NEW MEDIA MUSEUMS

Collecting and Preserving Media Arts

NEW MEDIA MUSEUMS

Collecting and Preserving Media Arts

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE HOPE OF NEW IN NEW MEDIA ART

Barbora Kundračíková

The New Media Programme is one of the new "small flagships" of the Olomouc Museum of Art – Central European Forum. Why "flagship" and why "small"? Or rather, how are these two adjectives related? For a long time, local collecting institutions have avoided new media, citing both the high costs associated with their maintenance and their not entirely stable and demonstrable artistic quality as reasons. The new media were simply too new for the tradition to grasp and safely incorporate, confusing their users and confounding their audiences. Although they are still at times a mere decoy, their importance continues to grow – making it almost impossible to imagine the art of the last thirty years without them. I consider the deficit we are forced to cope with because of the non-existent collections, paradoxically, to be one of our greatest benefits – it offers us an unprecedented opportunity to reassess and share. And it is in this sense that I understand and use the phrase "small flagship."

It was not until Hayden White at the latest that historiography has been systematically interested in its own narratology. Today, narrative seems to be its middle name, of course also under the impression of the fundamental social and political changes we are currently witnessing first-hand – in Ukraine. Although we are indeed facing substantial changes in discourse, we can still only prepare ourselves – and the field of new media might be a good vehicle for

that. Let us build new stories on the foundations of old ones!

The New Media Museums project combines several key moments – it is built on expertise that is not limited to a specific domain; it reflects a spectrum that is closely profiled, almost communal, at the same time presupposes a high degree of participation and ultimately affects not only the art world, but also the world itself; its exploration offers the possibility of an ultimate rethinking of existing categories, precisely because of how emphatically it inflects the word technology. Quite specifically, however, it is above all an inherently experimental and playful field.

I am very glad that our call for cooperation, which is at the roots of the Central European Forum itself, has been heard not only by our partners who have been involved in the creation of the online platform CEAD.space, but also by new ones, operating outside our established circles, in particular C3 in Budapest and PAF in Olomouc. I consider the combination of large state institutions, such as the Slovak National Gallery, with specialised centres such as the WRO in Wrocław and independent entities to be truly exceptional. The same applies to the intention to share our own experiences, including mistakes, and to motivate each other to correct them. The hope that a functional and vibrant network will emerge, helping to cushion the shocks and upheavals of history, preserving the monuments of the past while actively developing them, is growing – despite the fears that are now unexpectedly returning to a degree that perhaps few anticipated. Let us hope that we can meet the challenges ahead with honour, without losing the essential dimension of friendship.

INTRODUCTION

Dušan Barok

Video and installation have become the staples of artistic practice over the last three decades. Working with sound and digital media is also becoming more common. New media, which had been given the status of a separate genre, are now a common means of expression for contemporary artists. Compared to painting or sculpture, media-based works are more compact and portable, however their acquisition into collections is still relatively rare. As a result, in the long term it is not at all clear that post-1989 media-based art will have the same representation in public collections as it has had in award exhibitions and historical anthologies.

A major obstacle to collecting media art is the lack of expertise in its care. The preservation of electrical objects and digital materials does not necessarily fall within the remit of curators, restorers or depository staff, while museum technical departments are rarely prepared to take responsibility for parts of the collection. The installation of these works in galleries relies on the presence of the artist and their collaborators, who play the role of arbiters of the aesthetic and technical decisions involved in the process. The freedom of museum staff to make these decisions independently is otherwise limited. When it comes to installations and time-based media, we are still a long way from the self-confidence that accompanies the installation of painting and sculpture.

The New Media Museums project aims to address similar challenges by creating a platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration in the collection, preservation and presentation of media arts and culture. Its founding members include art museums and other organisations involved in the presentation of media arts in Central Europe. The initial phase was designed as a practice-oriented research. The aim was to identify possible scenarios for the participating institutions to shape their preservation strategies and workflows in order to better incorporate new art forms. This was achieved through case studies carried out by each partner on selected works from their collections.

Collecting time-based media art

The founding partners of the New Media Museums project are two museums: Olomouc Museum of Art (OMA), and Slovak National Gallery (SNG), and three nonprofits: WRO Wroclaw, C3 Foundation, Budapest, and PAF Olomouc. Their mandates to build collections and preserve works of art therefore vary. Museums are legally obliged to preserve the art in their collections. As Jakub Frank noted, curators therefore tend to refrain from acquiring media-based works. There is a real fear in museums that they will not be able to provide the necessary quality of care for media art.

Both the SNG and the OMA have dedicated staff for curating and restoring their collections of modern and contemporary art which include a growing number of media-based works and installations. In 2020, the OMA has begun the process of building a collection of new media and intermedia artworks, acquiring new works and communicating with the artists to provide satisfactory conditions for the conservation of their works. The SNG collection currently con-

tains around one hundred media-based works, including 40 videos. The WRO and C3 collections are primarily digital and can also be described as archives. The WRO collection is linked to its biennial and exhibitions and includes mainly video art and video registrations of installations and performances, but also installations. The C3 collection includes net art, video art and media installations co-produced by the organisation since 1996 and currently comprises 70 works by 40 artists. PAF has been developing a platform for the distribution of contemporary Czech moving image for some time, adapting its distribution strategy to a more personal approach, which has proved to be more effective for an organisation of this size and focus. However, all institutions have an interest in presenting works from their collections in gallery exhibitions and online.

Each partner maintains an online digital catalogue of their collections. The OMA operates an online platform called the Central European Art Database (CEAD); the SNG's collection catalogue is available on Web umenia; the WRO's collection can be accessed through its Videoteka and Media Library as well as on site; the C3 collection is available at catalog and collection; the PAF distribution can be consulted online.

Processual and performative preservation

Traditionally, art conservation has been associated with architecture, sculpture and painting. The profession has evolved to adhere to the conditions of impartiality and objectivity, synonymous with 'minimal intervention.' This concept, derived from the positivist paradigm, remains a dominant attitude in conservation.[1] In essence, it expects conservators-restorers to carry out scientific analysis of material changes in order to determine the interven-

tions necessary to *restore* the original state. While this approach remains relevant for a large number of works, the opening up of collections to media works raises the question of whether it is also applicable to time-based, processual art.

The argument for rethinking approaches to preservation triggered by time-based art essentially begins with unlearning the understanding of artistic intent and authorship as something that is given at the moment of the work's creation. The exclusive relationship between the artist and the work needs to be reconsidered. Conservation research in recent decades has persistently argued that this assumption is incompatible with the nature of the wide range of contemporary art, which requires different ways of determining the nature of the artwork.

Pip Laurenson, who introduced media conservation at the Tate, talks about the need to move away from trying to return an object to its original state and instead to recognise change as an integral part of its identity. Indeed, media works in museum collections are usually realised through reinstallation. In practice, media works only exist when they are installed. Moreover, many of their physical components – monitors, projectors, sound equipment, software and props – are interchangeable. Large parts of artworks are 'stored' only as a set of installation instructions and digital materials. Laurenson likens the act of installing a work to a performance, the results of which always vary because they depend on the interpretation of the work's specifications. Much like musical notation in music or a script in theatre.[2]

Vivian van Saaze adds that the relationship between artist intent and the reinstallation of the work is not unidirectional, but that au-

thenticity and intention are 'made,' constructed through documentation, interviews with the artist and discussions with the wider team and experts who are thus involved in the creative process. In contrast to the perspective of preserving the work by freezing it in a singular state, Van Saaze argues for practical and interventionist forms of engagement by museum staff.[3] According to philosopher Renée van de Vall, this is what distinguishes the paradigm of performative conservation from traditional, scientific conservation.[4].

The transformative effect of changing works on perceptions of authorship and the role of conservation is not limited to installations. Authors such as Rudolf Frieling and Annet Dekker write about examples of site-specific, relational and performative works.[5] Dekker says that artists are of course still important in the process of reinstallation, but instead of being inward looking, the museum assumes the role of facilitator for a group of people formed around the artwork in order to continue it, in other words, its 'network of care.' Similar forms of distributing authorship for the purposes of preservation are usually referred to as open, proliferative preservation. In this sense, Van de Vall speaks of a processual paradigm of preservation.[6] The latter differs from both the scientific paradigm, whose central concern is the material integrity of the work as a physical object, and the performative paradigm in that it does not rely entirely on the conceptual identity of the work, which is expressed as a set of instructions. Indeed, processual works are subject to uncontrollable factors such as weather, material wear, audience interaction or participation. In this context, the aim of conservation is to support the continuation of the work by transferring the necessary skills, procedures and information to those involved.

In summary, the preservation of contemporary art relies on the in-

formed interpretation of the conservator, as discussed in Zuzana Bauerová's contribution to this collection. This parallels the shift in archival theory that has taken place in recent decades. It has to do with the recognition of the power of institutions over history, as well as the fact that everything archivists do is subjective. Extending this thesis, the artist Cornelia Sollfrank highlights the concept of 'situatedness', which can help conservators understand what they can do, rather than striving for objectivity.[7] Or, in the words of Donna Haraway, 'feminist objectivity' can only be achieved through the interconnection of different, 'partial perspectives.' It is important, then, to acknowledge the plurivocal narratives in determining the artist's intent and in the pursuit of documentation in general.[8]

The proceedings

There are two main parts to this collection. The first, the reader, contains commissioned essays presenting different approaches to media conservation. The second part contains video recordings of a colloquium organised as part of the project at the Olomouc Museum of Art in March 2022. The presentations are divided into three blocks, focusing on case studies of the project partners, different museum practices, and archiving of video art and moving image. Many of the colloquium's participants participated in a roundtable discussion. A closer look at the case studies is provided by the video documentary, which was produced on the occasion of a workshop at the Slovak National Gallery in September 2021.

Although the discussions within the New Media Museums project followed several axes, some themes should be highlighted.

The first and obvious party to approach in addressing the questions of presenting and preserving problematic artworks is the artist. For

museums, however, working with an artist is not necessarily straightforward. Artists' views on their work change over time, all the more so on the scale of several decades. On the other hand, their opinions are invaluable and there is an urgent need to document them in one way or another while they are still around. Ideally, the artist would be interviewed at the time of acquisition or exhibition, and the documentation of this exchange would be available for future exhibitions of the work. Before this can happen, it needs to be decided how to these interviews will be conducted in order to adequately address potential problems, and how this documentation will be kept available for future use. This also relates to wider issues of documentation production and organisation.

As the Tate's media conservator Patricia Falcão once remarked, although we often cannot clearly identify the 'significant properties' of the work in question, it is important to think about them and try to write them down, because we learn a lot in the process. Exploring 'significant properties' is a means of determining what to focus attention on in order to answer fundamental questions about the work and what is important for its conservation. The term was originally adopted by Pip Laurenson from the archival community and has since been used interchangeably with the terms 'work-determining properties' and 'work-defining properties.' Patricia Falcão also stressed the importance of involving the artist in the process, ideally from the early stages of acquisition.

Installation-based works change from exhibition to exhibition. In this context, several contributors emphasise iteration reports, the purpose of which is to chronicle changes to the currently exhibited iteration, including the decision-making process behind them. They serve as a companion to the identity report of the work.[9)]

There are various institutional models to support preservation. The development of a media conservation laboratory seems appropriate for larger collections of media installations such as the Tate, MoMA and Guggenheim. Another approach mentioned was that of an interdepartmental working group. SFMOMA offers the example of its 'Media Team', which consists of curators, conservators, technicians and other staff who meet monthly to discuss issues related to the presentation, conservation, acquisition and loan of media-based works. Another model is offered by LIMA, an Amsterdam-based NGO that acts both as a distributor of media art and as a conservation facility for media-based works and components for the country's network of art museums.

What seems relevant in our context at the moment is to initiate communication about media preservation in institutions and to spearhead cooperation with third parties. There are several pitfalls to consider. Out of a hundred media-based works in the SNG collection, about ten are problematic from a media point of view. This is not enough to develop a caretaking partnership with an external institution. Instead, the museum works on a case-by-case basis, although it is interested in a more systematic approach. For the WRO, collaboration on preservation with external parties is limited by financial constraints, while its institutional status does not require museum standards. Similarly, the use of its video digitisation station is limited to the institution and there are no plans to offer it as a service to third parties. The digitisation process was made possible through participation in the major international project Digitising Contemporary Art (DCA). C3 has collaborated with various partners and projects on preservation such as Gateway to Archives of Media Art (GAMA), 404 Object Not Found and most recently with the

artist Mark Fridvalszki, as discussed in their presentation and essay.

In her contribution, art historian and conservation researcher Anna Schäffler recommends that museums establish long-term relationships with external stakeholders, which we might call 'networks of care.' This can also be seen within the institution, in the form of building distributed knowledge, where conservation is the result of collaboration between conservators, curators, educators, archivists, technicians, and others. It can also be seen in the shift (both in vocabulary and practice) from registration, conservation, and curation to collections care, collections management, and stewardship. Museums can draw on post-custodial practices here: focusing on facilitating processes and moving from static cataloguing to mapping relationships between different stakeholders. Acquiring 'unruly' works opens up for their 'instituent potential,' stimulating positive changes in established institutional approaches.

This project is by no means an isolated effort. It builds on the initiatives of the etc. gallery in Prague, PAF Olomouc, Ludwig Museum Budapest and other organisations in the region.[10] In 2019, Vasulka Kitchen Brno organised the colloquium The Digital Era of Artworks in Galleries and Museums, which resulted in an open access book.[11] In addition, the Národní filmový archiv, Prague, has carried out a major research project, "Audiovisual Work Outside the Context of Cinema," aimed at building an infrastructure of professional care for the moving image in Czechia.[12] The baton can be passed on.

---

[1] Villers, Caroline, "Post Minimal Intervention", *The Conservator*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2004, pp 3-10. DOI: 10.1080/01410096.2004.9995197.
[2] Laurenson, Pip, "Authenticity, Change and Loss in the Conservation of Time-based Media Installations", *Tate Papers*, no. 6,

2006. Online: https://tate.iro.bl.uk/work/530355f5-0b22-47f6-85c7-b4e8f401af32.

3) Van Saaze, Vivian, *Installation Art and the Museum: Presentation and Conservation of Changing Artworks*, Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 2013. Online: http://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/33884.

4) van de Vall, Renée, "Documenting Dilemmas: On the Relevance of Ethically Ambiguous Cases", *Revista de historia da arte*, no. 4, 2015, pp. 7-17. Online: http://revistaharte.fcsh.unl.pt/rhaw4/RHAw4.pdf#page=7.

5) Dekker, Annet, "Networks of Care", in Dekker, *Collecting and Conserving Net Art: Moving beyond Conventional Methods*, London: Routledge, pp 71-98. Frieling, Rudolf, "The Museum as Producer. Processing Art and Performing a Collection", in *New Collecting: Exhibiting and Audiences After New Media Art*, ed. Beryl Graham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014, 135–58.

6) Van de Vall 2015.

7) Sollfrank, Cornelia, "obn_a - A Situated Archive of the Old Boys Network", in *Networks of Care: Politiken des (Er)haltens und (Ent)sorgens*, eds. Anna Schäffler, Friederike Schäfer, and Nanne Buurman, Berlin: neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst (nGbK), 2022, pp 72-80.

8) Sollfrank 2022, 77.

9) The basis for iteration reports in a number of museums is a report developed by Joanna Phillips at the Guggenheim Museum and published on its website, https://www.guggenheim.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/guggenheim-conservation-iteration-report-2012.pdf. Several other museums have followed the suit in recent years and published their forms online, for an example of SFMOMA, see Barok, Dušan, Julia Noordegraaf and Arjen P. de

Art Documentation: The Conservator as an Editor", *Studies in Conservation*, vol. 64, no. 8, 2019, pp 472-489. Online: https://doi.org/10.1080/00393630.2019.1603921

[10] Between 2015 and 2020, the Ludwig Museum organized four editions of MAPS - Media Art Preservation Symposium. Most recently: http://maps2020.ludwigmuseum.hu/.

[11] Vojtěchovský, Miloš (ed.), *Vasulka Kitchen Cooking Reader #1: Beyond Media Texts: Primal & Final / Vašulkova kuchyňská kniha #1: texty k médiím: první & poslední*, Brno: Vašulka Kitchen Brno, 2020. Online: https://vasulkakitchen.org/en/publikace.

[12] https://videoarchiv-nfa.cz/

NEW CONSERVATION-RESTORATION OF MEDIA

Zuzana Bauerová

I am an art historian and painting conservator-restorer with a special interest in the theory and history of conservation-restoration of cultural heritage. I am also interested in different approaches of 'decision-making processes' in terms of institutional, methodological and professional aspects, from a historical perspective and in relation to future generations, i.e. the circumstances that affect the practice of conservation and restoration and naturally the profession of conservation and restoration (if it actually exists). Perhaps that is why the editor of this anthology invited me to write an essay on the topic of professional conservation-restoration in the context of the conclusion of the New Media Museums research project, despite the fact that I didn't take part in the project and I have to admit that I didn't follow it from the beginning. Compared to all active participants and co-investigators, I therefore have an advantage in the disadvantage that I can (perhaps) in hindsight take issue with some of its outputs, which have reached me as one of the end users through the project website[1] and the recording of the international symposium.[2]

In the context of the aforementioned orientation of my interests, this essay is therefore an attempt to sketch an intellectual framework for the conservation-restoration of new media in relation to the art of the moving image. My goal is to try to situate some of the

interpretations that the project researchers are working with concerning conservation-restoration as a process of preservation and protection of cultural objects, as well as the profession of conservation-restoration. In order to meet this objective, I have chosen to compare the 'traditional approaches' to conservation and the new needs that the field of conservation of moving image art is gradually formulating (thanks also to this project). The conclusion of the essay can perhaps be taken as a partial suggestion of some possible unorthodox solutions for the next steps in our area of interest.

1. Profession – definitions, documents, institutions, rules

The most recent document defining the profession of conservator-restorer in the Czech Republic is the Document on the Profession of Conservator-Restorer from 2010.[3] As stated in the justification report, its purpose is 'to establish the basic objectives of the principles and requirements relating to the profession of conservator-restorer and to define the role of the conservator-restorer in the protection of cultural heritage in museums and galleries of the Czech Republic' [4]. It can be considered as a non-legislative framework derived from the documents of international professional organisations.[5] This provides us with a certain terminological foundation and a proposal of professional principles for expert practices in the conservation-restoration of objects in cultural institutions.

However, even more than a decade after the adoption and publication of the Document, the fact remains that in the Czech environment we have not managed to precisely define the field of conservation-restoration in relation to other disciplines. Despite

the activities of the European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organisation (E.C.C.O.) and the accreditation procedures of some domestic and foreign universities and academies, we (and Europe as a whole) lack codified requirements for the content and scope of education for conservator-restorers in our country. These areas are characterised by numerous discussions and interdisciplinary dialogues rather than specific documents with a general international consensus on their wording.[6] And while we can certainly argue over the reasons, we can probably agree that the current situation is mainly due to the wide range of materials and types of conservation-restoration objects, more or less sophisticated methodologies of approaches for specific museum, gallery or archival collections, specific situations in the protection of architectural or archaeological cultural heritage and, last but not least, specific political and social interests. The question remains, however, whether the existing conditions don't in fact determine the very nature and essence of conservation-restoration, as was the case in the past.

Almost in the same year in which the Documentary on the Profession of Conservation-Restoration was published thanks to the Association of Museums and Galleries of the Czech Republic and the Czech Committee of the ICOM, the British conservator-restorer Jonathan Ashley-Smith playfully described our profession as an adolescent.[7] He presented the immaturity of preservation-restoration against the characteristic features of this developmental stage of the human individual in terms of psychology and adaptation to codified social relations in society, even making use of more 'serious evidence': for example, he pointed to the concepts that society (in the sense of society, community) connects with ideas about the profession and their activities – cleaning, purification, restora-

tion and conservation. He referred to their origins in the 19th century, although he did not forget to add sustainability as a modern concept.

