

Refresh! Conf. on the Histories of Media Art

Oliver Grau

Call for Papers

REFRESH! FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON

THE HISTORIES OF MEDIA ART, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Banff New Media Institute, Canada, September 28 - October 3, 2005

<http://www.mediaarthistory.org>

Deadline: Dec. 1st 2004

"The technology of the modern media has produced new possibilities of interaction... What is needed is a wider view encompassing the coming rewards in the context of the treasures left us by the past experiences, possessions, and insights." (Rudolf Arnheim, Summer 2000)

Recognizing the increasing significance of media art for our culture, this Conference (Evening of Sept. 28th, Sept. 29th, 30th, October 1st) on the Histories of Media Art will discuss for the first time the history of media art within the interdisciplinary and intercultural contexts of the histories of art. Leonardo/ISAST, Banff New Media Institute the Database for Virtual Art and UNESCO DigiArts are collaborating to produce the first international art history conference covering art and new media, art and technology, art-science interaction, and the history of media as pertinent to contemporary art.

Held at The Banff Centre, featuring lectures by invited and selected speakers, the latter being chosen by an international jury from a call for papers, the main event will be followed by a two-day summit meeting (October 2-3, 2005) for in-depth dialogues and international project initiation (proposals welcome).

For more information on the conference, please visit:

www.MediaArtHistory.org

Papers are invited from scholars and postgraduates in any relevant discipline, particularly art history and new media, art and technology, the interaction of art and science, and media history, are encouraged to submit for the following sessions: (Please address your proposals to the sessions with the Priority A to C)

I. MediaArtHistories: Times and Landscapes I and II

I. After photography, film, video, and the little known media art history of the 1960s-80s, today media artists are active in a wide range of digital areas (including interactive, genetic, telematic and nano art). The Media Art History Project offers a basis for attempting an evolutionary history of the audiovisual media, from the Laterna Magica to the Panorama, Phantasmagoria, Film, and the Virtual Art of recent decades. This panel tries to clarify, if and how varieties of Media Art have been splitting up during the last decades. It examines also how far back Media Art reaches as a historical category within the history of Art, Science and Technology.

2. Although there has been important scholarship on intersections between art and technology, there is no comprehensive technological history of art (as there are feminist and Marxist histories of art, for example.) Canonical histories of art fail to sufficiently address the inter-relatedness of developments in science, technology, and art. What similarities and differences, continuities and discontinuities, can be mapped onto artistic uses of technology and the role of artists in shaping technology throughout the history of art? This panel seeks to take account of extant literature on this history in order to establish foundations for further research and to gain perspective on its place with respect to larger historiographical concerns.

II. Methodologies

This session tries to give a critical overview of which methods art history has been using during the past to approach media art. Papers regarding media archaeological, anthropological, narrative and observer oriented approaches are welcome. Equally encouraged are proposals on iconological, semiotic and cyberfeministic methods.

III. Art as Research / Artists as Inventors

Do "innovations" and "inventions" in the field of art differ from those in the field of technology and science? Do artists still contribute anything "new" to those fields of research - and did they ever in history? Which inventions changed the arts as well as technology and the media? These questions will be discussed in a frame from the 19th century until today, special foci of interest are:

- modernism and the birth of media technology 1840-1880
- the utopia of merging art and technology in the 1920s and 1960s
- the crisis of the "new" vs. digital media art innovations since the 1980s

IV. Image Science and 'Representation': From a Cognitive Point of View

Although much recent scholarship in the Humanities and Social Sciences has been "body-minded," this research has yet to grapple with a major problem

familiar to contemporary cognitive scientists and neuroscientists. How do we reconcile a top-down, functional view of cognition with a view of human beings as elements of a culturally shaped biological world? Current scientific investigations into autopoiesis, emotion, symbolization, mind-body relations, consciousness, "mental representations", visual and perceptual systems Sopen up fresh ways of not only figuring the self but of approaching historical as well as elusive electronic media –again or anew—from the deeper vantage of an embodied and distributed brain. Papers that struggle concretely to relate and integrate aspects of the brain basis of cognition with any number of pattern-making media are solicited to stimulate debate.

V. Collaborative Practice/ Networking (history)

In a network people are working together, they share resources and knowledge with each other - and they compete with each other. This process has sped up enormously within a few decades and has reached a new quality/dimension. It is the computer who had and has a forming influence on this change - from the Mainframes of the 50s and 60s to the PCs of the 70s and the growing popularity of the Internet during the 90s of the past century. The dataflow created new economies and new forms of human communication - and last but not least the so-called globalization.

VI. Pop/Mass/Society

The dividing lines between art products and consumer products have been disappearing more and more since the Pop Art of the 1960s. The distinction between artist and recipient has also become blurred. Most recently, the digitalization of our society has sped up this process enormously. In principle, more and more artworks are no longer bound to a specific place and can be further developed relatively freely. The cut-and-paste principle has become an essential characteristic of contemporary culture production. The spread of access to the computer and the internet gives more people the possibility to participate in this production. The panel examines concrete forms, as for example computer games, determining the cultural context and what consequences they could have for the understanding of art in the 21st century.

