

CFP: Conference: The Art Museum in the Digital Age – 2022

Location: Belvedere, Vienna (Online)

Dates: 17–21 January 2022

Submission: 17 October 2021

The Art Museum in the Digital Age – 2022

The Belvedere Research Center is continuing its conference series on the digital transformation of art museums with its fourth event on the topic. The COVID-19 pandemic, and our resultant inability to experience proximity to people and objects, has given the matter additional “virulence” in museums. Although the topic of digitization was gaining ground before the pandemic, the measures taken against the virus created a very special experimental arrangement in which the digital presence of museums was no longer merely a possible extension of exhibition spaces but rather the only way to reach the public. While the focus of our 2021 conference explored the premise of a crisis-induced return to the museum’s own collections, the 2022 edition centers on the convergence of analog and digital media. Is the binary rhetoric of analog/digital, conservative/progressive, either/or ... still appropriate in the post-digital age, or should we address questions of media specificity, hybridity, and mixed reality?

Media theorists like Peter Weibel were quick to bury the body-based “society of proximity” discursively in the face of the pandemic. In gigantic stadiums, concert halls, and museums, he could only recognize “the pharaonic tombs of the future.” That people would not simply relocate to a purely digital world was already foreshadowed by the first easing of restrictions in the summer of 2020, when an almost excessive return to the analog took place. Original artworks were more in demand than ever, and there was a hunger for encounters with other people and objects in the museum. There are, it seems, anthropological constants, despite the expanded purview of technological possibilities. But what does this mean for the art museum in the digital age and the position of the digital in the cultural sector? What do successful forms of mediation look like in view of the dialectic of virtuality and physical presence? And what new challenges must be overcome in the process?

During five evenings, the online conference will feature a range of interdisciplinary contributions, which above all – but not exclusively – critically reflect on the following topics:

- The structural transformation of the public sphere in the digital age
- The logic of selection and interpretation in the modern media ecosystem
- “Platformization” and the erosion of the traditional rituals for engaging with art
- Artificial intelligence and new forms of curating
- Human-computer interaction in the museum
- Forms of participation in real/ digital spaces
- The relationship between original-digital-virtual
- Hybrid publishing and new forms of knowledge representation

We look forward to receiving your proposals for topics in the fields of museum/museology, art and cultural history, media studies and digital humanities. Please send your abstracts for a 20- to 25-minute presentation in German or English (max. 250 words), including a short biography with complete contact information as **one PDF document** by 17 October 2021 to a.kroupova@belvedere.at.

We are delighted that Max Hollein (Director, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) will be our keynote speaker.

Conference Committee: Christian Huemer, Ralph Knickmeier, Anna-Marie Kroupová (Belvedere, Vienna), Liz Neely (Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe), John Tain (Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong), Chiara Zuanni (University of Graz).

Conference Languages: English & German

Conference Partners:



Hashtag: #digitalmuseum

All presentations will be online. Participation in the conference is free of charge!