER’S MEDIA PHILOSOPHY
KATEŘINA KRTILOVÁ

16:00 GESTURES OF ACADEMIC WRITING
ZUZANA KOBÍKOVÁ

11/20 THURSDAY PROGRAMME

10:00 HEARING AIDS
FLUSSER’S GESTURE OF LISTENING AND AESTHETICIZING OF SIGNALS
SHINTARO MIYAZAKI & JAN THOBEN

11:00 THE DIMENSION OF SOUND IN FLUSSER
IMPLIEDATIONS FOR A SONIC MEDIA ARCHAEOLOGY
ANNIE GOH

12:00 LUNCH BREAK

14:00 LISTENING WITH EYES
REMARKS TO LIVE CODING PERFORMANCE
MARTIN FLAŠAR

15:00 GESTURES OF THE POSSIBLE LIFE
MARTINA IVIČIČ

15:30 ARTGORITHMS
COMPUTER-AIDED ART SHOWCASE
TOMÁŠ STAUDEK

16:00 ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION
GESTURES OF RE/SEARCHING
FLUSSER’S CONCEPT OF GESTURE AS AN INSPIRATION FOR CURRENT MEDIA/SOUND STUDIES
BARBARA BÜSCHER (MODERATOR)
FEATURED SPEAKERS

BARBARA BÜSCHER | Leipzig Academy of Music and Theatre, Germany
barbara.buescher@hmt-leipzig.de

Barbara Büscher is a professor of media studies / intermediality at Leipzig Academy of Music and Theatre. She has published numerous essays on independent theatre, postdramatic live art, performance theory and media art, art and technology. Since 2010 her research focuses on questions of historiography of performance and media art and on performance / performing archives. She is a co-publisher of the online journal MAP – media / archive / performance (www.perfomap.de). The last two editions were dedicated to ‘archiving processes’ and the gestures of recording ephemeral art processes. Since 2005, she cooperates with Jana Horáková in various media and performance research projects. Her latest publication is focused on spaces of art presentation in different formats (Raumverschiebung: Black Box – White Cube 2014).

JOZEF CSERES | Masaryk University, Czech Republic
114731@mail.muni.cz

Jozef Cseres lectures on the aesthetics and philosophy of music, visual arts and intermedia at the Comenius University in Bratislava (Slovakia) and the Masaryk University in Brno (Czech Republic). The problems of representation and symbolism in arts, the structural relations between music and myth, the intermedia and multimedia, and the experimental and improvised music stand at the centre of his research and theoretical interest. He is the author of several books and many studies, essays, articles, reviews and translations. He is the regular contributor to the magazines His Voice, UNI (published in Prague) and Hungarian Workshop (published in Budapest). In 1995–2010 he was the co-researcher of several ministry grants in Slovakia and Czech Republic. Under his artistic nickname HEyeRMEarS he often balances on the borders between the discursive and non-discursive modes of expression and between art and game in performances, installations, audio-visual assemblages and various intermedia.

MARTIN FLAŠAR | Masaryk University, Czech Republic
flasar@phil.muni.cz

Martin Flašar is an assistant professor and a researcher at the Masaryk University, born in 1979 in Brno. Music is Martin Flašar’s lifelong passion. After his graduation at the Brno Conservatory as a violinist he continued with his studies at the Department of Musicology, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, during which he had been working as an editor of the music magazine Opus Musicum. The focus of his research tends to centre mainly around comprehensive multimedia works and electroacoustic music. In his free time he enjoys jazz music not only passively, but also actively as a member of the Indigo Quartet.

ANNIE GOH | University of the Arts Berlin, Germany
www.flusserstudies.net/person/annie-goh

Annie Goh is an artist and researcher, born in 1984 in Birmingham, UK and based in Berlin since 2008. Her works include installations, compositions, writings and performances. She completed a DAAD-funded MA in Sound Studies at the UdK Berlin in 2010 and graduated with outstanding achievement from the class Generative Art/Computational Art with Alberto de Campo at the UdK Berlin in 2013, receiving her “Meisterschülerin” title in 2014. She has been co-curator of the discourse program of CTM Festival since 2013, was awarded the Elsa-Neumann Scholarship of Berlin in February 2014 for her project “Myths of Echo” and is currently a guest lecturer at the UdK Berlin.

