EPFL+ECAL LAB

## The new EPFL+ECAL Lab to boost innovation between engineering, architecture and design.

**What are the multiple implications of technologies emerging from the labs? How can they be fuelled with new content and emotion? How can one provide designers with competencies, tools and materials to widen the scope of their work? EPFL[1] and ECAL[2] answer these questions in a new way.**

EPFL, one of the two Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology, joins the new ECAL to open the EPFL+ECAL Lab. The mission of this unit is to integrate competencies of both schools to develop a new culture of innovation that permeates both teaching and research, at a crossroads between free exploration and industrial prospects.

The partnership between EPFL and ECAL officially started in 2002 through the signing of an agreement in principle. Today this partnership is involved in the training of some 500 students. Several research and innovation projects are ongoing.

The EPFL+ECAL Lab and its 2,000 $m^2$ of workshops are now giving this partnership concrete form and greater scope. The Lab draws on numerous transdisciplinary experiments conducted at international level. The EPFL+ECAL Lab is thus proposing an unprecedented model to take the field of innovation one step further, at the interface between various disciplines and cultures.

In terms of education, the offer of lectures for engineers and architects has doubled as from this new academic year, with two curricula: one in industrial and object design, and another in graphic and interaction design. This raises EPFL students' awareness so that they find common ground with the designers – an essential asset for their future career. Conversely, the EPFL+ECAL Lab will also welcome ECAL students so that they become familiar with technologies emerging from the labs.

As an innovation platform, the EPFL+ECAL Lab distinguishes itself through the identification and nature of projects in such fields as object design, interaction design, mixed and augmented reality, variable environments, sensitive materials or production methods for design and architecture. It also features an extremely pragmatic approach to relationships between the various actors, based on a strengthening of the dynamics specific to each discipline. In other words, workshops and interactions are targeted at the most auspicious periods in terms of innovation. The various disciplines thus share their know-how while pursuing the most efficient dynamics for their own work, and the various stakeholders develop a common language and a culture of interaction from the early stages of a project.

Depending on the selected themes, industrial partners will add their skills to increase the projects' educational value, foster technology transfer to the market and bridge the gap between research and the general public. The EPFL+ECAL Lab complements the program offered by the new ECAL premises and contributes to its international reach.

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[1] With over 10,000 people on campus, EPFL (Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne) is among the top ten European research universities, renowned in particular for its role as Official Scientific Advisor to Alinghi - twice winner of the America's Cup, the Hydroptère trimaran and its world record for sailing speed per nautical mile, or the technology for the first ever computer mouse

[2] University of Art and Design Lausanne