

ONLINE-KONFERENZ
DAS KUNSTMUSEUM IM
DIGITALEN ZEITALTER
2025

ONLINE CONFERENCE
THE ART MUSEUM IN
THE DIGITAL AGE
2025

20.–24.1.2025

ABSTRACTS

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ANMELDUNG UNTER
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KONFERENZSPRACHEN DEUTSCH UND ENGLISCH
#DIGITALMUSEUM #BELVEDEREMUSEUM

TEILNAHME KOSTENLOS

MO | MON, 20.1.2025

PANEL 1: KÜNSTLICHE INTELLIGENZ & ETHISCHE ASPEKTE |
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE & ETHICAL ASPECTS

Moderation: Sonja Thiel (University of California, Berkeley)

17:20

Situated and Ethical Approaches to AI: An Oral History Museum, an Ancient Rock Art Site, and their Communities in Australia

Lilian Cameron (University of Sydney)

This paper explores two case studies of the application of artificial intelligence in the Australian museum and heritage sector: one at the Sydney Jewish Museum, a museum where "history has a voice," and the other in the Quinkan Country rock art sites of Northern Queensland, which have been cared for by the Ang-Gnarra people for thousands of years. These vastly differing localities and applications of AI share commonalities in practice that are worthy of note: the bespoke, tailored creation of AI prototypes and algorithms in service to and in consultation with specific communities. Much has been written of the profound risks of AI in the cultural sector and of their capacities to cause social, cultural, and environmental harms. These risks, and harms, are most pronounced for communities who have been subject to persecution and injustice across time and whose cultural heritage has been misused and mis-appropriated into the present. This paper acknowledges these risks, before advocating through these case studies for the development of AI prototypes and protocols in close consultation with the community to whom a collection or place belongs. The paper then concludes with broader reflections and recommendations on an application of AI that is both situated and ethical across the cultural sector, developed in response to a specific museum or place, in collaboration with community, and for purposes that cannot be achieved with the human resources at hand.

Lilian Cameron is a lecturer in museum and heritage studies at the University of Sydney. Her research often focuses on contemporary developments in curating and the ways in which curators initiate new relationships between artists, audiences, and collections in art museums. She currently teaches the masters-level intensive unit Museums and the Digital at the University of Sydney, alongside courses in contemporary developments in curating and collections management. Her first book, *Curating Art Now* (Lund Humphries, London), was published in 2022.

MO | MON, 20.1.2025

17:45

A Dalí for the Digital Age: Interrogating the Bringing of History (Back) to Life with Deep Fake Technology

Kris Belden-Adams (University of Mississippi)

To celebrate what would have been Salvador Dalí's 115th birthday, the Salvador Dalí Museum in St. Petersburg, Florida greeted visitors with a digital Dalí, brought back to life on screens throughout the museum using artificial intelligence and deep learning. His voice, provided by an actor, and his visual likeness, rebuilt from photographs, present quirky thoughts about everything from his digital afterlife to his interpretation of artworks. *Dalí Lives* is an example of what the American Alliance of Museums declared in 2018 to be integral to the future of museums: the use of technology-driven immersive storytelling to make history accessible to museum audiences. AI and VR have also recently been employed at the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia, the Vatican's Archives, the Art Institute of Chicago, Laycock Abbey (England), the National Science and Media Museum (England), and Somerset House in London. While this technology has been popularly hailed for its ability to connect with audiences, it also raises questions about the creative liberties we may take with history and our obligations to artifactual truth in the age of AI- and VR-generated deepfakes. This paper contextualizes and explores those debates and speculative histories, which challenge the institution's presumed fidelity to historical accuracy. The emergence of AI-driven images in historical arenas simply calls us to be mindful of ethical obligations and to aggressively articulate the complex truth value of "data portraits"—especially ones that may be produced independently by computers.

Kris Belden-Adams is an associate professor of art history at the University of Mississippi, having previously been the Dorothy Kayser Hohenberg Research Chair of Excellence in Art History at the University of Memphis (2023–24). She is the author of *Photography, Temporality, Modernity: Time Warped* (2019), and *Eugenics, "Aristogenics", Photography: Picturing Privilege* (2020). In addition, she is an editor and contributor to the volumes *Photography and Failure: One Medium's Entanglement with Flops, Underdogs and Disappointments* (2017), and *Diverse Histories in Photographic Albums: "These Are Our Stories"* (2022). With Dr. Karen Barber, Belden-Adams co-edits the history of photography content for Smarthistory/Khan Academy.

MO | MON, 20.1.2025

18:10

AI and Generative Art in Museums: Ethical Challenges for Authenticity and Representation

Julia Gerda (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt | Goethe University Frankfurt)

The integration of artificial intelligence into art is transforming museum spaces, challenging established ideas of representation, curation, and authorship. Generative art, created through algorithms, shifts focus from tangible objects to conceptual expressions, demanding innovative curatorial approaches to convey these works' essence. This dematerialization raises ethical questions around authenticity and ownership, as AI-driven art produces evolving forms that blur traditional boundaries of creation. In contrast to traditional art, which relies on a fixed, original artifact, AI-generated art integrates human and machine creativity, complicating authorship and authenticity. This paper explores how curators can navigate these blurred boundaries, representing AI art while honoring both artists' and algorithms' roles. Additionally, it considers how museums can ensure transparency in AI art curation, addressing issues like machine bias and algorithmic opacity to foster an inclusive understanding of AI in contemporary art. Finally, this presentation discusses the philosophical and aesthetic alignment of generative art with minimalist and modernist principles, emphasizing a pure, experiential form that moves beyond conventional narrative or emotional constraints, allowing audiences to engage deeply with the core of the creative process.

Julia Gerda is a PhD student at Goethe University Frankfurt, specializing in the challenges digital technologies like AI and VR introduce to museum spaces. With an MA in applied and interdisciplinary history, Julia also studied cultural studies in Tübingen and Konstanz. Her research explores the impact of emerging technologies on museum curation, representation, and visitor engagement.

