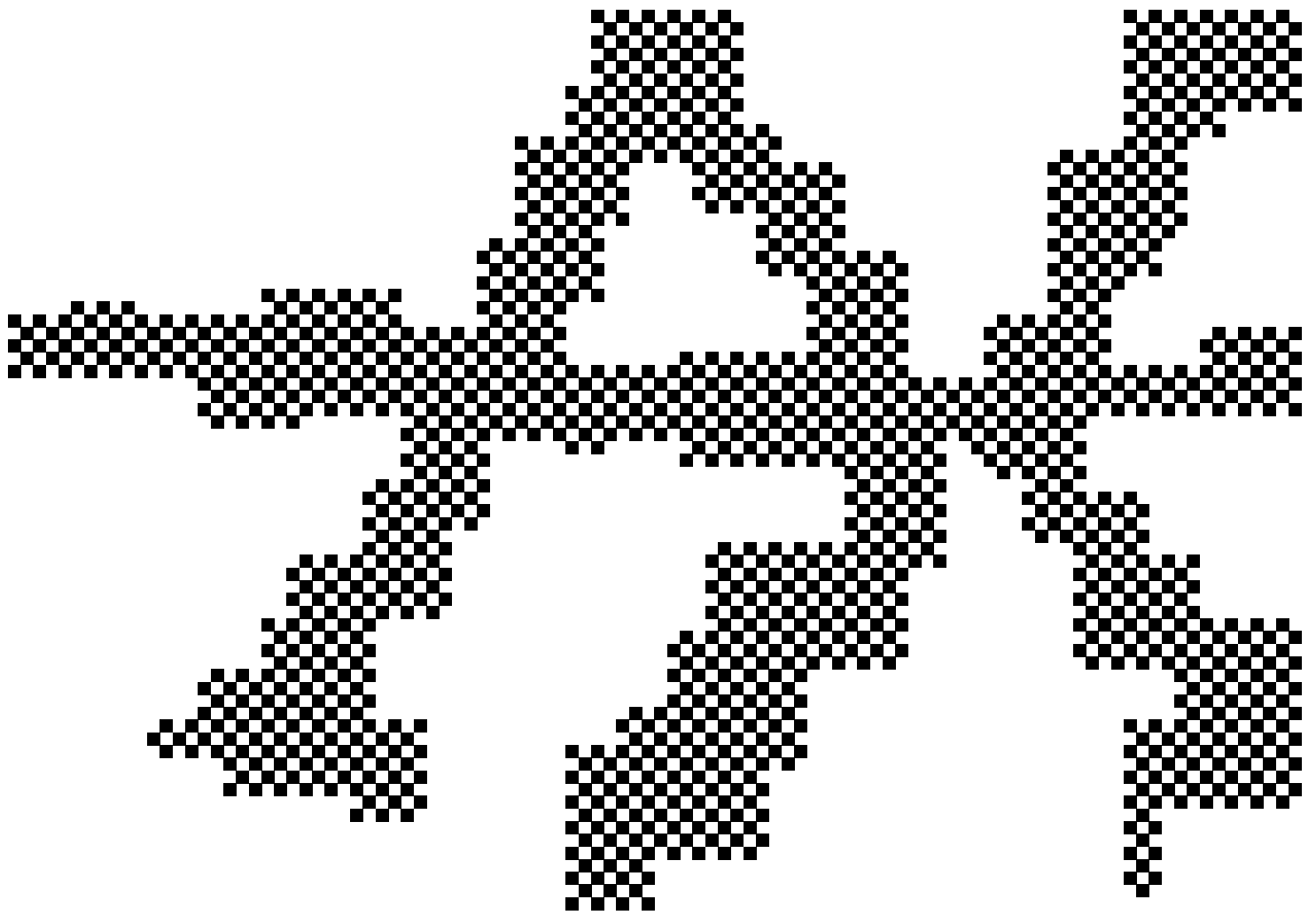




Artificial Creativity

26.9.2026 – 10.1.2027

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Introduction

The exhibition explores how artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming creative processes. AI should not be understood as an independent creative force, but rather as part of an interplay between people, data, technology, and societal values.

