



## ROCA News

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### Website:

*ROCA website official!*

The ROCA website is now official at [ikk.ku.dk/roca](http://ikk.ku.dk/roca). Please announce our website far and wide!

When you enter, the site will re-direct you to a slightly different website address, located at Research Projects for IKK: <http://kunstogkulturvidenskab.ku.dk/roca/>. The website is not so elaborate yet, so any text of relevance is welcome.

Elizabeth has created a dropbox where each of you can upload photos and text. I check the dropbox regularly, and will make sure to include your biography in the website shortly after. If you upload images, you can help the editor by creating headshots for the biography at 200-300 dpi, and make the photo 70 pixels wide.

### New participants:

*New participants in the ROCA group:*

**Nanna B. Thylstrup** is finishing her Ph.D. thesis at IKK, and her interest in algorithms and agency fits nicely into the concept of robots.

**Mette Tranholm** has just started her Ph.D. project on performance artist Jack Smith at the IKK section for theatre and performance studies. Although not directly related to robots, many of Mette's areas of interest are closely connected to our plans of robot performance.

**Tania Ørum** is Associate Professor at IKK and has signed up as contributor to the FKK application. Tania is an expert in Nordic avant-garde movements, and will provide insights on techno-utopias in the FKK application.

**Anders Michelsen**, Associate Professor at IKK, is part of the FKK application, and will contribute important aspects of the imaginary.

**Troels Degn Johansson** and **Tau Ulv Lenskjold** from the Design School of the Royal Danish Academy of Arts, Design and Architecture will contribute to the FKK application with a WP on design. We are particularly happy since they agreed to join the application with very short notice.

## **New Advisory Board members:**

*Experts from around the world support our work*

**Kjell Yngve Petersen**, Associate Professor at IT University, Copenhagen.

**Guy Hoffman**, Assistant Professor in the School of Communication of IDC Herzliya, and co-director of the IDC Media Innovation Lab: <http://milab.idc.ac.il>.

**Johanna Seibt**, Associate Professor at Department of Culture and Society, Section of Philosophy, Aarhus University, and Project Manager of PENSOR: <http://projects.au.dk/pensor/>.

Johanna has submitted a number of very useful comments to the project description, for which I am grateful. I would like to quote Johanna directly: "ROCA rocks"!

## **Film:**

*Short documentary by Ken Goldberg and Tiffany Shlain*

Here is a link to a short documentary film made by Ken Goldberg and his wife, filmmaker Tiffany Shlain, describing what it's like to be a robot and summarizing new research trends in Belief Space and Cloud Robotics combining history, cultural references and found footage.

"Why We Love Robots": new 5 min short doc by @TiffanyShlain and @Ken\_Goldberg:  
<http://j.mp/WhyWeLoveRobots>

## **Velux Foundation:**

*ROCA Letter of Interest to the Velux Foundation*

The Research committee at IKK has now decided to permit ROCA to forward a Letter of Interest, a kind of pre-application for the Velux Foundation. This Letter of Interest should contain three documents as outlined below:

- A project description of max 3 pages, which outlines the aim, content, and theoretical/methodological approach of the project, as well as the project's relationship to current research in the field and to the research strategy of the department. The project description should also contain a short presentation of each sub-project and the relationship between them, and finally an outline of the project period and progress, and the plans for publication and communication.
- A list of participants of the project, as well as the organisation and institutional affiliations. For the project leader, a short CV and main publications, and main data for all participants.
- A budget draft of max 1 page, including co-funding from the institution, if any.

The Letter of Interest will be submitted on December 2, 2013. The Velux Foundation will announce the project that will be invited to make a full application in February 2014. The full application is 10-12 pages, and will contain a more elaborated version of the same elements as described above. Along with CVs and budget, the deadline for full application is May 2014. The results will be announced in September, and the project may start in January 2015.

The Call from Velux Foundation describes a number of issues that the evaluators will look for during the evaluation. The project is to support nascent research with new ideas, and strengthen team-research, including younger scholars' possibilities and impact. The team has to be based on close collaboration and integrity among the sub-projects; not just a loose network. Further, the support from Velux is a mid-size grant, and may be used as a stepping stone for larger grant applications from other sources. The project should also be able to provide synergy to the department's research plans and goals, including returns in the area of education.

Further, the Velux Foundation wants to support what they call good "core group projects". These are not defined by content, but by formal elements such as:

- projects that are not too "ripe" (just a prolongation of already existing projects), neither too "immature" (where the project is only on a level of ideas).
- projects that live up to two levels: realistic, precise and well-defined topic-wise, while at the same time point towards innovative basic research, for example by dealing with fundamental humanistic issues, development of theory or methods, including development of cross-disciplinary perspectives, or the like.
- the project has to have closely integrated and well defined sub-projects that are necessary for the project as a unified whole (synergy, value added as collective project).

In my eyes, a lot of the things we do in ROCA already fulfil several of these elements, which may be one of the reasons why our project was selected by the IKK research committee to propose a pre-application. By focusing on a production of a robot performance based on John Cage text and/or other relevant texts, and theorising such production with a number of the concepts in our project description such as issues related to "liveness" and mediation, embodiment and performativity, ontologies of robots and humans, etc., we have a well-integrated project with a number of related sub-projects that all support and strengthen one another. Also, we represent a new approach to robotics from a humanistic perspective. And yet, because some of our group have already worked with robots, and we have been having workshops and meetings on a regular basis for 6 months or more, we are not entirely "immature" as a group. We have a good core of researchers from IKK on all levels (Ph.D., postdoc, assistant and associate professor levels), and we have strong ties to other institutions, especially ITU. We are also already working cross-disciplinary with a strong emphasis on artistic practice, and attention to practice-based knowledge production and exchange.

In short: surely, we have to work hard to make a Letter of Interest that will go through the first round of evaluation: But I do believe we have all the right ingredients to make a good application.