

CFP: International Online Conference

The Art Museum in the Digital Age – 2027

Location: Belvedere, Vienna (online)

Date: January 25–29, 2027

Submission deadline: November 15, 2026

Digital technologies have profoundly shaped the work of art museums over the past decades. Collections have been digitized, metadata standardized, new forms of interpretation and engagement developed, including virtual exhibitions and extended-reality applications. Generative artificial intelligence (AI) introduces a technology that not only documents or visualizes content but also generates it autonomously. AI systems thus become co-creators of cultural production, transforming the conditions under which knowledge is produced, communicated, and evaluated. At the same time, central museological concepts such as authorship, originality, evidence, creativity, authenticity, and interpretive authority are brought into renewed debate.

The algorithmic production of content and the use of AI-supported decision-making processes are intensifying expectations of museums as trusted knowledge institutions. Large language models can create the impression of possessing knowledge and sound judgement. However, their responses are based on statistical patterns, and they cannot independently verify whether a statement is true or meaningful. Museums therefore face the challenge of critically communicating the limitations and societal implications of these systems, which involves making their modes of operation transparent and identifying biases in data and models. Equipping museum staff and visitors with the skills to critically assess and contextualize AI-generated content is thus becoming an important component of museum's educational work. As Kate Crawford highlights, critical engagement with AI must also take into account its material foundations and power relations. These relationships, between performance claims made by major technology companies and the demonstrable capabilities of their systems, as well as the economic interests shaping their deployment, will be central to this conference. Who benefits from these technologies? Which social and environmental consequences remain largely invisible? How can museums make autonomous decisions about the use of AI, their data, and the presentation of their collections? These questions are closely linked to digital sovereignty. Looking back at earlier waves of digitization offers a further perspective: Which expectations have been met, and where have the outcomes fallen short of the promises made? What can these experiences teach us about engaging with AI—for example, with regard to the long-term documentation and preservation of digital content or its contextualization within the history of cultural heritage?

The ninth edition of our international conference series takes up Seb Chan's call for a critical, values-driven engagement with museum technologies. Guided by the central question "What is technology for?", it invites participants to reconsider the role of the art museum in a society increasingly influenced by AI. Museums can serve as trusted knowledge institutions and spaces for public debate. At the same time, the question arises as to how they can contribute to shaping technological futures and, in doing so, which values they wish to uphold. The

conference invites contributions that explore current developments from a range of disciplinary perspectives. Proposals may address the following thematic areas:

Museums as Spaces of Trust in an AI-Driven Society

- Implementing AI governance in museums (EU AI Act and international standards)
- Algorithmic bias and cultural representation
- Ethical, environmental, and institutional responsibility in the use of AI
- Digital sovereignty of cultural institutions and museums

Data Sovereignty and Strategies

- Strategies for embedding transparency and traceability
- AI literacy and digital agency as emerging areas of responsibility for art museums
- Between innovation and technology for its own sake: technological scenarios for the future of museums

From Digitization to AI

- Experiences, continuities, and ruptures in the digital transformation of museums
- The potential and limitations of AI and chatbots in museum databases and online collections
- Automated image descriptions, accessibility, and inclusion

Curating and Cultural Production with AI

- The impact of AI systems on curatorial, conservation, and interpretive practices
- New forms of authorship, creativity, and knowledge production
- The musealization of AI-generated art

Preserving and Archiving in the Age of Technological Systems

- New challenges for collections and the long-term digital preservation of cultural assets
- Digital provenance and authenticity
- Archiving models, datasets, and prompts

Research, Visitor Studies, and Data Analysis

- Empirical studies in museums
- Visitor studies at the intersection of qualitative research, data analysis, and audience development
- Virtual, augmented, and extended realities as tools for research and interpretation
- AI in museum research: potential applications in collection analysis, pattern recognition, and new processes of knowledge discovery

New Approaches to Knowledge, Culture, and the Public Sphere

- AI and museum education
- AI-generated storytelling, worldbuilding, translation, and multilingualism
- Critical media literacy and new forms of participatory knowledge sharing

We welcome proposals from the fields of museums/museology, art and cultural history, visual and media studies, and digital humanities. Please submit your abstract for a 20–25-minute presentation in German or English (max. 250 words), together with a short biography including full contact information, combined into a single PDF document, by November 15, 2026, to: conferences@belvedere.at

We are delighted to announce that Seb Chan, Director & CEO at ACMI (Australian Centre for the Moving Image), Melbourne will be our **keynote speaker**.

Conference committee: Christian Huemer, Johanna Aufreiter, Alexandra Sommer, Sylvia Stegbauer (Belvedere Research Center), Seb Chan (ACMI, Melbourne), Ross Parry (University of Leicester), Chiara Zuanni (University for Continuing Education Krems)

Conference languages: German & English

Conference partners:



Institute for Digital Culture

MUSEUMSBUND:ÖSTERREICH



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 – 2027” 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.