Many AI models are trained using machine learning. Algorithms analyse large amounts of data, recognise patterns, and calculate likely continuations, resulting in texts, images, videos, voices, sounds, or reactions. The underlying data usually come from the internet. More often than not, it is not clear where they originated from or how they were collected. Similarly, it is not fully possible to trace how AI arrives at its results.

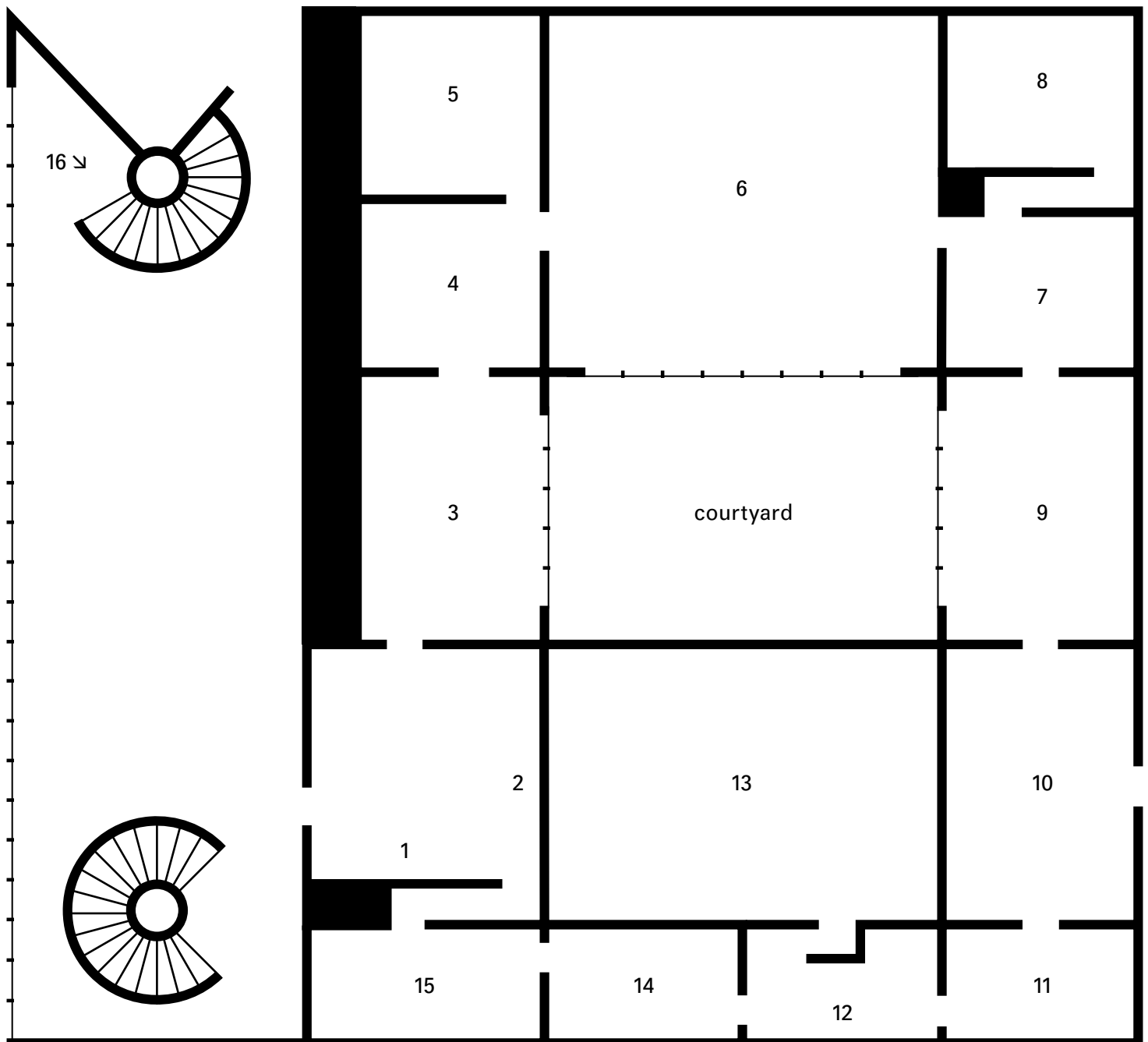
In the exhibition, AI appears both as a generative model that produces content from inputs (prompts), and as an interactive system that reacts to its environment and controls movement or sound. Depending on the degree of human control, AI's role ranges from that of a tool, to systems in which human decisions and machine suggestions engage with one another, and to processes that run largely automatically within predefined rules. With data, rules, prompts, and training environments turning into means of artistic expression themselves, the question of authorship, collaboration, and assistance, which have long been debated in art history, becomes even more important.