MO | MON, 20.1.2025

19:00

KEYNOTE LECTURE

Moderation: Christian Huemer (Belvedere, Wien | Vienna)

Die Perspektive des digitalen Humanismus auf Kunst und Kultur

Julian Nida-Rümelin (Professor emeritus für Philosophie und politische Theorie, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München | Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich)

Julian Nida-Rümelin ist emeritierter Lehrstuhlinhaber für Philosophie und politische Theorie an der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, war Kulturstatsminister im ersten Kabinett Schröder 2000–2002, ist Mitglied der Europäischen Akademie der Wissenschaften

und Künste und hatte zahlreiche Gastprofessuren in den USA und Italien inne. Seit 2018 ist er Direktor am Bayerischen Forschungsinstitut für digitale Transformation (bidt), seit Oktober 2022 Gründungsrektor der Humanistischen Hochschule Berlin. Zu seinen letzten Publikationen zählen: *Eine Theorie praktischer Vernunft* (DeGruyter 2020), *Cancel Culture – Ende der Aufklärung? Ein Plädoyer für eigenständiges Denken* (Piper 2023) und zuletzt *Ähren im Wind. Politische Orientierung in fordernder Zeit* (Piper 2024). Das Buch *Digitaler Humanismus* (Piper 2018) erschien in englischen, koreanischen und italienischen Übersetzungen. Nida-Rümelin ist Träger der Europamedaille der bayerischen Staatsregierung und des bayerischen Verdienstordens.

DI | TUE, 21.1.2025

PANEL 2: PLATTFORMEN & DATENRÄUME | PLATFORMS & DATA SPACES

Moderation: Jacqueline Klusik-Eckert (Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf | Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf)

17:00

Souverän, fair, sicher. Der Datenraum Kultur und das Prinzip digitaler Humanismus

Clara Blomeyer, Katharina Hoins (Hamburger Kunsthalle), Felix Biermann (acatech – Deutsche Akademie der Technikwissenschaften | acatech – National Academy of Science and Engineering)

In einer technologisierten Welt, in der Fake und Reallife kaum zu unterscheiden sind, genießen Museen höchstes Vertrauen, noch vor Wissenschaft und Medien. Sie regen medienkritisch zu Diskussionen an, indem sie von ihren Sammlungen ausgehend Wissen generieren – die materiellen Quellen sind dabei für ihre Verlässlichkeit ebenso zentral wie die Qualität digitaler Daten. Infrastrukturen, die sicheren Umgang mit Daten gewährleisten, werden deshalb immer wichtiger. Im Jänner 2025 werden wir auf über zwei Jahre Projektlaufzeit zurückblicken, in denen die Hamburger Kunsthalle im Use Case 2: „Smarte Museumsdienste“ einen Anwendungsfall für den Datenraum Kultur in Deutschland erprobt hat. Die nationale Dateninfrastruktur soll Zugänglichkeit und Wiedernutzung von Daten für Kulturinstitutionen vereinfachen, die FAIR-Prinzipien einhalten und so die Souveränität aller Beteiligten gewährleisten. Für Kunstmuseen heißt das etwa, eigene Daten zur nachhaltigen Weiternutzung zu eigenen Lizenzbedingungen zur Verfügung zu stellen, Bildlizenzen fair, einfach und gebündelt abzuwickeln oder aus dem digitalen Fundus Neues zu erstellen – wie etwa das Webportal cdfriedrich.de, das genau diese Anwendung im Friedrich-Jahr 2024 demonstriert hat. Für den Datenraum Kultur ist digitaler Humanismus zentral: Sein erklärtes Ziel ist, Technologiegroßkonzernen öffentlich getragene Lösungen entgegenzusetzen, die dem Wohle der Allgemeinheit dienen und ressourcenschonende Kulturarbeit nachhaltig erleichtern sollen. Im Rahmen der Tagung wollen wir uns fragen, wie wir den Zielen des Datenraum Kultur nähergekommen sind – und welche Potenziale für einen digitalen Humanismus eine solche Infrastruktur perspektivisch bieten kann.

Clara Blomeyer arbeitet als Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin für den Datenraum Kultur an der Hamburger Kunsthalle und ist verantwortlich für das Webportal cdfriedrich.de. Sie studierte Kunstgeschichte und Kulturanthropologie in Göttingen, Düsseldorf und Rom. Erfahrungen in Kuratieren, Vermitteln und Digitalität sammelte sie u. a. am Badischen Landesmuseum in Karlsruhe, am Kunstpalast Düsseldorf und am Museum der Bildenden Künste Leipzig.

Katharina Hoins ist Referentin des Direktors und Projektleitung des Use Case „Smarte Museumsdienste: Caspar David Friedrich“ – Datenraum Kultur an der Hamburger Kunsthalle. Sie studierte Kunstgeschichte und arbeitete zuvor am Warburg-Haus in Hamburg, am Bucerius Kunst Forum und an den Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen Dresden.

Felix Biermann ist Senior Manager bei acatech – Deutsche Akademie der Technikwissenschaften und als Politikberater für Innovationspolitik und strategische Projekte im Digitalisierungsbereich zuständig. Nach dem Studium in Philosophie, Volkswirtschaftslehre und Public Policy war er in verschiedenen Beratungsunternehmen für den öffentlichen Sektor tätig. Anschließend forschte und lehrte Biermann am Geschwister-Scholl-Institut der LMU München und wurde mit einer Arbeit zu institutionellem Wandel in der europäischen Politik promoviert.

