

16th International Congress of the Hispanic Society of Philosophical Anthropology

Homo pictor: Art, Imagination and Creation

Barcelona, 30 September–2 October 2026

Organised by:

Hispanic Society of Philosophical Anthropology (SHAF)



Universitat Internacional de Catalunya
Institute for Culture and Thought

In cooperation with
Faculty of Humanities

Call for Papers

Presentation

The term *Homo pictor*, coined by Hans Jonas to describe a distinctively human characteristic, offers a unique perspective: it suggests viewing humans as beings who imagine, depict and create images. *What abilities and attitudes come into play in the production of images?* – asks Jonas in his famous essay. Thinking about *Homo pictor* involves questioning the conditions that make imagination and creation possible as defining features of humanity.

The characterisation of humans as *Homo pictor* is therefore not limited to an aesthetic description – and is certainly not merely a pictorial appellation – but rather points to the core of human experience: the ability to open up a world, project what is absent and transform both reality and the self through the act of creation. In a broad sense, *Homo pictor* denotes the human capacity for figurative expression, transformation and self-formation.

Here, philosophical anthropology finds a rich terrain for reflection. At its most fundamental level, artistic creation may be seen as a technical endeavour at the service of life. Yet from the outset, it frees itself from immediate necessity, engaging the symbolic dimension, as Ernst Cassirer noted, addressing questions of existence and the creation of meaning. Thus, the act of creation is both material and symbolic: drawing, modelling, building and narrating are operations in which matter becomes sign and sign transfigures matter. In the creative act, body and world engage with one another, revealing the continuity between biological existence and spiritual life.

From this perspective, creation emerges as a core category within philosophical anthropology. However, the expansion of digital technologies, generative artificial intelligence, the automation of image production and the global ecological crisis may necessitate a paradigm shift, a reassessment of humans' role as creators. The proliferation of images, their rapid circulation and their potential for substitution challenge the very experience of depiction. In this context, reflecting on *Homo pictor* is a way of questioning what it means to create when images no longer seem to require a human subject, and how imagination is redefined when the realm of possibility is dictated by algorithms.

At the same time, the ecological crisis reveals the ambivalent nature of the creative impulse, situated between *techné* and *poiesis*. The capacity to transform the world, which originally served to ensure survival and create meaning, has now also become a threat to life itself. Technological creation is boundless, exceeding the limits of its life-sustaining foundations. Rethinking creation through the prism of philosophical anthropology therefore involves questioning the limits and responsibilities of the creative act. In this context, imagination is not simply the capacity to invent, but also to envision new ways for humans to inhabit the Earth. To create therefore entails fostering ways of coexisting, acknowledging otherness and caring for life in all its forms.

Within this framework, anthropological inquiry may provide a critical perspective for considering continuity and disruption between traditional and emerging forms of creation. To what extent do new technologies sustain the symbolic logic of *Homo pictor*, and to what extent do they replace it with the subject-less logic of production? What happens to imagination when its creative power is delegated to a machine? These questions are not merely technological, but profoundly philosophical: they address the human self-conception as agents, creators and beings capable of shaping the world.

The aim of this Congress is to explore, from the perspective of philosophical anthropology, the multiple dimensions of this primordial act. Under the title *Homo pictor: Art, Imagination and Creation*, the Congress seeks to spark reflection on the relationship between the human capacity to imagine and create and contemporary approaches to understanding humanity. In what way does imagination shape our experience of the world? How has creation changed in the context of new technologies? What does the history of images teach us about the evolution of human self-understanding? What place does imagination hold today in relation to reason, technology and life?

Topics

Both a **general topic** and **specific topic** must be indicated in the papers.

General topics

1. History of anthropology and philosophical anthropology
2. Anthropology, phenomenology and hermeneutics
3. Philosophical anthropology: art, film and literature
4. Anthropology and feminist philosophy

5. Anthropology, culture and religion
6. Philosophical anthropology and applied philosophy
7. Philosophical anthropology and Spanish and Ibero-American philosophy

Paper submission

1. Anthropological roots of art and creation (corporeality, sensoriality, emotion, imagination, freedom)
2. Art, creativity and human development: the humanisation and dehumanisation of art
3. Art, creativity and health: the art of caring
4. Art, creativity and the ecological crisis: limits and responsibilities of the creative act
5. Art, expressiveness and gesture: the artistic transfiguration of the body
6. Art, symbolism, spirituality and transcendence
7. Image, imagination and the imaginary: the anthropological need for fiction
8. Creativity obsolescence and new technologies

Paper submission

Participation in the Congress will be structured around paper sessions and panels of invited speakers. Anyone interested in submitting a paper to the Congress must send their proposal by **15 May 2026** to the following email address: congresoshaf2026@gmail.com, indicating “16th SHAF Congress: Papers” in the subject line. Authors will be notified of the assessment results by **15 June 2026**. All papers will be subject to a blind review. Each paper should be limited to a 15-minute presentation, plus five minutes for discussion.

The submitted papers must include:

- Title of the paper
- Name and surname(s) of the author
- Home institution
- Brief CV (100/150 words)
- Email address
- The relevant general and specific topics
- Abstract of between 200 and 500 words (including basic bibliographic references)

A second copy of the paper, without the author’s personal and professional details, must be attached for blind review.

Papers may be submitted in any of the official languages of Spain, as well as English, French, Italian and Portuguese.

Registration

Once a paper has been accepted, the author must register for the Congress in order for the submission to be included in the final programme.

Authors must register via [the following link](#).

Registration period: 15 June–15 July 2026.

Registration fee:

- **Participants with a paper:** €75
- **SHAF members:** €30
- **Participants without a paper** (will receive a diploma/certificate of attendance): €30

Organising committee

Xavier Escribano, UIC Barcelona
Andrea Rodríguez Prat, UIC Barcelona
Albert Moya, UIC Barcelona
Juan Velázquez, UNIZAR
Noé Expósito Roperó, UNED

Keynote speakers

Irene Borges Duarte, full professor at the University of Évora (Portugal)
Roland Breeur, professor at the Institute of Philosophy at KU Leuven (Belgium)
Joaquín Esteban Ortega, permanent Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Valladolid
César Moreno Márquez, professor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Seville
Fernando Pérez-Borbujo Álvarez, associate Professor of Philosophy at Pompeu Fabra University
Magda Polo Pujadas, professor of Aesthetics and Music at the University of Barcelona
Ignasi Roviró i Alemany, retired Professor of Aesthetics at Ramon Llull University
María Teresa Russo, professor of Moral Philosophy and Bioethics at Roma Tre University (Italy)

Location

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