

Homage to R.U.R.: 100 Ways to Play a Robot

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Keynote Abstract

In 2021, we celebrate 100th anniversary of an invention of a ROBOT, the modern symbol of artificial life. In my presentation, I will introduce the 100 years of Robot history and 100 ways of robot existence. Meet the Robot – a concept, an embodied symbol, and an agent of (r)evolution, a drama character, a figure of automation of industrial production, the hero of science fiction, the embodiment of the human fear of (becoming) a machine, the representation of Otherness, and the protagonist of different model situations of human-machine interaction. The list of examples of robot metamorphoses will be framed by theories that will make it possible to understand the transformations of the appearance and the meaning of the Robot in different contexts and in different forms: as a dramatic character, as a literary character and as a machine within robotic art.

Jana Horáková graduated from theatre studies and now she is an associate professor in new media art at Masaryk University, Czech Republic. She has specialised in robotic art, robotic performance, and new media art. She is an author of a book "Robot as Robot", in which she focused on Karel Čapek's play R.U.R. from perspective of differences in staging and reception of Robots as well as on the Robot character appropriation by science-fiction writers and scientists. She presented her findings worldwide, at international conferences, and in scientific journals. Recently, she spoke about Robots at European Researchers' Night 2020, and she was interviewed for BBS to discuss 100 years of Čapek's play about Robots.