STEFAN HÖLTGEN | Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany
www.medienwissenschaft.hu-berlin.de/Mitarbeiter/hoeltgen
www.computerarchaeologie.de
stefan@hoeltgen.org

Stefan Höltgen (Dr. phil., 1971) studied German Literature and Linguistics, Sociology, Philosophy, and Media Studies in Jena. In 2001 he published his Master Thesis on David Lynch. From 2003 to 2009 he wrote his doctoral dissertation at the Institute for German Literature in Bonn about the discourse history of serial killer movies (published 2009). Since 2011 he is post-doctoral scholar at the department for media studies at Humboldt University in Berlin. There he works on the archaeology of the early micro computer an its programming, teaches computer sciences and programming

JANA HORÁKOVÁ | Masaryk University, Czech Republic
horakova@phil.muni.cz

Jana Horáková (born 1971) is an associate professor of Theory of interactive media at the Department of Musicology of the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University, Brno. She studied Theatre studies at Charles University in Prague and Masaryk University in Brno and Media studies at University of Lapland, Finland. She focuses on media art and performance art, historical and theoretical interrelations and on robotic art (Book: Robot as Robot, KLP: Prague 2011). She met with Barbara Büscher on the first Media-Performance symposium (Goethe-Institute, Prague 2005) and since that they continue cooperation in research of media and performance relations: E.g. They organized the Czech-German symposium Media-Performance 2 on ‘ephemerality’ (Dům pánů z Kunštátu, Brno 2007), Media-Performance 3 on ‘memory’, and they are co-editors of Czech-German publication: Imaginary Spaces: Raum/Prostor – Medien / Média – Performance/Performance, KLP: Prague 2008). In her latest publication Software studies. Towards New Media Studies Transformations (2014) she introduces main concepts and milestones of software studies that she interprets as a significant methodological turn.

MARTINA IVIČIČ | Masaryk University, Czech Republic
martina.ivicicova@gmail.com

Martina Ivičič is an external Ph.D. student at the Department of Philosophy, Theory and History of Science FF MU in Brno and teaches Artificial life art on the Theory of Interactive Media at the Department of Musicology of the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University in Brno. Published for A2, literary and artistic magazine ENTER, PROFILE of contemporary art, and FlashArt. She has curated exhibitions Bioart Affairs Life in Košice and 3rdCULTure in Nitra. She focuses on the biological aspects in the digital arts and various scientific-artistic fusions.

ZUZANA KOBÍKOVÁ | Masaryk University, Czech Republic
kobikova@mail.muni.cz

Zuzana Kobíková studied Czech language and literature at the Silesian University in Opava and achieved a Bachelor’s degree in 1999. During her studies there, she mainly focused on the structure of literary works. She continued her studies in a Master’s degree program in Media Studies and Journalism at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Masaryk University. During this period Hypertext and its role in media communication became the main field of her research interest. She graduated in 2003 and the title of her final thesis was “Hypertext and its form in the online media”. In the period 2001–2010, she was working professionally in the field of marketing research, online media and scientific publishing. Later on, she started teaching criticism and online journalism to students of Theory of Interactive Media Studies at the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University. She has also been working there as an executive editor of the TIM ezin magazine since the last four years. Since a few years, she has also been working as a PR manager at the Faculty of Science, Masaryk University and since a few months as a PR manager at the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, as well. Since 2012, she has been studying a doctoral degree program at the Department of Theory and History of Science, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University. Hypertext lies in the centre of her interest once again, this time in the context of scientific invention, scientific theory and communication. She presents this new medium as a metaphor developed in the theoretical model of the scientific mind, developed into a functional medium: Hypertext, the text with the new dimension given by the hypertext link.

KATEŘINA KRTILOVÁ | Bauhaus Universität Weimar, Germany
www.ikkm-weimar.de/people/staff_members/prm/160/v__d_p/id__52/index.html

Kateřina Krtilová is a research assistant at the Internationales Kolleg für Kulturtechnikforschung und Medienphilosophie (International Research Institute for Cultural Technologies and Media Philosophy, IKKM). In 2013/2014 she initiated and coordinated the DFG funded research project “Positionen und Perspektiven der deutschen und tschechischen Medienphilosophie” (Positions and Perspectives of German and Czech Media Philosophy). Since 2014 she is a member of the editorial board of the Internationales Jahrbuch für Medienphilosophie (International Journal of Media Philosophy). She studied Media Studies, Philosophy and Humanities in Prague and Regensburg and worked as a research assistant at Charles University in Prague. Recent publications of hers include: “Gesten des Denkens. Vilém Flussers ‘Theorie des Gesten’ als Medienphilosophie”; in: T.Hildebrandt, F.Goppelsröder, U.Richtmeyer (ed.), Bild und Geste. Figurationen des
SHINTARO MIYAZAKI | University of Basel, Switzerland
fhnw.academia.edu/ShintaroMiyazaki
shintaro-miyazaki.com/
ixdm.ch/