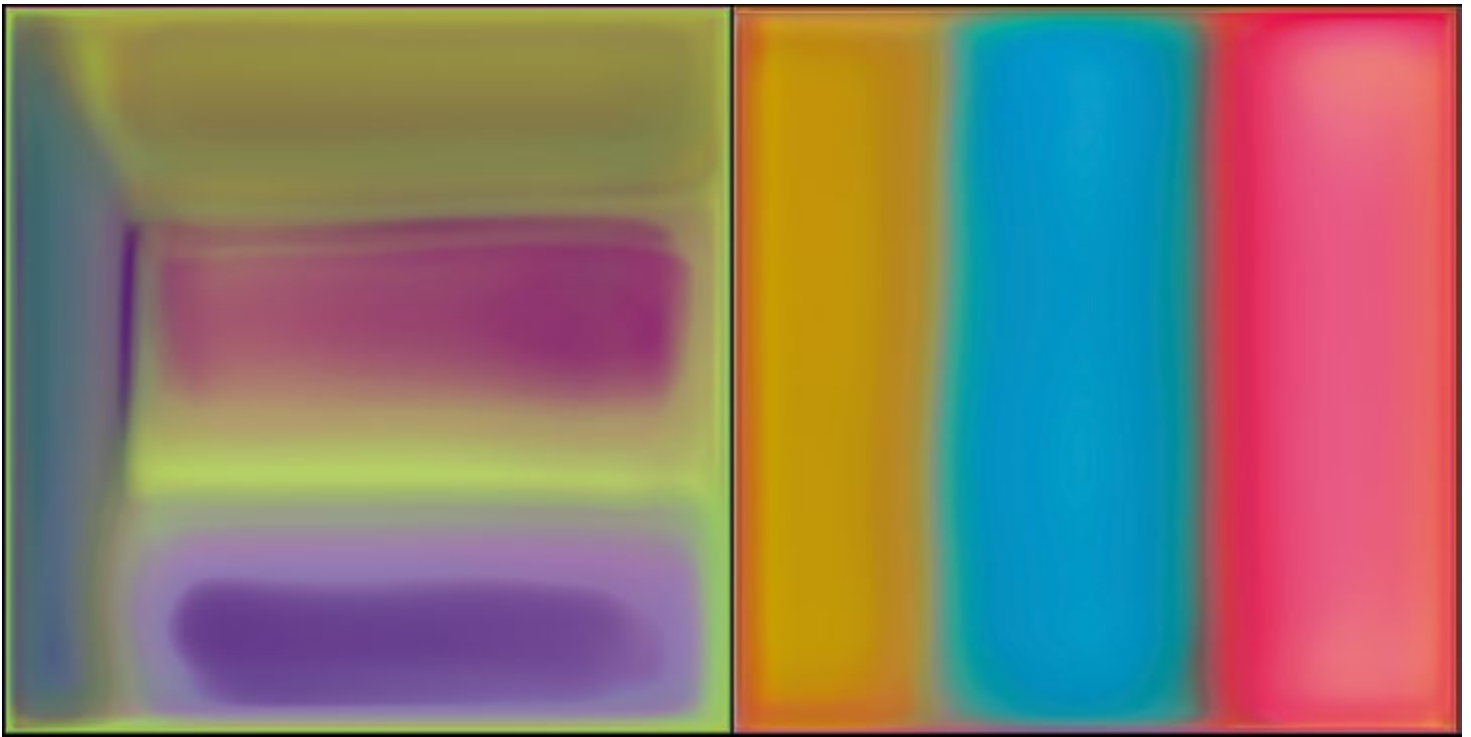
The exhibition tour explores three interrelated questions: How does AI become part of artistic processes? How does it alter our perception of reality? And what changes when AI becomes something that can be experienced spatially, physically, and socially? These questions are addressed in the three chapters: 'Creativity as Attribution', 'How Does Reality Emerge?', and 'Apparent Other'. Many of the works on display explore more than one of these questions.