Current heritage care literature works with this historical period in which the basic framework for the professional management and care of cultural heritage was established.[8] The set of values used by Alois Riegl to define the subject of (state) protection of cultural heritage in Central Europe was a philosophical and conceptual product of the Viennese School of Art History. More than sixty years later, these values were codified on the international level in the form of the Venice Charter. Its subsequent ratification in the national legislations of the 'Western' world ensured official preferences at national levels for the creation and subsequent support of heritage ideologies.

This has created a structure of processes and legislative and non-legislative documents often enabling manipulative decision-making by official (and other) cultural institutions and thus accommodating a certain voluntary blindness of bureaucratic procedures, including legal ones.[9] We do not need to continue this simplistic and certainly unbalanced summary of the history of the implementation of values in cultural heritage with the distinctly radical David Graeber to realise the presence of a society-wide legitimisation of 'structural violence' and political manipulation in heritage care, and therefore in conservation-restoration.[10] I am referring, for example, to the active role of heritage care in the interpretation of national cultural identity, its participation in the 'writing' of the official cultural narrative, but also to very specific cases of heritage care in this country and others.

Historical and contemporary discourses in state heritage care have broadened perspectives on objects of conservation, a revision of their concepts, objectives and tools. To recall just a few that had a direct influence on the conservation-restoration process, I would mention: in the Western world, the influential theory of Cesare Brandi, together with a rigid conviction in the reversibility of intervention, had to admit, under the pressure of postmodernism, that every conservation-restoration intervention is an irreversible process;[11] globalisation has expanded the objects of heritage care to include intangible cultural heritage, so that heritage care privileges the term 'cultural wealth' over 'cultural heritage'; the creative social theories of 1960s French intellectuals have pushed Foucault's theories of forms of social power and Bourdieu's social games into heritage 'collective selection' and have helped to bring community participation directly into the heritage care decision-making processes.[12]

And that's not all. Current proposals for 'experimental' conservation point to moving beyond the utopia of John Ruskin and the Arts and Crafts Movement – i.e. that it is our duty to pass on our inherited cultural heritage to future generations in the condition in which we inherited it.[13] On the other hand, experimental conservation "… sees culture as an intergenerational phenomenon – as shared heritage … as something that belongs to multiple generations. This is the basis of intergenerational equality – leaving the world in a condition that allows our children to enjoy it as much as we do, which is not the same as leaving it in the state in which we found it, which is essentially impossible, because the deepest quality of existence is change."[14]

The aforementioned corrections of conceptual categories demonstrate the pushing of the boundaries of the field and essentially set the stage for "moving past the boundaries of previous experience."[15] The imaginary movement of the boundaries of the field has support in the 'authorised heritage discourse', which is moderated by international organisations such as UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICOM, ICCROM, and IIC, and thus ensures the establishment of new or complementary top-down priorities and approaches.[16] By its very nature, it predisposes social and cultural institutions to normalisation and subsequent control.[17] It is important to note that this process (which needn't always end in the form of a law) has certain patterns and established procedures that take time and ultimately often generate even more rules, obligations and bureaucracy.[18]

These are certainly not flexible processes that skilfully correspond or respond to the needs of society, conservation or a particular monument; instead, the aforementioned movement 'beyond' the boundaries of current practice belongs to pressing current problems and the needs of specific artistic, conservation-restoration and heritage care practice, including the demands of society, taking the form of smaller projects or targeted activities. Their specific naming of the problems in principle calls for direct accountability and immediate remedy. The actions of activists allow for flexible changes, while allowing for a certain degree of error in their positions. Such strained situations can result in new, often unorthodox approaches.[19] It is important to realise that they are the hope for a particular object, field and discipline. As such, they are part of the natural life cycle and thus an expected outcome of our responsibility to 'vague' future generations.[20]

2. From institution to object

Available information and footage indicate that the New Media Museums project is in this very stage, i.e. it is looking for recognition of the needs of moving-image objects by state cultural (and academic) institutions or their founders. I consider the setup of the project, its focus and structuring to be absolutely correct and I value its results. I understand the calls from experts in various fields for the provision of material, technological and personnel infrastructure by competent (mostly national) institutions. Considering the information above, the following are some conclusions that could in my opinion complicate the collection, preservation and conservation-restoration of the moving image.

We designate the moving image as cultural heritage and apply the canonised categories to it in order to fulfil the earlier experiences of society, which are already codified concrete categories or 'values' (returning to Riegl at the beginning of the essay). As such, on the basis of convincing arguments, we legitimately and rightly attempt to introduce new cultural and historical objects into our collective consciousness.[21] The reasoning is in line with the priorities of the national authorities. As citizens, we want to use the existing procedures to make the state take responsibility for the care of this new kind of cultural heritage (as it is currently interpreted).

We therefore act as we have been taught and as the state administration tries to convince us: we see institutional support as a guarantee for the preservation and protection of cultural objects and therefore expect state investment: "In reality, without government funding, the existence of intergenerational preservation of … heritage would hardly be conceivable."[22] We see the collection and

preservation of moving-image objects or collections as a hedge against their destruction, against them falling into obscurity or not being preserved for future generations.

But to what extent are we willing to adapt the perception and needs of the moving image to this bureaucratic system? Are we ready to apply to moving-image works the interpretation of cultural heritage as an immutable relic of the past? In the interest of aestheticising historical value, are we ready to apply the 'aesthetics of end' to moving-image works, which are essentially the product of experimentation, or "the most common type of creative expression" (see Matěj Strnad's article)? Do we want to bring new media under institutional protection without changing the existing standardisation and control mechanisms and without the possibility of flexible responses to other needs that will surely arise in connection with their collection and preservation?

Or is a procedure free of institutional and state mediation more acceptable in order to preserve the material essence of the moving image? Are we sufficiently informed about the risks and potential losses? Do we know what rights and what obligations a current or future owner should have towards the property? In which parts of its management should it enter the decision-making process as part of its preservation, protection and, naturally, presentation? As such, what principles or ethical rules should be followed in the management of the moving image? This thinking represents a major intellectual shift in heritage care. It also directly affects conservation-restoration in the full breadth of its meaning, i.e. its process of preservation and conservation, but also the profession. Similar to the case of architectural cultural heritage, within the framework of which we are now considering, for example, 'experimental conser-

vation', I see the integration of the moving image (i.e. objects as de-
fined today) into the system of its musealisation as a challenge in
the form of identifying new knowledge relevant to this task: "… the
expanded object enables the expansion of the intellectual frame-
work of cultural heritage, which in turn enables the existence of the
object as an object of heritage care."[23] The conservation-restoration
intervention into the material substance of a cultural moving-
image work reflects current social interactions, i.e. it is a reflection
of the system of contemporary everyday social relations. The un-
derstanding of the legitimacy of the protection of a cultural object
is also anchored here.

3. (Time-based) media (art) conservator

While I do not wish to challenge the role of technical equipment and
technological competence in the moving image, I believe that its
preservation is not strictly a technical or infrastructural problem.
Its solution does not involve better technologies (provided inter-
nally by a specific institution or by a service provider, perhaps a
specialised 'hub' or 'lab'). After all, if we were to accept the argu-
ments for prioritising the technical problem, we would admit that
we are abandoning the moving-image works to further (often politi-
cal or power) machinations and further purposeful use/misuse, and
exposing them to ever greater dependence on financial resources.

Technically speaking, we are speaking about a 'reproducible
medium', but from the point of view of its sustainability we have to
deal mainly with the generational loss of the qualities of the work
itself, i.e. with philosophical-social issues (in the sense of Walter
Benjamin's grasp of originality) and, to a large extent, also with ob-
jects that are economic entities.[24] The sustainability of time-

limited media in terms of material and content (including media that are 'only' algorithms of information) cannot be 'recorded' in the classical historically verified way. Nor can they be accommodated by the form of (buck-passing) resilience used in recent years to cover various conservation interventions in architecture (especially in development projects).

In the context of provocative attempts to redefine the goals of traditional heritage care, Jorge Otero-Pailos, quoted here several times, asks ontological, legal, historiographical, cultural, political and technological questions,[25] drawing attention in this way to the inevitability of the conceptualisation of new objects of conservation and seeing it as a civilisational challenge for the field of heritage care: "We live today in a special situation in which certain artistic practices that stand outside of traditional conservation are coming to the forefront of a new conception of the field."[26] It is this unorthodox treatment of cultural objects (in the case of the aforementioned conservationist, even the 'atmosphere') that allows for a broader interpretation of the general values and statuses of cultural objects at the coordination/institutional level. I believe that more general terminology in legislative and non-legislative documents, including codes of ethics, etc., would literally 'free the hands' of memory institutions, allowing specific cultural organisations (museums, galleries, archives) to respond flexibly to the emerging and largely changing needs for new collection items. This would take the form of an independent and autonomous definition of collection and preservation priorities in the context of ethical principles.

A change in approaches in terms of conservation related to specific moving-image works will naturally provide space for a change in the perspective of the conservation-restoration profession. Another

closely related aspect in this regard is the change in the academic status of conservator-restorers. Let's look at some of these aspects in greater detail.

By their very nature, time-based media do not conform to the idea of the historical object defined through the concept of material authenticity, which, although redefined several times in history, defines the basic ethical boundaries of conservation and restoration intervention on a cultural object.[27] These are based on a gradually expanding interpretation of physical appearance (evidence) and rely on a material and structural understanding of specific objects. In his classification of interventions, the aforementioned Cesare Brandi listed positive and negative situations that determine the scope of conservation and restoration intervention: ageing, deterioration, accidents, damage. According to their character and scope (to which he applied an aesthetic perspective), a particular intervention has the nature of conservation, repair, restoration, adaptation, re-interpretation. The following period (1980–1990) brought heavier application of technological research in conservation and restoration intervention and introduced (especially in the Anglo-Saxon environment) the discipline of technical art history.

The result of the interaction of the disciplines involved is the re-interpretation of the profession of the conservator-restorer as a narrator, i.e. one who interprets and enters into the creation of the stories of a specific cultural object. In this framework, value has been assigned over the last forty years to originally unwanted signs of ageing (originally removed varnish, repainting, etc.), which support the narrative role of conservation and restoration intervention. This reversal, together with a turn towards the material nature of the cultural object, 'led' the profession to favour preventive conser-

vation over other forms of conservation and restoration interpretation. Additional proof of this is the recent terminological categories contained in the documents and codes of ethics for conservator-restorers that are listed in the introduction to the essay.

This established form of conservation-restoration has been enriched in recent decades by an interdisciplinary approach that allows for the involvement of other professions, or at least their work procedures. However, it still contingent on the historicity of the material nature of cultural objects. If elements such as the denial of material originality, material impermanence or even the absence of (at least classical) materials enter the processes of conservation, protection and interpretation of cultural objects thanks to the moving image, we have to admit that a change in some procedures is inevitable and the possibilities of the profession may be quite limited.

The future of professional care may therefore be shaped not by the introduction of new fields of conservation-restoration of new media in an academic environment, but by postgraduate or complementary (in the sense of specialised) studies to the Master's degree in conservation-restoration (at art or engineering colleges). This idea follows the practice of British conservator-restorers, who see the development of the discipline more as an amalgamation of related conservator-restorer specialisms, while maintaining a unified basic professional education.[28]

A major challenge for learning opportunities defined in this way is stimulating their ability to respond promptly to frequent changes (given the evolution of technology), as only then can we open the question of their integration into a specific cultural or academic institution, or of maintaining their institutional independence.

Conclusion

On its path to maturity, conservation-restoration will continue to be a part of heritage care. If the moving image and new media as new objects of cultural wealth help loosen today's ossified bureaucratic procedures and openly invite more flexible responses to the needs of cultural objects in the form of conservation-restoration options, we can move confidently in this direction.

Translated by David Gaul.

The text is also available in the original Czech version.

---

[1] http://newmediamuseums.cead.space/ (accessed 24.7.2022).
[2] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuBEkiAB_qI&list=PLWRZTvgljmrgPWQtbK5Qi3ARi41SEHgYk (accessed 24.7.2022).
[3] *Dokument o profesi konzervátora-restaurátora*, Asociace muzeí a galerií ČR, 2010. The 'conservation-restoration' terminology in connection with the professional treatment of works of fine and applied arts comes from ICOM-CC recommendations (2008).
[4] "Důvodová zpráva", in: Lehmannová, Martina (ed.), *Etické kodexy*, Český výbor ICOM, 2014, pp. 63–64.
[5] Lehmannová 2014, p. 64: '*Profesní kodec konzervátora-restaurátora ICOM-CC* (1986); *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums* (2004); *Dokument z Vantaa* (2000); *Victoria & Albert Museum Conservation Department Ethics Checklist* (1994, 2004); *E.C.C.O. Professional Guidelines I-III* (2002-2004); *AIC Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice* (1994); *ICOM-CC Resolution on Terminology for Conservation* (2008); *Směrnice Evropského parlamentu a Rady 2005/36/ES o uznávání odborných kvali-*

complete list of references is provided on pp. 76–77.

[6] Among the most current, I can mention: Conversations on Conservation: Current Issues and Future Strategies in Decision Making, https://www.icom-cc.org/en/calendar/event/conversations-on-conservation-current-issues-and-future-strategies-in-decision-making (accessed 24.7.2022).

[7] Ashley-Smith, Jonathan, "The Adolescence of the Profession", article presented at the conference *Conservation: Principles, Dilemma and Uncomfortable Truths*, London, 24.9.2009. Available online: https://www.icom-cc.org/en/downloads/the-adolescence-of-the-profession (accessed 24.7.2022); also see: Richmond, Alison – Bracker, Alison (eds.), *Conservation Principles, Dilemas and Uncomfortable Thruths*, London, 2009.

[8] The most recent in the Czech environment includes an essay published in: Melková, Pavla (ed.), *Živá památka*, IPR Prague, 2022.

[9] Graeber, David, Utopie pravidel, Prague: Prostor, 2017; cf.: Otero-Pailos, Jorge, "Atmosféra jako kulturní objekt", in: Melková 2022, note 8, p. 65.

[10] This appears on all levels, from the process of recognition of the object as a monument, which includes its legitimisation by state institutions, their institutional mechanisms (professional associations, government agencies, professional journals, critics and art historians, etc.). The same is pointed out by Otero-Pailos, Jorge, "Tvůrčí aktéři", in: Melková 2022, note 8, p. 51.

[11] Czech translation: Brandi, Cesare, *Teorie restaurování*, Tichá Byzanc, 2000.

[12] Graeber 2017, note 9, pp. 67–68.

[13] For more on this activity, see Melková's 2022 essays, especially p. 67: "One area that has great potential in this regard is 'experimental heritage care' – a theoretically informed practice that tests hypothe-

[14] Otero-Pailos 2022, note. 9, p. 67.

[15] Otero-Pailos 2022, note 9, p. 68.

[16] Smith, Laurajane, *Archeological Theory and the Politics of Cultural Heritage*, London, 2004.

[17] Also pointing out this trait in heritage care is Otero-Pailos, Jorge, "Experimentální památkové péče", in: Melková 2022, p. 24: "social institutions codify human experience in order to normalise and control it."

[18] Graeber 2017, note 9, p. 16.

[19] Otero-Pailos 2022, note 9, pp. 68–69

[20] Otero-Pailos 2022, note 17, p. 25: "The time scale is most often short: our personal choices are likely to die with us unless they resonate in some way with the future choices of younger generations." Cf.: Bauerová, Zuzana, "Konzervátor-restaurátor = Indiana Jones s bičem na minulost a budoucnost?", Plato Ostrava, 20/11/2019, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8HN2zrsrCZc (accessed 24.7.2022).

[21] Otero-Pailos 2022, note 17, p. 21.

[22] Otero-Pailos 2022, p. 26.

[23] Otero-Pailos 2022, p. 17.

[24] Every copy of the original, even the most perfectly created one, differs from it, loses certain technical, technological and aesthetic qualities, becomes mainly a set of information and its changes.

[25] Otero-Pailos 2022, note 9, p. 65.

[26] Otero-Pailos 2022, p. 68.

[27] In this context, we can point out, e.g. the controversies surrounding the removal of lacquer, secondary (and historical) interventions, or the conclusions of the much-discussed conference in Greenwich (1974) on the ironing of paintings, etc. For more on the subject, see e.g. Leonard, Mark (ed.), *Personal Viewpoints*, Los Angeles: Getty

[28)](#) Jonathan Ashley-Smith's article (note 7) recalls his colleague Jane Henderson's call in 2000: "we must realise that what unites us as conservators is far more significant than what divides us."

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS – FOUR CASES FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE OLOMOUC MUSEUM OF ART

Jakub Frank

Introduction

This text is an attempt to summarise what preceded the establishment of the New Media and Intermedia Collection at the Olomouc Museum of Art (OMA) and to share experiences with the handling new media artworks in state museum institutions. Using the example of two works of art that were acquired prior to the establishment of the collection and two works that were acquired for it, this article seeks to outline the specific issues that arise in the pre-acquisition process, the documentation and registration of these works and their components, the restoration/conservation processes as well as the storage and back-up of the works, and finally their appropriate presentation at exhibitions. The article is based on my practical experience, was written with the help of and in consultation with colleagues from various departments – restorers, documenters, curators, IT workers – and therefore also includes personal testimonies of people who were part of the acquisition process.

The establishment of a collection must be based on the long-term strategies of the institution, its internal organisation and ambitions, as well as the professional interest and preferences of the curators. On the other hand, it must be adjusted to the real possibilities of the

institution, its acquisition potential and availability of artworks, its technological background (restoration workshop, technical staff, storage and depository conditions), professional support (curators, inter-institutional communication) and the ability to provide care for the artworks and keep them operational. In the case of new media and intermedia, this often depends on the ability to anticipate the turbulent development and rapid obsolescence of the technologies that these works use. And while the digital footprint of contemporary art grows hand in hand with technological developments, the works of new media pioneers become obsolete and are doomed to extinction if not treated according to their specific needs. This results in the critical loss of a substantial part of the evidence of progressive artistic thinking of the second half of the 20th century and of contemporary artworks. Ensuring quality facilities and extensive research in this area is therefore an obligation for a 21st century memory institution dedicated to collecting modern and contemporary art.

In recent years, the Olomouc Museum of Art has significantly expanded its presentation and collection of new media and intermedia art. Media works have become a regular part of thematic exhibitions, interventions in short-term exhibitions are common, and acquisitions are also taking place. OMA has initiated the research project New Media Museums, which builds on its prior research on digital platforms and databases and brought together experts from different institutions in the V4 countries. All of the above led the museum to consider establishing a new collection. Although it may seem that the establishment of a collection without relevant artworks to be included in it is a reverse process, we see it as an opportunity to develop methods and establish satisfactory conditions for the acquisition, registration, preservation and display of artworks.

Towards the New

The Olomouc Museum of Art consists of three parts – the Museum of Modern Art + the Central European Art Forum and two archdiocesan museums – the Archdiocesan Museum Olomouc and Archdiocesan Museum Kroměříž. The Museum of Modern Art with the Central European Art Forum focus on 20th century art with an extension to the late 19th century and contemporary art. The Archdiocesan Museums, on the other hand, care for the Archbishop's collections and other heritage from the Romanesque period to the 19th century and they include art objects, but also archival materials, books, maps and other artifacts.

The focus of OMA is thus split between modern and old art. Until recent years, however, the museum did not acquire the most recent works of art nor did it concentrate on the younger generation of artists. This was justified by the long-term values the museum stands for and the interest of curators mainly in the progressive art forms of the unofficial scene of the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and the transition period, but not so much in the progressive tendencies of artists who began working after 2000.

When the project of the Central European Art Forum (SEFO) was founded in 2008, its idea was to transform the museum of modern art into a museum of contemporary art with a focus on 20th century art ending in 1989 (with a main interest in the totalitarian period). As the project evolved in relation to the current needs and possibilities of museum institutions, its lack of focus on recent periods became a limitation for a contemporary institution. This resulted in a modification of the concept and, subsequently, the acquisition of artworks from the 1990s as well as post-2000 works.