DI | TUE, 21.1.2025

17:25

Geneva Cultural Heritage Research Platform

Cristóbal F. Barria Bignotti (Université de Neuchâtel & Musée d'art et d'histoire de Genève), Nicola Carboni (Université de Genève | University of Geneva), Marie Barras (Musée d'art et d'histoire de Genève)

This contribution introduces and discusses the challenges and results of the Geneva Cultural Heritage Research Platform (GCHRP), a knowledge and linked-data hub created by the Musée d'art et d'histoire de Genève (MAH) to explore, study, and analyze the museum and its collection. Unlike the current digital catalog, which aims to democratize access, the objective of the GCHRP is to both datify the museum's data, giving researchers and developers the chance to extensively analyze its collection, and to make such data available in the linked open-data cloud and in a FAIR-compliant format, transforming the MAH into a cultural hub for referencing and interlinking Swiss francophone artists. The contribution will explore the development of the GCHRP, focusing on technical and human challenges, discussing the parameters used in the data selection, the curation workflow, the relationship between local and global curation standards, the limits of the internal museum infrastructure, the problems linked with historical name entity recognition, and semantic conceptualizations. Finally, we will present the platform, showcasing how it is used to connect and explore 78,573 artworks and objects, 12,794 historical figures,

1,383 exhibitions, 1,429 events, 1,865 archival materials, and 1,481 journal articles along with the places, people, and artworks cited in each of those articles.

Cristóbal F. Barria Bignotti is a lecturer in art history at the University of Chile and data curator at the Musée d'art et d'histoire de Genève (MAH). His academic trajectory includes visiting lecturer roles at the University of Konstanz in Germany and Andrés Bello University in Chile, as well as a postdoctoral fellowship at Concordia University's Centre for Sensory Studies in Montreal. Barria has also conducted research residencies at the German Center for Art History in Paris and the Center for Cultural Research at the University of Konstanz. His scholarly and curatorial work is centered on Latin American art, sensory studies, and the transnational circulation of art.

Nicola Carboni is a lecturer at the University of Geneva, where he teaches Digital Images, Data Curation, and Knowledge Graphs. He has been a fellow at the Swiss Art Research Infrastructure, University of Zurich, and Digital Humanities Fellow at the Harvard Center for Italian Renaissance Studies. He completed his PhD on the topic of visual heritage and knowledge graphs at National Technical University of Athens (NTUA) and National Research Center of France (CNRS), where he was also previously appointed Marie Curie Fellow. He works on the intersection between knowledge graphs, big visual data, and cultural interpretation.

Marie Barras is a digital projects and data manager at the Documentation and Research Center in the Musée d'art et d'histoire de Genève (MAH). After earning a master's degree in art history and the history of religions at the University of Lausanne, she continued her studies at the University of Geneva (UNIGE) with a master of advanced studies in heritage conservation and museology, as well as a certificate of specialization in digital humanities. Alongside her work at the MAH, she is a PhD candidate within the SNSF research project Visual Contagions, where she works on the global circulation of fashion images around 1900.

DI | TUE, 21.1.2025

17:50

From Platform Governance to Institutional Practice: How Museums (Actually) Use Google Arts & Culture

Leo Cao (Center for Advanced Internet Studies [CAIS], Bochum)

This study analyzes how museums use Google Arts & Culture, highlighting the (mis)alignment between the platform's affordances and the digital strategies of participating museums. As cultural institutions partner with Google and adopt its tools and resources, they also adapt their internal practices. A total of 21 in-depth interviews were conducted with 27 individuals from 24 cultural institutions, including a program manager from Google. This was supplemented by analyzing the platform's content guidelines and contractual agreements. Findings reveal that museums initially hoped for an aggregate portal—supported by

private-sector technological expertise—that would enhance their digital capacity and establish a stronger online presence. In reality, however, the alignment was more ad hoc than strategic, driven either by changing institutional priorities within museums or by expediency in response to extenuating circumstances such as the global pandemic. Consequently, this alignment tended to be contingent and experimental, hindered by limited resources on both sides, inadequate communication from Google, high staff turnover that fragmented institutional memory regarding digital initiatives, and competing internal priorities especially after the pandemic. Sustained use of the platform depended primarily on a constructive internal environment, where digital teams could effectively communicate and collaborate with curatorial staff to align platform use with their institutional mission. This study contributes to the conference by providing a situated understanding of platform governance in the cultural sector, highlighting the organizational factors—from digital strategy to power hierarchy—that shape the adoption of (or resistance to) digital technologies in the museum community.

Leo Cao is a research fellow at the Center for Advanced Internet Studies (CAIS). His research examines the impact of digitization and platformization in the cultural sector. His doctoral dissertation at the University of Texas at Austin explored the historical evolution, curatorial interventions, and governance mechanisms of Google Arts & Culture, investigating how cultural institutions have embraced, negotiated, or resisted the platform in practice. His current project focuses on the German cultural sector, expanding the research scope to include the EU-led platform Europeana and the grassroots initiative museum-digital.

DI | TUE, 21.1.2025

18:15

Mit HAI durch Sammlungsgeschichten tauchen – der Heidelberg Accession Index für Objektgeschichte und Provenienzforschung

Maria Effinger (Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg | Heidelberg University Library),
Valentina Salcedo Paparoni (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz | Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation)

Ausgangspunkt für das noch im Aufbau befindliche Angebot der Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg – das einen möglichst breiten Nachweis digital verfügbarer Zugangsbücher und Bestandsverzeichnisse deutscher Sammlungen und Museen anstrebt – bilden die rund 1.100 Erwerbungsbücher der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin (SMB) aus den Jahren 1650 bis 2010, die 2021/2022 im Rahmen eines Projekts systematisch retrodigitalisiert und in einer ersten Projektphase als unkommentierte PDF-Dateien online bereitgestellt wurden. Sie dokumentieren den Sammlungsbestand und reflektieren die wechselvolle Geschichte der Erwerbungs- und Zugangspolitik der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin. Seit dem 17. Jahrhundert werden sie handschriftlich geführt und enthalten in unterschiedlicher Informationstiefe Angaben zu Erwerbsbedingungen, Verlusten, Verlagerungen sowie zu Ankäufen und