VII a. Collecting, preserving and archiving the media arts

Collections grow because of different influences such as art dealers, the art market, curators and currents in the international contemporary art scene. What are the conditions necessary for a wider consideration of media art works and of new media in these collections?

VII b. Database/New Scientific Tools

Accessing and browsing the immense amount of data produced by individuals, institutions, and archives has become a key question to our information society. In which way can new scientific tools of structuring and

visualizing data provide new contexts and enhance our understanding of semantics?

VIII. Cross-Culture - Global Art

Issues of cultural difference will be included throughout Refresh!

However, the panels in Cross-Culture--Global Art provide an opportunity to examine cross-cultural influences, the global and the local. Through these sessions we hope to construct the histories, influences and parallels to new media art and even the definitions of what constitutes new media from varied cultural perspectives. For example, how what are the impacts of narrative structures from Aboriginal and other oral cultures on the analysis and practice of new media? How do notions of identity shift across cultures historically, how are these embedded and transformed by new media practice? What philosophical perspectives can ground our understandings of new media aesthetics? How does globalization and the construction of global contexts such as festivals and biennials effect local new media practices? We encourage papers from diverse cultural perspectives and methodologies.

IX. What can the History of New Media Learn from History of Science/Science Studies?

As in the case of artists working in traditional media who have engaged science and technology, new media artists must be situated contextually in the "cultural field" (Kate Hayles) in which they have worked or are working. Science and technology have been an important part of that cultural field in the twentieth century, and the history of science and science studies-along with the field of literature and science--offer important lessons for art historians writing the history of new media art. This session invites papers from art historians and scholars in science-related disciplines which explore methodological and theoretical issues as well as those that put interdisciplinary approaches into practice in studying new media art.

X. Rejuvenate: Film, sound and music in media arts history

During an earlier period of new media arts discourse, time-based media were often considered to be "old media." While this conceit has been tempered, we still need to consider the sophistication and provocation of film, sound and music from the perspective of media arts history. This session invites papers, which examine the return of old media, thick in their natural habitat of the discourses, practices and institutions of the arts, entertainment, science, everyday life, wherever they existed.

Please send a 200 word proposal and a very brief curriculum vitae by December 1st, 2004
via e-mail to: MediaArtHistories@culture.hu-berlin.de.

Full papers (5000 to 7000 word long) must be received via e-mail by July 1st., 2005.

Details about their format will be sent separately to the participants.

All Papers will be considered for publication.

Registration information soon: www.banffcentre.ca/bnmi/

www.MediaArtHistory.org

SUPPORTED BY:

LEONARDO, BANFF NMI, DATABASE OF VIRTUAL ART,
GERMAN RESEARCH FOUNDATION, UNESCO DIGIARTS, VILLA VIGONI, INTEL

HONORARY BOARD

Rudolf ARNHEIM; Frank POPPER; Jasia REICHARDT; Itsuo SAKANE, Walter ZANINI

ADVISORY BOARD

Andreas BROECKMANN, Berlin; Paul BROWN, London;
Karin BRUNS, Linz; Annick BUREAUD, Paris; Dieter
DANIELS, Leipzig; Diana DOMINGUES, Caxias do Sul;
Felice FRANKEL, Boston; Jean GAGNON, Montreal;
Thomas GUNNING, Chicago; Linda D. HENDERSON,
Austin; Manrai HSU, Taipei; Erkki HUHTAMO, Los
Angeles; Ángel KALENBERG, Montevideo; Ryszard
KLUSZCZYNSKI, Lodz; Machiko KUSAHARA, Tokyo;
W.J.T. MITCHELL, Chicago; Gunalan NADARAJAN,
Singapore; Eduard SHANKEN, Durham; Barbara
STAFFORD, Chicago; Christiane PAUL, New York;
Louise POISSANT, Montreal; Jeffrey SHAW, Sydney;
Tereza WAGNER, Paris; Peter WEIBEL, Karlsruhe;
Steven WILSON, San Francisco.

BANFF

Sara DIAMOND, Director of Research and Artistic Director of BNMI (Local
Chair)

Susan KENNARD, Executive Producer of BNMI (Organisation)

www.banffcentre.ca/bnmi/

LEONARDO

Annick BUREAUD, Director Leonardo Pioneers and
Pathbreakers Art History Project, Leonardo/OLATS
www.olats.org

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Chair: Roger F MALINA, Chair Leonardo/ISAST

www.leonardo.info

CONFERENCE DIRECTOR & ORGANISATION

Oliver GRAU, Director Immersive Art & Database of Virtual Art
Humboldt University Berlin
<http://virtualart.hu-berlin.de>

Reference:

CFP: Refresh! Conf. on the Histories of Media Art. In: Arthist.net, Oct 26, 2004 (accessed Jul 5, 2025),
<<https://arthist.net/archive/26662>>.