Workshop: Motion, Migration and Data: An Introduction to Digital Art History

The computer as well as computational and digital approaches have transformed art historical research, much as photography did at the beginning of the last century. The photograph enabled researchers to familiarize themselves with works of art at a far remove from where they lived or worked. As collected in photo archives, it became the repository of knowledge collected over decades as scholars, librarians and archivists annotated these images. In what ways are digital technologies similarly changing the landscape of art historical research and scholarship?

This online workshop proposes to answer this question by sharing frameworks for the full lifecycle of digital projects, starting with research questions, moving through data collection and analysis, to scholarly outcomes (e.g., publication of scholarship and/or datasets), to preservation and sustainability. For each of these stages, we will offer tools and resources that will allow the participants to explore and learn more outside of the workshop.

In keeping with the overarching theme of the congress, migrations, the workshop will focus on those methods particularly well suited to exposing and expressing motion, exchange, and circulation through data analysis: **network analysis**, which allows researchers to explore the connections and relationships (and relative strengths) between entities, and **geospatial analysis**, which allows for the mapping of entities. The session will also probe the nature of the digital archive and the standardization of data, which allows it to move more freely across different repositories and systems, thus increasing the connectivity of information, and potentially of art history, across the globe.

Throughout the course of the workshop, we will also have the opportunity to consider the epistemology of the digital. Our thinking is informed by the understanding that a database is, in fact, an argument. How do we ensure that key aspects of critical thinking, such as recognition of absence, ambiguity, complexity, paradox, and uncertainty, remain of significance in computational approaches? How do we avoid erasing the myriad of intellectual and subjective choices that inform work in the digitized/digital environment? As digital work often entails collaboration and even perhaps the crowd, how do we understand the nature of the author and authority? Art history has typically prized close reading, that is, focused and directed analysis of

a work of art or text; but the digital age has given rise to 'distant reading' to borrow from the phrasing of Franco Moretti. How can we create space in our discipline for 'distant reading' by articulating its benefits and its relationship to close reading? Digital analysis has also been critiqued for its so-called flatness; that is, the computer does not inherently hold one artifact in higher regard than any other. Might we turn this into a strategic intervention in the discipline, bringing to light the quotidian or the vernacular, as scholar Paul Jaskot has argued?

Workshop Subtopics include:

- The Digital Project, an Overview & Learning Through Examples
- Project Roles & Skills
- Research Questions to Data
- Data structure and standardization: benefits and limits
- Migration or mobility of data: data as 'open'; making your data explicit, shareable, and open to critical examination
- Data Analysis, including Network Analysis and Geospatial Analysis
- Data Visualization, including Network Analysis and Geospatial Analysis
- Sustainability and Preservation
- New forms of scholarly communication in the digital age

This workshop will be conducted in English. An electronic bibliography/list of resources will be provided to all participants, and in addition, pre-recorded presentations will be circulated ahead of the workshop for participants to view on their own time. This series of pe-recorded presentations will consist of a series of topics presented by specialists in the field and will provide 2-3 hours of content that should be viewed prior to the discussion and Q&A session. During the conference week, the participants and workshop leaders will meet for a two-hour discussion and Q&A session. This session may be virtual or in person scheduled:
// If virtual, Wednesday, January 19 from 6–8:00p
// If in-person, Thursday, January 20 from 9–10:00a

Finally, the workshop leaders will offer 2 hours of drop-by "office hours" on Thursday, January 20 from 12–2:00p, allowing participants to sign up for short, one-on-one discussions with the workshop leaders.

Individuals seeking to participate in this workshop should submit the following materials, via Google Forms (https://forms.gle/yeSVzZc2DbQ84UuBA) by January 8:

NAME
EMAIL ADDRESS
Current Career Stage: [select one: Graduate Student, Early Career (3-5 years post Ph.D.), or Mid to Senior Career]
Affiliation:

Responses to the following questions:

1) Why are you interested in acquiring training and knowledge in the field of Digital Art History?
2) What is your current stage of knowledge of digital methods and tools?
3) What is your current area of research and how might this workshop help you advance your work?
4) Are you part of a research group? If yes, please describe the project, its participants, and modes of funding (if funding exists)
5) Are your English skills sufficient to take part in the workshop in English?

Please upload a CV (no more than 3 pages)