Schenkungen von Sammlungsobjekten. Diese Bände sind damit nicht nur eine wertvolle Primärquelle für die Provenienzforschung und die Objektdokumentation, sondern auch ein unverzichtbares Arbeitsinstrument für den Museumsalltag. Über Generationen hinweg haben Museumsdirektor*innen, Wissenschaftler*innen und Kurator*innen Notizen, Korrekturen und Ergänzungen zu den Objekteinträgen hinzugefügt. Die wechselhafte Geschichte der Berliner Sammlungen spiegelt sich ebenfalls in diesen Bänden wider, was bei der Zurverfügungstellung und Nutzbarmachung dieser Informationen eingebettet in die komplexen Inventarstrukturen für die Forschung eine große Herausforderung darstellt. Bei dem über HAI präsentierten Material handelt es nicht nur um gedruckte Texte, sondern überwiegend um handschriftliche Quellen. Eine übergreifende Volltextsuche in den Inventar- und Erwerbungsbüchern ist deshalb aktuell noch nicht möglich. Selbstverständlich steht aber die mittels KI-Methoden realisierte Volltextsuche auf der Agenda. Dies gilt auch für die Integration schon vorliegender Transkriptionen in die übergreifende Suche oder die Umsetzung von weiteren Erschließungs- bzw. Annotationsprojekten. Die institutionsübergreifende Bereitstellung der (digital angereicherten) Objekt- und Transaktionsinformationen in maschinenlesbarer Form im Sinne der FAIR-Prinzipien soll einen innovativen Beitrag zur digitalen Zugänglichkeit dieses für die Objekt- und Sammlungsgeschichte sowie die Provenienzforschung hochbedeutenden unikalen Quellenmaterials leisten.

Maria Effinger, Studium Klassische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte. Leiterin der Abteilung Publikationsdienste der UB Heidelberg, Geschäftsführerin von Heidelberg University Publishing (heiUP), Fachreferentin für Kunstgeschichte und Projektleiterin von arthistoricum.net sowie Co-Sprecherin bei NFDI4Culture. Arbeitsschwerpunkte sind u. a. das elektronische Publizieren im Open Access sowie das Projektmanagement für vielfältige Projekte im Bereich des kulturellen Erbes und der Digital Humanities.

Valentina Salcedo Paparoni, Studium Kunstgeschichte in Venezuela und Heritage Studies an der Europa-Universität Viadrina. Seit 2023 verantwortlich für das Forschungsdatenmanagement sowie für Beratung, Planung, Koordination und Umsetzung der Digitalisierung von Kulturgütern bei den Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin. Der besondere Schwerpunkt liegt auf der digitalen Sammlungsdokumentation und der Anwendung von Methoden aus den Digital Humanities in Forschungs- und Digitalisierungsprojekten.

MI | WED, 22.1.2025

PANEL 3: MUSEALE PRAXIS & VISITOR RESEARCH | MUSEUM PRACTICE & VISITOR RESEARCH

Moderation: Hanna Brinkmann (Universität für Weiterbildung Krems | University for Continuing Education Krems)

17:00

Was machen die Leute wirklich in digitalen Ausstellungen?

Martin Siefkes, Julia A. J. Pfeiffer (Technische Universität Chemnitz | Chemnitz University of Technology)

Digitale Ausstellungen sind dezidiert für das Internet kuratierte Angebote von Museen, die individuell programmierte Lösungen oder vorgegebene Plattformen und Systeme (etwa DDB Studio) verwenden. Sie haben sich längst aus dem Schatten anderer digitaler Angebote befreit und können als eigenes multimodales Genre analysiert werden. Ihre museologischen Aspekte werden erforscht (z. B. Fackler & Carius 2021), relativ wenig ist jedoch darüber bekannt, wie Besucher:innen sich tatsächlich durch digitale Ausstellungen bewegen, welche „Betrachtungspfade“ sie wählen, wie viel Aufmerksamkeit sie den Objekten und Texten abhängig von deren Präsentation widmen, ob sie mit interaktiven Exponaten tatsächlich interagieren und wann das Angebot sie überfordert. Im Vortrag wird argumentiert, dass diese konkreten Fragen der Besucher*innenforschung relevant dafür sind, wie sich die Digitalisierung auf unseren Umgang mit dem kulturellen Erbe auswirkt. Wird der erleichterte Zugang durch Verflachung der Erfahrung und Beliebigkeit des tatsächlich Betrachteten und Gelernten erkaufte oder lässt sich dem durch Kuratieren und durchdachtes Ausstellungsdesign entgegenwirken? Wie kann eine digitale Ausstellung die Bedürfnisse sowohl von spontan Besuchenden als auch von Expert*innen erfüllen? Wie kann sie dem Ideal des Open Access entsprechen, ohne durch Materialfülle zu überfordern? Das Projekt „Digitale Ausstellungen: Von der Typologie zur Rezeptionsforschung“ an der TU Chemnitz versucht, solche Fragen mithilfe eines Mixed-Methods-Ansatzes zu beantworten, der korpusbasierte Untersuchungen und Rezeptionsstudien mittels Eyetracking miteinander verbindet. Auf diese Weise nähert sich das Projekt experimentell der Frage an, was die Digitalisierung wirklich mit unserer Erfahrung von kulturellem Erbe macht.

Martin Siefkes ist Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter an der Professur für Germanistische Linguistik der TU Chemnitz. Nach seiner Promotion in Linguistik an der TU Berlin im Jahr 2010 arbeitete er als Postdoc an der Universität IUAV in Venedig und an der Universität Bremen. Im Jahr 2021 schloss er seine Habilitation ab und erhielt die *Venia legendi* in Sprachwissenschaft und Digital Humanities. Er wurde mit Stipendien der Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes und der Humboldt-Stiftung ausgezeichnet. Siefkes wirkte an der Gestaltung der Ausstellung „*Gesten – gestern, heute, übermorgen*“ mit, die ab 2018 in Museen in Chemnitz, Berlin, Frankfurt/Main und Koblenz gezeigt wurde und mehr als

200.000 Besucher*innen anzog. Er ist Projektleiter des vom SMWK geförderten Projekts „Digitale Ausstellungen: Von der Typologie zur Rezeptionsforschung“ (2022–2025).

