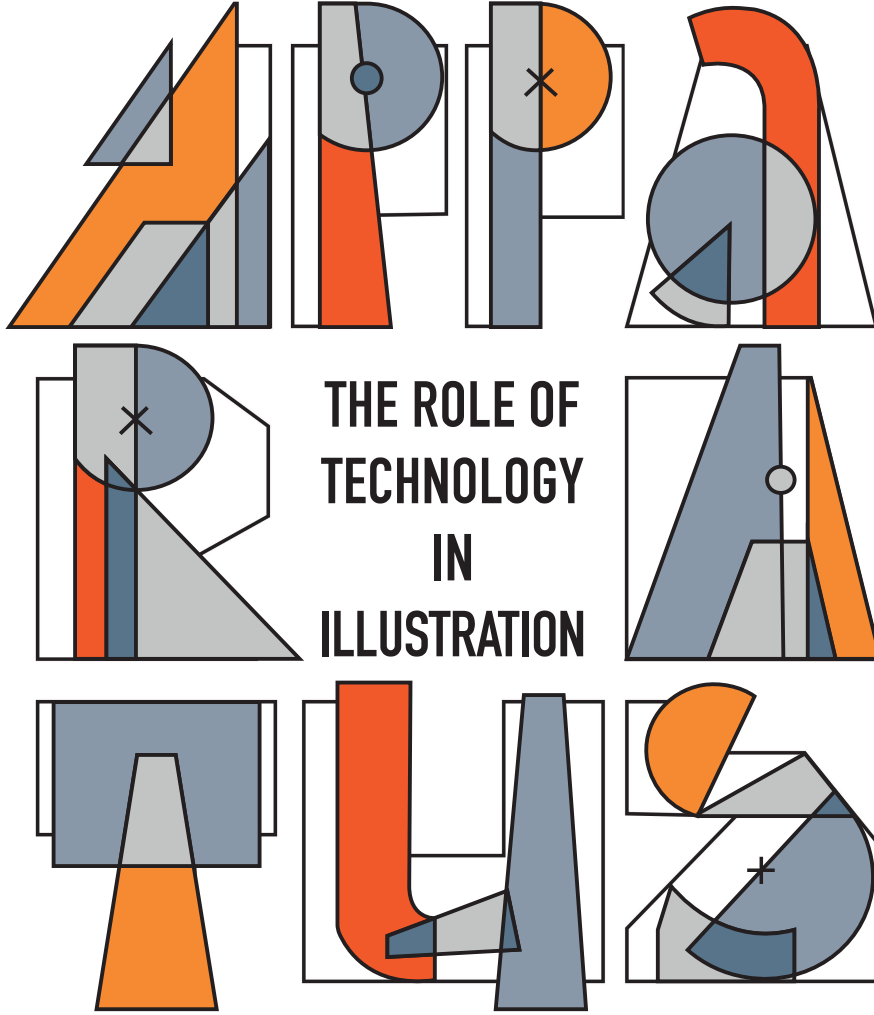


15th INTERNATIONAL ILLUSTRATION RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM



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15th International Illustration Research Symposium The Apparatus: The Role of Technology in Illustration

21–22 November 2025,
Koç University, Istanbul

Machines, appliances, gizmos, and contraptions have always been a part of illustration, enabling illustrators to transform their thoughts into real-life forms. The machine's abilities, aesthetics, and impacts on humanity have always been a source of inspiration and concern. With the discussion raging around artificial intelligence as a game-changing technology, and when computers seem to inextricably serve as parts of creation and of our lives, perhaps it is time to take stock and consider the long-established but fluctuating relationship between illustration and the machine.

From the industrial printing press (once considered the most advanced and disruptive technology) to a symbol of artisanal craftsmanship, from the camera obscura to drawing tablets, from the phenakistiscope to smart-phones—**within illustration, machines are not only an integral part of the process of creation** but also, within reproduction and distribution, they have a defining role in actualising and professionalising the illustrator's work. Throughout time, analogue and multimedia devices have offered new image–text relationships, bringing new modalities to illustration such as movement, touch and sound.

The digital has offered data visualisation; detailed, calculated modulation; and access to nano and macro worlds, expanding the illustrator's visual language and scope. Self-made contraptions, and emergent technologies such as digital lenses and wearables open new avenues for innovative visual experiences.

