INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

DIGITAL CURATOR

December 2 & 3 2020
Masaryk University, Faculty of Arts
Brno, Czech Republic
online

Speakers:

Amy Alexander
Hans Bernhard
Sarah Cook & Roddy Hunter
Wendy Coones & Oliver Grau
Jana Horáková
Michal Klodner
Barbora Kundračíková
Alessandro Ludovico
Alex McLean

Organized by:
PhD study programme Digital Culture and Creative Industries
Team: Svatava Doubková, Jana Horáková, Ivan Koutný
Contact: digitalcurator@phil.muni.cz

INTERNATIONAL *SYMPOSIUM*

DIGITAL CURATOR

Wednesday, December 2

10:00–10:10 Symposium opening, day 1

10:10–10:50 Wendy Coones & Oliver Grau:
Digital Curation in a Living Archive - History and Future of the Archive of Digital Art

10:50–11:30 Alessandro Ludovico: Curating Media Art in Physical Spaces, Online, and on Printed Pages

11:30–13:00 Lunch break

13:00–13:40 Alex McLean:
Archiving Live Code

13:50–14:30 Hans Bernhard, UBERMORGEN:
The Next Biennial Should be Curated by a Machine

14:30 Symposium closing, day 1

Thursday, December 3

09:00–09:10 Symposium opening, day 2

09:10–09:50 Amy Alexander:
"Always Only Once." The Paradox of Preservation:
From Expanded Cinema to Performative Algorithms

10:00–10:40 This contribution was unfortunatelly
canceled.

10:50–11:30 Sarah Cook & Roddy Hunter:
Networked Art Practice after Digital Preservation

11:30 - 13:20 Lunch break

13:20–14:00 CZ archives:
Jana Horáková: Do neural networks dream of videoart?
Media Art Live Archive for Vašulka Kitchen Brno

Barbora Kundračíková: CEAD New Media Archive
state funded institutions and new media storage

Michal Klodner: National Film Archive Prague

14:00–15:00 Discussion

15:00 Symposium closing, day 2

Full Program

Wednesday, December 2

10:00–10:10 Symposium opening, day 1

**10:10–10:50 Wendy Coones & Oliver Grau:
Digital Curation in a Living Archive - History and Future of the Archive of Digital Art**

ABSTRACT

In the past five decades, Media Art has evolved into a critical field at the intersection of art, science and technology. The significant loss threatening this art form due to rapid technological obsolescence runs parallel with the imperative to break with static documentation strategies and develop a "living archive" embracing the organic curation of the practitioners within the field. This talk will outline some of the Archive of Digital Art's strategies for the research, documentation and preservation of digital art through innovative strategies of 'collaborative archiving'. Social Web 2.0 features fostering the engagement of the international Media Art community, and Web 3.0 elements integrated through a 'bridging thesaurus' link the extended documentation of ADA with other 'traditional' art history databases to facilitate interdisciplinary and trans-historical comparative analyses. ADA's history and future are an integral part of curating the evolution of this living and dynamic field.

CV

Wendy Jo Coones is a member of the academic and research staff in the Dept. for Image Science at the Danube University in Krems, Austria. Since 2005 she is responsible for curricula development, teaching, and support of research initiatives. As academic lead for post-grad courses related to digital cultural life and its histories, she prepares post-graduate students for emerging futures in the cultural and creative sectors and is currently primary coordinating staff for an EU-funded Erasmus Mundus European Master of Excellence program in Media Arts Cultures. She also works with the Archive of Digital Art, the Media Art Histories International Conference Series and Archive, The Online Graphic Collection of Göttweig Abbey, the Arts & Digital Humanities LAB, and various research projects currently being realized.

10:50–11:30 Alessandro Ludovico: Curating Media Art in Physical Spaces, Online, and on Printed Pages.

ABSTRACT

Curating media art means to manage its artworks' time and space in different ways. The importance to understand the specificity of time-based media is equal to understanding its larger context, and to render both within the exhibition (real or virtual) borders. From early software art to online spaces, to curating media art on printed pages, or through archives of publications, curating media art requires appropriate methodologies for each medium and setting. The different use and rendering of time and space, in each of these technological environments, will be analysed, underlying what connects them and what is instead specific to each medium.