Fig. 1: Jan Šépka, SEFO – Central European Art Forum. Architecture visualisation.
©OMA

However, although the museum's collections grew, other gaps in the collections became increasingly apparent as curators' interest in traditional media (especially painting and sculpture) outweighed the already rapidly expanding art production in new media and intermedia. It should be noted that this situation was and still is common in most museum institutions in the Czech Republic and is similar in the Central European region as well.[1]

Reflecting the Old

This was the main reason to start the New Media Museums project dedicated to the reflection of art collections, with the aim to use and share the experience gained in different types of organisations to

promote qualified acquisitions and professional care of artefacts of impermanent nature. Prior to the launch of the project, an internal survey of OMA's collections was undertaken to identify the most significant works of art with reference to new media and intermediality. Although at that time there was only one work in the collections that could be described as a 'new media' artwork,[2] there were several artworks that required similarly complex treatment, whether in terms of acquisition, classification and registration, preservation or display. The first issue to be addressed in this project was the reasoning behind restraint in the acquisition of media artworks. In my conversations with curators who worked at the OMA after 2000, three main arguments recurred.

1. Lack of expertise

   This is not to say that the curators were not familiar with new media art, but rather that they were aware of the technical infrastructure and specific requirements that collecting new media art entails, and were well aware that these requirements could not be met under current conditions.

2. Specialised institutions

   Around the year 2000, there were already other institutions specialized in collecting and preserving new media - the Research Centre of the Academy of Fine Arts, the National Gallery in Prague, etc. Since the OMA collections are media-oriented, new media were perceived separately also from the point of view of collecting. The prevailing opinion was that contemporary art could be collected according to the traditional division of media, and new media were thus neglected.

3. Act No.122/2000 Coll.

   The act on the protection of museum collections requires the

collection from damage" and "to preserve the collection in its entirety as it is recorded in the central register." According to the museum collection manager, the law does not sufficiently define the treatment of intangible objects. Since it is the museum that guarantees the proper presentation of its artworks and, above all, their preservation for future generations, considerable responsibility lies with curators, depository staff, conservators and other museum staff. These considerations ultimately outweighed the curators' desire to expand their collections of modern and contemporary art to include works of new media.

Although the law has not changed and the technical infrastructure is still far from ideal for handling media artworks, the thinking in the institution has gradually evolved in recent years. The preferences and experiences of a younger generation of curators who have followed the accelerating transformation of the art scene have played a fundamental role in this process. Over time, it became clear that new media works did not belong only to specialised institutions, but became a natural part of contemporary art. And while much of preservation work can be done by specialised institutions, representative collections of contemporary art themselves cannot do without new media works. The way forward has been then to collaborate on functional methodologies that can form the basis for future modifications. At the same time, these ambitions are subject to the consideration of the management on the institution's capabilities, objectives and long-term strategies.

With the idea of establishing a New Media collection, there was a need to review the OMA's collections to find works relevant in the context of new media and intermedia. The largest group of works

were kinetic sculptures and interactive objects, which are part of the Collection of Sculpture. The selection of artworks does not necessarily represent the precursors of new media, nor does it necessarily include only artists who later focused on new media. Rather, the works were selected based on treatment requirements, either in exhibitions or in depositories. These are mainly kinetic, optical and light sculptures by artists such as Stanislav Zippe, Milan Dobeš, Juraj Bartusz, Václav Cigler, Hugo Demartini, Radoslav Kratina and others. Some of the works are not kinetic or interactive in the true sense of the word, rather they were created as mobile objects or variables, but could not be used in the gallery conditions and were exhibited as static objects.

Among the selected works are three kinetic light sculptures by Slovak artist Milan Dobeš - *Kinetic Relief, Pulsing Rhythm, Attraction of Red Buildings* - all created in the 1960s and belonging to the early period of constructivist experimentation with movement. Another example is the light sculpture *Light Point - Cut Glass* by Václav Cigler, which uses a spotlight placed behind a large glass plate. A characteristic element of these sculptures is their variability, which strongly influences the final appearance and effect, as well as the conservation treatment of their parts and their storage.

One work stands out in the Collection of Sculpture, *Sembion* by the Czech-Argentine artist Federico Díaz. *Sembion* is the only work that can be viewed as new media art and embodies most of the issues and problems associated with collecting and preserving new media. These issues are elaborated below.

In addition to those mentioned above, there is also a sub-collection of action art that belongs to the Collection of Photography.

Although these works hardly fit into the field of new media art, certain affinities can be found in the nature and problems of their classification and in the importance of documentation.[3] These issues, however, are beyond the scope of this article.

Cases

Stanislav Zippe – Spiral

A special place in the Collection of Sculpture is dedicated to Stanislav Zippe. He belongs to the generation of pioneers of new media and his work *Spiral* is of unquestionable importance as one of the first installation artworks in Czechoslovakia. *Spiral* builds on Zippe's series of luminescent variations - environments usually made up of lights, mirrors and various objects. *Spiral* is installed in a black box or in a room lit by UV lights and black mirrors on the floor. On the mirrors are placed several spheres painted with fluorescent colours and a fluorescent circle. Above them, mounted to the ceiling, an engine rotates a suspended fluorescent wire to create impressive kinetic and light effects.

Zippe created the work as early as 1969 and included it at his solo exhibition at the Gallery on Charles Square, but it was not shown again until 1993, when it appeared at the *Poetry of Rationality* exhibition curated by Jiří Hlaváček at the Wallenstein Riding School.[4]

OMA acquired the installation from the artist in 2000, when it was on loan to the National Gallery in Prague. During an exhibition there, the engine turning the spiral collapsed and damaged not only the glass parts at the bottom, but also the engine itself.
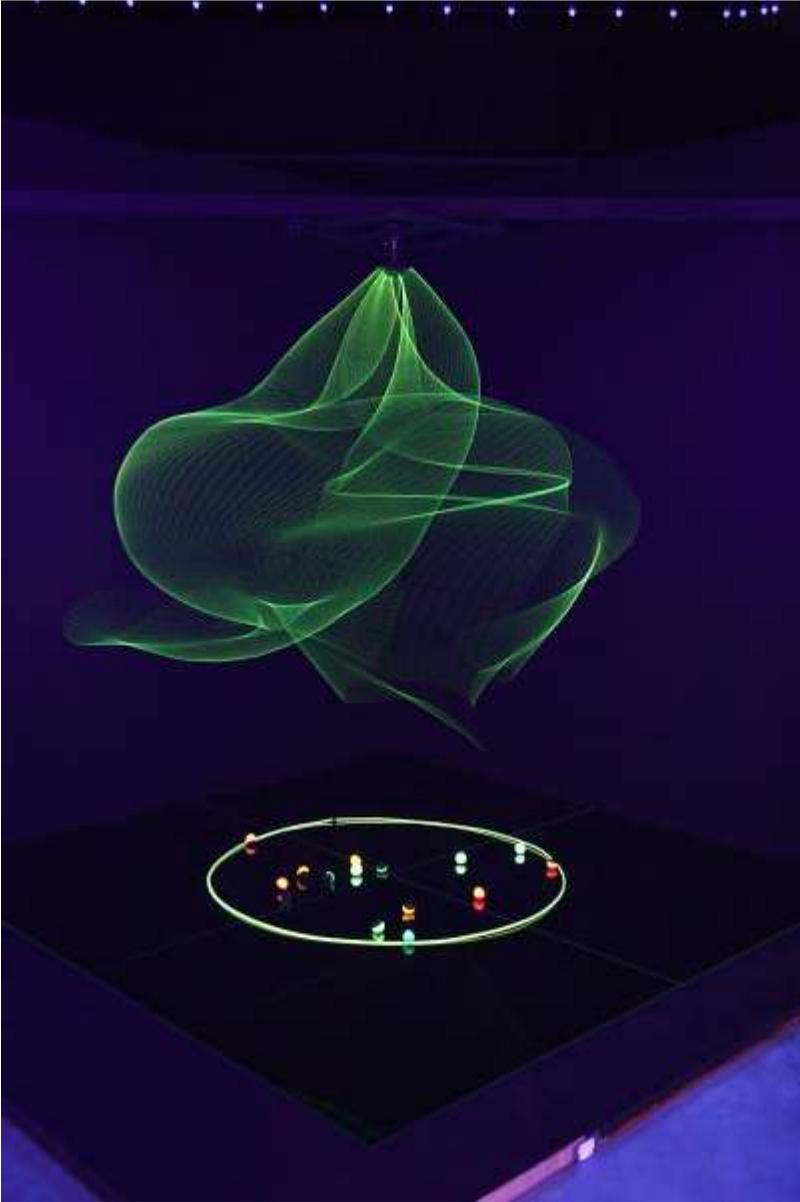
Fig. 2: Stanislav Zippe, *Spiral, From Titian to Warhol*, 2012. OMA Collection. ©OMA

During restoration work, the OMA curators and conservators were in contact with the artist, but he had no specific requests or instructions for repair or reconstruction of the work. In the end, the work was restored with the help of local technicians using components of an old photocopier.

In 2012, *Spiral* was exhibited at the *From Titian to Warhol* exhibition at the OMA. The artist was consulted about reconstruction and suggested suitable dimensions for the installation, but did not specify them in detail. Neither the number nor the design of the objects belonging to the installation was specified by the artist, and the photographic documentation from previous exhibitions was of little help. Several photographs from the 1969 exhibition focus primarily on capturing the movement of the spiral instead of the technical setup of the work as a whole.[5] The photo documentation of the 1993 exhibition *Poetry of Rationality* has not survived due to the transformation and relocation of the museum.[6]

The reconstructed version of *Spiral* was well photographed and a short video was made during the 2012 exhibit. This visual material can be used as a reference for future exhibitions of the work. Depository storage appears to be unproblematic, as does the inventory of parts of the installation, which means that the current condition of the work is stable and *Spiral* can be exhibited and loaned. However, some important data is still missing. For example, the restoration report lacks information on the replacement of the engine. A revision is therefore necessary to document the current state in detail and to record as much as possible about the former conditions of the piece.

standards for the display of work and that the installation methods used in *From Titian to Warhol* are determinative of future exhibitions. Any further documentation of previous arrangements of the work, as well as accompanying documentation (sketches, written notes…) by the artist or a record of his memories, can play an important role in terms of art historical research.

Federico Díaz – Sembion

Fig. 3: Federico Díaz, *Sembion*. Installation view. ©Federico Díaz

Probably the most complex example of all the media artworks in the OMA collections is the work *Sembion* by the Czech-Argentine artist Federico Díaz. *Sembion* has all the hallmarks of an intermedia artwork, combining an interactive software and audiovisual installation along with automatically designed objects and digital prints.

The technical details provided by the artist:

PC, C++ software, semantic analyser, optical sensor,

data projector, semi-transparent material, polyamide material, acoustic insulation, SLS rapid prototyping objects, data network size projection room of flexible dimensions.[7]

The artist's statement on the work:

> The aim of the project is to convert speech into visual forms through specially programmed software. Voice recognition detects the speech of visitors to the installation and analyses not the meaning, but the syntax and conventionalised phrases and converts them into a pre-built dictionary of shapes. The result is a set of data visualised as metablob systems through stereolithography technology and rapid prototyping. The project was developed in collaboration with the Research Centre of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague and the renowned art theorist Jiří Ševčík.
> The project was also presented at the exhibition *Die Algorithmische Revolution* at the ZKM in Karlsruhe and the ICA in London.[8]

Sembion was originally designed as a software for data visualisation using written text as source material. The text, originally a single book, the anthology *Czech Art 1938-1989*, was analysed according to its morphological and semantic structure and the data obtained was subsequently transformed into 3D visual form of so-called metablobs projected on the screen. When exhibited as an interactive installation, sensors connected to the program also responded to motion, touch, voice and colour stimuli from visitors, further varying the resulting image. Subsequent displays of the piece used vari-

the software's dictionary. However, the idea of translating the texts according to their content and meaning was never implemented due to technical difficulties. Neither the reflection of visitors' emotions or their physical condition in the resulting visualisation was possible during the years of software development.

The visual outputs of the analysed texts, the "metablobs" - constantly changing fluid forms resembling mercurial substances - constitute an important part of Díaz's work. Their shape responds to each new input - each word in the text, every visitor in the room - and constantly adapts its form. Díaz used these digitally produced metablobs (created without the direct involvement of the artist) to create physical objects using a method called Selective Laser Sintering (SLS), a precursor to 3D printing. The method involves sintering a thermoplastic powder medium with a laser beam to create abstract sculptures. Díaz continued this method in the following projects. These small sculptures were then exhibited alongside the *Sembion* installation, either alone or as part of other installations.

Sembion was offered to OMA in 2007 by the private gallery Zdeněk Sklenář as a set of works. It consisted of software on CD-R with one extra copy (both copies signed by the artist), three large format digital prints showing a metablob adjusted and signed by the artist, and a sculpture produced by SLS. The set also included a complementary element to the SLS sculpture - a luxurious looking platform made of shiny red plastic, belonging to the *Fluid F1* project, suggesting a merger of two independent projects.[9]

Both CD-Rs contain a single file - the boot command – that should launch the Sembion software. However, the software itself is stored elsewhere. It is not clear what else (software or hardware) is needed to reconstruct the installation as it was presented in 2003-2005, nor what the exact function of the software is. This question - arguably the most problematic about *Sembion* as a collection object - belongs not only to the category of collecting and documenting new media, but also to licensing and authenticity, and in a broader sense to the ontology of digital art. This, however, appears to be a problem that is eminently museum-related, which may be one of the reasons why Díaz decided to turn to privately funded and commercial projects.

Fig. 5: Federico Díaz, *Sembion*. Depository storage. ©OMA

Since the acquisition, *Sembion* has been exhibited only once at the *From Titian to Warhol* exhibition at the OMA, where only the SLS object was on view with video documentation of the installation without interactive elements.

In short, a museum that had never acquired such artworks before and had not necessary care in place, acquired an art piece that simply proved to be non-functional before it could be displayed. And since the original software soon became obsolete and similar interactive software is being developed in many fields, this work is simply a testament to the progressive ambitions of early software art in this country.

From the OMA's perspective, three options for future display seem relevant: 1) Reconstruction of the work using the original software

with an adequate hardware constellation; 2) Acquisition of archival materials and documentation of the installation as it was exhibited at the ICA London or ZKM Karlsruhe, thus showing it as a document of once progressive technologies; 3) Function-based emulation - using the current system to imitate the work's functioning. The last option seems to be the most problematic and opens up questions of authenticity and integrity of the work. Documentation of the original modification would be an essential part of such an installation. The artist's statement may play a decisive role in this case, but all efforts to contact Federico Díaz have so far been unsuccessful.

Roman Štětina – Babyluna

The gradual change in the aims and ambitions of OMA and SEFO has led to a greater representation of contemporary progressive art forms and the introduction of artists of the younger generation in exhibitions and collections. These include contemporary interventions in exhibitions of canonical works of art, transhistorical approaches within the permanent exhibition, site-specific and public-art realisations within the SEFO Triennial, and many more. All of these reflected the tendency towards intermediality or post-media approaches and presented new technological challenges for curators, installers and conservators.

Among them was an artistic intervention created by Roman Štětina - Czech intermedia artist, laureate of the Jindřich Chalupecký Award and assistant of the studio of intermedia art at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague.

Fig. 6: Roman Štětina, *Babyluna*. Depository storage. ©OMA

The work was commissioned for an exhibition by Jiří Kolář, which is part of the confrontage series *Babyluna*. Kolář's album, consisting of 52 individual sheets with two confronting motifs on the front and the artist's epigrams on the back of each sheet, became Štětina's inspiration in terms of semantics and form. The resulting intervention consisted of a sound installation in which a male voice (radio director Miroslav Buriánek) reads the epigrams and tries to find the correct pronunciation and intonation for each of them, while in the background we hear Štětina clicking his mouse while cutting and editing the resulting work. The articulation of the collaging process triumphed over the content of the spoken word. Another part of Štětina's intervention was his variation or appropriation of one of Kolář's confrontages - when he uses Google image search to vary

one of the sheets and the result is a new confrontage, not dissimilar to the original one, but created purely by Google's algorithms.

The installation is intended to be invisible, playing from conventional stereo speakers mounted to the ceiling of the room, presenting only the voice and clicks. The piece thus consists only of a data file and a set of instructions that were communicated in advance via email between the curator, the artist and a member of the audiovisual team.[10] After much debate, the decision was made to omit any visible - or even visually appealing - sound reproduction devices, leaving the final 'form' of the work to the curator and the technological possibilities of the space.

Roman Štětina's *Babyluna* was then proposed for acquisition as the first new work for the newly established New Media and Intermedia Collection and was eventually acquired also as the first sound work in the OMA's collections. Communication with the artist then began to establish the terms of the purchase and its actual subject matter. At this point, the artist's experience in selling videos in particular was of great help to the curators and documentarians. *Babyluna* was delivered as a data file on an SSD stored in a simple black case with a certificate of authenticity and a technical sheet. The certificate confirms that the work was produced in a 1/1 edition by the artist himself, while the technical sheets describe what the SSD contains and how the work should be handled and displayed. The work's file therefore includes:

    1. Basic specifications
    2. Archival and exhibition copies
    3. Technical requirements
    4. Display manual

5. Labelling information

The basic specification describes what files are stored on the disk (in this case, one archive copy file and one exhibition copy file) and what their technical specifications are - file type, length, channels, bitrate, and sample rate. The second section contains a simple description of the physical contents of the case. The technical requirements describe the appropriate display of the work (stereo sound system/headphones, playback options, type of device) and specify the file conversion and compression options. The display manual states that when displaying the work in a room with other works, it is recommended to use acoustic and sound absorbing materials. Finally, the fifth section provides information that should be included on the label.

In addition to the case with the disc, the acquired work includes a box frame with the original print labelled and signed by the artist.

In terms of sustainability, *Babyluna* appears to be relatively trouble-free, with OMA having documentation designated by the artist. The work, which was the first to be included in the New Media and Intermedia Collection, served as a case study in terms of registration and inclusion in the database, as well as in terms of file storage and backup within the museum's data storage system. The entire technical documentation system was designed by the artist himself, which demonstrated Štětina's experience in the production and sale of video and sound works.

Petr Válek − Vrrrrrzofon and Import − Export

As already mentioned, OMA's new exhibition formats, especially

the SEFO Triennial, have sparked several new collaborations with artists from different fields of art who have created performative, site-specific and participatory projects. These formats are usually outside the regular museum context - their ephemerality and immateriality makes it very challenging to collect and preserve them, or even to exhibit them in regular museum displays. These projects have included participatory happenings with performers, lecture series, temporary artistic interventions in public space, pop-up performances and events. One of the artists with whom OMA has established a long-term collaboration during the SEFO Triennial is Petr Válek. Válek has prepared a series of performative events, sound interventions in public space using navigational speakers for the blind as a playback medium, and a kinetic object - a special attention-grabber - placed in a museum window. He has also used the museum building and its everyday life as source material for his musical improvisations, on which he has collaborated with two curators and sound theorists, Martin Klimeš and Miloš Vojtěchovský.

Fig. 7: Petr Válek, *Vrrrzzophone*, 2021. ©Petr Válek

Fig. 8: Petr Válek, *Import – Export, Válek Attacks!*, 2021. Installation view, CCA Gallery, Šumperk. ©Petr Válek

Two kinetic sound objects by Petr Válek were acquired in 2022, together with the artist's video documentation of their ideal setup and functioning.[11] Although materially they are more or less traditional media, their sonic element and distinct performative potential situates them in the context of the Collection of New Media and Intermedia.

Petr Válek is a sound artist, musician, performer, painter, creator of musical instruments, synthesizers and sound effects, author of videos that he shares on social media, and above all a tireless sound and noise experimenter. Válek did not study at art school, nor does he belong to an easily definable group of creators. A common feature of his work is an interest in DIY and handmade practices, constant recycling of materials and exuberant creativity. Although Válek primarily creates kinetic objects and sculptures, their aesthetic effect lies primarily in the rhythmic and sonic element.

Válek's sound work has only recently received recognition from the art scene and in 2021 his works were exhibited at Vasulka Kitchen Brno, Bludný kámen in Opava and the East Bohemian Gallery in Pardubice, which also purchased several works for its collection. His other works are also part of the collections of the Art et Marges Musée in Brussels.

