Session at CIHA 2020 (Sao Paulo, 13-18 Sep 20)

Sao Paulo
Deadline: Oct 31, 2019

Prof. Dr. Oliver Grau, MAE

Migration, Climate, Surveillance – What does Media Arts Complexity want?

Chairs:
Giselle BEIGUELMAN, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo
Oliver GRAU, Danube University, Austria
Nara Cristina SANTOS, Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, Santa Maria

MediaArtHistories is an interdisciplinary field of research that explores the current developments as well as the history and genealogy of new media art, digital art, and electronic art. (GRAU 2007, DOMINGUES 2009). On the one hand, media art histories address the contemporary interplay of art, technology, and science. (WILSON 2010, HENDERSON 1983) It aims to reveal the historical relationships and aspects of the 'afterlife' (Aby Warburg) in new media art by means of a historical comparative approach.

This strand of research encompasses questions of the history of media and perception, of so-called archetypes, as well as those of iconography and the history of ideas. Moreover, one of the main agendas of media art histories is to point out the role of digital technologies for contemporary, post-industrial societies and to counteract the marginalization of according art practices and art objects as pointed out in the Liverpool Declaration: "Digital technology has fundamentally changed the way art is made. Over the last fifty years, media art has become a significant part of our networked information society. Although there are well-attended international festivals, collaborative research projects, exhibitions and database documentation resources, media art research is still marginal in universities, museums and archives. It remains largely under-resourced in our core cultural institutions Hence, scholars stress that the technological advances in current media cultures are best understood on the backdrop of an extensive media and art history. Contributions to this field are widespread and include researchers who have disciplinary focuses such as the history of science (Lorraine Daston), art history and image science (Oliver Grau, Barbara Stafford, Jonathan Crary), media studies and media archaeology (Friedrich Kittler, Erkki Huhtamo, Siegfried Zielinski), sound studies (Douglas Kahn), film studies (Sean Cubitt, Jorge La Ferla), media art aesthetics (Christiane Paul, Giselle Beiguelman, Lev Manovich), archives (Grau, Beiguelman).

The term new media art itself is of great importance to the field. The focus of new media art lies in the cultural, political, and social implications as well as the aesthetic possibilities – more or less its 'media-specificity' – of digital media. Furthermore, the field of new media art is increasingly influenced by new technologies that surmount a traditional understanding of (art) media. The

list of genres that are commonly subsumed under the label of new media art illustrates its broad scope and includes, among others, virtual art, Software Art, Internet Art, Glitch Art, Telematic Art, Bio Art / Genetic Art, Interactive Art, computer animation and graphics, Urban Media Art, Mobile Art, Hacktivism and Tactical Media. These latter two 'genres' in particular have a strong focus on the interplay of art and (political) activism. Recently, with the development with Artificial Intelligence, there is also an emerging trend exploring its aesthetics. The diversity of fields makes clear that digital art with its histories is a complex system, which is not only complicated but has rapidly-accelerating complexity. With the Algorithmic, Computational and even Post-digital turn over recent decades, the digital image is becoming contextual, ephemeral, immersive, interactive and processual, made as it is out of many technologies.

This session addresses the role Media Art plays in today's sociopolitical issues such as migration, climate, virtual finance, and surveillance society. We welcome going beyond state-of-the-art analytic methods in the humanities, combining for example qualitative close gaze (of critical visual analysis) and the quantitative distant-reading (from computer-assisted data analysis/empirical research). A main session outcome is added value for the humanities with "a socio-political iconography of the present", and discussion of a new "way of seeing", of "thinking with pictures", and asking "what do complex images want?" in the Digital Age. Therefore, this session welcomes as well proposals for adequate research infrastructures following the Liverpool Declaration, which was signed by scholars and artists based at institutions all over the globe to develop systematic strategies to fulfill the task that digital culture and its research demands in the 21st Century (http://www.mediaarthistory.org/declaration).

This session focuses on an evaluation of the status of the meta-discipline MediaArtHistories today. Immersed in both contemporary and historio-graphical aspects of the digital world, we explore the most immediate socio-cultural questions of our time: from migration and media (r)evolutions, to climate, virtualization of finance and surveillance. And we do so through a fractal lens of inter- and trans-disciplinarity, bridging art history, media studies, neuroscience, psychology, sociology, and beyond.

We welcome papers across disciplines, territories and times preferably in the following themes:

- MediaArtHistories historiographies and futures of an ever-emerging field;
- Media Art & Politics (migration, surveillance, climate, etc.);
- Comparative studies on "medium" across different times;
- Institutional histories of Media Art;
- Archiving, collecting, preserving and representing Media Art;
- Digitization of historic collections: Their managing and control. Repatriation of cultural objects in a digital form?;
- Methodologies and research tools for MediaArtHistories with a focus on Digital Humanities;
- International and local histories and practices of media art. How are media arts used in different parts of the world (high tech/low tech..);
- (Post-)Colonial experiences and non-Western histories of media art, science and technology;
- Paradigm shift Digital vs. Post-Digital Theory;
- Media Art aesthetics of memory (dataviz, defunct media, glitch etc.).

To apply for the Sessions and Special Session, please provide:

a PDF file of the Applicant Form (model at the end of this document) with the following information:
- Name of Session;
- Name of applicant;
- Institutional affiliation (if any);
- Title (up to 20 words);
- Abstract (350 - 450 words in length);
- Short biographical note (no more than 100 words).

All documents must be sent as one PDF file to cihasaopaulo2020@gmail.com

Reference:
CFP: Session at CIHA 2020 (Sao Paulo, 13-18 Sep 20). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 21, 2019 (accessed Nov 20, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/21603>.