CV

Alessandro Ludovico is a researcher, artist and chief editor of Neural magazine since 1993. He received his Ph.D. degree in English and Media from Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge (UK). He is Associate Professor at the Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton. He has published and edited several books, and has lectured worldwide. He also served as an advisor for the Documenta 12's Magazine Project. He is one of the authors of the award-winning Hacking Monopolism trilogy of artworks (Google Will Eat Itself, Amazon Noir, Face to Facebook).
http://neural.it

11:30–13:00 Lunch break

13:00–13:40 Alex McLean: Archiving Live Code

ABSTRACT

Live coding is where an artist creates a live performance by writing and modifying code, which runs on a computer while it is being changed. The classic example is a musician writing code that makes music which people then dance to, creating a connection from coder to code to music to sound to bodily experience. In this way live coding celebrates live experience and human authorship in computer programming. The question is how to archive live coding? The code that's left at the end of the performance is just what is left over, the performance came from editing the code live, not in creating an easily archivable end result as with traditional programming. In talking about this perhaps we can find ways to rethink digital products and archives, related to ancient forms of craft transmitted through oral culture.

CV

Alex McLean is an interdisciplinary researcher, software artist and musician based in Sheffield UK, working on interfaces for exploring Algorithmic Pattern, including the free/open source TidalCycles environment for live coding music, and weaving technologies as part of the five year ERC PENELOPE project lead by Ellen-Harlizius Klück in Deutsches Museum, Munich. He is active across the digital arts, including co-

founding the TOPLAP and Algorave live coding/algorithmic music movements, the international conferences on live coding and live interfaces, and the AlgoMech festival of algorithmic and mechanical movement. https://slab.org/

13:50–14:30 Hans Bernhard, UBERMORGEN: The Next Biennial Should be Curated by a Machine

ABSTRACT

Creating a world that was unthinkable just a few hours ago has become obscenely attractive! The Next Biennial Should be Curated by a Machine is hyper-modern but still feels classic, evoking another time in history supplementing the existing narcissism of human curators it sets the conceptually-aware sharpness over organic humor and playfulness. A remarkable effort from entities whose projects and keywords (AI) have become in danger of being camouflaged by hype. Dressed-down avant-tech with D.I.Y. immediacy and intimacy the B3(NSCAM) software's brilliance and elegance is an obvious truth that allows the creation of a parallel universe of artist identities imaginable objects plausible exhibitions and descriptions and constructions of improbable biennials. Some actors defy descriptions but the website is the 'terminal' to a vast 'networked system' where all the iterations realities and parallel universes exist! It's a universe that moves with purpose and knows when to hold the users tight or grab them by the scruff of the neck and drag them into its world.

CV

UBERMORGEN is an artist duo founded in 1995. Autistic actionist lizvlx and pragmatic visionary Hans Bernhard are net.art pioneers and media hackers widely recognized for their high-risk research into data & matter and polarising social experiments. CNN called them 'Maverick Austrian Business People' during their Vote-Auction online project. They reached a global audience of 500 million while challenging the FBI CIA and NSA during the US presidential election. In 2005 they launched their acclaimed EKMRZ Trilogy, a series of conceptual hacks – Google Will Eat Itself Amazon Noir and The Sound of eBay. UBERMORGEN occupies 175 domains. Their exhibitions include New Museum USA Somerset House London Haifa Museum of Art Israel/Palestine (2019) Wei-Ling Contemporary Malaysia HKW Germany ZKM Germany National Art Gallery Bulgaria (2017) ICA Miami USA Mahatma Gandhi Institute Mauritius (2015) Serpentine Galleries London UK (2014) Kunsthal Aarhus Denmark Ars Electronica Austria MoMA Ljubljana Slovenia ArtScience Museum Singapore (2013) 3331 Arts Chiyoda Japan (2012) Centre Pompidou France Gwangju Design Biennale Korea WRO Media Art Biennale Wroclaw Poland (2011) Prague Biennale Czech Republic (2009) Biennale of Sydney Australia (2008) MOCA Taipei (2007) The Premises Johannesburg South Africa ICC Tokyo Japan (2005) SFMOMA USA (2001).

14:30 Symposium closing, day 1

Thursday, December 3

09:00–09:10 Symposium opening, day 2

**09:10–09:50 Amy Alexander:
"Always Only Once." The Paradox of Preservation:
From Expanded Cinema to Performative Algorithms**

ABSTRACT

The 20th century saw various approaches to expanded cinema performance, including color organs and mixed media "psychedelic" light shows. These practices were difficult to document technically and were, to various extents, based on performance in the moment. Technically, archival 20th century visual performance documentation and preservation ranges from the non-existent to the surprisingly future proofed. But expanded cinema historian William Moritz summed up the unrepeatability of performance experience in a 1969 review of the mixed media performance ensemble Single Wing Turquoise Bird: "always only once." Contemporary performative digital practice shares some parallels with these earlier performative practices: the work may be performed live by a performer, or an algorithm may perform the work automatically. In either case, preservation faces the paradox of recreating moments that were intended to happen "always only once." What can we learn from 20th century attempts to preserve the ephemeral?