The two objects that have been selected for acquisition are *Vrrrrrzofon* and *Import - Export*. The former consists of a base on which is placed a device consisting of a round metal plate and an assembly of wires bent so that each of them touches the plate. A motor rotates the plate, causing the wires to creak and squeak in a rusty noise. A potentiometer controlling the speed of rotation adjusts the final saturation of the sound. *Import - Export* is an object that consists of a base with a motor rotating around a horizontal axis, to which a long wooden rod is attached. Attached to the end of the rod is a banana box, which is pushed forward and pulled backward by the rotation of the motor. The friction of the box against the floor produces a deep resonant sound.

In terms of room adjustments, *Import-Export* can be described as an installation (rather than an object) because the resulting effect is largely dependent on the space where it is placed. Moreover, since the artist's intention is to create complex sound environments, we can recognize spatial and temporal as well as performative qualities in most of his works. From an interpretative point of view, it is essential to take these aspects into account. Although the visual form of the works remains more or less stable, the sound component is strongly influenced by the environment in which the works are exhibited, making it a key factor in the perception of the work, even

though it is not an integral part of it. The sound emitted by the objects fundamentally influences the perception of the works in their surroundings and, no less significantly, the work of the museum staff.

Fig. 9: Jakub Frank and Petr Válek at New Media Museums Colloquium, 2022. ©OMA

In terms of restoration, the uncomplicated construction and simple technical operation of the works appear to be relatively trouble-free. At the same time, however, their technical instability and the fragility of some elements present a challenge for conservators. In addition, the creative input of the artist, who during the interview expressed an interest in reconstructing the works himself, plays an important role in the process. When asked what would happen to the works after his death, he replied that they would die with him.

An interview with Petr Válek, devoted to the issues of the integrity of his works, their preservation and restoration, as well as their installation and the interpretation of the artist's intent, was con-

ducted publicly as part of the New Media Museum Colloquium and has been included in [this anthology](#).

Conclusion

Although the OMA's New Media and Intermedia Collection is relatively recent, and the same can be said of its experience with media artworks, we believe that the topic of preservation should be raised and expertise in handling new media artworks should be gathered and shared, in order to create satisfactory conditions and design workable methods across organisations and institutions focused (not only) on new media art to ensure their longest possible life. This is also the reason why the Olomouc Museum of Art, although it did not have a new media collection, implemented the New Media Museums project.

These four cases represent just a few of the wide range of issues and problems associated with new media and intermedia artworks and their handling from the moment of their selection for potential acquisition, through their inclusion in the collection and physical storage, to their display and eventual loan.

Based on the findings presented, it is clear that the ability to anticipate is crucial to the proper handling of these works, especially in identifying potential problems, determining the cost of maintaining the work, etc. If we are able to foresee and prevent impending problems, or at least be prepared for them, we can not only save the affected artworks, but also save the museum from unforeseen burdens and unavoidable costs. Moreover, if we followed the methods that have been available for several years on the websites of major museum institutions and various independent platforms, or

adopted some of the methods introduced in this project, the process of anticipation would become much more feasible.

Conversely, it is necessary to take care of artworks when some unforeseen event happens to them and to learn to react immediately, with sufficient flexibility and the necessary courage. We need to make detailed documentation of every step we take in these often untried processes. This allows researchers to follow the process of transformation or deterioration of an artwork, but it also helps to facilitate future understanding of the work and its interpretation in an art historical context/research.

Moreover, interdepartmental collaboration between curators, conservators, documenters and IT staff leads to overcoming the fear of making mistakes and shows that it is not possible to follow strict instructions and procedures from a manual when conserving new media, but that it is necessary to work together in interdisciplinary teams and to learn and master new processes.

Given that the current economic crisis is affecting not only the museum's operations, but also all investments in exhibition programmes and collection development, it is obvious that no major acquisitions will be possible in the near future. This situation creates room for a deep rethinking of the care of artworks and for paying special attention to selected works, to determine adequate ways of displaying them and to preserve them for the future. Considering what Zuzana Bauerová writes in her essay in this anthology on the dependence of cultural preservation on state investments that make collections and artworks susceptible to bureaucratization and manipulation, this process seems relevant under the above conditions and certainly beneficial for artworks.

[1] This was confirmed by a survey on the collection and care of new media artworks in the collections of state institutions, conducted by students in the New Media Arts & Archive course within the Theory of Interactive Media programme at Masaryk University. The course was led by Barbora Kundračíková, Dušan Barok and Jakub Frank, the initiators of the New Media Museum project. The survey has not been published.

[2] According to the Tate Art Terms definition: "A term new media is used to describe the sophisticated new technologies that have become available to artists since the late 1980s that can enable the digital production and distribution of art." Available at https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/n/new-media.

[3] More on new media documentation: Documenting New Media Art, http://mattersinmediaart.org/assessing-time-based-media-art.html

[4] Hlaváček, Josef (ed.), *Poetry of Rationality – Constructive Tendencies in Czech Art of the 1960s*, Prague: České muzeum výtvarných umění, 1993, p. 97; Srp, Karel, *Stanislav Zippe – Luminous Fields 1968/1996*, Prague: Galerie hlavního města Prahy, 1996, pp. 20-24.

[5] Srp 1996, p. 26.

[6] The author communicated with the National Gallery in Prague, in whose current premises the exhibition took place, as well as with the former Czech Museum of Fine Arts in Prague (now the Central Bohemian Region Gallery), which exhibited *Spiral* in 1996. Neither institution possesses any photo documentation of the piece.

[7] Díaz, Federico, et al., *Resonance*, Prague, 2008, p. 147.

[8] Díaz 2008, p. 163.

[9] The *Fluid F1* project used the same SLS-made forms as *Sembion*, but the content of the project was entirely different. More information

2008, pp. 204-239

[10] The exhibition ran from autumn 2020 to spring 2021 during the Covid lockdown, so most of the communication and the installation were managed remotely.

[11] They were made at the request of the curator as documentation of the artist's proposed installation of the work, but they also serve as independent video works and can be exhibited as such. For this reason, digital data is treated in the same way as other video or sound works

---

See also the video presentation What's lying on the shelf? – What should have been done before the acquisition and what is to be done now? by Jakub Frank and Petr Válek in this volume.

NEW MEDIA DOCUMENTATION IN THE SLOVAK NATIONAL GALLERY

Mária Bohumelová, Michal Čudrnák, Lucia Gregorová Stach

Other Media collection

The new media are other media, at least in the collections of the Slovak National Gallery (SNG). The SNG's Other Media collection was established after 1989, with its first acquisition being a fragment of the famous team work by artists Stano Filko, Miloš Laky and Ján Zavarský, *White Space in White Space* from 1974 (IM 001).[1]

The collection can be divided into three lines. One consists of the collection and historical reconstruction of artworks belonging to the new tendencies of "other creativity", to use the term of art historian Radislav Matuštík, which developed in Slovakia since the early 1960s in various positions and non-classical media outputs. Most of these works emerged from the unofficial and underground art scene as an alternative to the official doctrine of artistic production associated with academic education and the representation of socialist state culture. Future acquisitions to the collections aim to continue to record, research, collect, preserve and present works of conceptual art, action art and intermedia art, either through artefacts or, in the case of ephemeral works, through mediated photographic documentation. The second line of the collection is related to time-based media art (experimental film, video art, video installation) and the third line is related to "contemporary" installations and site-specific

art. From the media point of view, the collection maps all media of creation and all non-classical positions and forms of artistic production; its focus is on research and registration of the experimental art scene in the sphere of contemporary art in Slovakia, within the limits of its possibilities.

Fig. 1: Ilona Németh installs her work *Breathing Floor* at the exhibition project *Reconstructions*. Photo: SNG Archive.

Due to the circumstances of its creation and short history, the Other Media collection contains various works from the 1960s and later. Some of them can be found on the intersection of conceptual art and sculpture, such as environments, objects and installations. Also included are time-based works such as films, video art and intermedia works such as documentaries, happenings and performances. The focus of the collection allows for future acquisitions of artworks combining multiple artistic approaches, as well as interdisci-

plinary works. Through the collaboration of several professional activities that enrich curatorial knowledge with the necessary technological and media skills, it will also be possible to engage in a more systematic collection and exploration of performance, sound and internet art. For this, however, new ways of recording and storing data need to be developed.

New media documentation v.1

Traditional gallery documentation in collections management systems (CMS) is not suitable for documenting new media. The data structures of most documentation schemes and collections management systems have been designed to meet the needs of painting, drawing and sculpture. The standards and rules reflected in the CMS we use do not allow us to record the complexity of new media in detail, or make it quite complicated.

The Central Register of Works of Art (CEDVU) is an heir to the tradition (or attempt at) central planning of the socialist state; it is both a union catalogue and a collections management system used by all state-registered galleries in Slovakia and developed and maintained by the Slovak National Gallery and an external development team. The CMS uses one scheme for cataloguing all different collections, created according to the decree of the Ministry of Culture (defining a minimum set of fields for cataloguing records for Slovak museums and galleries), rules and guidelines inspired by the standards *Cataloguing of Cultural Objects* and *Categories for the Description of Works of Art* (CDWA).[2)]

This system has not been able to embrace the changes brought about by new media - the diversity of materials, technologies and concepts. This is partly due to the historical debt of collections that (at

least partially) focus on the acquisition of new media - except for the Slovak National Gallery's Other Media collection in the Intermedia collection of the Museum of Art in Žilina. Although many seminal and notable works were acquired in periods when collecting was on an upward curve, there are still gaps in these collections. The uncommon materials and difficult-to-maintain technologies used in many works of art have not been a focus of attention. The time allocated to curators caring for artworks has always been inadequate, the expertise of conservators who have had to deal with unfamiliar material has been lacking, just as documentation specialists have not been accustomed to contemporary art terms describing artworks. Many of the intermedia art positions in the collection are missing precisely because the expertise to preserve them is lacking. The challenge for the future will therefore also be to fill the gaps in the collection, which should at least to some extent reflect the development of art.

At the documentation level, one example of the shortcomings of the rules and schema we use is the lack of a component-level description of the work. At best, only measurements of the components that make up the artwork are provided, with no record of the material and other component-specific attributes. Because they are sparsely exhibited, many works have not been photographed, and installation guides have until recently been scarce and, if any, have not been part of the cataloging record in CMS or shared on an institutional repository.

In recent years, this has begun to change, thanks to projects and initiatives that are paving the way for the preservation and documentation of new media on the basis of the collaboration of experts from different fields.
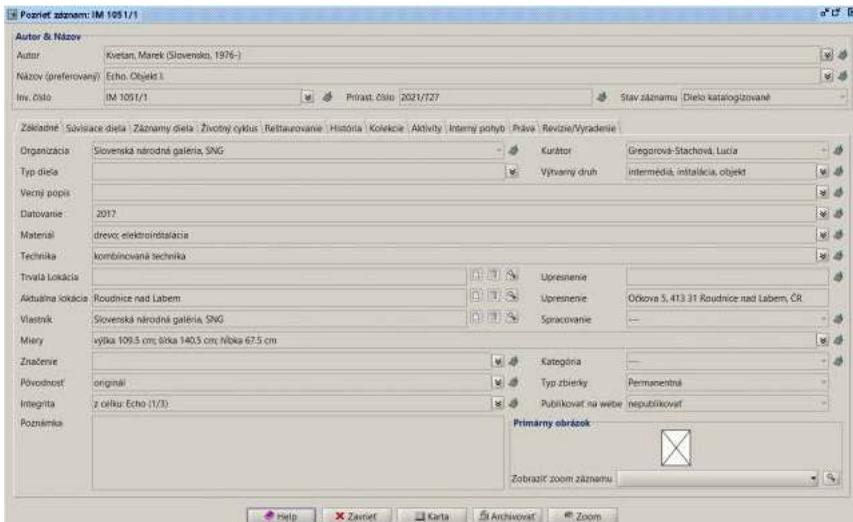
Fig. 2: Catalogue record of Marek Kvetan, *ECHO*, in the CEDVU collections management system.

Reconstruction

One of the attempts to document the Other Media collection was the exhibition project *Reconstructions*.[3] The aim of this "working exhibition," which took place in 2015, was both to present to the public some of the works from the Other Media and Modern and Contemporary Art collections (which changed over time, they were not exhibited all at once), and to digitally document the process and the resulting installations as part of the Digital Gallery project. One outcome was video documentation of the installation process and informal interviews with the artists, along with multiple views of the installation created for print. Lacking a required rigour, the resulting videos are only partially usable as a means of documenting the installation process and the artists' motivation for using the materials (one of the most pressing issues being the common question

of whether certain components are replaceable with other - contemporary - materials).

Wikification of new media documentation

Projects like the New Media Museums provide a good opportunity to look at the ways in which other institutions are tackling similar issues to ours. During our initial meetings with Dušan Barok, we were inspired by the best practices he shared with us, one example being SFMOMA Media Wiki. At SFMOMA, the MediaWiki platform is used as a documentation tool "to help represent the aboutness of contemporary art through reimagined, open-ended object records that can accommodate differing degrees of variability in art, and for which collaboration among individuals and teams is key."[4] The inherently unstable nature of new media is reflected and supported by the wiki, a low-barrier, collaborative tool used to document a list of equipment, technical narrative, software, installation guide, exhibition history with photo documentation, and multiple iterations of an artwork. Each iteration (the artwork's installation in a different environment and setting) is documented in the wiki, hence the need to change other parts of the documentation. If any of the iterations (artwork exhibitions) over time needed to replace or update any component of the artwork, the changes need to be reflected in the installation guide or software section of the documentation on the wiki page. The wiki does not replace the CMS, licensing database, or digital asset management systems (DAMS) used to store images from the exhibition. It serves as an interface between these various systems and processes.

Fig. 3: Marek Kvetan, *ECHO* (2017). Photo: Adam Šakový.

Documentation change

In addition to participation in the New Media Museum project and the inspiration of SFMOMA, the impetus for the change in the documentation of new media works at the SNG was the long-term focus on the acquisition of contemporary art, the plan for a major modernisation of the CEDVU CMS and the relocation of the collection to a new depository (in the newly renovated SNG building).

In 2021, the SNG received a generous donation for the acquisition of artworks from five contemporary Slovak artists. The acquisition and exhibition of these artworks (*You Can't Buy a Butterfly*[5]) was an ideal opportunity to capture the complex information related to their installation, technical elements and other aspects: from A to Z - from the Artist's Idea to almost Zero questions. Given this com-

plexity, we realized that one person (the curator) cannot do it alone, as is the case with traditional artworks such as paintings or drawings. Documenting artworks from new media collections in a new way is based on teamwork.

One of the acquired works is a triptych of wooden chests, *ECHO*, by the Slovak artist Marek Kvetan. It is a multimedia installation, a triptych of found objects of wooden wedding chests with original perforations (folk motifs), enriched with hardware and software (diodes, speakers, 3-channel light and sound program in a loop).

We use *ECHO* as a case study for new documentation. In addition to standard metadata such as description, title, date, technique, measurements and material, we added three important content pillars: artist's intent, installation guide and technical rider. Team members had two meetings before gathering and recording the information and process. The group consisted of a curator, a conservator-restorer, and colleagues from the digital technology and installation departments.

Artist's intent

In an interview with the artist, Lucia G. Stach, curator of the Other Media collection, asked him questions such as:

Why did you choose the material of wooden chests in conjunction with audio-visual elements, how does it relate to the folk theme?

What if one of the chests is damaged? What are some tips for a future restorer?

What should the sound volume be?

Should the chests be installed in a certain order?

The findings include:

- These are wooden chests in which, according to tradition, the bride receives a gift; the artist collects these chests and used three of them for this particular work.
- A three-channel light and sound programme as a reflection of "trávnice" (haymaking songs), traditional Slovak folk songs sung in meadows in mountainous areas of Slovakia, where a group of singers responds to the singing of other groups as an echo. The installation of three chests in a large room is ideal to make the sound effect noticeable.
- It was never meant to be installed in complete darkness so that the visitor could see the beauty and age of the chests and their ornaments.
- The sounds were inspired by the original shepherd songs of Svetozár Stračina, although they are all digital - even the sound of the shepherd's pipe (fujara) is artificial.
- It is the arch that bears the digital mark of our traditions.
- Light follows sound.

Installation guide

In this case, the installation instructions were not crucial because the artwork consists of only three components that need to be wired for electricity. However, it should include information on space requirements and constraints along with photo documentation.

Fig. 4: Marek Kvetan setting up *ECHO* at the *You Can't Buy a Butterfly* exhibition. Photo: Juraj Starovecký.

Technical rider

This part of the documentation was the most challenging. It started with the author's statement "just plug it in and adjust the volume" and ended with a six-page long instructions. Our colleagues required as much detail as possible about the LED lights, MP3 player, impulse source and radio frequency controller. The artist who worked with the sound and lighting programmer was invited for an interview and his contact details are listed in the guide.

Lessons learned

Prepare questions in advance for the artist and their collaborators. Otherwise, you may end up with a three-hour video interview with

the artist with no answers that reflect the need for documentation.

Invite colleagues from other departments to join the process - their knowledge will help you ask more questions useful for documentation.

Plan for it - it's all time consuming.

Be uncompromising in audio and video recording quality. Effort is wasted when the audio is too unclear to understand all the words or when the images do not show specific details.

Transcribe the essential information from the recordings into text.

Next steps

It is essential that this pilot project becomes an ongoing internal process for documenting all newly acquired or exhibited new media artworks. All stakeholders should be informed about it and invited to participate. The next step is to upgrade our CMS and its data structure to be able to record the specifics of new media, expand the vocabularies (material, type of work), and modify the documentation methodology (describing the components of an artwork as items with specific materials and dimensions). The team should agree on templates for documentation on the wiki, establish a common template structure and quality standards for A/V recordings. Each artwork to be acquired for the Other Media collection will then be documented on the wiki using this common template (along with the CMS record). As we cannot expect all artworks acquired for the Other Media collection to be documented in this way in the near future, we will develop a plan to prioritise the artworks and select those that are most challenging to install or interpret.

Fig. 5: Wiki page for Marek Kvetan, *ECHO*.

[1] https://www.webumenia.sk/en/dielo/SVK:SNG.IM_1

[2] https://vraweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04
/CatalogingCulturalObjectsFullv2.pdf, https://www.getty.edu/re-
search/publications/electronic_publications/cdwa/
[3] https://www.sng.sk/en/exhibitions/653_reconstructions
[4] https://stedelijkstudies.com/journal/reimagining-the-object-
record-sfmomas-mediawiki/
[5] https://www.sng.sk/en/exhibitions/3049_you-cant-buy-
a-butterfly-contemporary-art-donated-by-tatra-banka

See also video presentation You Can't Buy a Butterfly by Lucia
Gregorová Stach and Mária Bohumelová in this volume.

VERSIONS, FRAGMENTS OR INACCESSIBLE WORKS? CONSERVATION APPROACHES TO MEDIA ART INSTALLATIONS AND NET ART WORKS IN THE COLLECTION OF THE C³ CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION FOUNDATION

Anna Tüdős, Márta Czene, Márk Fridvalszki

Introduction

The C³ Centre for Culture and Communication Foundation is a small, yet long-established NGO with a video archive and media arts collection. The Centre was founded in the late 1990s with the aim of showcasing scientific and technological innovation and promoting collaboration between art, science and technology. For example, one of the C³'s exhibitions featured Hungary's first publicly accessible internet hotspot. C³'s collection and archives have grown organically through the accumulation of works and content related to its activities.

The main interface for the collection is the catalog.C3.hu platform. Although preservation has been a matter of debate for years, if not decades, maintenance work on the platform is currently sporadic due to lack of resources. In this article, we present a new work called Home Page, an archive of net art selected from the C³ collection. The archive reorganises the works into a new conceptual framework, evoking the lost techno-optimist perspective of the internet. Its de-

velopment was inspired by the idea of integrating the complete works of media artists on the platform and the importance of documenting art while the artist is present.