Julia Pfeiffer ist Kulturanthropologin. Sie studierte Europastudien an der TU Chemnitz sowie Volkskunde und Kulturgeschichte an der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena. Pfeiffer war in verschiedenen Forschungsprojekten, in der universitären Lehre und Forschung sowie im musealen Bereich und in der kreativen Vermittlungsarbeit tätig. Seit Dezember 2022 ist sie Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin am Projekt „Digitale Ausstellungen: Von der Typologie zur Rezeptionsforschung“ (2022–2025). In ihrer Dissertation erforscht sie Interaktivität und Hybridität in Museen. Ihre Forschungsinteressen liegen in den Bereichen Museumswissenschaft, Kulturanthropologie und Spielforschung mit besonderem Fokus auf der Schnittstelle von Museen, Kulturgeschichte und Digitalisierung.

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17:25

To What Extent Does Digitization Impact the Authenticity of Digital Objects in the Ithra Museum?

Rabab Almalki (University of Birmingham)

This research comprehensively examines the relationship between authenticity and the existence of technology in the Ithra museum in Saudi Arabia. Some researchers believe that the digitization of objects erodes their authenticity and the value of cultural heritage, thus undermining the capability of museums to conserve cultural heritage and affirm national identity. The research assessed the concept of authenticity from a quantitative perspective, intending to analyze audiences' perception of authenticity at Ithra by employing a closed-ended questionnaire between March and June 2023. The research analyses the constructive and material elements of approaches to authenticity in order to shed light on the ways that digital objects may retain a quality of authenticity comparable to that of their physical counterparts. Moreover, it draws on authenticity theories—including objective authenticity, staged authenticity, emergent authenticity, perceived authenticity, and existential authenticity—to understand visitors' perspectives. Thus, it can offer knowledge and understanding of the authenticity of digital items housed in the Ithra museum. As one of the world's foremost institutions for Islamic and Arabic culture, which uses its digital collection for displaying and preserving cultural heritage, Ithra is a prime location from which to consider authenticity and its impact on digital objects.

Rabab Almalki is a PhD student studying art history at the University of Birmingham, UK. She is a lecturer at Taif University in Saudi Arabia and holds a master's degree from Birmingham City University.

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17:50

Reconstructing (Contested) Cultural Heritage in the Post-Digital. Ethics in Curatorial Practice and Visitor Research

Annette Löseke (Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Braunschweig | Braunschweig University of Art)

"The size of the image [...], the new sharpness of detail, and the latest lighting and sound technology" make the digitally enabled *Pergamon Panorama* exhibition in Berlin "a spectacular, even bombastic visual experience," as the exhibition brochure claims. The exhibition was conceptualized by Berlin's Pergamon Museum, which houses the contested reconstructions of ancient monuments, for the period of its temporary closure for refurbishment. It presents a selection of 80 pieces from the museum's collection of antiquities together with Yadegar Asisi's digitally enabled 360 degree panorama of the ancient acropolis of Pergamon, near modern-day Bergama in Turkey. By exploring the interplay between ancient fragments and the digitally reproduced ancient monuments, I examine how digital tools are integrated into the museum's research and exhibition practice. Drawing on recent literature about the virtual space as politically constructed, I explore various ethical implications of digitally reconstructing a contested cultural heritage. How does the digitally enabled exhibition, like the *Pergamon Panorama*, frame the museum as a scholarly (as opposed to imperialist) institution, reinforcing rather than challenging the museum's historical narrative about preserving a pre-given (as opposed to produced) cultural heritage? Besides exploring the technical affordances of digital technologies, how can we understand the post-digital as a culturally shaped field embedded in social practice and historically situated in epistemic frameworks of colonial or imperialist knowledge production and conceptual appropriation? And what may be the ethical implications for today's curatorial practice and visitor research?

Annette Löseke is a professor of art history and new museum studies at Braunschweig University of Art in Germany. Educated in art history and arts management in Freiburg, Munich, Paris, and London, she received her PhD in art history from the University of Bonn. Her research is at the intersection of museum studies, sustainable cultural marketing, climate-centric museum politics, and transformative curatorial practice in super-diverse, hyper-connected societies. Prior to joining Braunschweig in 2024, she was program director for cultural and creative industries management at Sheffield University Management School. She also taught at NYU Berlin and in the Master-of-Museology Programme of the Reinwardt Academy at Amsterdam University of the Arts.

MI | WED, 22.1.2025

18:15

Sonic (Hi)Stories – Artistic Mediation of Cultural Heritage Through Audio-Augmented Reality

Florian Wiencek (Musealisten, Wien | Vienna)

How can a historic space be activated and enriched as a hub for stories and information? How can one approach a physical location with its historical layers, lived (hi)stories, and their rich testimonies of witnessed events in time with digital, artistic forms of mediation? And how to make them accessible and tangible, to re-think, re-interpret, and re-imagine a building through immersive extended reality (XR) experiences? In collaboration with the project Palácio das Belas Artes Lisboa (PdBA), dedicated to exploring a physical site as a multidirectional place of remembrance (Carreira & Garcinig, 2023), Wiencek experiments with the creative possibilities of site-specific augmented reality sound installations that interweave, sonically translate, and reinterpret potential pasts into a physically explorable sound field. The project explores the core of an empty building as a living organism. How does the building resonate its past, its possible futures and current events, the life that takes place outside its walls and in the city? The soundscapes that emerge from the "living void" enable the visitors to immerse themselves in invisible worlds, stories, other times, and spaces. This artistic and mediation practice is based on Eyal Weizmann's ideas of "forensic aesthetics" and "forensic architectures". The basic idea is that buildings, but also objects, function as witnesses to the lived histor(ies) inscribed in them. These, however, require translation in order to become accessible and tangible again, and thus remain part of the active cultural memory. Showcasing the concept and current work in progress of the Sonic Histories project, the lecture will discuss and reflect on both a creative and artistic approach to XR mediation concepts that transforms public space into a museum experience space, as well as the transfer and translation of site-specific stories into a (museum) exhibition—for example in the form of physically explorable soundscapes in the museum space.