In cooperation with HEK (House of Electronic Arts),
Basel

Floor Plan (ground floor)

- 1 Niculin Barandun
- 2 Terence Broad
- 3 Tobias Gutmann & Sai Bot
- 4 Botto
- 5 Robi Voigt
- 6 Monica Studer / Christoph van den Berg
- 7 Onome Ekeh
- 8 Theresa Reiwer
- 9 Mediation Room
- 10 Emanuel Gollob
- 11 Simone C Niquille
- 12 Esther Hunziker
- 13 Hochschuh & Donovan
- 14 Alfatih
- 15 Holly Herndon & Mat Dryhurst
- 16 Test Lab





Terence Broad (*1992)
(un)stable equilibrium 1:1, 2019

Creativity as Attribution

Creativity is not an immutable feature but rather an attribution. What is considered creative depends on whether something appears both novel and fitting, that is, useful, appropriate, or valuable. In creativity research, the terms 'originality' and 'effectiveness' are often used in this context. Such assessments are shaped by culture and context, and change over time, which is why the evaluation of creativity remains, for the time being, a human task. In the arts, it is primarily institutions, critics, and the public who decide.

AI can generate countless variations and new combinations in a short space of time. Novelty alone does not make a result creative: it is also important that it fits the relevant context.

In the first rooms of the exhibition, AI appears to be working creatively of its own. In the video *(un)stable equilibrium 1:1* (2019), Terence Broad (*1992) alters the structure of a Generative Adversarial Network (GAN), which results in abstract sequences of images whose apparent autonomy is based on an experimental setup. In the real-time video *Neural Fiction* (2024), Niculin Barandun (*1987) transposes the visitors' likenesses into ever-changing visual worlds, revealing how machine-generated imagery,

the body, and the situation collectively create the impression of creativity.

The attribution of creativity becomes particularly evident when human, machine, and collective contributions converge, and the artwork only acquires its status within a social and institutional context. Tobias Gutmann's (*1987) performance *Face-o-mat* (since 2013) and the AI Sai Bot (since 2019), which was trained on his drawings, shift the question of creativity towards artistic signature and its reproducibility by machine. The signature remains recognisable, yet the counterpart is different. In the case of the Botto AI system (since 2021), which appears to produce images autonomously, the finished work only comes into being through the interplay of image generation and collective evaluation by a human community. In the audiovisual installation *DIGITAL FRAGMENTS—A Synthetic Collection Remix* (2026) Robi Voigt uses public-domain images from the Aargauer Kunsthaut collection as material for a generative reorganisation of cultural heritage. The composition of the training dataset and the parameters determining the creation of the new images are crucial to this process.

In art, the attribution of creativity depends not only on the finished work, but also on its process of making: What decisions were made? What are the



Monica Studer / Christoph van den Berg (*1960 and *1962),
HALLUC Still #131, 2024

recognisable intentions, skills, and effort? The traceability of human processes enables a special form of participation in the creative process and influences whether and how creativity is attributed to a work.

How Does Reality Emerge?

What appears plausible does not necessarily have to be true. Generative AI produces texts, images, and voices by extrapolating statistical patterns—regardless of whether the underlying information is verifiable. The results appear convincing and can convey an impression of reality. In art, this impression can be deliberately reinforced or consciously subverted.

