

**CFP:** International Online Conference

## **The Art Museum in the Digital Age – 2026**

**Location:** Belvedere, Vienna (online)

**Date:** January 19–23, 2026

**Submission deadline:** November 2, 2025

In the digital age, museums and cultural heritage institutions are challenged more than ever to redefine their role as custodians of collective memory. The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI), immersive technologies, and global communication channels is changing not only how knowledge is produced and communicated, but also how truth is negotiated. What is still reliable today, and what is manipulated? Who decides which information is visible and which voices remain hidden? Museums find themselves caught between authenticity, responsibility, and media-driven dynamics. They must not only react to deepfakes, algorithmic distortions, and digital disinformation, but also develop new forms of participation, translation, and contextualization. As public institutions, museums have a growing ethical responsibility to actively promote new mechanisms for response to such developments—not only to impart knowledge, but also to stand for transparency, critical reflection, and the responsible handling of information.

Passed in 2024, the European Union’s AI Act created the first binding legal framework to regulate the opportunities and risks of AI systems, including in the cultural sector. For museums, innovative technologies create new possibilities, for example in automated text generation, digital provenance research, and barrier-free communication. At the same time, clear requirements are being set for transparency, traceability, and risk assessment—especially when dealing with sensitive data, curatorial decisions, or applications that are popular with the public. While museums can play a key role in shaping the use of AI in the cultural sector in a responsible and forward-looking manner, doing so requires facing not only technical but also normative challenges. For example, in her 2024 essay “The Digital Transformation of Cultural Practice,” Oonagh Murphy argues that social and technological change is not a new concept for arts organizations. What is new, however, is the depth and reach of these technologies—particularly in relation to the creation, processing, and interpretation of data. Murphy therefore calls for value-driven leadership within the cultural sector and for a critical and engaged approach to digital technologies, one that encourages value-based leadership by European cultural practitioners, as well as critical and engaged practice in the field of digital technologies and digital culture.

The eighth edition of our international conference series invites an exploration of the theme “Truth, Fakes, and Knowledge Sovereignty in the Digital Age,” with the aim of

jointly reflecting on new perspectives, strategies, and practices in the context of digital knowledge production in art museums:

- What responsibility do museums have in the generation and communication of knowledge?
- How can ethical AI guidelines be designed in the cultural sector, for example, based on the EU AI Act?
- What practical applications already exist, and where are their limits?

The conference is intended as a platform for exchange, reflection, and debate. Considering the questions outlined above, we welcome proposals for contributions on the following topics:

- **Truth and disinformation in the digital space:** Strategies for museum communication in dealing with deepfakes, filter bubbles, and algorithmic bias.
- **Artificial intelligence and ethical responsibility:** Implementation of the EU AI Act in a museum context: opportunities, risks, and ethical guidelines.
- **Digital provenance research:** Use of AI-supported tools for provenance research and their limitations—between transparency, complexity, and context.
- **Texts, translation, and interpretive authority:** Automated text generation and machine translation in museums, the implications for multilingualism, levels of meaning, and cultural authority.
- **Museums as epistemic actors:** The role of art museums in negotiating truth, meaning, and memory in the digital age.
- **Immersive technologies in knowledge transfer:** Use of AR/VR/XR: new narratives, spaces of experience, and the question of authenticity.
- **Participation, platform logics, and digital public sphere:** How museums can engage digital communities—beyond attention, likes, and reactions.
- **Bias in data and systems:** How AI and digital archives reinforce existing exclusions, and how museums can actively counteract this.
- **Linked Open Data: Linking, visibility, and global collaboration:** The potential of open data structures for interoperability, contextualization, and collaborative knowledge production.
- **Source criticism and digital literacy as a museum educational task:** Communication strategies that enable critical engagement with digital content, algorithms, and media literacy.
- **Deepfakes, visualizations, and narrative constructions:** Between fact and fiction: How visual technologies influence our understanding of history and reality.

- **Data protection, energy consumption, and sustainability as ethical criteria for digital practice:** How museums can take on ecological and data protection responsibilities.
- **Human-machine interaction in curatorial and editorial processes:** Collaboration between curators, editors, and AI—between assistance, autonomy, and loss of control.
- **Museum work in transition—new roles and digital skills:** Requirements for qualifications, further training, and team structures in the course of digital transformation.

We look forward to your paper proposals in the fields of museums/museology, art and cultural history, visual and media studies, and digital humanities. Please submit your abstract for a twenty- to twenty-five-minute presentation in German or English (max. 250 words) including a short biography with complete contact information, summarized as a PDF document by November 2, 2025, to: [conferences@belvedere.at](mailto:conferences@belvedere.at)

We are delighted to announce that **Dr. Oonagh Murphy** (Goldsmiths, University of London) will be our keynote speaker.

**Conference committee:** Christian Huemer, Johanna Aufreiter, Sylvia Stegbauer (Belvedere Research Center), Oonagh Murphy (Goldsmiths, University of London), Chiara Zuanni (University for Continuing Education Krems), Ross Parry (University of Leicester)

**Conference languages:** German & English

**Conference partners:**



**Hashtags:** #digitalmuseum #belvederemuseum

All talks will be held online. The keynote lecture, a panel discussion and a workshop for registered participants will also take place on site at Belvedere 21, Vienna. Participation in the conference is free of charge.

**Note on data protection in the context of the conference:**

*The Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Wissenschaftliche Anstalt öffentlichen Rechts processes your personal data in the course of the online conference “The Art Museum in the Digital Age – 2026” for the purpose of selecting speakers, preparing and following up on the event, as well as for conducting the event, establishing contact, reporting and further promoting this and future events. The data will be stored for the duration of the purpose and beyond, until the expiry of the legal obligation to keep records. Your data will be passed on to the conference committee for the selection of speakers. If you are selected, your data will be published as part of the conference program, the promotion of the conference and reporting on it. Information on data protection and your rights, all contact details of the controller and the data protection officer may be found at [www.belvedere.at/en/privacy-policy](http://www.belvedere.at/en/privacy-policy).*