I.A.rt
COLLOQUIUM

I.A. RT: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND DATA SERVING CREATIVE WORK FOR PUBLIC SPACES

PROGRAM – THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2018

9:00 Word of welcome

• François William Croteau, member of the Executive Committee responsible for the smart city, information technology and innovation
• Magda Fusaro, rector, Université du Québec à Montréal
• Pierre Fortin, executive director, Quartier des Spectacles Partnership

Opening remarks

• Matthieu Dugal, host

Increasingly, big data and artificial intelligence are leading to new artistic and creative experiences for public spaces. What kinds of opportunities and possibilities do these new technologies open up? Our guest speakers will approach that question from four different angles:

• A history of AI and data used creatively
• The art of data visualization
• Collaborative creation: the intersection of art, research and entrepreneurship
• Challenges and reflections on creating with AI

There are few topics that leave Matthieu Dugal indifferent. He is a radio reporter for Radio-Canada in the Saguenay, an editor at RDI Montréal, a freelancer for Le Devoir, Voir, Urbania, Le Soleil and Le Téléjournal 22h, a host and reporter for TV5 and, for the last four years, a host on Télé-Québec. Since 2014, he has contributed to the weekly Paris-based show 300 millions de critiques, broadcast in 200 countries and territories on TV5 Monde. Last fall he appeared on Explora as the host of Hackers, a program about cybersecurity. Since 2011 he has hosted the digital culture program La sphère on ICI Radio-Canada Première.

9:15 AI AND DATA SERVING CREATIVE WORK

A history of AI and data used creatively

• Caroline Pernelle, director of partnerships, IVADO
• Nadia Seraiocco, instructor and doctoral candidate, UQAM, and commentator for La Sphère on ICI Radio-Canada Première

A brief history of artificial intelligence and its core concepts, with an overview of the links between data, AI and creative work. Some background for enlightened discussion.

Caroline Pernelle identifies as a data-techno-geek. She has a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from Polytechnique Montréal, with specializations in aeronautics and aerospace. After nine years with Dassault Systèmes, Ms. Pernelle joined the IVADO team, first as a consultant and then as director of partnerships, with a mission of helping companies derive value from their data and put their human potential front and centre. In her view, access to data and the ability to transform it will make today’s companies more efficient and innovative as they prepare themselves for the world of tomorrow.
Nadia Seraiocco is a joint doctoral candidate in communication studies and holds a master’s in art history from UQAM. Since 2013, she has been an instructor in UQAM’s media studies program, where she teaches digital media. Her previous experience as a cultural journalist and in public relations for the Ville de Montréal and the National Gallery of Canada, combined with her interest in technology and the Internet, have allowed her to build expertise in digital communications. She is a contributor to La sphère on ICI Radio-Canada Première and a regular contributor to Médium Large and the weekend edition of RDI Matin.

THE ART OF DATA VISUALIZATION

Data as raw material

• Sébastien Pierre, director, Ffunction

Once confined to the realm of obscure technical details, data have become an essential part of our networked culture. Previously used for utilitarian purposes, data now provide fascinating new perspectives. As a digital window on human activity, they allow us to better understand ourselves and reveal phenomena that escape our notice in daily life. How can data be used at the intersection of design and technology, shaped and transformed from complex raw material to intelligible information?

Sébastien Pierre founded the Ffunction studio in 2008 with the mission of helping companies and organizations better understand and communicate one of their key assets: their data. Ffunction has emerged as a major international studio with clients such as the Gates Foundation, UNESCO, the World Bank and major corporations like 3M, HP and Google. Mr. Pierre is also interested in technology’s influence on organizations and the ways in which organizations can respond and adapt to new challenges brought about by technology.

On the Illumination of the Jacques Cartier Bridge

Living Connections has a pulse that beats in real time, in response to the city’s data flows. Each light particle emitted by the bridge’s exterior structure corresponds to data that determine the light’s colour, intensity, appearance and movement.