Shintaro Miyazaki studied Media Studies, Musicology and Philosophy at University of Basel. Ph.D. on a media archaeology of computation at Humboldt-University of Berlin in 2012. He is a senior researcher at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts North western Switzerland, Academy of Art and Design, Institute of Experimental Design and Media Cultures in Basel and is creating epistemic devices and open-source software for inquiring media and their timing and effects on history, culture and society.

TOMÁŠ RULLER | Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Technology, Brno
performance.ffawutbr.cz/
www.ruller.cz

Professor Tomáš Ruller was born 1957 in Brno, Czech Republic, where he still lives. In 1982 reached MFA in sculpture at Academy of Fine Arts Prague, since 70’s works in media & performance art. He was a co-founder of East-West / School of Attention performance art movement in 1983 in Poland & Black Market Project in1985, since 1989 organizing Open Situation / European Project. He was active in resistance before 1989 (i.e. Open Dialog 1988) and in Velvet Revolution as member of Civic Forum 1989/90. He became co-founder of Faculty of Fine Arts at BUT Brno from 1992, in 1993 built department of Video-multimedia-performance including Media-archive and Multimedia Lab, in years 1992–97 organized international exhibition and festival Hi-tech/Art, restructured faculty in years 1998/2000 from position of dean, in 2004 reached the status of Professor in Fine Art, now being head of Performance Studio.

TOMÁŠ STAUDEK | Masaryk University, Czech Republic
about.me/tomas.staudek

Tomáš Staudek is a lecturer and graphic designer with computer art & science roots. Teaches algorithmic art at the Faculty of Arts (Masaryk University) and Faculty of Information Technology (Brno University of Technology). Software aesthetics researcher, editorial board member of new media journals, computer art curator, member of the International Association of Art, co-founder of non-profit cultural association Napříč.cz and member of its endowment board. Enjoys playing around with computational foundations of aesthetics and taking part in events bringing software and art together.

JAN THOBEN | Berlin-based musicologist, author and curator
homenormal.com/jan-thoben
www.see-this-sound.at

Jan Thoben studied musicology and art history at Humboldt University in Berlin. In 2009 Thoben was a research fellow at Ludwig-Boltzmann-Institute in Linz and is co-editor of the print and online compendium “See This Sound”, an interdisciplinary survey of audiovisual culture. Thoben is currently working on a Ph.D. investigating the cultural history of audiovisual media. He has lectured at Goldsmiths University of London (computational arts), UdK Berlin (sound studies), HfK Bremen and University of Potsdam (media studies).
FEATURED LECTURES

WEDNESDAY 10:30
**TOMÁŠ RULLER | GESTURE**

Gesture as an elementary way of in-formative “unambiguous” discrete expression / communication – imparting (which allow us to write and read – to give and get the meaning of changes we are currently undergoing).

But also as a representation of “ambiguous” existential being-together / sharing – partaking, as an elementary per-formative phenomenon of creative approach to reality (passing the way we exist in the world).

WEDNESDAY 11:00
**JOZEF CSERES | REUNION OF GESTURE AND VOICE IN MUSIC**

Mimetic gesture as a natural means of expression in performing arts. Deconstruction and reunion of gesture and voice in modern music and intermedia. Body and gesture in music of Jon Rose, Bob Ostertag and Miya Masaoka. The lecture will be accompanied by snapshots from the movie “The Reach of Resonance” by Steve Elkins.

WEDNESDAY 14:00
**STEFAN HÖLTGEN | HOW TO DO THINGS WITH BUTTONS**

**PROGRAMMING AS A GESTURE BETWEEN MAKING AND WRITING**

Is programming a practice of writing? Or is it rather a craft? Vilém Flusser never mentioned coding specifically as a gesture in his book on gesture but we can find a couple of sentences about the role and the effect of computer usage for the arts, writing (text), and thinking. I want to position the act of programming a computer using formal languages in-between Flusser’s gestures of “making” (Machen) and “writing” (Schreiben) – especially programming in assembly languages, since these machine orientated languages “do things“ directly in the sense of John L. Austin: They connect elements of hardware; they make the electrical signals flow in a distinct way through the circuits; and beyond all that their syntax and semantic stand for a theoretical model for the computer itself (Turing completeness). So the coder at the keyboard becomes much more than only a writer/autor of code. He applies a theoretical to a real machine.