The formation of the C³ collection

The launch of the centre in Budapest in 1996 was the result of careful negotiations with the Soros Foundation Hungary, Silicon Graphics Hungary and MATÁV (Magyar Telekom), who provided main funding. C³ can be seen as the successor to the Soros Centre for Contemporary Art (SCCA) in Budapest, the largest in the region.[1] The SCCA network was established in 1991 as an international NGO and expanded to eighteen other former Soviet bloc countries throughout the 1990s. With the end of the centrally planned system, the initial period of liberalisation led to a structural crisis and drastic under-funding in the cultural sector. With funding sources being withdrawn, it was recognized that a bottom-up system was needed rather than a centrally managed one.[2] Related to this realization, the network's mission was to help the new system emerge and stabilize, in line with the principle that art can be a force for social change by challenging existing norms in the creation of an open society.[3] The affiliated institutions were modelled on the Hungarian branch. Operating with a new type of art management, the institutions' procedural manual provided guidelines for generating international exchanges, commissioning new works (through a major exhibition and grants annually), and documenting Eastern European art and integrating it into the global canon.[4]

The SCCA network was put on a new footing around 1996, following the restructuring of the funding scheme by the Soros Foundation.

At this point, the C³ Centre for Culture and Communication was created as a three-year pilot programme.[5] At the same time, all the individual SCCA institutions became autonomous. In 1999 and 2000, a newly created but short-lived Amsterdam-based organisation, i_CAN, brought together the former member institutions, of which C³ was a founding member.

Fig. 1: Internet hub at the *Butterfly Effect* exhibition, Kunsthalle Budapest, 1996. Source: C3 Foundation.

SCCA Budapest and C³ have been of great importance both locally and internationally. Major exhibitions before the C³ was founded include *SVB VOCE* (1991) *Polyphony* (1993), *Butterfly Effect* (1996), and subsequently *Perspective* (1999), *Media Model* (2000), *Vision* (2002) - all at the Budapest Kunsthalle, except for *Polyphony*, which is considered the first major public art event in the region. It is also worth mentioning the international conferences organised by SCCA

Budapest, such as *The Media Are With Us!* (1990), *Problem Video* (1991), and the *VI International Vilém Flusser Symposium & Event Series* (1997). Works, recordings and documentation from these events form the core of the C³ collection.

C³ and the world wide web

After 1996, C³'s main task was to raise public awareness of a new phenomenon: the internet.

> "In the 90's it was difficult to get online. Some universities had Internet connections, but only on an experimental level. The technical details (availability of modems, phone lines) and the cost were a deterrent, but nobody knew what it was or how to use it. The first publicly available Internet hotspots in Hungary were created by the C³ Foundation in early 1996 for the exhibition *Butterfly Effect* in the Kunsthalle in Budapest. There, five computers were available and they puzzled the audience. Similar machines were also set up at Internet Galaxy events and Artpool had access, but at that time they were operated from flats. The C³ did eventually have an internet lab, with a free service. You had to register, drop-off visits were time-limited, but it was possible to do this. There was also someone to help people while they were surfing the internet on one of the 10 machines. After that, internet cafés appeared, but there you had to pay."[6]

The C³'s lab was free and open to the public, which was also provided with help and courses for navigating the web. Silicon

tracted a small but active community of artists, which developed various projects. It was an active centre with a residency programme, public events and exhibitions, web terminals, a library and a growing collection. C³ also developed the first public e-mail service (freemail) in the country and helped NGOs to get online by sponsoring web domains. C³ ventured into various collaborations, including with the Pararadio net-based radio station (1997-2007).[7]

C³'s original mission included supporting the artistic creation of new media art, running a residency and organising events and exhibitions. Regular, large-scale group exhibitions of mostly international media art combined the work of local artists with emerging new directions in contemporary art. As the successor to the Soros Centre for Contemporary Art, documentation has been at the heart of the foundation as well. Much of the collection was built up in this way, through the initial residency programme (1996-2002) and annual exhibitions between the late 1990s and early 2000s.

The organisation has been mentioned in the same breath as Ars Electronica in Linz and V2 in Rotterdam, and in a short time has become a regional centre for media art. Through an international residency programme that focused on web-based projects, among other things, artists such as JoDi, Alexei Shulgin and Olia Lialina, spent time in Budapest and produced works, many of which are now considered key. By showing Hungarian artists alongside more established names in their exhibitions, C³ has accelerated their careers at home and abroad.

In 1999 the Centre became independent and continued to operate as a non-profit foundation. The director of C³ since April 1997 has been media theorist Miklós Peternák. With the move in 2005, C³ lost its

own exhibition space and could no longer host public events. The Labor Gallery in Képíró Street, served as a satellite gallery, shared with the Association of Young Artists and the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts. The database of collections has therefore fewer entries from 2004 onwards, but there are entries until 2011.

Collection and catalog: conservation efforts until 2022

The collection is currently available in an online database and via the C³ website. Both are publicly accessible sites and visitors can access different levels of information about the works - some works, especially web projects and video works, are fully operational and accessible. The catalogue includes media art works co-produced by C³, online works, works produced under the C³ residency programme and Studio Grant, and documentation of media art projects carried out by C³. It also includes C³-produced artworks that have been shown in major exhibitions or at the C³ Gallery and for which the primary medium was not the internet. It also includes recordings of lectures, video documentation of exhibition and other content. No new acquisitions have been made for many years. It is important to note that while the C³ collection counts roughly 70 works by 40 artists, the catalogue features over 700 works.

The catalog.C3.hu platform was created as part of the Gateway to Archives of Media Art (GAMA) preservation project in 2009. The aim of the EU project was "the establishment of a central platform to enable multilingual, facilitated and user-orientated access to a significant number of media art archives and their digitalised contents. The consortium comprised of a majority of the most important digital content holders for media art in Europe. The content

provided constitutes approx. 55% of all media artworks presented online by European cultural archives and distributors."[8].
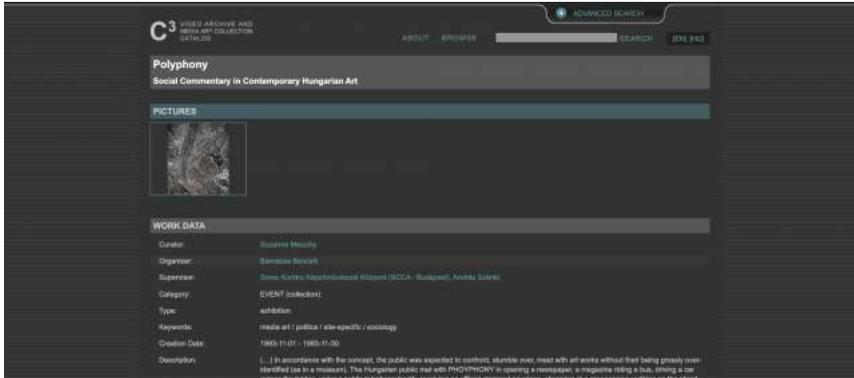

Fig. 2: Entry on the *Polyphony* exhibition (1993) on catalog.C3.hu. Source: C3 Foundation.

However, with the digital acceleration after 2009, the common platform has become obsolete, the structure restrictive and the content forgotten. Sustainability was not sufficiently addressed in the original objectives of the project and the limited operation of C³ did not allow the catalogue to be activated, presented and regularly updated (with the exception of an accessibility update in 2012). Even the project's website, which was supposed to be a central access point, eventually ceased to exist.[9] This cannot be blamed on a lack of expertise or skills, as the debate on the preservation of media arts has been going on since the birth of media arts, including on the European scene. The C³ was previously involved in another initiative, 404 Object Not Found. What Remains of Media Art? (2003), which was a research project focusing on specific works, using different case studies, to investigate problems and issues related to the presentation, documentation and preservation of media art. The project concluded with a congress at the Hartware Medien Kunst

89

Verein (HMKV) in Dortmund. C³ presented a case study on the possible preservation of the online VRML artwork *Cryptogram*.[10]

In 2008, in a unique collaboration, conservator Elzbieta Wysocka took on the challenging task of restoring Olia Lialina's early net art work *Agatha Appears* (1997).[11] For many years afterwards, the question of 'what remains of media art?' was particularly prominent in Budapest, where the Ludwig Museum hosted the Media Art Preservation Symposium (MAPS) in 2015, 2017, 2018 and 2020. The event was attended by international experts, including C³ Director Miklós Peternák. At another event at the Ludwig Museum in Budapest, the *Dead Web* exhibition, the public was able to see a restoration of a work by János Sugár entitled *Dokumentum-modell* (1997).[12]

Taking all these experiences into account, C³ decided not to focus on a single case study for the New Media Museums project. This is largely due to the fact that there is rarely an opportunity to look back at this collection. It would have been very difficult to select a single work, while there are larger, structural problems to be addressed and resolved. So, first of all, the database had to be reexamined, with the help of the person who was responsible for its creation in 2008 and its update in 2012. As has become apparent in this process, it is very important to be consistent with people when looking after older digital archives. Many answers were given and many more questions were raised. Some of the structural problems are organisational, for example the catalogue platform and the collection on the C³ website do not correlate, some are communicational (the user interface is outdated, the design is not responsive, the images are very small), some are more serious (missing entries, incomplete art catalogues). This discussion has led to some changes

in the administration interface, where for example there was no search function before.

From these problems, one obvious shortcoming urged us to act: although the oeuvre of László László Révész, who died suddenly in 2021, was represented in the archive, his entries were fragmentary and incomplete. A frequent contributor to C³, Révész was an artist who produced a large body of work, integrating the genres of computer art, video and installations. With the help of artist and researcher Márta Czene, C³ was able to rethink how it represented his work in the catalogue.

The decision was also made to take a closer look at the net-based artworks in the collection and improve organisation and communication. The chosen method was to approach the collection from an artistic research perspective, and to examine the web-based projects as one large category, rather than isolating individual works. This process was led by curator Anna Tüdős and artist Márk Fridvalszki.

Starting in 2021 for the first time in many years, C³'s preservation activities consisted of the following three strands: the identification of structural problems and their rapid resolution, the use of an artist case study to test the potential of the decade-old catalogue platform, and artistic research into the preservation of the net art collection.

Preserving the works of László László Révész

László László Révész studied painting at the Hungarian College of Fine Arts ('Magyar Képzőművészeti Főiskola') and animation at the Hungarian College of Applied Arts ('Magyar Iparművészeti Főiskola'). He created dadaist, intellectual performances with

András Böröcz in the 1980s. From 1990 on, painting and films became decisive in his art, however, he had already made art pieces on his computer since the 1980s and had also continuously exhibited works of video art and installations. Working at VOX Television in Cologne, Germany, and also later on in several scholarship programs, he could use most modern computers and sofwares for his artistic projects that were not accessible in Hungary. Besides appearing in numerous European and American intitutions, his art pieces were also shown at the 8th Documenta in Kassel.

Narrativity and parallel perception, montages of juxtaposed images like open windows on a computer screen or iconostases play a pivotal part in his art. His versatile work spanning more than four decades was ground to a halt by his sudden death in March last year.

Although he was a regular participant of almost all exhibitions, programs of the C[3] Foundation or earlier the Soros Center for Contemporary Arts (SCCA),[13] documentation regarding him is fragmented and partly unsystematic in the archives and collections of C[3], moreover, which of his previously exhibited pieces, if any, could be reconstructed without the artist and at what standard, remains questionable.

In the following, we will use three examples to describe the shortcomings and pitfalls of the documentation methods in C[3]'s archives, as well as those characteristic of Hungary in the 1990s with regard to new media art. Please note that Révész's oeuvre is only one example, he is not a better or worse documented artist than the average, it has only become relevant because his tragically sudden death closed the possibility of communication with him, making it impossible to answer any further, potentially crucial questions.

The Triumphal Arch (Diadalív)
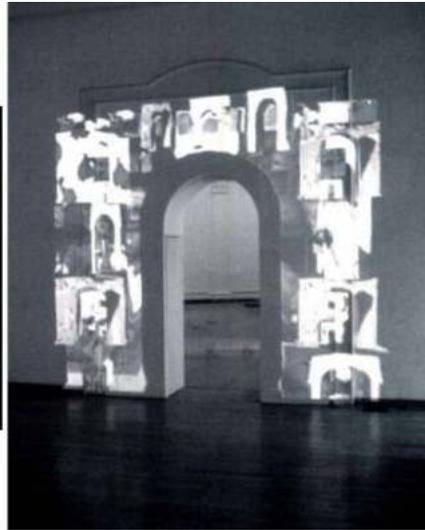
Fig. 3: Révész László László, *The Triumphal Arch*, 1996.[14]

The first example is *The Triumphal Arch*, an art piece by Révész presented at the C³ exhibition called *The Butterfly Effect* (*A Pillangó-hatás*) in 1996. The exhibition was the first attempt to present contemporary media art in a historical context in Hungary. The material exhibited in the halls of the Art Gallery (Műcsarnok) comprised of two parts: *Media relics* (*Médiarelikviák*) showed Hungarian, Central and Eastern European discoveries of technology and media history, while *Coordinates of the Present* (*Jelenkoordináták*) displayed Hungarian and international works of media art.[15]

Révész's work of art presented here was a triumphal arch projection. The description in the catalogue does not depict the finished work of art, it could have presumably been the artist's preliminary

plan or concept about how he would exhibit the piece. It starts with a short technical description and then goes on to the interpretation, the cultural and political readings of his own work.

> "A piece of canvas, measuring 2 x 2.20 meters and cut into the shape of a triumphal arch, is hung from the ceiling at a distance of one meter from the plane of the wall. The bottom edge of the canvas is at a height of 1.90 meters above the floor. A black, homogeneous form "complements" the arch on the wall; the video equipment, which is also hung from the ceiling, projects a computer animation over the arch, which corresponds, both in dimensions and in theme, to the "screen." The recorded material, an approximately two-minute-long and continuously replayed loop, has morphic character and is presented in strong contrasts. The morph always begins with a 3D/CAD structural drawing of a triumphal arch. In the course of the brief (3-4 seconds) transformations and re-transformations, it is this structure that turns into mobile compositions which derive and originate from the associative domain of the ideas of abundance-glory-triumph. These characteristic compositions are primarily the products and fruits of Eastern (Central) Europe, most notably melons, apples, plums and their variations of form. Thus I also diverge from the antique - or pseudo-antique - triumphal arches in the sense that I create a seemingly arbitrary artwork, as opposed to propagandistic (and counter-propagandistic) art, in which I manipulate art's disburdenment of propaganda. In other

life of Central and Eastern Europeans when the politi-
cization of art - its propaganda - is no longer impor-
tant, but the "new" keeps us waiting in every domain,
or as in my case, emerges as a variant of old forms."[16]

Contrary to the description, the work that appeared at the exhibi-
tion was realized in a slightly different manner according to press
photos, the documentation of both C3 and the Art Gallery.[17] The
piece of screening canvas emerging high in space and the black,
three dimensional complementary form were omitted, instead, the
screening was adjusted to the big door connecting two halls of the
Art Gallery. Hence, the public could actually proceed under the arch
itself. We suppose this form, much more simple and maybe more
favourable than the one in the original plan, was inspired by the fea-
tures of the place at the moment of directing.

In a sense, this piece had become an iconic part of the exhibition, al-
most all press articles, recommendations, summaries included a
photo of it. Sadly, arts press articles do not abound in descriptions
of the works of art either, they are mainly engaged with the then
unusal topic of the exhibition and the fact itself that it could be real-
ized.

The exhibition and the opening ceremony were documented by the
Art Gallery on video, but the person in charge after video taping the
opening speech, recorded the halls in succession at a swift walking
speed, all in all devoting only about 10 seconds to this actual
piece.[18] C3 also stores videos about the exhibition, a part of which
is publicly available with *The Triumphal Arch* being visible in a clip
edited for the twentieth anniversary of C3.[19] Six-eight different
photos were taken of it and published,[20] but all of these, just like

the videos, only show the triumphal arch decorated with fruit varieties, and colleagues taking part in the exhibition cannot recall for sure either whether the space structure described by Révész was actually presented or not[21]. Based on the visual documentation, movement, the morphic character and rotation of the details cannot really be experienced either, because the same moment was randomly captured by almost all photographers. C³ does not possess the original files, and since probate hearings will not be closed in the foreseeable future, the heritage may not be researched. Let me note in brackets here that even if it was open for research, knowing László László Révész's self-documentation and self-organization habits it would require tremendous efforts to locate the files, if it was possible at all.

It is unexpectedly fortunate though that in the years before his death the artist shared with me a YouTube channel of his own consisting of mostly private, disorganized and partly unlabelled videos so that we could write about his old films,[22] It was in this collection of videos that we noticed an unlabelled, few-second-long moving image[23] that basically matches the 1996-description of the work. It cannot be the original material that was projected, because on the basis of the preserved documentation the framing triumphal arch form appeared in front view there, however, it could obviously be some kind of a visual design that may have been exported from the original CAD file. This imagery features the initial, spatial structure of the triumphal arch, but no conclusions may be drawn from this as for the actual piece that was eventually exhibited.

Fig. 4, 5: Révész László László, *Triumphal Arch*, 1996.

SAN

In an artist's life it happens quite often that a work of art created in a technically well-equipped environment, under ideal circum-

stances must be orchestrated for the more modest conditions of an exhibition. This may also cause numerous uncertainties during reconstruction if the artist does not differentiate the versions with subtitles or some kind of notation, and photos taken in the previous location, where he had presented them as the exhibition plan, are mixed in the exhibition documentation with the version appearing in the new exhibition.

The case of László László Révész's video and computer installation *SAN*, shown at the *Media Model* (*Média Modell*) exhibition organized by C³ in the Art Gallery in 2000, is an example of such a situation.[25] [26]

Luckily, both the video material screened in the Art Gallery and the projected map that was used in the video installation were preserved after the exhibition, with the help of which the installation can be reconstructed even if the quality of the video leaves a lot to be desired.

The question that arises, also relevant for *The Triumphal Arch*, is what can be considered an original work of art in this case, that is in case of an installation for an exhibition. The piece designed by the artist and intended to be put on view on site, or the piece that was realized then and there as adjusted to the advantages and disadvantages of the site, financial resources or lack of infrastructure? Certainly, there are different versions, and there should be, since all sites are varied, and at best installations basically possess a kind of flexibility that makes them adaptable to a given exhibition hall. What exactly happened in this specific case, or whether the artist had a sense of lack in connection with this exhibition, we will never know.

a letter about the *Media Model* exhibition from László László Révész to Miklós Peternák, the curator of the exhibition.[27])

The artist asks for two projectors to display the work, for a six-minute videoloop on one and for the display of an interactive computer image on the other. He would like to see both in the same size, one projected under the other. He refers to a previous appearance of the work at an exhibition in Berlin also sending pictures of that. The pictures were not included in the documentation, but they are available at the C3 website where the works on display at the *Media Model* exhibition are documented[28]), designating the place where the work was created, and the exhibition where the pictures were taken. However, some other photo documentation made at the *Media Model* exhibition will not appear here.

Description of the work on the exhibition website:

> "San the single channel video:
>
> Shot with one take dolly in half circular movements using simple actions of couples facing each other.These couples are identified with the action they constantly repeat.The half circled choreography of the camera and the position of the couples creates a framing structure.The first couple facing south and north is closer to the camera framing the second couple facing east and west.When from this position the camera moves to east west there is a new north south couple and so on.
>
> San the interactive:
>
> is an explanation of San with the floor plan used for the

shooting as the main interface. Moving in the space and hierarchy with a structured preconception while watching the space as a two dimensional representation of that space. An explanation of watching and understanding structures based on structures such as the structure of cards, floor plan."
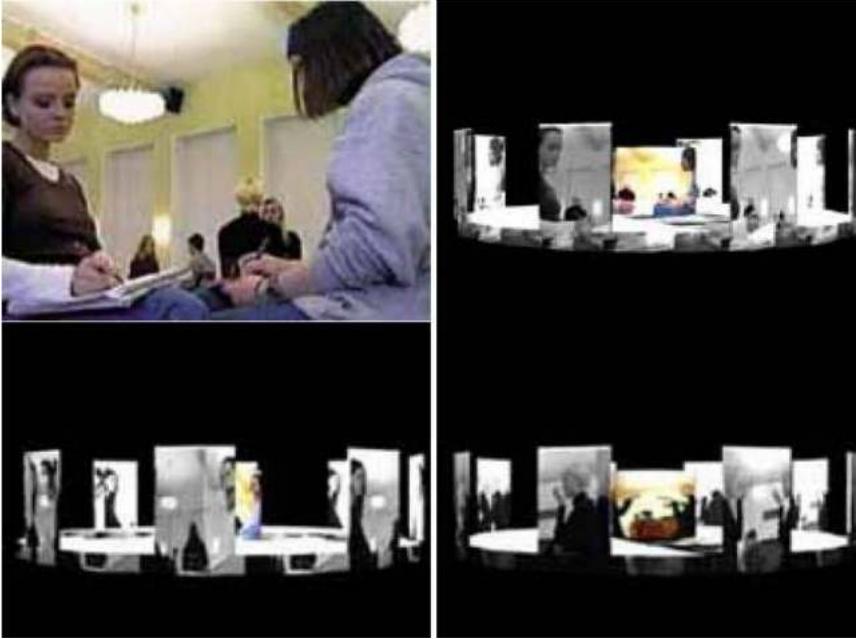
Fig. 6: Révész László László, *SAN*, 1997-1998. Exhibition in Berlin.[29)]

We are quoting the full text because of its complexity and obscurity. In one of the photos to illustrate it you can see a still image of the video described above, in the others a two dimensional map/floor plan turned into 3D, where stills of the video participants appearing as couples were inserted in designated spots. It was the map that was probably rotatable or walkable in some way, while the inserted

film stills as two dimensional cards modelled in 3D could be viewed from different directions.