• Yohan Trépanier Montpetit, head programmer, Réalisations Inc.
• Marie Belzil, multimedia producer, Moment Factory

Discover the technical details and creative process behind the illumination of the Jacques Cartier Bridge, as well as the story of a unique multidisciplinary collaborative process involving several Montreal-based studios.

Yohan Trépanier Montpetit is head programmer for Réalisations - Montréal. He holds a bachelor’s degree in software engineering from the École de technologie supérieure and is a specialist in software development processes, systems architecture and integration, communication with sensors and data analysis.

Marie Belzil has a talent for creating moments of collective wonderment. She has a degree in film production and has directed several documentaries. She worked with Robert Lepage on his show Le Moulin à images. She joined Moment Factory in 2011, where she creates immersive experiences that express the soul of a place. Ms. Belzil has worked on several high-profile projects that test the limits of technology and storytelling, including a major installation at Los Angeles International Airport, the Foresta Lumina illuminated forest walk and the illumination of the Jacques Cartier Bridge.

COLLABORATIVE CREATION: THE INTERSECTION OF ART, CREATION, RESEARCH AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

IBM Art with Watson

• Sid Tomkins, designer and typographer, Ogilvy & Mather
• George Tannenbaum, executive creative director and copy chief, Ogilvy & Mather
Technology has always been a way to express art. Marble, bronze, oil-based paint, photography – all were originally state of the art technology put to use executing an artist’s vision of the world. But what happens when today’s bleeding edge technology, artificial intelligence, is used to inspire art? We applied AI to the works of seven of history’s greatest thinkers, including Charles Darwin, Marie Curie and Nikola Tesla, to inspire portraits that revealed something we’d never known before. Come discuss how AI can see hidden inspiration and what that taught us about the way we see each other.

Sid Tomkins has worked in advertising since 1972. In 2000, Ogilvy acquired his design business. Shortly after he started working on the IBM business. He was head of design in the London and Paris offices before moving to the New York in 2012 as Worldwide Design Director on the IBM account. He developed a partnership with art colleges in London, feeding his passion for discovering and nurturing creative talent. An evolution to this was to create design workshops for the Ogilvy group, to try to help improve the perception, execution and effectiveness of design and typography in the advertising space.

George Tannenbaum has spent well over half his life in the advertising business. He re-joined Ogilvy more than three years ago to work on his dream account: IBM. He also worked at Ogilvy on IBM from 1999-2004. Before Ogilvy, he worked for five years as executive creative director at R/GA, where he ran the Ameriprise business, R/GA’s first traditional advertising account. Mr. Tannenbaum has won major awards for both creativity and effectiveness in four media channels: traditional, direct, interactive and experiential.

AI serving creatives

• Yves Jacquier, PhD, executive director – production studio services, Ubisoft

Artificial intelligence amplifies the ever more immersive and creative video game worlds produced by Ubisoft Montréal. What is the future for this new form of intelligence in creative work? Are we looking at a tool that makes it easier for creative people to make emotionally rich, tangible works? Or is the tool on the way to supplanting its user entirely? Explore recent developments in AI in gaming in general, and at Ubisoft in particular.

Yves Jacquier has extensive experience in technology development and innovation. He joined Ubisoft in 2004 and took charge of production studio services in 2008. At the same time, he developed an R&D strategy with two significant milestones: the creation of a chair in artificial intelligence (deep learning) in 2011, then the founding in 2016 of the lab in the gaming industry dedicated to the application of academic research: Ubisoft – La Forge. Dr. Jacquier is also a director and science advisor at CDRIN and an enthusiastic science communicator for Ubisoft.

Mur.ai: Interactive art and AI

• Katy Yam, communications and marketing director, Element AI

Mur.ai is the first artistic initiative from Element AI. A look at the project’s origins and progress, from C2 Montréal to the Art Basel Miami contemporary art event.

Katy Yam has more than 16 years of experience in brand image and product management and business intelligence. She is currently the communications and marketing director at Element AI, the largest applied research laboratory in Canada. She also leads TEDxMontréal, an organization whose mission is to showcase ideas originating in Montreal on the international TEDx stage. Ms. Yam fosters synergies between ideas and people. She likes solving problems, facilitating success, teaching and sharing.