Florian Wiencek is an expert at the interface of digital media and cultural education. He is the founder and CEO of Musealisten – Studio for Digital Mediation and provides consultations for museums and cultural institutions regarding digital mediation and learning—from concept to implementation. Moreover, Wiencek develops sound experiences for museums and public spaces as part of the Initiative for Sound Scenography (in collaboration with Extraplan). Since 2014, Florian has taught at the University of Continuing Education Kems and regularly publishes articles on the digital mediation of art. He is particularly interested in the question of how digital media, cultural data, and their characteristics are used in the mediation of art and culture and cultural learning and how they enable museums to master the challenges of the twenty-first century. As a composer, singer, multi-instrumentalist, and certified audio assistant, he has been working increasingly with new music and electro-acoustic music since 2015. His current focus is the creation of multi-layered sound spaces that can be experienced

in live performances and installations while also being used as a tool for the mediation of culture.

DO | THU, 23.1.2025

PANEL 4: DIGITALE STRATEGIEN & TRANSFORMATIONEN | DIGITAL STRATEGIES & TRANSFORMATIONS

Moderation: Rebecca Kahn (Universität Wien | University of Vienna)

17:00

Digital Transformation at Cuba's National Museum of Fine Arts

Marta María de la Fuente Marín (Instituto Cubano de Investigación Cultural Juan Marinello, Universidad de la Habana | Juan Marinello Institute for Cultural Research, University of Havana)

This presentation examines the digital transformation process of Cuba's National Museum of Fine Arts (MNBA), analyzing its technological evolution and adaptation to contemporary museum practices. Through a comprehensive study of the museum's digital journey, this research explores how the institution has embraced technological tools and digital solutions to enhance its cultural mission and public engagement. The analysis focuses on key aspects of the museum's digital development, including the implementation of collection management systems, digital cataloging initiatives, and the creation of virtual experiences. Special attention is given to strategic partnerships with technological institutions and cultural organizations that have supported the museum's digital advancement despite infrastructural challenges unique to the Cuban context. The presentation highlights significant projects that mark different stages of the museum's digital evolution, from early digitization efforts to recent virtual exhibition platforms and social media engagement strategies. Through case studies and practical examples, this research demonstrates how the MNBA has adapted to changing technological landscapes while maintaining its cultural heritage preservation mission. The findings reveal both achievements and challenges in the museum's digital transformation process, offering valuable insights for other cultural institutions undertaking similar journeys in developing contexts.

Marta María de la Fuente Marín, a graduate and master in art history, focuses her studies on the links between art and technology. As a professor at the University of Havana (Faculty of Arts and Letters) and researcher at the Juan Marinello Institute for Cultural Research, she has published work in *Con A de animación* (Spain), *Crisopeya* (Colombia), and *Perfiles de la Cultura Cubana* (Cuba), had research fellowships in Germany and Argentina, and spoken at conferences in Cuba, Costa Rica, and Germany. She has been awarded the Scientific Merit Award and Research Award by the University of Havana.

DO | THU, 23. 1. 2025**17:25****Transcontinental Techno-Accessibility: Collaborative Digitization of Colonial Heritage Collections**

Agustina Andreoletti (Universität zu Köln | University of Cologne)

Recent debates in civil society, the media, and academia have highlighted the colonial roots and legacies of museums, prompting intense discussions. Research on the colonial histories of collections shows that entanglement with imperial politics deeply shaped the rapid growth of collecting as well as logistical infrastructure and scientific practices in the field. Much work is yet to be done to understand how coloniality informs museums and archives, practices of collecting, knowledge-making, and collection digitization. Amidst these discussions, policy makers and cultural workers worldwide have come to regard the digitization of collections as an important means for addressing global inequalities by advancing fast and fair access to collection items. However, the digitization of collections, as with any other technological innovation, integrates assumptions and preferences—about people, capacities, and values—that, if left unchecked, reproduce or reinforce biases. While partnerships between researchers and practitioners in the Global North and Global South can be, and often are, intellectually and socially impactful in this context, they remain highly unfair. Coloniality pervades these partnerships, influencing who leads digitization projects and whose interests are represented. I argue that collaborative digitization efforts, more than offering programmatic solutions, provide an opportunity to consider the unequal distribution of power, historical responsibilities, and epistemic injustices. This paper aims to examine how transcontinental partnerships that aim to digitize colonial heritage collections function as spaces for negotiation and dialogue on issues such as power dynamics, sustainability, accessibility, traceability, authorship, policy making, governance, sensitive material, trauma, digital and hybrid relationships, and aesthetics.

Agustina Andreoletti is a cultural worker and curator from Buenos Aires, Argentina. Her projects engage with concepts of technocolonialism, self-organization, infrastructures of power and its distribution, and self-empowerment. From 2020 to 2023, she worked at the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, where she curated the public and digital mediation programs. In 2024, she held the Assistant Professorship for Networks at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne. She is a PhD candidate at the University of Cologne, where she is completing her dissertation on the digitization of colonial heritage collections and transcontinental cooperations.

DO | THU, 23.1.2025**17:50****Pursuing Relevance in a Digital Age: Museums in the Spectacle of Crisis**

Liana Safaryan (University for Continuing Education Krems, Aalborg University, University of Łódź)

In an era defined by polycrisis and the hyper-reactivity of digital platforms, museums face the challenge of maintaining cultural relevance amid the accessibility and instant gratification of smartphone society. This image-addled mediascape has reshaped the museum's role, positioning it in direct competition with high-stimulation content that demands constant engagement and novelty. The "crisis of attention" has reshaped audience expectations and compelled museums to adapt their digital strategies to remain visible in an "always-on" media environment. Drawing on critical theory, this analysis suggests that museums increasingly embrace interactive models to capture audience interest, blurring the lines between cultural institutions and the entertainment sector. This shift explains the recent popularity of immersive light installations. It also risks aligning museums too closely with the instant gratification that dominates social media, potentially compromising their traditional role as spaces for thoughtful reflection. Unlike digital platforms, however, museums are confined by fixed structures and institutional legacies, which limit their ability to respond quickly to cultural and social issues. In an attempt to retain relevance, museums find themselves torn between engaging audiences already fatigued by unending crises and avoiding reliance on short-lived spectacles that may compromise their cultural authority. This research explores how museums can foster sustainable engagement without becoming yet another transient source of content in a crisis-saturated, dopamine-driven culture. Ultimately, it suggests that pursuing relevance within this fragmented mediascape may inadvertently undermine the museum's role as a repository of cultural memory and knowledge.