CV

Amy Alexander has been making computationally-based art projects since the 1990s. She is a Professor of Computing in the Arts in the Visual Arts Department at University of California San Diego. An algorithmic filmmaker and performer, her work has focused throughout her career on the fuzzy borders between media and the world, creating transparently algorithmically biased, sometimes funny alternatives to the systems thrust upon us. She has also written and lectured on software art, software as culture, and historical and contemporary audiovisual performance. In the early 2000s Amy was a founding member and curator of the runme.org software art repository. She has served as a reviewer for festivals and commissions for computer music as well as new media art.

Amy's projects have been performed and exhibited at venues ranging from The Whitney Museum, Prix Ars Electronica, Transmediale, SIGGRAPH, NIME, ICLC (International Conference on Live Coding), and the New Museum to club performances at Sonar (Barcelona), First Avenue (Minneapolis) and Melkweg (Amsterdam). She has also performed on the streets of Los Angeles, San Diego, San Jose, Zürich, and Aberdeen, Scotland. Her latest work, the algorithmically generated durational film "What the Robot Saw," has live streamed online since late 2019.

10:00–10:40 This contribution was unfortunatelly canceled.

10:50–11:30 Sarah Cook & Roddy Hunter: Networked Art Practice after Digital Preservation

ABSTRACT

Over the last six decades, networked art practice has anticipated and responded to the changing material conditions of communications systems, infrastructures and technologies. Whether pre-internet mail art or born-digital net art, changes to these material conditions have been frequent and far-reaching and extend to the preservation as well as the production of networked art practice. As with other contemporary art practices associated with the so-called dematerialisation of the art object, the material and, at times, ideological dimensions and proprieties of these works have challenged existing approaches, methods and protocols of art conservation. This paper aims to unpack existing digital preservation efforts concerning online and offline exchanges, while also feeling out the implications of data mining techniques and human-machine learning within preservation strategies and how they affect artistic and curatorial agency and authorship. We also report on initial findings from our recent workshop at ISEA 2020 where we embarked on case study research of The Museum of Ordure (2001 onwards) by Stuart Brisley, Geoff Cox and Adrian Ward and 6 Months Without (2018-2019) by Nastja Säde Rönkkö. Overall, this paper will contribute to our broader and longer-term research project tracing the edges and boundaries of networked art practice after digital preservation.
http://networkedart.blog

CV

Sarah Cook is a curator, writer and researcher based in Scotland. She is Professor of Museum Studies in Information Studies at the University of Glasgow. Sarah is one of the curators behind Scotland's only digital arts festival NEoN Digital Arts and was founder/curator of LifeSpace Science Art Research Gallery in the School of Life Sciences, University of Dundee (as part of her role as Dundee Fellow at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, 2013-2018).Sarah has curated and co-curated international exhibitions of contemporary art and new media art including: 24/7 (2019) at Somerset House; The Gig Is Up (2016) at V2_Institute for Unstable Media in Rotterdam; Right Here, Right Now (2015) at The Lowry in Salford; Alt-w (2014) at the Royal Scottish Academy, SSA Annual Exhibition in Edinburgh; Not even the sky: Thomson & Craighead (2013) for MEWO Kunsthalle in Memmingen; Biomediations (2013) for Transitio_MX_05, the festival of electronic arts and video in Mexico City; Mirror Neurons (2012) for National Glass Centre in Sunderland; Q.E.D. (2011) for the AND Festival in Liverpool; Untethered (2008) for Eyebeam in New York; Broadcast Yourself (2008) for AV Festival 08 in Newcastle; Database Imaginary (2004) and The Art Formerly Known As New Media (2005) both for the Walter Phillips Gallery,

The Banff Centre.Together with Beryl Graham, Sarah co-founded CRUMB, the longstanding online resource and network for curators of new media art, hosting workshops and courses worldwide. She holds a Masters degree from CCS at Bard, and a PhD from the University of Sunderland (2004) where she was employed until 2013, undertaking research, supervising PhD students and developing and teaching on the MA Curating course. As part of her research funded by the AHRC, Sarah worked as adjunct curator of new media at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art until 2006, and in 2008 was the inaugural curatorial fellow at Eyebeam Art and Technology Center in New York.