LUNCH BREAK

Propolis

Propolis is a playful installation inspired by the concept of biomimicry. It invites members of the public to imitate the collective behaviour of bees in order to produce a substance with pollution-reducing properties. The video projection shown on the Président-Kennedy building is inspired by the building’s architectural elements to transform it into an enormous beehive. The video projection evolves as it is fed project and environmental information, resulting in a real time visualization of the installation’s data.

• Jonathan Bonneau, instructor, interactive media, UQAM
• Marc-Antoine Laberge, designer
• Louis Thériault-Boivin, programmer
2:05

CHALLENGES AND REFLECTIONS ON CREATING WITH AI

Artists’ round table

• Maxime Carbonneau, director, writer and actor, co-director of La Messe Basse, co-author of Siri
• Laurence Dauphinais, actress, director, musician, co-author of Siri
• Daniel Iregui, new-media artist
• Xavier Snelgrove, Applied Research Scientist at Element AI and Independent Artist

A discussion of the panellists’ artistic practices and their relationships with new technology and artificial intelligence.

A graduate of the Conservatoire d’art dramatique de Montréal, Maxime Carbonneau is a director, playwright and actor. Among other things he directs the collective piece Le ishow, produced and co-written by Descendance, at the Centre du Théâtre d’Aujourd’hui as part of the residency of La Messe Basse, a theatre company of which he is co-artistic director. He is also the co-writer and director of Siri, a work staged in Brazil, the United Kingdom and Canada, and more recently La femme la plus dangereuse du Québec, based on the personal archives of poet Josée Yvan, presented in the Fred Barry space at Théâtre Denise-Pelletier.

Laurence Dauphinais studied acting at the National Theatre School of Canada and works as a playwright, director and musician. She has just completed a year-long tour of her solo show, Siri, which she performed in three different languages. She co-wrote the play with Maxime Carbonneau. Ms. Dauphinais has also worked on several films and television programs and won a Gémeaux award for her performance in the TV5 project Écoute cette histoire.

Daniel Iregui is a new-media artist who creates interactive sculptures, spaces and architectural interventions using technology to both utilitarian and aesthetic ends. He enjoys working with the random combinations produced when an audio-visual system is open for the audience to transform it. In 2010, Mr. Iregui founded Iregular, an interactive content creation studio where he produces his art and commercial commissions. He was born in Bogota, Colombia and now lives and works in Montreal.

Xavier Snelgrove designs algorithms and tools to understand the world. He has built AI-powered apps during the days for things like predicting emoji, and at night he turns the algorithms towards artistic creation. In his «subjective functions» series he is building new neural-network algorithms for creating images and videos, and exploring the subjective process through which we control these complex algorithms. Education is central to his practice, he regularly teaches workshops, and organizes the annual GenArtHackParty. He currently works as an applied research scientist at Element AI.

Chomsky vs. Chomsky: Exploring the challenges of AI and HI creativity

Artificial intelligence can be immensely helpful in the creative process. While many artists are already using it for inspiration, the development of AI with innate creative abilities is not far off. Chomsky vs. Chomsky explores the key questions and known and expected challenges affecting the creation of an immersive experience comprising several AIs, which will react in dialogue with human intelligences. Follow the emergence of a project based on AI creativity and the questions raised by the possibilities, dreams and anxieties inherent in the AI/HI relationship.