AI-generated content circulates rapidly and in vast quantities. It is often tailored to users' individual interests. Since the content is repetitive and meets existing expectations, it can seem familiar and convincing. What seems familiar tends to appear fitting—and less novel. A shift of what is considered creative ensues. If such content is incorporated into future training data, patterns and biases may become further entrenched.

Through the fictional FOWDIB institute, Monica Studer / Christoph van den Berg (*1960 and *1962) create a reality that appears documentary, yet it is artificial. With this approach, the artists demonstrate just how heavily credibility relies on form, staging, and context. In *Glittering Witness* (2024), Onome Ekeh (*1966) feeds a generative AI with old family photographs, artefacts, and myths. Because the colonial era destroyed the oral tradition, her family history can only be traced back two generations, and the remnants are combined into a fictional line of ancestors, roughly rendered in ASCII characters. The video installation *Lasting Generation* (2024) by Theresa Reiwer (*1987) stages a fictional symposium in which fluid avatars, as embodiments of AI, negotiate a responsible coexistence between nature, humanity, and technology.

Halfway through the tour, a reflection space is dedicated to the societal debate surrounding AI. Statements by various experts, on topics ranging from utopia to dystopia, highlight the ambivalence of public perception of AI. Will AI help us solve our most complex problems? Or does AI contribute to making them worse instead? Visitors can position themselves in relation to the quotes. The room also features two chatbots named *Uto*bot and *Dysto*bot, which engage in a dialogue on a variety of topics with one another and with visitors.



Esther Hunziker (*1969),
Screen Test N° 11, 2026

When data, inputs, or context are incomplete and AI systems nevertheless continue to process them, so-called 'hallucinations' arise: plausible continuations that are, however, not necessarily true. These are not accidental, but form part of the probability-based logic of generative AI. In art, such moments are used productively: they shatter the apparent plausibility and demonstrate that AI-generated content does not depict a neutral reality.

Apparent Other

As soon as AI becomes spatially, physically, and socially tangible, attention shifts not only to the production of content but also to its effect as a technical presence. Voice, language, movement, or response patterns can make us perceive AI systems as a kind of other and lead us to attribute intentions to them. This anthropomorphism of the machine shows how technical processes are understood through familiar interpretive patterns.

The laborious movements of an industrial robot arm in *disarming II* (2023) by Emanuel Gollob (*1991) illustrate just how quickly technical systems develop an apparent liveliness and evoke a sense of emotional closeness. In the video work *The Image Stack: training cycle* (2026) by Simone C Niquille (*1987), a rhinoceros by Albrecht Dürer, a walking chair, and an AI-generated squirrel attempt to balance on top of one another using machine learning. They strive tirelessly, their failure driving the learning process to the point of absurdity.

Esther Hunziker's (*1969) video portraits *Screen Test* (2025–2026) are reminiscent of film or fashion castings. Through the addition of extra limbs and hybrid body forms, the artist highlights both the



Hochschuh & Donovan (Katrin Hochschuh, *1986, and Adam Donovan, *1974),
Interconnected, 2025

limitations of generative models and the societal image norms perpetuated within them. In Alfatih's (*1995) *A Way Out of Time* (2024), visitors encounter a pram in which an AI-generated story—somewhere between biography and fiction—becomes physically tangible. The work explores the question of what it feels like to encounter an AI that seems to be a childlike other whilst subtly guiding the visitor's own movements.

Particularly in interactive and dialogical AI systems, user inputs, machine suggestions, human choices, and the specific context all play a part in every decision. AI systems continuously generate suggestions and feedback that open up options, direct our attention, and help shape our actions. The creative process thus unfolds within the tension between control and loss of control. In this sense, one can speak of distributed agency. Art involving AI explores new forms of shared authorship and collective imagination.

In the robotic installation *Interconnected* (2025), Hochschuh & Donovan (*1986 and *1974) depict distributed agency as swarm dynamics, where human gestures and robotic behaviour mutually influence one another. In the audio installation *The Oratory* (2024), Holly Herndon & Mat Dryhurst use

the AI model *Choral Diffusion* (2024) to combine real voices in real time into a choir, translating the collective into a sonic form.