Illustrators, by applying their creative visual knowledge and participating in the innovation of scientific tools, have expanded the possibilities of machines. The long history of illustrating machines not only shows the art of technical drawing, but also our aesthetic fascination with them. All these developments show how the machine, celebrated as an advancing technology, has significantly expanded creative capabilities across both traditional and emerging media.

On the other hand, the technological drive towards progress has also created wasteful obsolescence and loss of knowledge and traditions. The potential for overtaking human creation, alongside the restricting impact of machine technology, should not be overlooked, especially when considered in relation to the authority held by creative-technology developers. Who controls who, the illustrator or the apparatus, particularly in this era of boundless growth of new technologies?



The often-celebrated handmade quality, aura of authenticity and personal “voice” contribute to a distinctly humanizing presence in illustration. Subconsciously, or perhaps consciously, this evokes a desire for the absence of the machine. Ironically, the very machines that illustrative practices have oftentimes resisted can now come close to replicating this human-like quality artificially.

For the 15th International Illustration Research Symposium on Apparatus & Illustration, we invite papers and posters that **demonstrate, expand upon, and discuss the question:**

- As the terrain of the apparatus expands, how does illustration define its relationship with the machine?
- How have machines and their technologies empowered or undermined the illustrator?
- How have machines enabled, defined or restricted new and exploratory creative processes and ways of thinking, in the past, present and future?
- Can a machine actually make illustrations?
- What can we take away from machine-made illustrations?
- Can a machine be an illustration?
- Can illustration be a machine?

Possible topics may include, but are not limited, to the following:

Machine objects

- Devices, gears, machines, technologies, contraptions and gizmos
- Historical and contemporary apparatuses
- Illustration machines
- Illustration through machine
- Emerging technologies and tools
- Perception through machines
- Machine eyes
- Machines as illustration

Practice and discipline

- Craft and craftsmanship
- Mental apparatuses
- Machine-aided illustration
- Current and historical technical illustration practices
- Representation of machines
- Use of creativity in scientific visualisation practices
- Culturally located creative tool practices
- Global illustration-machine cultures and practices

Ethics, philosophy and politics

- Machines, creativity and ethics
- Machine and creative ownership
- Machine learning and artificial intelligence
- The role and power of the machine
- Impact of machine usage
- Positional theoretical grounding

CALL FOR PAPERS AND POSTERS

The call for papers and poster proposals is now open: please submit your interest by 20 March 2025. All submissions should be in .pdf format and emailed to: ialaca@ku.edu.tr (subject line: 15th International Research Symposium)

To submit a paper proposal, include:

- Working paper title
- A 300-word written proposal detailing how the paper relates to the symposium themes
- 3 images maximum
- 100-word biography and affiliation

To submit a poster proposal, include:

- Working poster title
- 150-word written proposal detailing how the visual work relates to the symposium themes
- 5 images maximum (from your own practice and/or research)
- 100-word biography and affiliation

Notes:

Posters will be exhibited alongside the symposium. Posters can be fully illustrational. Format specifications and practicalities for poster printing and display will be shared after the submission deadline has passed.

We welcome proposals for presentation and exhibition of portable machines, or visual representations of machines such as illustration artwork, photographic or moving images.

You can also submit works that challenge the traditional understanding of tools and machines within illustration-focused projects. Do note that the possibility for exhibition of physical machines is restricted and the costs of transport and installation cannot be covered. Feel free to contact us for more details.

Important Dates:

November 22, 2024:

Call for Papers announced

March 20, 2025:

Abstract submission deadline

April 15, 2025:

Notice of acceptance

November 21-22, 2025:

Conference Date

March 13, 2026:

Full paper & visual essay submissions

Conference Venue:

Koç University, Rumelifeneri Yolu,
Sarıyer, İstanbul 34450 Türkiye

<https://www.ku.edu.tr/en/>

2 day symposium

1 extra day, for tours at selected venues
(optional)

Convenors:

Ilgım Veryeri Alaca, Koç University, TR
Nanette Hoogslag, Cambridge School of
Art, Anglia Ruskin University, UK
Dilek Yördem, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts
University, TR

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Tuğçe İşçi, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, TR
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Şevval Konyalı, Independent artist, TR
Sevgi Ortaç, Koç University, TR
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