This first version of the work was created in Werkleitz Gesellschaft, Germany in 1997-98 in the EMARE scholarship program. On the online interface of the Werkleitz Gesellschaft (Tornitz, D) archive there is no photo or description of it, it is only referred to as a video tape in the archive [30)]. The equipment Révész had been able to work with there, was not available here even several years later, and it would not be surprising to learn that the institution accepting the exhibition, the Art Gallery in Budapest was not technically prepared to show the interactive version of this piece. The exhibition had an outstandingly high budget at the time[31)]), however, the number of interactive pieces on show still posed a remarkable challenge in terms of the available technology.

We can learn from the description above that the video and the interactive material interpreted or we can say modelled each other. Both are maps of each other. All this would be in perfect harmony with the author's description and interpretation, but it was only published in the printed catalogue of the Media Model exhibition, but never on the previously quoted interface.

> "The title, as well as the structure of the work, is borrowed from Bridge. San (from the French sans atout) means a play without a trump card. In such cases, it is only the hierarchy that counts; neither colour has the advantage. I used people in place of cards, in an everyday action. Always in pairs - so that the symmetry (of playing cards) would be attained, visibly, to the fullest extent possible. In this case, horizontally, rather than

vertically. Between the pairs - i.e., one card - appears the next card, the next pair. This works in such a way that their succession and hierarchy derive from the symmetry of the card itself. When the camera arrives to one of the pairs, their action appears in the centre of the next playing card. This card is perpendicular to the preceding one. And so it proceeds all the way through. In other words, there are two planes in the space, perpendicular to one another. The former is oriented West-East, while the latter is North-South. The shift is continuous, with the camera movement occurring in arcs. What I have now tried to describe in words appears on the wall in the form of a projected video. I called it a map during the course of the work. I placed another map on a monitor, on a table in front of the projected image. This is truly a bird's-eye view image: the groundplan of the video shoot. I referred to this as a map because I considered this situation as something Vermeeresque. Figures (i.e., we, the viewers) are standing at a table, perhaps even pressing on a mouse. All of this in the expectation that we can bring about some change in the projection (the map). On the wall, there really is a large image, albeit not bird's-eye view, but nevertheless a map. A two-dimensional map is at the disposal of those standing at the three-dimensional table. There is no window in the room, so that the primary light-source is also this map. The large map "goes on its own", while the small one only aids in its interpretation."[32)]

not involve or does not exactly involve the work that you can find on the C³ website, but rather the version that came about at the exhibition in the Art Gallery. The really confusing part here is that the change is not highlighted by being marked with another year or even a subtitle, and certainly the fact that the author equally uses the word "map" for all "projected views", which is obviously important for the purposes of interpretation. You even have to read the subtle allusions in the text several times before you realize that some kind of a transformation happened here.

The exhibition in Budapest featured only one video on a projector screen, and below that, a little bit farther in space a simplified, two dimensional map on a small computer monitor. [33] It is clearly visible from the pictures documenting the exhibition that this is the picture that you can find on the C3 website under the title *Videóarchívum és médiaművészeti gyűjtemény (Video Archive and Media Arts Collection)*.[34] For some reason, the documentation that appears here about the same work is totally different from what is available under the title *Media Model* exhibition in the C³ database.[35] It is probable that this version of the work got into the collection only after the exhibition.

Fig. 7: Révész László László, *SAN*, 1997-1998, The Art Gallery, Budapest.36)
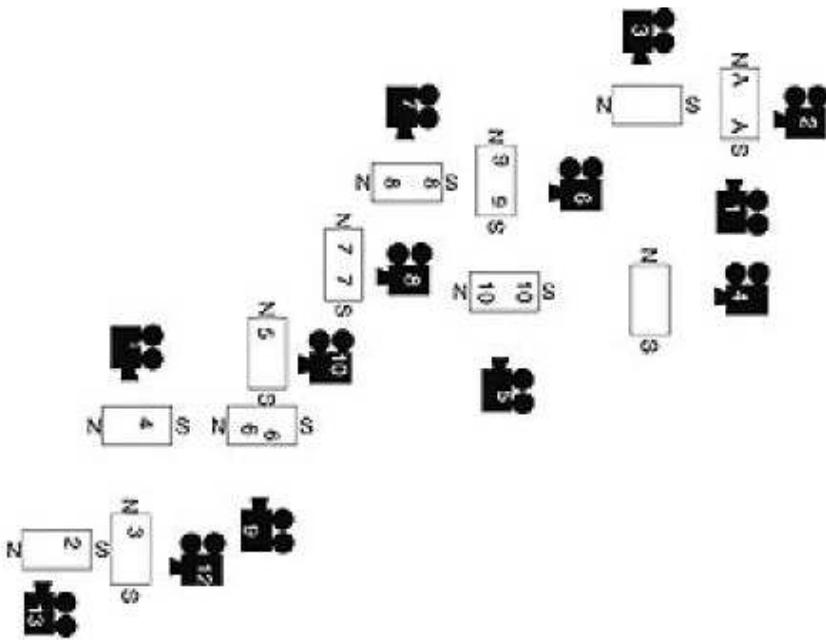
Fig. 8: Révész László László, *SAN*, 1997-1998, The Art Gallery, Budapest.[37]

Besides the exhibition catalogue, the small computer escaped all other photographers' and documenters' attention, the exhibition was even video taped as if the monitor complementing the installation had not been there.[38]) It was omitted from the picture, superficial viewers did not realize that it belonged to this work.

Technical difficulties or lack of equipment had presumably led to this solution at the exhibition in the Art Gallery, or at least it seems as if the author had had some justified or unjustified dissatisfaction regarding the situation. The last lines in the catalogue description of the work of art written by Révész may at least seem to refer to that when read from a certain perspective:

The situation would be different if those standing at the table could freely intervene into the sequence of events. But the hand that is dealt (i.e., the hierarchy) has the upper hand: it is from the dealt hand (the situation) that the appropriate play may be made.

Nevertheless, the most relevant question that arises for me here through this example is whether the original files could be found anywhere, in the artist's own archive or among the files of those who used to work with him at the time. And we would be especially interested to know whether, based on the description and the pictures in the documentation, it would be comparatively easy with today's technologies to reconstruct the 3D environment that meant an extremely big challenge more than twenty years ago.

Transer

The third and last example concerns what actually happened in practice when a former and in several locations variously documented work was presented again at an exhibition. Loss of memory, as well as negligence on the part of both the author and the institutions played a significant role in the story.

The C³ exhibition in 2001 called *Science Fiction*, which was not housed by the Art Gallery in Budapest but by several smaller arts institutions, in case of Révész the *Trafó Gallery*, the artist appeared with the work entitled *Transer*. At the international exhibition called *Both Ways* organized by Ludwig Museum as part of the *Science in the City* festival on the site of Trieste Contemporanea in August 2020 a video called *Transfer* was on show.

Fig. 9: Révész László László, *Transer*, 2001. Trieste Contemporanea, Trieste. Photo: Marino Ierman.

In the text of the exhibition guide, the curator, Anna Bálványos characterizes Révész's work with this sentence: :"… his video *Transfer* is based on the idea that the movement of the Earth can be used in transport: Lyon and Szekszárd, a city in a wine region in Hungary, are on the same latitude, so wine transportation to Lyon can be easily solved according to that."40) All other texts published about the exhibition basically quote these summary type sentences word for word, because on the basis of a virtual exhibition published on the site of Trieste Contemporanea, it seems that the video was shown without any further written explanation, although in itself it can hardly be interpreted and is really obscure.

This work features as a video installation or in other places as an interactive installation illustrated by only some video stills in the 2001

C3 exhibition catalogue.

We have not found detailed imagery about this exhibition, the curators, Miklós Peternák and József Mélyi unanimously recollect that detailed documentation was probably not even made at all.[42)] We can say, the arts press reacted in a strange way to this exhibition, just like to the one before this called Media Model. Basically, they gave the impression as if it had not been an arts exhibition. A lot was said about desirable or undesirable receptive-exhibition viewer attitudes in connection with the new genres, interactivity and video gaining ground, the inevitability of new technologies,[43)] but describing, interpreting works of art almost never happened, they were even mentioned quite rarely.

Fig. 10: Révész László László, *Transer*, 2001.[44)]

An information booklet was made for the 2001 *Science Fiction* series of events, and also a smaller catalogue in connection with the exhibition, the latter including Révész's interpretation in its entirety, and it turns out that, in fact, we are watching a a filmed report about the scientific works of a fictitious inventor, which was made after the mysterious disappearance of the inventor and in which his disciples half convincingly, half disbelievingly tell about his plan, namely, that he would use the energy of the Earth's rotation in some obscure way to solve international transportation on the same latitude. Transportation would work with a machinery that he invented. As an explanation for the workings of the machinery, during an experimental journey, due to the sponsorship of a film factory he would document the rotation of the Earth as a photogram made about the stars on a roll of film stretched on the ground on the complete route between Szekszárd and Lyon.

As the closing lines say:

> "The main goal of the work is the reconstruction of the researcher's character with all remaining documents. I would like to exhibit all the documents in my possession: the film, the plans, a short section of an interview, and his notes."[45]

Based on this, the film, the notes and the plans may have constituted the rest of the installation. There is a slight uncertainty in the sentence above, which may derive from the practice that in the aforementioned catalogues, in all three exhibition catalogues that are included in the essay the participating artists made each and every description of the works of art. These writings had obviously

nizers to complete the catalogue before the opening of the exhibition to make sure it was readable together with the exhibited pieces, since, as we have already seen it, descriptions may be really important in the interpretation process. This practice had led to the fact that some of the artists did not speak in the third person singular, but spoke their own voices in the descriptions.

Révész plays with this role. He does not introduce himself as an artist, but as a modest researcher and archiver possessing documents about a mysterious researcher. As such, he remarks modestly what he has in his possession and that he would like to show it all. However, since he is playing a role it is not obvious if he really owns the "documents", he really made these works of art. But at this point the two roles meet and among the lines the artist reveals himself because in the catalogue he reuses the plan of his installation, a proposal. As a result of this nice and witty solution this description also becomes part of the work, in a certain sense. Let me note here that even the work itself deals with the topical questions of documenting, archiving and making collections, among other topics.

Anyway, whether the above documents and the "original" experimental film material had been completed or not, they were not put on show in Trieste, and since the curator had only been able to see the shorter one of the two catalogues[46)] that did not contain the description in full and the artist had not informed him about that either, he could not find out that the Transer originally was the name of the transporting vehicle that exploited the movement of the Earth. The title of the work of art also comes from this, so it is not Transfer but Transer!

This situation gives rise to numerous questions and one of them is

about the case when the video element of a work becomes part of a media arts archive or digital collection what happens to the objects that possibly belong to the work in the installation, they obviously cannot be stored there, and since they cannot be copied they will still remain in the possession of the artist. Hence the archived work of art will necessarily become fragmentary.

The previous three cases deliver several lessons. The primary task, which is already in progress, is definitely to collate all C^3 documentation that can be found in different places and to connect it with other archives and institutions concerned. C^3 plays an especially crucial role in executing this task, because right now its database in Hungary is unique in the sense that it concerns exhibitions that do not belong only to a single institution like the Art Gallery, but it has extensive information about the works of the previous generation's most important Hungarian media artists from the beginning.

While regrettable from the point of view of the Révész oeuvre, the main lessons that derive from the situation caused by his death do not involve posterior documentation of this specific oeuvre as the most urgent task to complete.

It is possible, moreover it is necessary, of course, to find the people the artist worked with at the time to use their memories, descriptions or probably objects (documents) until the heritage can be researched again. It is more important, however, to avoid similar situations in the future and ask for the help of contemporary living artists to document their works better. Several aspects emerged in the course of what has been described above, several points of reference that may help define directions and preferences for the work to be done.

The basic question is what we expect of an archive that is meant to document and preserve media art works, the initial history and most significant works of the genre and make them consumable for the next generations to come. In many cases it turns out that even if the works can be preserved in the form of original files, their playback is hindered by more and more obstacles. While continuously converting them to the latest technologies seems to be an uphill struggle, preserving them in their original forms may require operating ever more extended museum equipment.

Still, when an exhibition situation like the one above arises, it turns out that one of the most important bits of information about a work is what should appear and how at an exhibition so that it makes sense and becomes approachable for today's audience. The archive in its present form, unfortunately, hardly ever provides an answer to this question.

We would deem it good practice if the artists whose works are listed in the archive and who can still be contacted today were asked about what they consider necessary to be included in the introduction of their works. What minimum requirement is needed to make their work appear. We do not mean technology here, but for example in the case of *SAN* the significance of interactivity, the map view, or how important it is for the projections to appear in the same size. Likewise, in the case of e.g. *Transer* it would be important to know what belongs closely to this work of art. What texts, possibly objects or presentation-projection methods form a part of it.

Ideally, descriptions like these could also be supplemented by the former exhibition photo documentation. Such images and views or descriptions, in my opinion, would be just as important as the tech-

nical requirements of the work, since it is more probable to create the reconstruction with the latest technologies from the view itself rather than reconstructing the former scene and especially the former effect based on only the technical requirements. At this point there is also the concern of how much a kind of a retro feeling proves to be useful or even acceptable, which the appearance of old equipment necessarily bears, in case of works of art that gave a glimpse into a futuristic world at their time.

Home Page: an investigation into preserving the net art collection of C³ Foundation

Why net art?

The C³ collection contains a small but significant selection of net-based works from the early days of Internet art in Hungary and abroad. The majority of the works date from the second half of the 1990s, a period marked by the exploration of the web as a new platform and means of communication. For artists of the time, websites offered a new medium for experimentation, as structure and design principles were not yet set in stone. The artistic freedom to shape the internet motivated many creators to produce exciting and unique work. The C³ collection offers a selection of works, including seminal artists of this period as well as experiments. Preservation efforts, however, tend to be passive, with a lack of resources not allowing for the activation of individual works.

Over the years, many platforms and solutions have become obsolete and unavailable, and some specific examples of preservation efforts will be discussed later. In 2022, with renewed interest in the 1990s and against a backdrop of accelerating digital content production,

net art and the artistic values it represents are once again in the spotlight. For decades, the conversation around net art has been stimulated by a number of theorists and organisations (e.g. Variable Media Network, Monoskop, Zentrum für Netzkunst) and conservation work on web-based artworks is being done in different parts of the world (Rhizome, LIMA), but this is not the case in the Central and Eastern European region. This fact was one of the driving forces behind C³'s recently launched Home Page project.

We cannot pass by the debate on the terminology of net art, where a single dot or dash is of great importance for the practices described by the term. The literature distinguishes between a version of 'net art' with a space and 'net.art' with a dot, the latter coming from Vuk Ćosić and denoting the internet activist movement of the same name in the mid-1990s, whose members included Alexei Shulgin and Natalie Bookchin. Therefore, the term 'net.art' is used in the literature and on the Home Page website specifically in relation to this movement, while 'net art' is understood as a much broader category encompassing a wide range of internet-based art practices.[47] Various terms are used to categorize artworks on the various C³ platforms, including 'net-art', 'web-based art', 'network art', and 'web project'. Web project generally refers to artworks that are more process-based and constantly changing in nature, but C³ uses the term as an umbrella term for net art. As the collection is currently available on various online platforms (websites), preservation efforts have identified the need for a comprehensive, synthetic summary or presentation that integrates the interdisciplinary nature of the works.

A loose methodology of artistic research was applied in this process.

Net art works and artists at C³
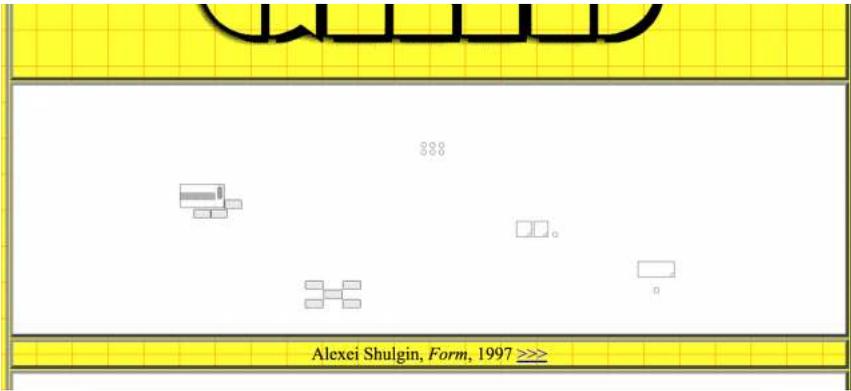
Fig. 11: Alexei Shulgin's *Form*, 1997, on *Home Page*, 2022. Source: C3 Foundation.

The net art collection has been created in line with C³'s original aims: to promote and explore the potential of the internet for the general public. There are three categories of net art works in the collection: 1) works created as part of an international residency programme, 2) works created by local artists, and 3) websites that are not created with artistic intent but retain some artistic value (this category includes websites created to document exhibitions, conferences, radio stations, video collections, etc.). As with most early net art works, their interdisciplinary nature makes them difficult to categorise. While Alexei Shulgin's *Form* (1997) is an example of a classic net art work,[48] the same cannot be said of *Ctrl-Space* (1999) by the Dutch-Belgian artist duo Joan Heemskerk and Dirk Paesmans (JoDi). This is listed under web projects on the C³ website, but in reality it is not a net art piece, but a downloadable file which was then uploaded into a computer game called Quake to create a unique gaming environment. *Ctrl-Space* is described as a network game that

can be accessed and played on the internet, but the definition of a network game has changed significantly since 1999 and means something different. Another example of an interdisciplinary net art work is *Lapsus Memoriae* (2002) by urtica (Violeta Vojvodic + Eduard Balaz), an online memory game.[49)

One of the iconic works in the collection is *Agatha Appears* (1997) by Olia Lialina, which underwent an extensive restoration in 2008.[50) By this time, typical conservation problems such as incompatibility with contemporary browsers, loss of interaction element, and damage or loss of certain files had become apparent. As with many early websites, the home page contains instructions for viewing, but these conditions can only be mimicked in an emulated environment.
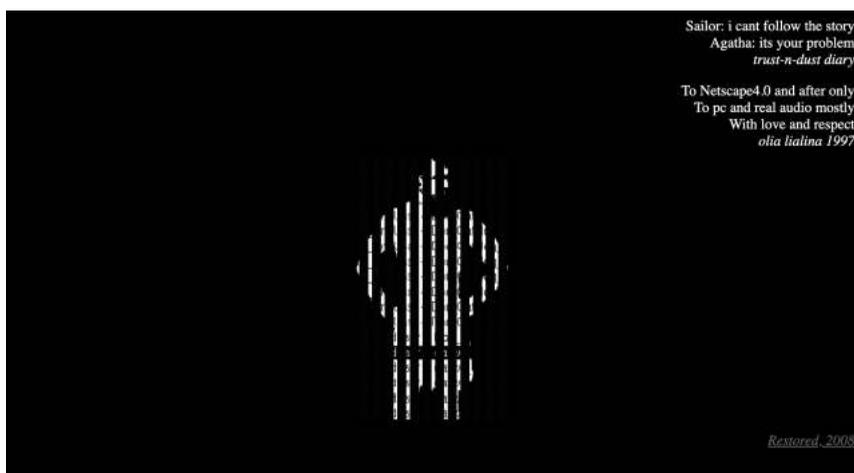

Fig. 12: Olia Lialina, *Agatha Appears*, 1997. Source: C3 Foundation.

