Dušan Barok (University of Amsterdam)
db@monoskop.org

New Approaches in Media Conservation

Artworks from the Digital Era in Galleries and Museums
colloquium,
Vašulka Kitchen Brno,
The Brno House of Arts, Brno
23 October 2019
**Multiplace**

Multiplace is an annual festival of media art and network culture, held since 2002 in multiple locations in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Austria, Poland, Hungary, and other places. Next to Enter in Prague, WRO Biennale in Wroclaw and Art Electonica in Linz, it is one of the largest events for media art and culture in Central Europe.

**Contents** [show]

The festival is held in Spring, lasts 5-14 days and offers up to a hundred events including performances, exhibitions, workshops, discussions, presentations and screenings. It was coordinated by Mária Ríšková (2002-04), Katarína Kudélková (2005), Zuzana Duchová (2006-07), Dušan Barók (2008-09), and currently by Barbora Šedivá (since 2010). Other members of the coordination and program groups included Slávko Králikovič, Viera Levitz, Magdolna Kolozsó, Ždenka Konopáčová, Peter Gonda, Katarína Gajálová, Barbora Kalinová, Barbora Nápolyová, Dáša Pelčová, Michal Kindermay, and many others.

The festival started as a coordinated event organised by people with a shared interest in presenting new forms of creativity. In April 2002 Bunyzone, Jan Konšarek Gallery, Space Gallery, Atrak7 Art association, Rokast, Sulterra, Czech Centre in Bratislava, and Austrian Cultural Forum in Bratislava joined efforts and during five days organised at 7 locations (in Bratislava, Trnava and Nitra) presentations and performances by media artists, digital filmmakers, video artists, musicians and programmers from Slovakia, Czech Republic, Austria and Finland.

The aim of Multiplace is to serve as a platform for the support of media art, to maintain an open and collaborative environment and to encourage critical reflection on the role of art in a culture shaped by technologies. Multiplace emphasizes experimentation and encourages collaboration and networking among participants in the network. It awards no prizes.

Since January 2008 the network runs the free culture server Sanchez hosting more than 100 websites of artistic and cultural initiatives worldwide.

**Open organisation**

From 2007 to 2009 the network was an open organisation consisting of working groups (for more details see [concept](https://www.example.com/concept) and [chart](https://www.example.com/chart) of the organisation). The mailing list communication of each group is publicly accessible.

- [Coordination group](2006-2009), [archive](2006-2010)
- [Program group](2007), [archive](2007-2010)
- [Theory group](2006-2007), [archive](2008-2009)

**Gallery**

- Image 1
- Image 2
- Image 3
- Image 4
Case study
Concepts & theory
Documentation
Digital preservation
Institutions & networks
New tendencies
Hans Haacke, News, 1969

Exhibition
Prospect 69
Düsseldorf, 1969

Howard Wise Gallery
New York, 1969

Exhibition *Software*, Jewish Museum New York, 1970

---

Exhibition
*Art of Participation*
SFMOMA, 2008
Hans Haacke, News, 1969/2018

Exhibition Nothing Stable Under Heaven, SFMOMA, 2018
NACCA (New Approaches in the Conservation of Contemporary Art)

www.nacca.eu
I: Identity, Authenticity and Values
II: Materials, Media and Technologies
III: Presentation, Documentation and Reception
IV: Professions and Institutions
List of Interviews Made as part of the New Approaches in the Conservation of Contemporary Art (NACCA) Research Network, 2015-2019

The research was realised as part of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Innovative Training Network ‘New Approaches in the Conservation of Contemporary Art’ [NACCA], funded by the European Union H2020 Programme [H2020-MSCA-ITN-2014] under Grant Agreement no 642892.

http://nacca.eu
Last updated: 5 July 2019
List of Publications Produced as part of the New Approaches in the Conservation of Contemporary Art (NACCA) Research Network, 2015-2019

DESCRIPTION

Books / Monographs


Journal articles

the term is useful to “describe installations that have a duration and therefore have to be experienced in the context of the passing of a period of time.” (Laurenson 2001)

“any artwork that has both physical and temporal dimensions.” (EMG AIC)
Complex artworks, non-object based artworks, changing artworks are...

installations and other types of work with one or more of
the following elements:

- variable form (e.g. involving non-dedicated, replaceable components)
- conceptual or otherwise immaterial features crucial for re-exhibition
- process-based
- open-ended
Installations are ‘alive’ only when installed

"Essentially [time-based media installations] do not really exist until they are installed"

   (Laurenson 2001)

"Artists' installations only truly exist in their installed state"

   (Scholte and ‘t Hoen 2007)

"[Some] time-based media works only really exist in their installed state"

   (Tate 2012)

"The large majority of time-based media works [...] only exist when they are installed"

   (Phillips 2015)

"[Time-based media works are] often only fully realized in their installed state"

   (MoMA 2018)
Conceptual framework for media conservation

Pip Laurenson, “Authenticity, change and loss in the conservation of time-based media installations”, *Tate Papers*, 6, 2006
Hans Haacke, News, 1969

Exhibition
Prospect 69
Düsseldorf, 1969
“In the case of allographic works, whether time-based media installations or musical works, each occasion a time-based media work is installed and each time a musical work is performed, decisions are revisited and sometimes re-made as to what aspects of the work are significant to its identity.”