Liana Safaryan is a researcher specializing in art history and cultural critique. She holds a joint bachelor's degree in art history from Bard College and Saint Petersburg State University (2021) and an Erasmus Mundus joint master's degree in media arts cultures from Donau-Universität Krems, Aalborg University, and the University of Łódź (2024). A recipient of the academic Erasmus Mundus Excellence award (2022), her current research interests include the post-1968 dissensual ethos in the art world, focusing on the complex, often agonistic relationship between critical artists and art institutions, as well as cultural heritage preservation within the realm of digital humanities. Liana has also gained valuable experience working at renowned cultural institutions across Europe, West Asia, and the USA.

DO | THU, 23.1.2025

18:15

Dopamine Dilemma: Museums and Digital Cultural Heritage in an Era of More Media and Endless Distractions

Florian Windhager, Eva Mayr (Universität für Weiterbildung Krems | University for Continuing Education Krems)

In a world of shifting reception habits driven by online platforms' competing efforts in attention mining, what can museums effectively hope for when joining the digital communications game? This talk builds on the assumption that the efficient work of galleries, libraries, archives, and museums (GLAM institutions) frequently suffers from the lack of overview regarding both topical maps of the larger digital-cultural landscape, and nuanced depictions of strategic development options. In response, we develop two theses: I) It can help to map out the larger state of digital culture through critical and realist lenses before engaging all too idealistically in local work. A widely resonating sketch has been developed by Ted Gioia, who reflects on the fate of art—understood as slow traditional culture—in the age of corporate attention mining, algorithmic regimes, and interfaces optimized for distraction and addiction. II) Regarding the resulting dopamine dilemma, GLAM institutions have to position themselves within a strategic spectrum—ranging from the easiest technological solutions of interface design (with the risk of low user experience and digital attraction power) to appealing, high-cost designs (yet risking shallow information processing). We will reflect on three in-between scenarios and strategies for interface design, including the promotion of a) cognition-supporting, macro-contemplative views (Windhager, Mayr & Glinka, forthcoming), b) slow, reflective, or critical designs (Bentvelzen et al., 2022), but also "museo-therapeutic" positions (Waniek, 2020), either resisting transformation, or promoting post-digital on-site immersion.

References

Marit Bentvelzen, et al., "Revisiting reflection in HCI: Four design resources for technologies that support reflection," *Proceedings of the ACM on Interactive, Mobile, Wearable and Ubiquitous Technologies*, vol. 6, no. 1 (2022), pp. 1–27.

Ted Gioia, "The State of the Culture, 2024," *The Honest Broker*, blogpost, February 18, 2024, www.honest-broker.com/p/the-state-of-the-culture-2024.

Joanna Waniek, "Museum as a Therapeutic Space," in *Museotherapy: How Does It Work*, ed. Robert Kotowski (Kielce, 2020), pp. 31–41.

Florian Windhager, Eva Mayr, and Katrin Glinka, "From Exploration to Critique: Catalyzing Critical Inquiry with Cultural Collection Visualizations. *Computer Graphics & Visualization*" (forthcoming).

Florian Windhager is a senior researcher at the Department for Arts and Cultural Studies at the University for Continuing Education Krems, Austria. He received his PhD from the University of Vienna in digital humanities with a focus on the visualization of artwork and artist biography data. He coordinates research projects and teaches in the areas of digital humanities, cultural heritage, information design, and data visualization.

Eva Mayr is a senior researcher at the Department of Arts & Cultural Studies, University for Continuing Education Krems, Austria. Her main research interests include cognitive processes during interaction with information visualizations, in particular in "casual," informal learning settings. She received her PhD in applied cognitive and media psychology from the University of Tübingen, Germany.

FR | FRI, 24. 1. 2025

14:00

WORKSHOP (ROUNDTABLES)**ROUNDTABLE 1: CULTURAL HERITAGE DATA**

Andrew Ellis (Art UK, London)

Andrew Ellis has been Chief Executive of Art UK since 2003. He has responsibility for the strategic direction of the organization, the development of partnership relationships and plays a major role in fundraising for the charity. He played a key role transforming the organization from being a publisher of hardcopy catalogues of oil paintings in public ownership to being the digital platform of the UK's national art collection bringing together almost 3,500 institutions on one platform. With colleagues at the Collections Trust and the University of Leicester, he helped found and launch the Museum Data Service in 2024. He sits on the Arts & Humanities Research Council's Towards a National Collection Steering Panel. Previously he worked at investment bank Robert Fleming, which subsequently became part of JP Morgan Chase, in various equity research and management roles in London and Tokyo. In the distant past he read Economics at the University of Cambridge.

ROUNDTABLE 2: SENSORY EXPERIENCE

Ross Parry (University of Leicester), Hannah Thompson (Royal Holloway, University of London)

Ross Parry is principal fellow of the Higher Education Academy, and board member of Attenborough Arts Centre. He is a member of the UK Research and Innovation's steering committee of its over eighteen-million-pound digital cultural heritage initiative Towards a National Collection. With Art UK and the Collections Trust, he also coleads the new Museum Data Service, funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK. Parry's recent books include *The Routledge Handbook of Museums, Media and Communication* (2019), edited with Kirsten Drotner, Vince Dziekan, and Kim Christian Schröder, and *Museums and the History of Computing* (2025), edited with Simone Natale and Petrina Foti. Parry has been listed in the Education Foundation's EdTech50 as one of the fifty most influential people in the UK education and technology sectors.