In my lecture I will show the effects of the “gesture of programming” from the computer’s subface in detail: How it effects its circuits and how the programming forces the “universal Turing machine” to become a “special purpose machine” – only by using words from a special alphabet – the programming opcodes. On the other hand there will be the question how the hands of the programmer can become programming devices (perhaps by losing their “dialectical position” for each other). My question will be if there is a gap in Flusser’s theory between making and writing – a gap to be filled with theories of computer studies and pragmatics.

WEDNESDAY 15:00
**KATEŘINA KRTILOVÁ | ‘IMMERGING THE HAND IN REALITY’**

**VILÉM FLUSSER’S MEDIA PHILOSOPHY**

There are two ways to understand Flusser’s project of a new philosophy, a “new method of thinking”: On one hand, it is connected to computers performing symbolic operations that seemed to be the domain of thinking, reason or the spirit; on the other hand, Flusser takes up Martin Heidegger’s critique of techno-science and his ‘step back’ into a thinking embedded in the world. Flusser’s gestures might indicate a way of transforming the techno-scientific world view, criticized by Heidegger, through a new performative concept of thinking not “standing above the phenomena” but linked to medial practices.

WEDNESDAY 16:00
**ZUZANA KOBÍKOVÁ | GESTURES OF ACADEMIC WRITING**

My lecture is inspired by Vilém Flusser’s text about gestures of writing. I want to focus on gestures of contemporary academic writing with the help of computer and Internet, which I try to describe using a method of metaphors analyse and interpretation.

At first I present Flusser’s key theses about gestures of writing, which he sees as reading and listening of inner voice. I interpret these abstractions as metaphors, according to interactive theory of metaphor (Black, 1962, etc.). I ask myself, what metaphor of academic writing can be?

Applying Flusser’s method of introspective observation of writing process to academic writing allows me to interpret this
special style of writing as hypertext, according to poststructuralistic tradition (Barthes, Derrida), because the author of academic text makes several types of something I call “linking gestures” (making a topic, move with the parts of text by shortcut keys, choose key words, refer to another text, create hypertext links, etc.). Can we describe these gestures as gestures of programming? Can we interpret them as gestures of symbolic movement, as Flusser suggest?

With the aim to place the problem in a broader context, using a method of conceptual metaphors analyse, I want to show, how academically writing people, involved in the “apparatus-operator-complex”, how Flusser said, think nowadays about computers. Are they still our colleagues, slaves or only filing cabinets, as Lawler in his inspirational text Metaphores we Compute by (1988) supposed?

The aim of my lecture is to show, how modifications that we can observe in our gestures of academic writing allow us to ’read’ the existential changes we are currently undergoing in this area, how I will show with some data of contemporary academic writing and reading researches.

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**THURSDAY 10:00**

**SHINTARO MIYAZAKI & JAN THOBEN | HEARING AIDS**

FLUSSER’S GESTURE OF LISTENING AND AESTHETICIZING OF SIGNALS

In a manuscript titled Hörapparate (hearing aids) Vilém Flusser argued: “Through hearing aids one realizes that sounds are instrumentalized.” He felt that his own hearing aid helped him to develop an awareness and better understanding of the underlying programme of his auditory perception and thus of communication in general. It is the main objective of our paper to discuss Flusser’s concept of the “gesture of listening” in the technological milieu of contemporary culture. It is a milieu characteristic of time-critical media processes operating beyond our perceptual thresholds. Sonification and audification can be employed as a particular type of hearing aid providing perceptual access to these hitherto inaudible signals working inside and beneath our everyday machines. It is our understanding that the aesthetization of signal processes in technical networks constitutes a critical gesture of listening in order to reclaim open access in the age of media technological closures.

While Flusser observes gestures of listening mainly in the context of music (“sounds purposely composed by the human intellect”) we will shift the focus to what he calls “accidentally composed” sounds. That is: ubiquitous oscillations emerging from technical agencements encompassing computer programmes and electronic images.