(Laurenson 2006)

Exhibition *Nothing Stable Under Heaven*, SFMOMA, 2018
Work-defining properties include..

- the artist's instructions
- the past installations approved by artist intended to act as models
- an understanding of the context in which they were made
- ...

Conceptual framework for media conservation: Work-defining properties

Installation

Artist parameters:

a) printer should be placed on a simple table that does not draw attention to itself.

b) Any printer that produces the news bulletins on paper as they come in, dot matrix or other. In case such paper print-outs can technically no longer be produced in the future, an LED or a comparable presentation could be considered.

c) New sources, only in English, from all major centers around the world that affect the political events of the time. Inclusion of sources representing opposing sides of conflicts that have repercussions beyond their respective region. All continents should be represented.

d) The computer program Craig Waldman developed for "The Art of Participation: 1950 to Now" will most likely have to be adjusted, as technology develops.

Room Requirements

No particular room requirements. Gallery presentation. Will need room for paper to expand.

Courtesy of SFMOMA, 2018

Exhibition
*Art of Participation*
SFMOMA, 2008
Hans Haacke, News, 1969/2018

Exhibition Nothing Stable Under Heaven, SFMOMA, 2018
Artist's intent and authenticity are ‘being done’

They are constructed through documentation, artist interviews, negotiations, etc.

Vivian van Saaze, 2013
OA at https://oapen.org/search?identifier=449202
To document a media installation...

- identify its components and elements
  (possibly including the space and acoustics),
- explain how they are connected,
- describe their roles in terms of aesthetics and functionality,
- establish the factors most likely to prevent each component from fulfilling its role.

(Laurenson 2001)
Documentation Model for Time-Based Media Art (2015).
Courtesy of Joanna Phillips.
### Documentation model for media art: Iteration report

**Pages 1-3 of 4 of Guggenheim Iteration Report, 2012**  
**Courtesy of Guggenheim Museum.**  
Preservation dossiers

Egg Growes
Nem June Paik
Video Installation
Preservation Dossier
January 2012

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

Courtesy of SFMOMA
Preservation dossiers

Courtesy of SFMOMA
Criteria for documentation platform for media conservation

- Straightforward navigation through documentation associated with an artwork.
- Support for differentiating between identity and installation of a given work on the one hand, and its respective iterations on the other.
- Support for documenting decision making on the component level.
- Support for linking components and elements of a work.
- Support for multimedia content.
- Version control including history of changes and identification of their authors.
- Integration of the platform within the information infrastructure.
A documentation platform for media conservation: SFMOMA Media Wiki

SFMOMA Media Wiki

Welcome!

Search here for artists or for installations! You can also access these two options in the sidebar to your left. Or you search for artists or artworks in the search bar on your upper right.

Courtesy of SFMOMA
SFMOMA Media Wiki: Artwork page template

Template

[SFM: ]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist Name</th>
<th>Artist Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art/Title</td>
<td>Nationality, born Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Year
Description
Credit Line
Accession Number

Contents
- 1. Canonical Description
- 2. Technical Narrative
- 3. Components
- 4. Exhibitions
- 5. Installation
- 6. Iterations
- 7. Manuals and hardware information
- 8. References

Courtesy of SFMOMA

GUGGENHEIM
Conservation Department

Iteration Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artwork</th>
<th>Accession No.:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artist:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exhibition</th>
<th>Title:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Iteration</th>
<th>Created/Supervised by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curator(s):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrar(s):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art-Handler(s)/Ala:P:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition Designer(s):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist(s):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant(s):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Technician(s):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist Assistant(s):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Company:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservator(s):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabricator(s):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who installed the artwork, for how long? [List names, under skill-set, and add the footprint per person].

Was the artist present/represented during the entire install? If not, how (approximately) did the artist contribute or influence this iteration?

Evaluation of this iteration:
- Did the decision(s) fit the successful or unsuccessful/poorly? [Success, Date]
- Did the artist(s) perform as expected? [Date, Artist(s)]
- Were there any unknown problems or suggestions for future improvements? [Source, Date]
Wikis for art (preservation) documentation

ZKM Karlsruhe, 2006-2015
Guggenheim’s Panza Collection Initiative, 2010-2016
SFMOMA’s media conservation, 2013-
SFMOMA’s The Artist Initiative, 2014-2017
NYU’s Artist Archive Initiative, 2017-
...

