

Libraries, design and artificial intelligence for better living together.

September 8, 2026

EPFL+TECAL LAB

PRESS RELEASE

ÈVOKÂ



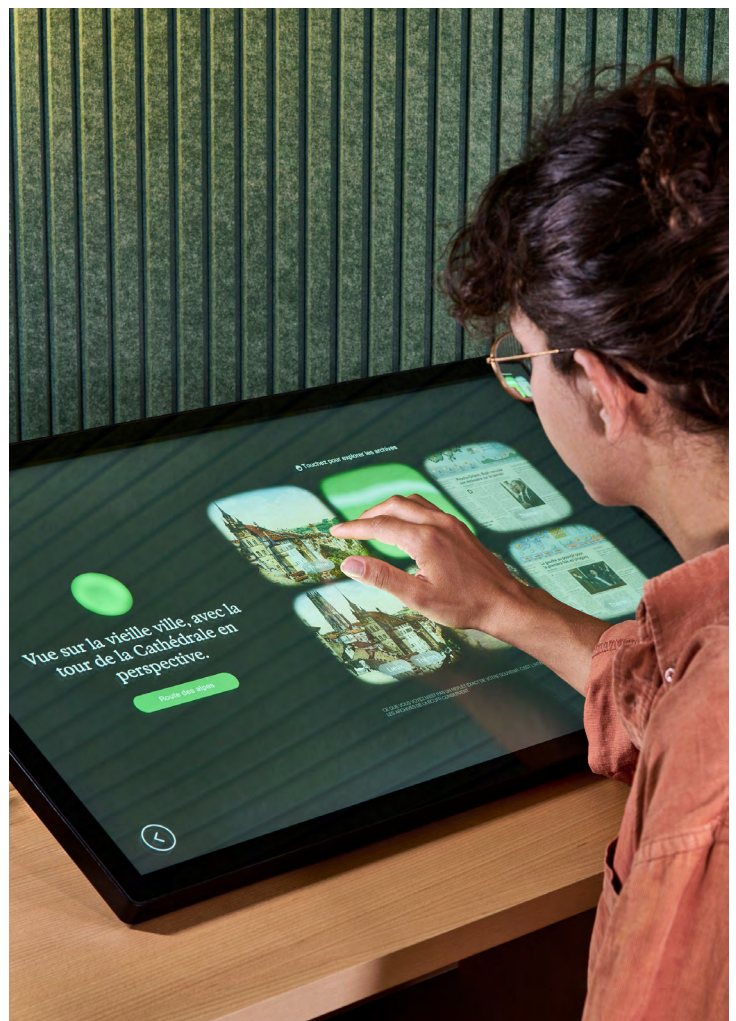
Libraries, design and artificial intelligence for better living together.

Our heritage brings together the traces of our history — the foundations of our collective identity. It contributes to our sense of belonging and our ability to imagine a shared future. But how can we stay connected to this heritage amidst today's media overload? Four years of experimentation, led by the EPFL+ECAL Lab in collaboration with Fribourg's Cantonal and University Library and the Swiss Data Science Center, have paved the way for a novel installation, *Èvokâ II*: it fosters a dialogue between our own memories and those that emerge from the collections through the use of artificial intelligence. An experience open to everyone, rich in emotion and surprises, the development of which has benefited from a contribution from the Swiss National Library.

A welcoming space made of fabric and wood, where anyone can experience a fascinating exchange: all you need to do is mention a memory for *Èvokâ* to delve into its collection of some 70,000 images, 2300 hours of video, 10,000 hours of audio and over a million press articles. The curious machine then replies: 'Let's see what our memories have in common'. It's nothing like a search engine. It's a dialogue between users' memories and a heritage spanning several centuries of history — a new form of interaction for discovering often unexpected content, a way of reconnecting with the richness and history of a region.

And this is precisely the challenge: at a time when digital tools facilitate global networking according to our specific interests, *Èvokâ* reconnects us with the place where we live. A sense of belonging that is essential for fostering community life and building the future within a region. Collective identity is rooted in our shared history. And the artefacts bearing witness to this history are carefully preserved in the collections of libraries, archives and museums.

With this project, the transformation of Fribourg's Cantonal and University Library (BCU) is taking on a pioneering role in addressing a societal challenge. Four years of work have made it possible to bring together the expertise required to bring it to fruition. The EPFL+ECAL Lab, the design centre of EPFL, has explored new forms of interaction and the use of new technologies. The Swiss Data Science Center joined the project to tackle challenges relating to data indexing using artificial intelligence. Identifying local and historical content is a crucial task in a world dominated by international databases. Equipping the machine with the ability to engage in dialogue is equally important. Drawing on the experience gained from an initial mobile installation, interaction designers, engineers and scenographers worked with BCU Fribourg's team to develop the new