CV

Roddy Hunter is an artist, curator, educator and writer. Known for performance art interventions in wide-ranging sites and spaces internationally over 30 years, he has shown work across Europe, North America and Asia. He became involved with curatorial practice while a member of Hull Time Based Arts in the mid-1990s. His projects since include 'The Next Art-of-Peace Biennale', 'Span2', and 'Rootless' 97: The Nomad Domain', Hull. His writing on histories, theories and practices of contemporary art has been published by Routledge and Palgrave Macmillan, appears in international journals such as 'Apparatus', 'Acoustic Space' and 'Inter, art actuel', and includes monograph essays on Alastair Maclennan, John Newling, André Stitt and others. His most recent practice engages with art, curating, networks and performance after the internet, such as through the research project 'Networked Art Practice After Digital Preservation', with Sarah Cook, and 'Parallel State' with Simon Poulter, Judit Bodor and others. He holds an MA Contemporary Arts from Nottingham Trent University and a PhD from Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, University of Dundee. A senior academic with over 20 years' experience of creative arts and design in higher education, he is currently Director of Teaching and Learning in the School of Art, Design and Architecture at the University of Huddersfield, England and a trustee of the Council for Higher Education in Art & Design (CHEAD).

11:30–13:20 Lunch break

13:20–14:00 CZ archives:

Jana Horáková: Do Neural Networks Dream of Videoart? Media Art Live Archive for Vašulka Kitchen Brno

CV

Jana Horáková is an associate professor in aesthetics at Masaryk University, Czech Republic, where she teaches theory of interactive media at the Faculty of Arts. Her professional interests include new media art, robotic art, and the intersection between art, science, and technology. Together with Barbara Büscher she organized several international symposiums collectively titled MEDIA PERFORMANCE – Imaginary Spaces (2005), Ephemeral (2007), Memory (2010), and Gestures (2015). In addition, they also co-edited the Czech-German book Imaginary Spaces (2008). Recently, she has become interested in media archeology, software studies (Introduction to Software studies), and art-based research methodologies (Computer GraphicRevisited.the virtual reconstruction of one of the first computer art exhibitions / URL: https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/8663648).

Barbora Kundračíková: CEAD New Media Archive state funded institutions and new media storage

CV

Barbora Kundračíková has graduated from History, Art History, and Aesthetics at the Masaryk University in Brno (2016). Currently, she is the head of modern art collections in the Olomouc Museum of Art - Central European Forum. She also cooperates with the Photography Research Centre at the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague and works as a freelance curator. Her area of expertise includes European visual arts of the nineteenth and twentieth century, technical representations (Photography, Graphic Arts), the methodology of Art History, and analytic approaches to Aesthetics. Regarding the OCEF, she is highly interested in the possibilities of interdisciplinarity and inter-institutional cooperation.

Michal Klodner: National Film Archive Prague

CV

Michal Klodner works in the field of visual and audiovisual live performances and independent film. As an assistant he worked at FAMU film school and completed his doctoral studies on the subject of postmediality. In the National Film Archive he is involved in digital curation and research in the field of documentation, presentation and analysis of moving images.

14:00–15:00 Discussion (All participants of the symposium)

15:00 Symposium closing, day2

Digital Curator International Symposium

International symposium with a spotlight on the problematics of preservation of the new media art

ANNOTATION

New media art, or digital art, is an important part of most established art collections today. New media, however, is a broad concept; a chameleon that changes form. The very nature of new media also implies the different requirements on the methods of curatorial work, both in the presentation and archiving, as well as in mediation for research purposes. The aim of the international symposium, 'Digital Curator', is to provide an environment for sharing knowledge, perspectives and experiences, as well as a critical evaluation of their importance and professional quality.

The new media, it's history, present and it's long-term preservation strategies for future generations give rise to questions and issues that any curator of such funds must deal with. What skills and competencies should such curators possess? What challenges must they address? What questions do they ask themselves? What are their necessary workplace tools and what equipment is needed? Countless questions come to mind. The symposium 'Digital Curator', which take place on 2 & 3 December 2020, seek those answers. Professionals working in this field of interest will present not only theoretical background, but also current practical approaches, contemporary tendencies and visions for the future.

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