From Collection Management to Content Management in Art Documentation: The Conservator as an Editor

Dušan Barok, Julia Noordegraaf & Arjen F. de Vries

Pages 472-489 | Received 07 Dec 2018, Accepted 02 Apr 2019, Published online: 15 Apr 2019

Download citation | https://doi.org/10.1080/00368078.2019.1603921

ABSTRACT

It has been widely acknowledged that reinstallations and re-executions of contemporary artworks substantially rely on available documentation. Especially for installations and performances it is crucial to record the artist's intent, past iterations, and tacit knowledge involved in staging the artwork. The growing presence of contemporary artworks in museum collections increases the importance of documentation as a central focus of collection care. However, collections management systems have limitations in adequately presenting these often rich forms of documentation. Consequently, documentation required for presenting a specific complex artwork is often dispersed across multiple systems, drives, and dossiers inside various departments. In recent years, several initiatives responded to these challenges by implementing a digital...
Digital preservation (code, media files)

Abstract

The transmission of the documentation of changes made in each presentation of an artwork and the motivation behind each display are of importance to the continued preservation, re-exhibition and future understanding of artworks. However, it is generally acknowledged that existing digital archiving and documentation systems used by many museums are not suitable for complex digital artworks. Looking for an approach that can easily be adjusted, shared and adopted by others, this article focusses on open-source alternatives that also enable collaborative working to facilitate the sharing and changing of information. As an interdisciplinary team of conservators, researchers, artists and programmers, the authors set out to explore and compare the functionalities of two systems featuring version control: *MediaWiki* and *Git*. We reflect on their technical details, virtues and shortcomings for archiving complex...
Institutions & networks for media conservation today, I.

**Museums with media laboratories or specialised positions for media conservation:**

Tate Modern: Pip Laurenson (formerly), Patricia Falcao, Louise Lawson ..

SFMOMA: Martina Haidvogl, ...

MoMA: Glenn Wharton (formerly), Kate Lewis, ...

Guggenheim: Joanna Phillips (formerly), ..

ZKM: Hanna Hölling (formerly), Morgane Stricot, ...

Hirschhorn

Smithsonian

Art Gallery NSW

M+, Hong Kong

Met, NYC

Guggenheim’s media lab
Institutions & networks for media conservation today, II.

Electronic Media Group (EMG) AIC, est. 1998

INCCA (International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art), est. 1999

LIMA, Amsterdam, est. 2013 (continues the legacy of Montevideo/TBA)

Rhizome, NYC, est. 1996, now affiliated w/ New Museum

iMAL & Packed, Brussels

Bern University of the Arts (HKB) Conservation-Restoration MA programme

Die Angewandte, Vienna, Modern+Contemporary Art Conservation MA programme

NYU Time-based media MA programme, est. 2018

CICS Cologne, decision-making model 2019

Atelier für Videokonservierung, Bern, private studio of Agathe Jarczyk

Small Data Industries, NYC, private studio of Ben Fido-Radin
Decision-Making Model for Contemporary Art Conservation & Presentation

1. Point of Departure
2. Data Generation and Registration
3. Current State (Condition)
4. Desired State (Meaning)
5. Discrepancy?
6. Conservation / Presentation Options
7. Considerations
8. Conservation / Presentation Strategy
9. Implementation and Assessment

Fig. 14: The revised model
Performance-based art

Collecting the Performative, research project, Tate, 2012-2014

Histories of Performance Documentation, book, 2017

Reshaping the Collectible, research project, Tate, 2018-2021

PhD dissertations: Acatia Finbow 2017 (U Exeter), Helia Marcal 2018 (U Nova de Lisboa), Iona Goldie-Scot (Maastricht U)
Net-based art

LIMA, Arthost.nl launched 2019

Rhizome’s Net Art Anthology, 2016-2019

Exhibition & Catalogue, 2019

Reshaping the Collectible, research project, Tate, 2018-2021

Annet Dekker’s book Collecting and Conserving Net Art: Moving beyond Conventional Methods, 2018

Ludwig Museum’s MAPS symposium, 13-14 Feb 2020

PhD dissertation: Claudia Roeck (U Amsterdam)
Ethnographic methods in conservation research

Van Saaze’s book Installation Art and the Museum, 2013, open access

Sanneke Stigter’s PhD “Between Concept and Material” (UvA, 2016)


Caitlin Spangler-Bickell’s research in NACCA
Private estates

Symposiums organised by
Contemporary Conservation Ltd, NYC:

First Crack, 2015

Body of Work, 2018

Anna Schäffler’s research into posthumous caring for artists’ estates at Freie U Berlin
Networks of care

Chapter in Annet Dekker’s book *Collecting and Conserving Net Art*, 2018

Morgane Stricot of ZKM on maintaining relationships with pirate communities to obtain obsolete commercial software

Tate maintains relationships with analog film studios

etc..
Resource on contemporary art conservation

https://pad.multiplace.org/
0xBDx5Y3S9S05_8G1g8E-w?view

short link: https://tiny.cc/preservation
Thank you

Acknowledgements

Aga Wielocha, Annet Dekker, Arjen P. de Vries, Béla Tamás Kónya, Claudia Roeck, Dana Doughin, David Gauthier, Gaby Wijers, Glenn Wharton, Jill Sterret, Julia Noordegraaf, Julie Boschat Thorez, Karen te Brake-Baldock, Layna White, Lúcia Almeida Matos, Martina Haidvogl, Morgane Stricot, Nina Quabeck, Pip Laurenson, Renée van de Vall, Tatja Scholte, Vivian van Saaze

Dušan Barok

db@monoskop.org, D.Barok@uva.nl