"To Netscape4.0 and after only
To pc and real audio mostly
With love and respect
olia lialina 1997"

The process, initiated by Elzbieta Wysocka, has set an example for the organisation, but has also demonstrated the effort and expertise required to handle delicate works to the right standard. János Sugár's *Dokumentum-modell* (1997) was restored for the Ludwig Museum Budapest's 2020 exhibition. Lacking any documentation, the reconstruction relied on the artist's faint recollections, arguably creating a new work based on an old idea. Technological upgrades to the original hosting server meant that all media on the site had to be replaced, including videos from Budapest traffic security cameras from 1987 and the artist's answering machine messages from the early 1990s. Interestingly, during the same exhibition in 2020, Olia Lialina justified her decision not to allow *Agatha Appears* to be shown by claiming that a simulation of the original hardware and software interface was required to exhibit the work, otherwise it was available online for anyone to view.

As time goes by and internet standards change, more and more works become inaccessible. On the other hand, as the C³ collection shows, accessibility is not enough to preserve a work of art. Without presentation, discussion, the creation and maintenance of networks of care and activation through awareness-raising, works of art will be forgotten. For the Home Page project, our aim was to rescue this moment in time when the web was seen as an artistic medium, surrounded by endless enthusiasm and utopian optimism for the future. Rather than focusing on a single work, we took the collection as a whole and analysed it, looking for specificities in terms of unique language, theoretical charge, activist motivation and communicative innovation. We wanted to create a new body of work in which browsing is dominated by the joy of discovery, as opposed to carefully organised information made available with a single click.

The new artwork takes the form of a website, presented as an alternative archive. This is not to disregard conservation perspective, quite the opposite - our aim was to provide an expanded view of conservation in practice and to take advantage of the opportunity provided by the New Media Museum project to bring the essence of early works in the care of C³ to a wider audience.

Home Page, an alternative archive of net art

The works of Márk Fridvalszki deal with the sensual materiality of failed modernist visions. The artist usually employs a variety of media, such as wallpaper, found and manufactured objects, digital printing and other printmaking techniques, and combines them in all-encompassing collages. His artistic programme can be described as archaeo-futurological, which means that he deals with the remnants of forgotten utopias, the cultural sediments of our lost collective future. He was commissioned to make a new work by curator Anna Tüdős, who had worked at C³ for 4 years and knew the collection well.

After defining the main theme, Fridvalszki immediately referred to Ferenc Kömlődi's *Cathedral of Light*, which became the inspiration and guide for the creation of the website.[51] From the beginning, the aim was to revive the visual aspects and logical structures of the net art works of the early 1990s. The creators wanted to avoid nostalgic appropriation and to preserve and present the zeitgeist of the 1990s in Hungary and Central and Eastern Europe, incorporating visual inspirations and texts from that period. At the same time, Home Page uses the retro-futuristic visuality of the 1960s/1970s, with a geometric design and vibrant colours. This work, like Fridvalszki's other works, is a collage where the individual elements have a very

important reference value.

Creating the website for the artist was akin to editing a publication, and the curatorial work helped to harmonise the organic integration of text and image. The selection of the featured texts followed preliminary research, which included interviews, research in archives and consultation with scholars.
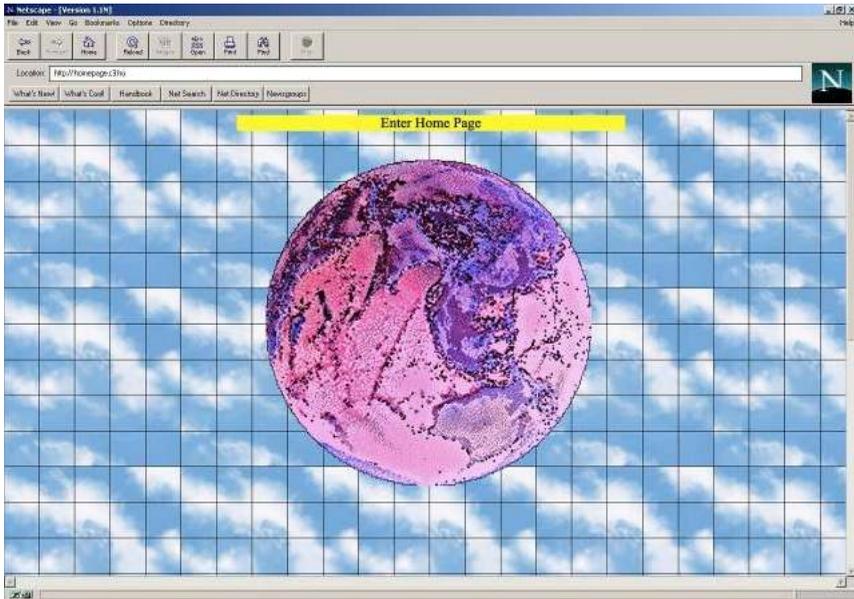
Fig. 13: *Home Page* in Netscape, one of the most popular browsers of the 1990s. Graphics and concept by Márk Fridvalszki. Source: C3 Foundation.

The site starts with a rotating globe, which suggests the idea of the internet as a way to connect the world. These pre-pages were also a common feature of early websites, usually containing information or a simple 'Enter' button to give the underlying webpage some time to load. After entering, visitors are faced with the main menu. In structuring the menu items, we were careful to ensure that they

were poetic but informative, that the topics were distinguishable even if related (e.g. there are links between the 'Cyberspace' and 'Grid' pages, but their focus is noticeably different), and that the dual–local and universal–references of the project worked well together. A good example of this is when a timeline is superimposed over the dot-com balloon graph to give a sense of the interplay between the Hungarian and wider context, and that Hungary was indeed relatively early in terms of internet access and net art.
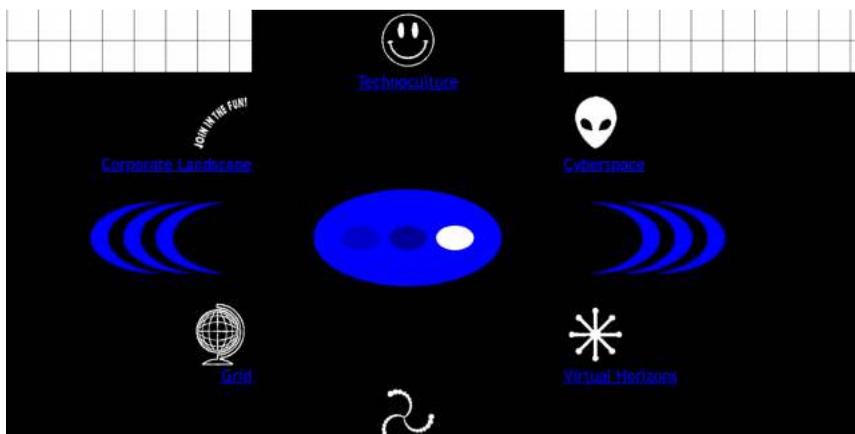
Fig. 14: *Home Page*, www.homepage.C3.hu. Source: C3 Foundation.

Under 'Technoculture', an interdisciplinary understanding of the word is demonstrated:

> "The definition of technoculture goes beyond music, literature, film, video, visual arts and all other new forms of artistic expression. It describes a sense of a changed world."[52]

Under 'Corporate Landscape', we reflect on the critical internet culture, and mark the anti-consumerist attitudes, the social distance

and loneliness created by technology, but also historical milestones such as the dot-com bubble. Here, Ferenc Kömlődi's words coincide with Geert Lovink's vision of the Internet as a self-generative tool capable of bringing together critics, social movements, NGOs and others.[53)]

The section 'Cyberspace' explores twisted identities and realities created by online environments, linking the then new concept of cyberspace with a selection of artworks. Similarly, 'Grid' explores the drastically new ways in which information was organized online. Many artists have drawn inspiration from the abstract, mathematical, simple yet informative grids that began to define digital life in the 1990s. The works of Balázs Beöthy, Gyula Várnai and Hajnal Németh are displayed alongside those of Alexei Shulgin. 'Hyperdimension' functions almost as an audiovisual artwork in itself, with music composed by Elod Janky and a narrative scrolling structure reminiscent of the strategies of early net art artists.

Last but not least, 'Virtual Horizons' contains most of the local knowledge and archival data that could be useful for future researchers. In this section, the website details how the World Wide Web was introduced in Hungary in the 1990s, why artists and students took up the medium, and how some of the first few websites were created. It goes into more detail about the history of the World Wide Web and explains how it is truly considered the most democratic medium.

Preservation approach

If one can't update a database (of net art), the right solution is not to create a new one, bypassing the problem. Software-based artworks

are constantly changing, so their preservation needs to be flexible. Any presentation of them can be interpreted as a re-enactment, with the original ideas at the heart, but never quite identical to the original. Some artists argue the need to present works using original software, hardware and physical environment (Olia Lialina), others allow the work to transform over time (János Sugár). The exhibition *Seeing Double: Emulation in Theory and Practice* at the Guggeinheim Museum (2004) presented these two approaches side by side, pairing works of art made in endangered media with their re-created counterparts in newer media.[54] In the case of *Home Page*, a new work was created based on the complex whole of the net art collection with the aim of adding new value. Perhaps *Home Page* does not preserve the works in the net art collection in the form in which they were once available, but rather fits into a new wave of preservation paradigms that emphasize the importance of systematic presentation, the importance of curatorial choices to preserve the essence of the works, and the inclusion of different actors and disciplines in the 'networks of care' surrounding the works.

The post-custodial paradigm calls for a re-contextualization of archives to seek knowledge and understanding rather than mere documentation and control.[55] In archives following this model, as in C³, ownership rights may not necessarily be held by the institution but by individuals. Archivists take on the role of arranging records in relation to other records in the archive or even in other archives, working with others towards the same or similar ends, creating new records and contextualising content along the way. This represents a clear shift from traditional archival practice, where responsibility is more concentrated and power relations more fixed. This paradigm implies dynamic boundaries within archives and between archives, creators, subjects and users. Although usually associated with par-

ticipatory archival models, in this case it was useful to think about it in the context of the C³ catalogue and preservation efforts, where rather than focusing on a single work, the emphasis was on mapping the dynamic legacy and context of the net art collection.[56] The *Home Page* follows the paradigm in its attempt to recontextualize the collection within the "larger historical and social landscape."[57] around them.

On *Home Page*, net art works, physical artworks, video art, a documentary, quotes and screenshots contribute to the interpretation of the nineties' mindset, digital culture, utopian or sometimes apocalyptic visions. That "software is stuff unlike any other" and "cyberspace is unlike any physical space."[58] It was important to include 'broken artworks' on the site, such as Szilvia Seres' *Culture is Consumer Goods* (1999), of which we have a description and screenshots, while the original files have been lost. The inspiration came from Gallery 404, a website set up to challenge the phrase "the internet never forgets," showcasing the early 1990s net art generations' "attempt to plant a cultural stake in cyberspace" through the display of broken artworks.[59]

Future Prospects

The actual home page of C³ is a net art work by Balázs Beöthy, which refers to the periodic table and the unity of science and art.[60] The site was created in 1997 and has seen only minor changes since then.[61] To many, it looks old and dusty, a relic from the past in urgent need of updating. For some, however, it is an imprint of another era, when faith in technological advances was stronger and the power of experimentation prevailed over economic imperative, and is therefore unlikely ever to change. The website presents all

relevant information, although navigation can be an unusual experience.

Net art requires conservation practices that view artworks not as fixed but as a process, "an assemblage that can mutate over time and according to context."[62] On the other hand, many institutions and caretakers are not able to regularly update and transform their artworks. Experimental efforts such as *Home Page* can provide fresh perspectives in such situations, spark debate and activate care networks. Jon Ippolito stated that "almost every time when you preserve works of new media, it takes a lot of money, it takes a lot of effort. [...] But on the other hand, if you look at early games, they have been preserved not by museums, not by curators, not by conservators, but by game enthusiasts and no one gave them a huge grant. They are preserved because they have a fan base."[63] If enough people are enthusiastic enough about these works, or if enough excitement can be generated around them, then we will be closer to being able to preserve them.

Flóra Barkóczi uses Bourriaud's term 'dee-jaying' to describe the creative process that results in *Home Page*, where the artist creates a work by reorganising or re-contextualising existing artistic practices.[64] By presenting fragments of early net art culture in context, using them almost as raw material rather than archival relics, the result is a kind of remix that questions the legacy of this culture and makes connections with contemporary artworks. *Home Page* remains an open platform with the potential for expansion. All aspiring DJs are welcome to create a new remix.

Part of this essay was translated from Hungarian by Zsuzsa Feladó.

[1] SCCA Budapest itself grew out of the Soros Foundation's Fine Arts Documentation Center, which operated in Budapest from 1985 to 1991.

[2] Labowicz-Dymanus, Karolina, "Corporate and Market Strategies of Contemporary Art in Eastern Europe in the 1990s", In *Proceedings of the Art Museum of Estonia, Lost and Found Spaces: Displacements in Eastern European Art and Society in the 1990s*, Tallinn: KUMU Tallinn, 2019, p. 77.

[3] Based on Karl Popper's theory of open society. Popper, Frank, *Open Society and Its Enemies*, London: Routledge & Sons, 1945.

[4] SCCA, *The Soros Foundations / Soros Centers for Contemporary Arts Network Procedures Manual*, Internal document of the Open Society Foundations, 1991, p. 52.

[5] http://www.c3.hu/scca/

[6] Anna Tüdős's interview with Miklós Peternák and Márton Fernezelyi, February 2022.

[7] http://www.pararadio.hu/

[8] https://www.akbild.ac.at/en/research/projects/research_projects/0000/gama-gateway-to-archives-of-media-art

[9] http://gama-gateway.eu

[10] http://www.c3.hu/cryptogram/

[11] https://incca.org/articles/project-agatha-re-appears-net-art-restoration-project-2008, http://www.c3.hu/collection/agatha/

[12] http://www.c3.hu/collection/index_en.php?id=107

[13] http://catalog.C3.hu/index.php?page=person&id=136 Accessed 1.3.2022

[14] Source: http://www.c3.hu/scca/butterfly/Revesz/projecthu.html; *Balkon*, no. 3, 1996, p. 34.

[15] http://www.C3.hu/C3/publications/index.php?kiid=16 Accessed 15.2.2022

pillangó-hatás: Jelenkoordináták / The Butterfly Effect: Current Coordinates, Budapest: SCCA, 1996. http://www.C3.hu/scca/butterfly/Revesz /project.html Accessed 15.2.2022.

[17] exhibition documentation: The Butterfly Effect: Coordinates of the moment before discovery: International series of media art and media history events: Art Gallery, Budapest, 20 January 1996-25 February 1996 /Exhibition directed by Suzanne Mészöly and Miklós Peternák; Directed by the Soros Center for Contemporary Art and the Art Gallery, (Video recording of the opening and the exhibition: 1 ea video tape, articles: 49 photocopied pages), *Balkon*, no. 3, 1996, p. 34; *Népszabadság*, 27 January 1996, p. 27, photo: János Bánhalmi; http://www.catalog.C3.hu/index.php?page=work&id=1021& lang=HU Accessed 20.2.2022.

[18] The video recording can be viewed in the library of the Art Gallery. *The Butterfly Effect*, exhibition documentation: Coordinates of the moment before discovery: International series of media art and media history events: Art Gallery, Budapest, 20 January 1996-25 February 1996. (Video recording of the opening and the exhibition: 1 ea video

[19] http://www.c3.hu/20/ 2'50"

[20] *Balkon*, no. 3, 1996. p. 34; *Népszabadság*, 27 January 1996, p. 27, photo: János Bánhalmi; http://www.catalog.C3.hu/in-dex.php?page=work&id=1021&lang=HU Accessed 20.2.2022; *The Butterfly Effect: Coordinates of the moment before discovery*, CD-ROM, Budapest: C3, the Art Gallery, 1998.

[21] Personal interview with Miklós Peternák, János Sugár and Csaba Nemes

[22] Czene, Márta, "Longing to be where we just are – László László Révész's works of moving pictures in the reflection of representa-tion" ('Elvágyódás oda, ahol éppen vagyunk - Révész László László

2020, pp 12-16.

23) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KcxAUmao-Ig& list=PL982824821BA596DB&index=47 7'35"-9'15. Accessed 10.2.2022

24) Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KcxAUmao-Ig& list=PL982824821BA596DB&index=47.

25) "Within the framework of millennial celebrations in 2000 the first event of a series of exhibitions was jointly organised by the C3 Foundation, the Art Gallery and the Association of Hungarian Artists ('Magyar Alkotóművészek Országos Egyesülete', MAOE) The exhibition was accompanied by a Hungarian-English catalogue (2001), which presented Hungarian media art of the present and the previous decade in international context on 300 pages. In Hungary that was the first comprehensive publication of the kind presenting works of art that build on the possibilities of new technologies, a publication which enables foreign readers to learn about the formation and the present of this most dynamically progressing segment of Hungarian contemporary art. Miklós Peternák's introductory study is followed by an abundantly illustrated presentation of the works on show, which often contain texts written by the artists about their own works. With regard to the pioneering character of the publication we thought it would be important to put a chronology of the local media arts events together, as well as a more detailed publication of the participating artists' professional profiles." http://www.C3.hu/C3/publications/index.php?kiid=7 Accessed 20.2.2022

26) Erőss, Nikolett (ed.), *Média Modell: intermédia, új képfajták, interaktív technikák / Media Model: Intermedia, New Image Genres, Interactive Techniques*, exh.cat., Budapest: C3 Foundation, and Műcsarnok, 2001.

27) Exhibition documentation: 'Média Modell', exhibition documentation: 'Intermédia, új képfajták, interaktív technikák': The Art

organised by the Association of Hungarian Artists and the Art Gallery. Co-organiser: the C3 Foundation (agreements, budget, correspondence: 70 sheets of paper.

28) http://www.mediamodell.C3.hu/ there is no direct link to the page, but it is available from here navigating on the participating artists and then on the right side on László László Révész's name. Accessed 28.2.2022

29) Source: http://www.mediamodell.c3.hu/

30) https://emare.eu/works/san Accessed05/03/2022

31) Exhibition documentation: 'Média Modell', exhibition documentation: 'Intermédia, új képfajták, interaktív technikák': The Art Gallery 31 August 2000-24 September / The exhibition was jointly organised by the Association of Hungarian Artists and the Art Gallery. Co-organiser: the C3 Foundation (agreements, budget, correspondence: 70 sheets of paper

32) Erőss 2001, p. 153.

33) Erőss 2001, pp. 152-153.

34) C3 Video Archive and Media Arts Collections Catalogue: http://www.C3.hu/collection/videomuveszet/muveszek/Revesz /cv.html#san Accessed 17.2.2022

35) http://www.mediamodell.C3.hu/ there is no direct link to the page, but it is available from here navigating on the participating artists and then on the right side on László László Révész's name. Accessed 28.2.2022

36) Source: *Média Modell*, exh.cat.; http://www.c3.hu/collection/video-muveszet/muveszek/Revesz/cv.html#san.

37) Source: *Média Modell*.

38) Exhibition documentation: 'Média Modell', exhibition documentation: 'Intermédia, új képfajták, interaktív technikák': The Art Gallery 31 August 2000-24 September. The exhibition was jointly

Gallery. Co-organiser: the C3 Foundation (video tape of the opening and the exhibition: 1 ea video tape, articles, photocopied press cut: 33 sheets of paper

39) Source: https://www.triestecontemporanea.it/en/2020/08/30/both-ways-hungary/

40) https://www.triestecontemporanea.it/en/2020/08/30/both-ways-hungary/ Accessed 02/03/2022

41) Erőss, Nikolett, József Mélyi (eds.), *2001: science + fiction / science and fiction ('tudomány és fikció'), Media Arts series of events by the C3 Foundation, 7-17 June 2001*, Budapest: C3, 2001, pp. 25-26.