Hannah Thompson is Professor of French and Critical Disability Studies at Royal Holloway, University of London, and describes herself as a "partially blind academic and activist." Her most recent research focuses on the benefits of blindness ("blindness gain") in literature, culture, and heritage and on audio description as a kind of creative, intermodal translation with a focus on museums, galleries, and performance venues. She worked with a range of theaters and audio describers during her Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)

2021–22 EDI Fellowship "Inclusive Description for Equality and Access." In April 2023 she became Principal Investigator on the £1M AHRC-funded project The Sensational Museum which aims to "use what we know about disability to change how museums work for everyone." Hannah writes about her place as a partially blind academic in a resolutely sighted world in her blog Blind Spot (hannah-thompson.blogspot.com/).
sensationalmuseum.org/

ROUNDTABLE 3: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Sergiu Gordea (AIT Austrian Institute of Technology GmbH, Wien | Vienna)

Sergiu Gordea holds a master's degree in Telecommunications from the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca (Romania) and a doctorate in Computer Science from the Alpen-Adria University of Klagenfurt (Austria). As senior research engineer in the Data Science and Artificial Intelligence Competence Unit of AIT Austrian Institute of Technology, Sergiu acted as coordinator for Enrich Europeana and the EnrichEuropeana+ EU Projects, leading the development of data processing and semantic enrichment activities in these projects. Within the scope of the European common dataspace for Cultural Heritage project, Sergiu Gordea leads the development of several APIs including Annotation, Entity, User Sets, and Translation APIs. His current topics of interest include knowledge engineering, natural language processing (NLP) and large language models (LLM), machine learning, information retrieval, big data analysis, the semantic web, and the reuse of digitized cultural heritage. Sergiu Gordea is a member of the Europeana Research Community and of the Austrian Standards Institute affiliated to ISO.

ROUNDTABLE 4: VIRTUAL REALITY

Matthias Husinsky (FH St. Pölten | University of Applied Sciences, St. Pölten)

Matthias Husinsky is a lecturer and researcher at St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences. Since 2016, he has been leading the Master Class for Augmented and Virtual Reality. His research explores the dynamic intersection of technology and art, bridging the gap between analog and digital realms, and integrating industry with the humanities. Originally, his research was primarily focused on interactive experiences for arts and science centers, but later shifted to media applications supporting health rehabilitation, manufacturing, and even agriculture. Apart from creating XR experiences for the arts and creative industries, his recent work focuses on fusing digital/virtual and real spaces into one continuous medium. His current interest lies in the creation of situational photorealistic digital twins for virtual reality with applications in stop-motion animation, education, and cultural heritage.

FR | FRI, 24. 1. 2025

17:00

PODIUMSDISKUSSION | PANEL DISCUSSION

Moderation: **Christian Huemer** (Belvedere, Vienna)

Andrew Ellis (Art UK, London)

Susanne Kurz (Universität zu Köln | University of Cologne)

Lukas Pilka (UMPRUM, Academy of Art, Architecture and Design, Praha | Prague)

Hannah Thompson (Royal Holloway, University of London)

Andrew Ellis has been Chief Executive of Art UK since 2003. He has responsibility for the strategic direction of the organization, the development of partnership relationships and plays a major role in fundraising for the charity. He played a key role transforming the organization from being a publisher of hardcopy catalogues of oil paintings in public ownership to being the digital platform of the UK's national art collection bringing together almost 3,500 institutions on one platform. With colleagues at the Collections Trust and the University of Leicester, he helped found and launch the Museum Data Service in 2024. He sits on the Arts & Humanities Research Council's Towards a National Collection Steering Panel. Previously he worked at investment bank Robert Fleming, which subsequently became part of JP Morgan Chase, in various equity research and management roles in London and Tokyo. In the distant past he read Economics at the University of Cambridge.

Susanne Kurz completed her master's degree in Information Processing (Digital Humanities), Sociology, and Philosophy at the University of Cologne. Since 2003, she has been Akademische Rätin at the Institute for Digital Humanities and is head of the IT Certificate Program at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. Additionally, she teaches at the Institute of Public Law, focusing on Digitalization Law, and the Research Center for Law and Ethics at the Faculty of Law. Her research interests include the analysis and modeling of trust mechanisms in digital environments, their implementation in technical systems, and the resulting challenges for academia and science in an evolving AI-driven society. She also focuses on forward-looking methods for agile and interdisciplinary academic teaching and learning in digital spaces. Her latest publication is *Vertrauen in die Wirklichkeit—AI, Trust und Reliability in den Digital Humanities*, 2024.

Lukas Pilka is a digital designer and researcher working on interaction design, the latest technologies, and cultural data. He founded Cabinet of Wonders, a virtual guide across museums that uses a specialized large language model (LLM) to create personalized museum experiences. He is also the initiator of the Open Collections project, which maps the state of digitization of museums in the Czech Republic, and the creator of DigitalCurator.art. This app explores Central European art collections using computer vision. Lukas is also the cofounder of BlueGhost, a software agency that develops custom apps and digital products, a programmer, neural network enthusiast, podcaster, publicist, and fan of old and new

generative art. He completed his PhD at the Academy of Art, Architecture and Design in Prague in 2022. His dissertation focused on using computer vision and machine learning for automated classification and quantitative interpretation of artworks.

Hannah Thompson is Professor of French and Critical Disability Studies at Royal Holloway, University of London, and describes herself as a "partially blind academic and activist." Her most recent research focuses on the benefits of blindness ("blindness gain") in literature, culture, and heritage and on audio description as a kind of creative, intermodal translation with a focus on museums, galleries, and performance venues. She worked with a range of theaters and audio describers during her Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) 2021–22 EDI Fellowship "Inclusive Description for Equality and Access." In April 2023 she became Principal Investigator on the £1M AHRC-funded project The Sensational Museum which aims to "use what we know about disability to change how museums work for everyone." Hannah writes about her place as a partially blind academic in a resolutely sighted world in her blog Blind Spot (hannah-thompson.blogspot.com/).
sensationalmuseum.org/

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