

03.17.-08.05.2018, ZKM\_atrium 8+9

## **DIA-LOGOS. Ramon Llull and the ars combinatoria**

Press conference: Thurs., 03.15.2018, 11 am

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Please note: On the press tour, the valuable manuscript St. Peter perg. 92 *Breviculum ex artibus Raimundi Lulli electum* from the inventory of the Baden State Library (BSL), will be placed in the window by hand, by the restorers of the BSL. At the press conference, apart from the curators of the exhibition, Amador Vega, Peter Weibel and Siegfried Zielinski, the Director of the Baden State Library, Julia Freifrau Hiller von Gaertringen, will also speak.

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**In the age of the return from the religious war, an intercultural dialog is required. With a bold exhibition project, the ZKM therefore wants to refer to a European tradition, from Llull to Leibniz, which placed rationale at the service of religion, reason at the service of belief, and not the reverse, religion at the service of irrationality: *DIA-LOGOS. Ramon Llull and the art of combination* (3/17/2018 to 8/5/2018). The Catalan philosopher, theologian, logician and mystic from Mallorca, Ramon Llull (around 1232–1316) formalized the religion concepts of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, in a type of theological comparison, to give religious truth validity. From this formalization of terms, arose the logical school of *ars combinatoria*, which is still visible in the current artistic present. By combining outstanding historical materials from the archives of important libraries, like the Bavarian State Library and the Biblioteca de Catalunya, with contemporary artistic items, the exhibition allows insights into previously unknown facets of Ramon Llull's thinking and actions.**

With rotatable panels, on which a multitude of terms were arranged in the shape of a cross, formal-logical correspondences could be derived between these terms. Llull's "paper computers" were the first attempts to interlace truth and provability, logic and faith as an antidote to religious fanaticism and fundamentalism. Llull's method of acquiring knowledge and world construction, his universal concepts and intercultural ideas are still effective today, in literature, visual art, music and philosophy, as well as information theory and media technology, right up to the latest generative and algorithmic principles. This exhibition is an *Aide-mémoire* against the global repression of history. Llull's main work *Ars generalis ultima* and/or *Ars brevis* (1308) is shown for the first time in three languages - Arabic, Hebrew and Latin, as an early testament to an intercultural dialog, which is more necessary than ever today. In order to disseminate his new knowledge, Llull wrote over 250 books in Catalan, Latin and Arabic, traveled between Western Europe, North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean, and spoke in

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Regina Hock  
Press officer  
Tel.: 0721 / 8100 – 1821

E-mail: [presse@zkm.de](mailto:presse@zkm.de)  
[www.zkm.de/presse](http://www.zkm.de/presse)

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front of kings and popes. According to legend, he died for his convictions. Lull is one of the great founding fathers and most enlightened spirits in European culture, who was committed to the trio of humanism, renaissance and enlightenment. Europe's copyright on modernity and innovation, is also based on the work of Ramon Lull.

### The focus of the exhibition

The content of the exhibition develops around two focuses: On the one hand, Lull's ideas reveal media archaeological and philosophical aspects, which make his work indispensable as a basis for today's discourse with media ecologies and learning algorithms. On the other hand, his universal, rational system of knowledge, opens up a highly relevant attitude today, which is realized as a dialog beyond the cultures and boundaries of the three monotheistic religions, in a productive analysis with the others.

### Historical documents ...

The exhibition exposes surprising and unknown aspects of Lull's thinking, in that historical documents enter into a broad and multi-layered dialog with artistic items from the 20th and 21st centuries, which are inspired by Lull's *ars combinatoria*. Manuscripts from the 14th century in Latin, Hebrew and Arabic, demonstrate the sociocultural and political relationships of their time. The centerpiece of this historiographic piece, is the *Breviculum ex artibus Raimundi Lulli electum*, which represents the life of the Spanish philosopher in suggestive miniatures. An animated, immersive projection of beautiful miniatures, leads the visitors to the exhibition into this long past, foreign world, and shows that the reception of Lull's body of thought found a great resonance, particularly in Germany - widespread in the 16th and 17th century as the school of thought of Lullism. The humanist **Nikolaus Cusanus** (1401–1464) and the universal scholar **Athanasius Kircher** (1602–1680) analyzed Lull's work in great deal. For **Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz** (1646–1716), one of the most important founders of mathematical logic, whose way of thinking and conception of apparatus such as the mechanical calculator, revolutionized the fields of philosophy and technology, Lull's writings were an important inspiration. In the exhibition, you can see a functional reproduction of his calculator, which he developed in 1672 and which was able to carry out the four basic arithmetic operations automatically, for the first time, as well as the original calculator by Philipp Matthäus Hahn (1739–1790) from Württemberg, a trinket from the State Museum of Württemberg.

### ... in dialog with contemporary items

In the exhibition, numerous protagonists of art across all disciplines, are a testament to the enormous topicality and relevance of Lull even today. The

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ideas of Ramon Llull had a great influence on the work of visual artists such as **Salvador Dalí** (1904–1989), **Jorge Oteiza** (1908–2003), **Antoni Tàpies** (1923–2012) and **Anselm Kiefer** (\*1945). These artists primarily searched for hidden sources of knowledge in Llull's work, which are formed as alchemy or mysticism. The light rooms by **Otto Piene** (1928–2014) reveal, similarly to Llull, an experience of cosmic connection, inspiration and contemplation. This is based on the idea of peaceful human coexistence, which Piene set as a counterpoint to the terrible experiences of the Second World War. The artist and architect **Daniel Libeskind** was familiar with the writings of Ramon Llull and Giordano Bruno (1548–1600), when he designed a *Virtual House* in 1997. The concept of virtuality relates to the idea of the possible here, and therefore makes a combinatory, open principle inspired by Llull, the structural basis of his design.