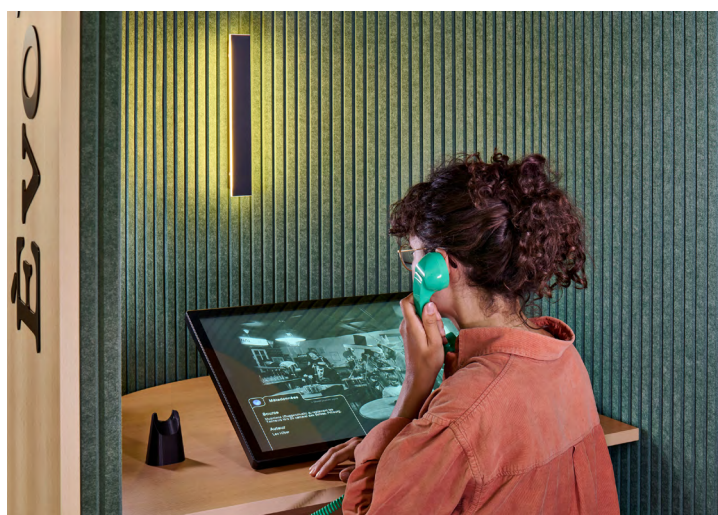


↑ *Èvokâ II* (image © EPFL+ECAL Lab / Daniela & Tonatiuh)

installation *Èvokâ II*. Thanks to the EPFL+ECAL Lab's expertise in cognitive science, they were then able to measure the impact of such a dialogue between citizens and cultural heritage. The project has thus delivered not only a functional installation, but also a wealth of knowledge on these new forms of interaction, the use of artificial intelligence and human perception.

The Swiss National Library has supported certain stages of the project's development and contributed to discussions on sound heritage. The challenge being tackled in Fribourg is also a national one: to encourage citizens to engage with our heritage in order to foster greater national cohesion and a strong identity, in all its diversity.

Presented to the media on September 8, 2026, *Èvokâ II* will be unveiled to the public during the European Heritage Days on Saturday, September 12, from 10.30 am, and will then be on permanent display in BCU Fribourg's new premises as of their official opening on September 26.



↑ *Èvokâ II* (image © EPFL+ECAL Lab / Daniela & Tonatiuh)

PUBLIC OPENING

Èvokâ II will be unveiled to the public for the first time on Saturday, September 12, from 10.30 am, as part of the European Heritage Days.

Information and registration on:

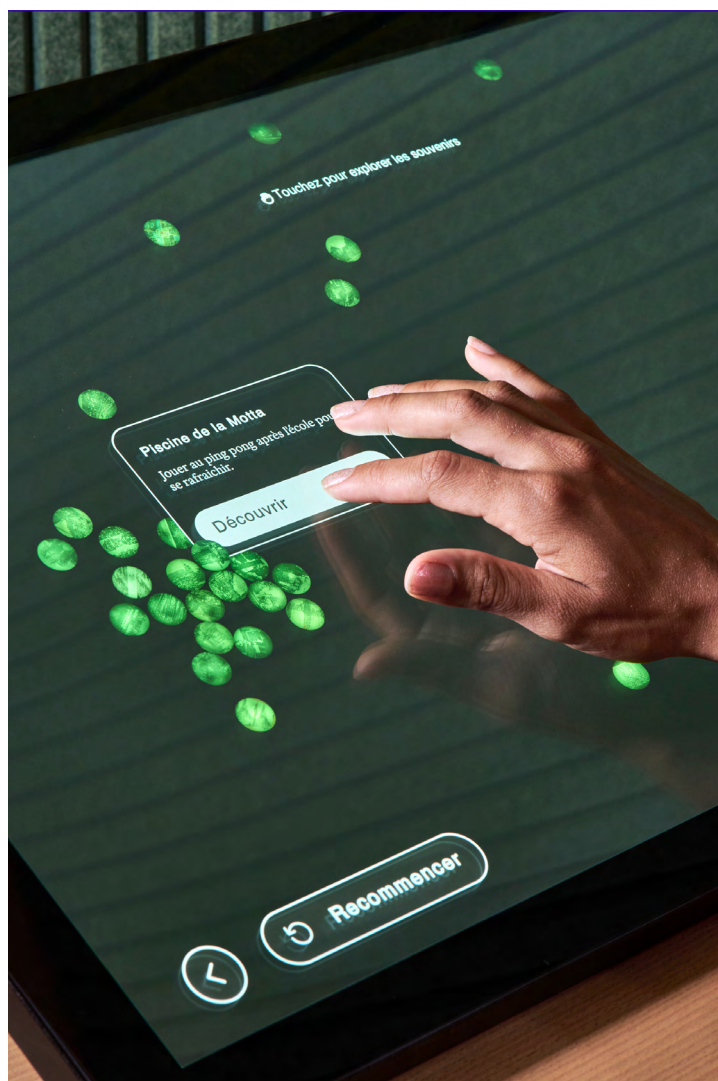
<https://www.fr.ch/bcu/evenements/evoka-mini-conferences-vernissage/>

BCU INAUGURATION

On September 26 and 27, the BCU Fribourg will open its new buildings.