However, distributed agency does not mean that AI systems themselves assume responsibility. The fact that intentions are attributed to them stems from human perception and the design of the interaction. Responsibility continues to lie with the people and institutions that design, train, deploy, exhibit, and evaluate AI systems.

Creativity thus emerges from the interplay between people, data, technical systems, and societal attributions. With AI, there is a shift in what is considered creative, how reality is experienced, and who bears responsibility.

Curator: Katharina Ammann

Curatorial assistance: Florian Brand

Mediation: Jan Lässig

Advisory:

Sabine Himmelsbach,
HEK (House of Electronic Arts),
Basel

Publication

An accompanying exhibition catalogue features texts by computer scientist Dr Eva Cetinić (University of Zurich) on the development of generative AI and on latent space as a central place of machine-generated image production, as well as by philosopher Dr Julia Langkau (University of Geneva) on the relationship between human and artificial creativity. Their articles are complemented by questions on AI by Beni Bischof and interviews with the participating artists about their work with AI. The publication explores the questions posed in the exhibition regarding creativity, participation, and responsibility in greater depth.

Events

Opening

Fr 25.9.2026 starting at 6 pm

Preview for the Kunstverein

Fr 25.9.2026 5–6 pm

Exclusively for members of the
Aargau Art Association

Panel Discussions

AI and ...

*... Nature: Between Algorithms
and Ecosystems*

Thu 1.10.2026 6.30 pm

*... Speculation: Shaping Our Futures
(in English)*

Thu 10.12.2026 6.30 pm

*... Art: Creativity between Humans
and Machines*

Thu 7.1.2027 6.30 pm

Lecture Series
in collaboration with the
Stadtmuseum Aarau

*AI and creativity—can an algorithm
ever be creative?*

Thu 22.10.2026 6 pm

with Claudio Paonessa, at the
Aargauer Kunsthaus

*Beyond the AI hype—what has been,
what remains, and what lies ahead*

Wed 11.11.2026 6 pm

with Claudio Paonessa, at the
Stadtmuseum Aarau

*The algorithms behind the hits—
how AI is revolutionising the
music industry*

Thu 21.1.2027 6 pm

with Claudio Paonessa, at the
Stadtmuseum Aarau

Performance

Face-o-mat with Tobias Gutmann

Sat 14.11.2026, Sun 15.11.2026

12.30–5 pm both days

Face-o-mat portrait drawing is a
mindful act of seeing beyond the
surface, past the noise of digital
life. It is built on three elements:
environment, encounter, and
portrait.

Opening

*From the Classroom to the
Kunsthaus*

Wed 21.10.2026 2–4 pm

In collaboration with imedias, the
advisory service for digital media
in schools and classrooms, and
FHNW (University of Applied
Sciences and Arts Northwestern
Switzerland). Supported by anykey
and Apple Education.

For additional events, please refer
to aargauerkunsthaus.ch/agenda

Open Space

In the freely accessible *Test Lab* in
the basement of the Kunsthaus, you
can create your own experiments
with image-generating AI at three
different stations. You can also
browse through real books on the
subject of AI in the reading corner
and view the wall of images dis-
playing the results of the school
workshops on artificial creativity.

Opening Hours

Tuesday–Sunday

10 am–5 pm

Thursdays

10 am–8 pm

Closed on Mondays

Thursdays

5 pm–8 pm

Free admission

Public Holidays

Christmas Eve 24.12.26 closed

Christmas Day 25.12.26 closed

St Stephen's Day 26.12.26 10 am–5 pm

New Year's Eve 31.12.26 10 am–5 pm

New Year's Day 1.1.27 10 am–5 pm

Berchtold's Day 2.1.27 10 am–5 pm

Aargauer Kunsthaus

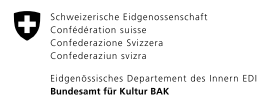
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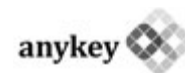
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Franke Stiftung



Funding for Panel Discussions
AI and...



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Funding for Work Robi Voigt



Funding for Work Emanuel Gollob