In the area of literature, the permutation techniques by **Juan Eduardo Cirlot** (1916–1973) form an extreme case of combinatory poetry. But also authors such as **Italo Calvino** (1923–1985), **Umberto Eco** (1932–2016) right up to the Latin Americans **Jorge Luis Borges** (1899–1986) and **Julio Cortázar** (1914–1984) show that they were influenced by Llull's *ars combinatoria*, as well as authors in the Vienna group, but especially Konrad Bayer with his text *der vogel singt – eine dichtungsmaschine in 571 bestandteilgen [...]*, [The bird sings - a poetry machine in 571 parts] which is based on a complicated mathematical construction plan. Ramon Llull has also left his mark on music - in the works of **Arnold Schönberg** (1874–1951), **John Cage** (1912–1992) or **Josep Maria Mestres Quaderny** (\*1929) amongst others.

Artists such as **José María Yutrralde** (\*1942), **Manuel Barbadillo** (1929–2003) and **Manfred Mohr** (\*1938) offer voyages of discovery into the kingdom of the early media art of the 1960s and 1970s, which are centrally supplemented by contemporary items by young media artists such as **Ralf Baecker** (\*1977), **Philipp Goldbach** (\*1978) and **Yunchul Kim** (\*1970). In dialog with the Llull way of thinking, they offer current and deep insights into epistemological questions, which relate to our media environment. In addition, there are new productions from artists such as **David Link** (\*1971), **Perejaume** (\*1957) and **Adam Slowik** (\*1980), for the exhibition, which deal directly with Llull's ideas, and transpose them into today's social topicality. These works operating on the basis of immersion and interaction, should open up approaches to Llull in a special way, and give the visitors a new understanding of their own ways of thinking and perception.

### Artists represented in the exhibition

Abraham Abulafia - Friedrich Achleitner - Johann Heinrich Alsted - Peter Apian - Ralf Baecker - Manuel Barbadillo - Konrad Bayer - Berlin Society for

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Nontrivial Pursuits (S4NTP) - Michael Bielicky, Kamila B. Richter - Jorge Luis Borges - John Cage - Italo Calvino - Juan Eduardo Cirlot - Gianni Colombo - Honorius Cordier - Nicolaus Cusanus - Salvador Dalí - Joan Desí - Götz Dipper, Manfred Hauffen - Umberto Eco - Sabine Groschup - Márton Fernezelyi, Miklós Peternák, Zoltán Szegedy-Maszák - Johann Balthasar Friderici - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe - Philipp Goldbach - Matthias Gommel - Jean-Jacques Grandville - René Grillet - Philipp Matthäus Hahn - Gisbert Hasenjaeger - Curt Herzstark - Sarah Kenderdine, Jeffrey Shaw, Edwin Thumboo - Anselm Kiefer - Yunchul Kim - Athanasius Kircher - Werner Künzel - Pe Lang - Bernard de Lavinheta - Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz - Thomas Le Myésier - Yehudah ha-Levi - Sol LeWitt - Daniel Libeskind - David Link - Ramon Llull - Jennifer and Kevin McCoy - Josep Maria Mestres Quadreny - Manfred Mohr - William Morris - Luis Negrón van Grieken, Juan Orozco Velazquez - A. Michael Noll - Valère Novarina - Bartolomeo Olivo - Santiago Ortiz - Jorge Oteiza - Perejaume - Otto Piene - Giovanni Battista della Porta - Francesc Pujols - Raymond Queneau - Ludovicus Cornelius Rigijs - Petrus Roselli - Marius Schneider - Arnold Schönberg - Raimund von Sabunde - semiconductor (Ruth Jarman, Joe Gerhardt) - Adam Slowik - Josep Soler - Josep Maria Subirachs - Antoni Tàpies - Philipp Tögel - Jacint Verdaguer - José María Yturralde

### Publication for exhibition

*DIA-LOGOS: Ramon Llull's Method of Thought and Artistic Practice*

approx. 300 pages

English

University of Minnesota Press

Publication date: Summer 2018

### ***Breviculum ex artibus Raimundi Lulli electum***

The *Breviculum ex artibus Raimundi Lulli electum* is the best known manuscript by Ramon Llull. It includes the shortest of three compilations of the basic ideas of Llull. It was compiled by Llull's student Thomas Le Myésier (?–1336), who gave it to the French Queen Johanna of Burgundy as a gift. The *Breviculum* is primarily known due to its twelve big miniatures, which depict scenes from Llull's life. As the manuscript must have come into existence shortly after Llull's death, under the direct supervision of his pupil in Northern France, one can assume, that the illustrations at least come close to his real appearance. This makes the images so valuable, because lifelike portraits were rare in the Middle Ages.

The manuscript itself has a moving history. Initially still in Paris, it was in Poitiers in Western France at the beginning of the 16th Century, in the possession of a canon at the Cathedral St. Pierre. He bequeathed it to his two nephews in 1582. What happened to it after that, is uncertain. In 1736,

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Ulrich Bürgi, Abbot of the Benedictine monastery St. Peter in the Black Forest, bought it from Freiburg lawyer Joseph Anton Weigel. When the monastery was secularized in 1806/07, the manuscript was brought with many other treasures from the monastery library, to the court library of the Grand Duke of Baden in Karlsruhe. Today, the Baden State Library, as its direct descendant, stores these manuscripts.

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