• Louis-Richard Tremblay, producer – interactive studio, National Film Board of Canada
• Sandra Rodriguez, PhD, creative director, EyeSteelFilm_Creative Reality, guest researcher, MIT Open Doc Lab

Sandra Rodriguez is a creative director and sociologist specializing in media technology. As a director, she wrote and directed international award-winning documentaries before turning her attention to interactive art. She is now a UX consultant, mentor and speaker on immersive media and digital storytelling. She runs the Creative Reality Lab at EyeSteelFilm, where she explores the many ways of documenting reality. As a fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Open Doc Lab, Dr. Rodriguez teaches the university’s very first course in virtual reality production. She is dedicated to advancing her exploration of the human/machine relationship, between artificial intelligence and human creativity.
Louis-Richard Tremblay is fascinated by the power of interactive experiences and curious about media explorations of all kinds. He works with creators who subvert technology to produce works that capture the imagination and appeal to the intellect. After studying political science, his interests shifted to architecture and radio, leading ultimately to the world of interactivity with Radio-Canada and the NFB. His productions have won numerous awards in Canada and around the world (Gémeaux, Webby and Peabody awards). Mr. Tremblay’s most recent work involves mobile platforms, and immersive VR environments.

The Compassion Machine
• Jonathan Belisle, founder, Studio Hello, Architekt ! and co-founder ENSEMBLE ENSEMBLE

We are under constant scrutiny and study aimed at preventing deviant behaviour. What would happen if algorithms instead measured our disposition to goodness? That’s the question at the heart of the Compassion Machine by Ensemble Ensemble. By letting themselves be scanned by the immense camera, spectators receive a personalized forecast of their altruistic acts. If they wish, they can also change the settings of the machine, which takes real-time measurements of the compassion index in the square outside Saint-Laurent metro station. The installation is an invitation to reject our ingrained sense of wariness.

Web entrepreneur, interactive producer, experience architect, innovation strategist and inspired professor Jonathan Belisle takes a playful approach to complex problems related to connected experiences involving narrative worlds, home automation, immersive installations, the Internet of things, social media and mobile apps. He is a self-described organizational poet and company architect. He is the founder of Hello, Architekt !, a consulting studio active in instructional design, organizational creativity and experience architecture. In 2014 he created CALMR, one of the first methodologies and platforms developed for the design and management of hybrid-reality experiences involving narrative and interactive dimensions.

Collaborative creation: between art, mental health and AI
• Shirin Anlen, member of the MIT Open Documentary Lab, co-founder of Raycaster – Experience Design Studio

If machines can have mental capacities, do they also have the capacity for mental illness? Shirin Anlen believes the answer is yes. She will demonstrate the idea in five points while presenting her current project.

Shirin Anlen is an interactive creator working at the intersection of new technology, exploratory arts and social activism. Her work has been exhibited internationally at venues including IDFA DocLab, Next Festival de Cannes, SIGGRAPH, HeK - House of Electronic Basel, Museum of Moscow and the Israeli Center of Digital Art. In 2015, Ms. Anlen founded Steamer Salon, the first interactive and VR storytelling festival in Israel. Recently, she co-founded Raycaster, an experience design studio, supported by the NEW INC program. Currently she is a fellow at the MIT Open Documentary Lab.

On the Montreal Declaration on Responsible AI Development
• Valérie Bécaert, Element AI
• Pascale Daigle, Partenariat du Quartier des spectacles

CREATIVE CHALLENGE: DATA VISUALIZATION FOR PUBLIC SPACES
A public presentation of the four finalist projects for the Creative Challenge – Data Visualization for Public Spaces, based on datasets from BIXI and the STM. A jury of experts will select a winning team, which will receive a production grant to produce its work for the Illuminart 2019.

Closing reception
The public is invited to end the day in a casual setting with a cocktail organized by the Propolis team (UQAM) featuring activations of select interactive and digital works.
ACTIVATIONS

SpeechViz, PopcornFX

SpeechViz is a digital art installation presented by Persistant Studios. It is based on PopcornFX, a real time special effects editor. The work generates aesthetically pleasing visuals and shapes based on raw data culled from speech.

The result is a visual representation of the relative importance of words used during the I.A.rt Colloquium. It also reveals, in abstract form, the underlying connections between different data points.

Mur.ai, Element AI

Watch the application of a selected image style to a video captured in real time. “It’s as if AI could see the world through the eyes of a street artist.”

Quick Draw et Sketch-RNN, A.I. Experiment, Google

Two interfaces enabling exploration of machine learning and neural networks through photo and drawing recognition.

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