Information on:

<https://www.fr.ch/bcu/evenements/inauguration-de-la-bcu/>



↑ *Èvokâ II* (image © EPFL+ECAL Lab / Daniela & Tonatiuh)

PARTNERS

EPFL+ECAL LAB



BCU FRIBOURG
BIBLIOTHÈQUE CANTONALE
ET UNIVERSITAIRE

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Eidgenössisches Departement des Innern EDI
Département fédéral de l'intérieur DFI
Dipartimento federale dell'Interno DFI
Schweizerische Nationalbibliothek NB
Bibliothèque nationale suisse BN
Biblioteca nazionale Svizzera BN

SDSC

KUB FREIBURG
KANTONS- UND
UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK

ABOUT THE FRIBOURG CANTONAL AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

At a time when access to reliable, high-quality information is crucial, the BCU Fribourg provides a space for learning, discovery and remembrance at the heart of the city and the canton. Both online and in its new buildings, it offers extensive documentary resources and ensures access to scientific information. It also safeguards the canton's cultural heritage and organises a rich programme of cultural events.

The BCU's mission is to contribute to the education and general cultural knowledge of the population, to provide the essential tools for university teaching and scientific research, and to ensure the preservation and promotion of Fribourg's cultural documentary heritage. Furthermore, it contributes to the development of public reading in the canton of Fribourg. The BCU Fribourg opened the doors of its new library at 6 Rue Saint-Michel on September 1, 2026. This new building offers over 200,000 open-access items (books, journals, music and audiovisual materials), numerous study and reading areas, access to national and international newspapers and magazines at the La Parenthèse café, and spaces dedicated to hosting cultural activities such as exhibitions, workshops and lectures.

ABOUT THE SWISS DATA SCIENCE CENTER

The Swiss Data Science Center (SDSC) is a National Research Infrastructure for data science and artificial intelligence. Its mission is to accelerate the adoption of data-driven science and innovation for positive societal impact, through research projects and the transfer of knowledge and technology, as well as its commitment to education. A multidisciplinary team of data specialists based in Lausanne, Zurich and Villigen provides expertise and services in various fields, such as health and biomedical sciences, energy and sustainability, climate and the environment, and large-scale scientific infrastructure. The SDSC also offers undergraduate and postgraduate training programmes through EPFL and ETH Zurich.

ABOUT THE EPFL+ECAL LAB

The EPFL+ECAL Lab is the design centre of the EPFL/École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne, founded in 2007 in cooperation with ECAL/University of Art and Design Lausanne. Exploring the potential of emerging technologies through design, it tackles the related challenges by combining artistic creativity, scientific knowledge and the ability to assess user perception. Working on concrete projects, the EPFL+ECAL Lab collaborates with many companies, museums and institutes. With its expertise in design, engineering, architecture and psychology, it creates novel concepts and turns them into functional prototypes.



↑ Évokâ II (image © EPFL+ECAL Lab / Daniela & Tonatiuh)

CREDITS

EPFL+ECAL LAB

DIRECTION

Nicolas Henchoz

RESEARCH ASSISTANT, INTERACTION DESIGN

Sofia Lelis

ART DIRECTION, PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Lara Défayes

ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY MANAGER

Delphine Ribes

SOFTWARE ENGINEERING

Andrea Rovescalli, Gabriel Luthier

PRODUCT DESIGN

Lison Christe

UX RESEARCH, UX PSYCHOLOGY

Sebastian Baez Lugo

UX RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Sharon Guardini, Alexandra Pereira Santos

CANTONAL AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARY OF FRIBOURG

DIRECTION

Angélique Boschung

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Silvia Zehnder-Jörg

COMMUNICATION

Athéna Schuwey

CURATION, ICONOGRAPHY

Davide Nerini

CURATION, FILM AND SOUND

Yves Cirio

CURATION, WRITTEN ARCHIVES

Caroline Arbella

DATA CURATION

Loraine Molliet, Andreas Christe

SWISS DATA SCIENCE CENTER

PRINCIPAL DATA SCIENTIST

Alessandro Nesti

SENIOR DATA SCIENTISTS

Clément Lefebvre, Raphaël Matusiak, Chiara Preti

SENIOR MACHINE LEARNING ENGINEER

Johan Berdat

SWISS NATIONAL LIBRARY

VICE-DIRECTION

Elena Balzardi

HEAD OF PUBLIC SECTION

Isabelle Aeschbach

DIRECTION OF THE PHONOTHÈQUE

Günther Giovannoni

EPFL

MER, SENIOR SCIENTIST (CV LAB)

Mathieu Salzmann

SEMESTER PROJECTS

Kenji Tetard, Jean-Daniel Rouveyrol

PRESS CONTACTS

BCU Fribourg

Christophe Dutoit

christophe.dutoit@fr.ch

EPFL+ECAL Lab

Géraldine Morand

geraldine.morand@epfl.ch



↑ *Èvokâ II* (image © EPFL+ECAL Lab / Daniela & Tonatiuh)