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**THURSDAY 11:00**

**ANNIE GOH | ’THE DIMENSION OF SOUND IN FLUSSER’**

IMPLICATIONS FOR A SONIC MEDIA ARCHAEOLOGY

Although Vilém Flusser’s work is not often associated with music or sound, his writings on music and listening indicate a largely over-looked significance of these in his thought. Reading Flusser’s “crisis of linearity” thesis as a media-philosophical and epistemological model, his critique of Western culture can be expanded upon in the context of contemporary sound studies and its challenge to ocularcentrism. Using the example of archaeoacoustics, the gesture of listening can be re-examined for its implications towards a sonic media archaeology.

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**THURSDAY 14:00**

**MARTIN FLAŠAR | LISTENING WITH EYES**

REMARKS TO LIVE CODING PERFORMANCE

The practice of listening with eyes has a remarkably long tradition. In Western tradition of notated music we can trace this tendency back at least to the 16th century. Usage of musical figures, extramusical references leading to literature or fine art or even drawing with melodic lines could be considered as a common tendency of this practice. Music history after intermedial and multimedial traditions of the 20th century is nowadays heading towards code based performance. The crucial question is as follows: Is that music, notation or process of creation which is being performed? And, secondly, who is the performer and who is the audience comprised of?

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**THURSDAY 15:00**

**MARTINA IVIČIČ | GESTURES OF THE POSSIBLE LIFE**

Gesture of the living performer is the movement to express an idea or a meaning. What kind of meaning can emerge from the gesture of artificial performers? Scientists from various fields of study call these entities digital organisms, or programs capable of performing mathematical operations to simulate and study living systems. They offer the opportunity to test generalizations about living systems that may extend beyond the organic life that biologists usually study.
Also computer artists employ the biological concepts of living systems in manipulating the code. They create programs to generate data, visualizations or to demonstrate the reproduction processes in particular ways. Digital artists are not limited in creating art objects, but can make dynamic art objects that can themselves become autonomous entities. In this context, Frank Malina highlights the plasticity of digital information, when an image can be processed, visualized, simulated and networked. According to him, a different kind of reproduction is made possible within computer by software; he calls it post-mechanical reproduction (or a more descriptive term is generative reproduction – similar to biological one).

The artificial organisms with their autonomy perform their genuine roles in the artificial life narratives. They can do gestures similar to the human ones, because they dispose of technical skills but on the other side as Auslander reminds, they do not have the potential to exercise interpretative skills. Here we enter a problematic situation, when the “artificial” in Artificial Life (AL) refers only to the component parts, not the emergent processes: “[…] the processes are genuine – every bit as genuine as the natural processes they imitate” (Langton). Should these life-like performances be understood as the living gestures? This problem of the theoretical biology deals with the living material structures of organisms and their inherent “logic” counterparts at the same time.

THURSDAY 15:30
TOMÁŠ STAUEDEK | ARTGORITHMS
COMPUTER-AIDED ART SHOWCASE

Exhibition of students’ practical assignments from the course “IM130 Artgorithms: Algorithmic Art, Theory and Praxes”. The exhibition presents computer-aided creativity covering wide range of visual mathematics and software aesthetics — generative graphics, functions plots, digital improvisation, context-free graphics, multidimensional fractals, artificial landscape, tiling & ornament, genetic algorithms or mathematical sculpture. The exhibition goes beyond the gallery grounds and extends into cyberspace: the complete showcase can be accessed online at artgorithms.tumblr.com.

THURSDAY 16:00
BARBARA BÜSCHER (MODERATOR) | ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION
GESTURES OF RE/SEARCHING
FLUSSEr’S CONCEPT OF GESTURE AS AN INSPIRATION FOR CURRENT MEDIA/SOUND STUDIES

The roundtable serves us as a forum for summarizing the two days exchange of ideas, concepts and positions, and for thinking about common research strategies in the field of media and sound studies.

In what way can the specific concept of gesture be of relevance for our recent research fields and topics?

What questions result from the description of a specific configuration between (human) body, apparatus/tool and symbolization/communication?

What aspects should we focus on when we think of ‘post-optical unconsciousness’?

And finally – how can we analyse and evade, handle and change the rules of the game that today’s programmed and programming apparatuses impose on us?
ORGANIZERS

CONCEPT

JANA HORÁKOVÁ | Czech Republic | horakova@phil.muni.cz
BARBARA BÜSCHER | Germany | Barbara.Buescher@hmt-leipzig.de

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Alina Matějová, Vít Holubovský, Dominik Jícha

The official language of this conference is English.

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