42) Personal interview.

43) Exhibition documentation: 'Média Modell', exhibition documentation: 'Intermédia, új képfajták, interaktív technikák': The Art Gallery 31 August 2000-24 September / The exhibition was jointly organised by the Association of Hungarian Artists and the Art Gallery. Co-organiser: the C3 Foundation (articles, photocopied press cut: 33 sheets of paper).

44) Source: Erőss and Mélyi 2001.

45) László László Révész's description of the work: Erőss and Mélyi 2001, pp 25-26.

46) Erőss and Mélyi 2001, p. 12. It is confusing that the details of the two publications are identical. There is only one program guide here. https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/MuveszetiKatalogusok_2001_ScienceFiction_095_072/?query=science%20fiction%20C3&pg=18&layout=s Accessed 10.3.2022

47) Bosma, Josephine, *Nettitudes: Let's Talk Net Art*, Rotterdam: NAi Publishers, and Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2011.

48) http://www.c3.hu/collection/form/

49) https://urtica.org/artworks/lapsus-memoriae.html

restoration-project-2008

51) Kömlődi, Ferenc, *Cathedral of Light*, Kávé Publishers, 1999.

52) Kömlődi 1999.

53) Lovink, Geert, *Dark Fiber: In Search of a Critical Internet Culture*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002.

54) https://variablemedia.net/e/seeingdouble/

55) Kelleher, Christian, "Archives Without Archives: (Re)Locating and (Re)Defining the Archive Through Post-Custodial Praxis", *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 1:2, 2017.

56) "Electronic Records, Paper Minds: The Revolution in Information Management and Archives in the Post-Custodial and Post-Modern Era", *Archives & Social Studies* 1, 2007.

57) Ham, F. Gerald, "Archival Strategies for the Post-Custodial Era", *American Archivist* 44, 1981, pp 207-216.

58) Gelernter, David, *Machine Beauty: Elegance and the Heart of Technology*, Basic Books, 1998.

59) http://www.netart.today/pages/about.html

60) http://www.c3.hu

61) The changes are documented on a separate website, http://www.c3.hu/log/.

62) Dekker, Annet, *Collecting and Conserving Net Art - Moving beyond Conventional Methods*, London: Routledge, 2018.

63) Verschooren, Karen, "Internet art, net art, and networked art in relation: Interview with Jon Ippolito", 2006. http://three.org/ippolito /writing/ippolito_verschooren_interview.html. Jon Ippolito developed the concept and network of changing media at the turn of the 20th century. The project proposed an unconventional preservation strategy and questionnaire, based on identifying ways in which creative works can outlive their original medium.

64) Barkóczi, Flóra, "Utópista „deejaying" a posztinternet kultúrában

https://artportal.hu/magazin/utopista-deejaying-a-posztinternet-kulturaban-a-c3-home-page-cimu-projektjerol/. Bourriaud, Nicolas, *Postproduction*, Sternberg Press, 2006.

See also the video presentation by Anna Tüdős and Márta Czene in this volume.

ON THE SILVER GLOBE: FROM A VINTAGE PRINT PHOTOGRAPHY TO A COMPLEX MEDIA INSTALLATION. RE-CONTEXTUALIZATION AS PRESERVATION STRATEGY

Agnieszka Kubicka-Dzieduszycka, Dagmara Domagała, Cezary Wicher

Introduction

The issue of archiving and preserving media art is a great challenge that is constantly raised within the practice of WRO Art Center. The concept of Active Art Archive evokes the idea of keeping archives alive and open to continuous research and exploration, which also means treating archived content as a set of building blocks for further artistic creation. One result of this approach was the creation of the installation series *On the Silver Globe*, based on Zygmunt Rytka's archival photograph from our collection. This case study of a constantly evolving artwork also has in the background the notion of the life and death of media art, creating graveyards for obsolete concepts and reviving zombies from outdated technology. We pose questions rather than provide answers, but they all stem from WRO's experience in experimenting with reimagining and disenchanting media art archives.

Perspectives on archiving media art on the example of the WRO collection

From the very beginning of the WRO Biennale, a festival of media art in Wrocław organized since 1989, the subject of special concern accompanying the substantive program of the festival has been its adequate documentation - of individual exhibitions, events, installations, concerts, performances, lectures. The event, initially referred to as the Sound-Based Visual Art Festival [PL: Festival Wizualnych Realizacji Okołomuzycznych (WRO)], became a platform for building a documentary collection of contemporary art. It also created favorable conditions for the establishment in 2008 of the WRO Art Center, an institution operating at the intersection of art, communication and technology, which became the guardian of the legacy and organizer of the WRO Biennale.[1]

The WRO Archive is not only a space for documentation, preservation, and records, but also a way of thinking about the collection strongly correlated with the re-contextualization of its contents - the presentation of documentation of events that originated in a specific context, but as a result of recording on the medium have been transferred from their original temporality into another. This changes the conditions of presentation, the accompanying artifacts, but also the ontic status of the original artistic gesture - for example, a performance turns into a video recording, and a video recording becomes a component of an installation.

However, the WRO Archive is not only a collection of ready-to-use, properly edited video materials, but also objects from performative actions and special events. These include Piotr Wyrzykowski's VHS tape with drops of his blood from the performance *Ucieleśnianie*

[Embodying] (1994) or vintage Gameboy consoles that served as musical instruments for the Gameboyzz Orchestra Project art group. In addition, several historical raw recordings are still waiting in the archive for processing. Turning to exact numbers, the WRO's inventoried collection currently (as of June 2022) contains 7091 videos (edited clips), of which 1946 are recorded on VHS tapes, 633 on Betacam, and 14 on U-Matic. Next to it there is the extensive (and still developing) collection of photographic documentation - negatives, prints and digital files, as well as objects and installations, including algorithmic works.

The backlog includes another more than 5,000 recordings and documentation in S-VHS, MiniDV, CD, DVD, VCD, SVCD and Audio CD formats. To this should be added digital material – stored on computers, external drives, servers and clouds.

The collected videos have been made since 1989, with the first WRO Festival, but they are not limited to Wrocław. Among them are documentations made at the ZKM in Karlsruhe or the Ars Electronica festivals in Linz. Among the semi-amateur materials we can also find professional recordings, including registrations and television programs made in collaboration with Polish Television in the 1990s and 2000s. Also an important part of the collection are the original video works submitted as part of open calls to the WRO Biennale, as well as works donated or entrusted by artists, mainly in the form of physical media (tape).

The documentation forms a basis for further activities in the form of printed and electronic publications, installations and exhibitions. WRO Art Center publishes the WIDOK [The View] series dedicated to the history of media art.[2] These are multimedia publications

(texts+videos) based mostly on our materials, in some cases also on video fragments acquired from other collections during documentation process. Individual volumes of the WIDOK series included thematic collections, with articles on art, visuality and cultural theory, and a catalog of historical works of video installation, as well as issues devoted to specific artists (Nam June Paik, Istvan Kantor). The construction of such a corpus of issues is inherently endemic, and the projected narrative does not claim universalism, but rather creates space for polyphony, describing phenomena from a specific perspective by authors associated with the Biennale and the WRO Art Center, an institution that is an extension of the Biennale and at the same time a base for its organization.

The WRO Archive is a source for curating/creating screening programs, so-called thematic paths, as well as for exhibition elements. We aim to make it widely accessible to the public, including professional audiences (curators, art historians, etc.). During the 19th WRO Media Art Biennale 2021 REVERSO, we launched the beta version of the new incarnation of Media Library as an online platform collecting a range of documentation of exhibitions and activities, lectures and artist interviews.[3] It is a base for those dealing with the thematic areas of the archive, but also for anyone looking for references and inspiration for their own creative or research activities. It is also a space for media and educational activities, such as presentations of works during art classes at universities and academies.

Active Art Archive or (Re-)Contextualization as a Preservation Strategy

The term "active archive" emerged in reference to the practice of re-

contextualizing historical artifacts and documents in the context of the preparation of two comprehensive exhibitions on the history of video installation and interactive installation, curated by Piotr Krajewski and the WRO team in 2012.

The exhibitions and related events, prepared in the context of the then approaching 50th anniversary of media art, were dedicated to the origins of video art as one of the most important currents setting the rhythm of modernist, postmodernist and postmedia transformations of contemporary culture and art. Both shows brought together original works and their contemporary revisits, dialogically developed by Pawel Janicki, Bartosz Konieczny, Michal Szot, and others, as repetitions of their characteristic historical idioms, forms and strategies, using original analog equipment, as well as contemporary algorithmic techniques. Many of the presented works paid tribute to the prominent creators of early media art, proposing a kind of transfer of its essence to the present day.

Here we would like to refer to Japanese artist Yae Akaiwa of the exonemo group. At the 2nd International Symposium for Media Art organized by Arts Council Tokyo and Japan Foundation Asia Center in 2018, Akaiwa offered an inspiring metaphor for the preservation of art in changing social, political, cultural and technological conditions. She linked art preservation to a ritual practiced at Ise Jingu, one of Japan's holiest Shinto shrines. Every twenty years, beginning in the 7th century, the old temple is torn down and a new one - of the same dimensions - is built right on an adjacent site. Even though the building has been a copy of a copy for centuries, new wood and modern tools are used each time. To renew the connection to the deity (concept/software), it is moved to a new building (technical infrastructure + time context/hardware). The performative process of

updating the past in the present takes about eight years of various rituals. This metaphor seems particularly apt for time-based media art. It also shows that art has always been about negotiating meanings, dealing with specific settings, codes and filters, all of which change over time.

Another stimulating thought in this regard comes from Erkki Huhtamo, a media theorist and archaeologist, who in his talk at the 2018 symposium on art and science Future Mind 2 organized by Kyoto University described art in general as a stream of recurring "concepts trying to find their contexts."

Both conceptual inspirations are helpful in presenting another example of preserving the essence of media artworks rather than their physical forms, which become obsolete for various reasons. The exhibition *Reincarnation of Media Art* [RoMA],[4] curated on behalf of WRO Art Center by Agnieszka Kubicka-Dzieduszycka, was originally conceived and co-curated by Japanese, New York-based artist duo exonemo (Yae Akaiwa, Kensuke Sembo) on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media (YCAM), a vibrant venue for the production and presentation of media art in Japan, where it premiered in 2018. Exonemo, who themselves have experienced the obsolescence of their own digitally born artworks, created a unique environment to reflect on the limited lifespan of media art and its potential future beyond the impermanence of their materiality. The exhibition includes a selection of "still life" works by artists who have worked with YCAM in the past: Koichiro Eto, exonemo, Masaki Fujihata, Toshio Iwai, Kazuhiko Hachiya, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Nam June Paik, Tadasu Takamine, Nao Tokui and Tetsuya Umeda. These now-defunct artworks were displayed in burial chambers inside a massive Mausoleum of Media

Art resembling a burial mound. Video interviews with these and other artists provided different perspectives on the role of art as a transcendent vehicle for concepts traveling in time and finding new appropriate forms of expression. An additional layer of documentation and contextualization was provided by the audio guide, which could be played on a variety of historical devices (ghetto blaster, walkman, CD player, minidisc, etc.). Most importantly, the approach to preserving media art through documentation and (re)contextualization was indicated by the situating the exhibition in a burial mound, a culturally encoded object, commonly associated with the impermanence of life and death, which served as a platform for researching and documenting local media art histories in other regions as well.

When Agnieszka Kubicka-Dzieduszycka visited the RoMA exhibition at YCAM, preparations for the 30th anniversary edition of the WRO Media Art Biennale 2019 were already well under way. She immediately wanted to realize this unique exhibition formula to look back at the history of the WRO festivals through no-longer functional media artworks from the archives of both institutions: WRO and YCAM. The presentation at the WRO Art Center was the first - and so far the only - successful attempt to create a living archive of "dead" artworks enriched with local content, thus expanding the scope and timeframe of the RoMA exhibition.

Together with exonemo and the YCAM team (coordinated by curator Kazuhiko Yoshizaki), thanks to special support from the Japan Foundation, we prepared a regional iteration of the show by arranging the burial chambers inside a gallery at the WRO Art Center, the entrance to which resembled a path leading to a burial mound with walls made of clay and straw. In such a setting, we decided to exhibit

several dead artworks from the original exonemo selection (Koichiro Eto, Masaki Fujihata, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Nao Tokui) together with works by Piotr Wyrzykowski, Anna Plotnicka, Gameboyzz Orchestra Project, and Lukasz Szalankiewicz (aka Zenial) that have been created/produced/presented by WRO in the past.

In keeping with the original concept, which paid special tribute to Nam June Paik (two special burial chambers for Paik's dead works from the collection of the Nam June Paik Art Center in Seoul), we were also able to show two unique remains of his works from the private collection of Paik's former student and technical assistant. One of these was a CRT television screen recording from an installation of *Zen for TV* in 1976. Paik then made it on site for an exhibition at Kunsthal Charlottenborg in Copenhagen. Parts of the old television were replaced in 2001-2002, according to the artist's instructions, when another CRT was placed in the original Danish case to play the recording. This version of *Zen for TV* was later acquired by the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

An important element of the exhibition was a Wrocław-specific audio guide, which explained the various reasons why the objects on display - traces of past artworks - had become dead, without losing the meanings they had accumulated over time. This curatorial commentary provided insight into the more universal aspects of media art history, while a series of video interviews with Polish artists allowed reflection on the life and death of time-based art. These interviews were displayed within the burial mound of the RoMA exhibition and can still be viewed on the WRO's Vimeo channel, adding further layers of meaning to the - seemingly dead - artworks, keeping their essence active despite the passage of time.

On the Silver Globe: From vintage print photography to a complex media installation

Among the archive-based artworks of WRO, which are the result of our archival-activating approach, we would like to draw special attention to the installation *On the Silver Globe* as an example of an action taken around an original physical artwork from the collection (a photogram) giving rise to a new work (installation), activating other meanings of the original work in a new context.

Two photographs by Zygmunt Rytka (1947-2018), a Polish pioneer of conceptual time-based art, donated by the artist to the WRO collection, served as the inspiration and starting point for the work. When 20th -21th July 1969 he photographed the TV screen during the broadcast of the first manned moon landing, Poland was the only Warsaw Pact country where this first global media event was available live on television. The Moon broadcast became a testament to humanity's drive in the 20th century for "space exploration" and the power of the developing media technology. The event inspired artists around the world and went down in television history. Rytek's photograph showing the board: "The transmission from the moon has ended" [PL: Zakończyliśmy transmisję z Księżyca], published by Polish Television, however, had political rather than cultural overtones at the time. From the perspective of the harsh everyday life in a totalitarian regime lauded by communist propaganda as a glorious utopia, the moon landing - an achievement of a hostile political system - seemed an irrational event in a galaxy far from reality. The Apollo 11 mission was a strong point in the arms race, but also a significant blurring of the official glossy image of an advanced socialist world.

In 2012, Piotr Krajewski and the ephemeral creative collective WRO center Group created a tribute to Rytka's work consisting of an original framed print of a photograph and a video projection on a historical convex CRT TV monitor, showing a clip posted on YouTube of astronaut Neil Armstrong's first walk on the moon. The recording of this television broadcast, once a phenomenal media sensation, now functions as a meme circulating on the Internet.

The installation updates the original context of Rytka's work, highlighting how media technology and cultural phenomena can be used as raw material for art. Later, another two, interactive versions of the work, were created. Viewers were able to manipulate the video signal with their own internet-connected mobile devices through the original interaction system. With image processing software, the video component could be transformed into a pixel matrix generating a live 3D image, allowing viewers to control their viewing perspective and literally adding a new dimension to the archival footage. In addition, these subsequent versions made use of another cultural artifact: one of the earliest films of the sci-fi genre, Georges Méliès' *A Trip to the Moon*, a classic not only in terms of cinema, but also in terms of the history of the human imagination. Méliès' original film, a treasure guarded in the archives, is at the same time widely available on the Internet in countless copies (files), reflecting the changing notion of an original work of art and its value.

Conclusions

As the example of *On the Silver Globe* demonstrates, WRO's strategy is not an example of museum preservation, where the overriding rationale is to preserve the artwork in its original state and condition. Rather, this practice is taking off the white gloves to allow the

freedom of creative reconstruction, and approaching the original work as an open-source base for further queries and development. The weight of historical preservation and maintaining the evolution of the artwork shifts to the process of documentation and opening up the archives to the wider public and researchers. Camera recordings are limited in some ways, especially in terms of user experience and interaction, but they are partially immune to the problem of media obsolescence and the limiting factors of exhibiting actual artworks, such as time and space.

In a sense, we are also returning to the origins of media art: the counterculture and the volatile nature of time-based media. From the very beginning, media art was not intended to be shown in museums, focusing rather on the continuous process of expression and anarchistic exploration of new devices emerging from the dark blessings of capitalism. Artistic practices based on the recontextualization of content were, in a sense, possible forms of freeing artworks from institutional preservation and allowing them to live, die and reincarnate freely.

Reflecting on the pros and cons of this perspective, the issue of intervention and modification and the notion of authorship naturally come to the fore. The remix culture and deep immersion in the online community can serve as anecdotal evidence of the contemporary free flow of ideas and content. As well as disobedience to the concept of ownership and copyright, even in the "official" art market with the NFT at the forefront. However, internet-driven culture with its anarcho-hacker background does not erase legal issues for museums and art galleries. In the case of *On the Silver Globe*, the issue was quite simple, as the original artwork (a photograph by Zygmunt Rytka) was preserved in its original state as part of the installation.

What was manipulated was the context resolving around it. And even more: at one point the original photograph simply disappeared from the installation and remained only as a disembodied concept, which led to the process of creating *On the Silver Globe* in its various incarnations.

At this point, there are more questions than possible answers when it comes to issues of possible preservation of media art in the process of its re-contextualization. However, despite its drawbacks, this strategy also has some promising features, especially when it comes to obsolete systems and devices. A possible remix of an obsolete interface brings the artwork back to life, even if the original program is no longer supported by the app store or has been destroyed by a media failure, for example. Based on text, photo and video documentation, such an "active conservator" would be able to restore the original interface using modern devices. However, emulation is also not a 1:1 restoration process and requires much more modification than re-contextualization alone. By letting in the creative aspect, it can open up the possibility of keeping fresh, living ideas resolving around technology, rather than reviving technological zombies speaking a language no one understands anymore.

In this sense, an art institution can become a time travel machine for concepts and contexts. Because both technology and ideas can become obsolete. The goal of the WRO Active Art Archive, therefore, is to provide tools and content to reconfigure visions and inventions that are not seen in isolation from the history and development of media art. The preservation process is based on re-play rather than freezing an artwork at a specific point in time and space. Even though the original artwork may sometimes be lost in the process, the growing layers of possible contexts do not allow it to

die. It simply brings it to another level of historical continuity.

However, many issues related to re-contextualization are yet to be determined. Despite years of experience in creating an active media art archive, we can only pose some questions that other institutions might consider when building media art collections and archives. The case study describing the installation *On the Silver Globe* is an example of how a single collection item can initiate a whole complex process of redefining collections/archives as graveyards, and it also underscores the need to create a new, forward-looking imagination for each new acquisition that feeds the growing collections of art institutions.

---

1) https://wrocenter.pl/en/o-wro/, https://wrocenter.pl/en/archiwum-biennale-wro/
2) https://wrocenter.pl/en/publikacje/
3) https://czytelnia.wrocenter.pl/, https://wrocenter.pl/en/czytelnia-mediow/
4) https://wrocenter.pl/en/rma/

DEAD ARTWORKS AS NARRATORS: (RE)USE OF BROKEN ARTWORKS IN THE MEDIA ART NARRATIVE AT THE EXHIBITION //REINCARNATION OF MEDIA ART// IN WRO ART CENTER IN WROCŁAW (2019)

Sonia Milewska

Introduction

In order to reap as much benefit from works of art as possible, the perspective on their preservation might shift from thinking about prolonging life – to 'being until death'. The quoted thought is the conclusion of one of the Getty Conservation Institute expert panels on changes and developments in the field of contemporary art conservation (2008).[1] This paper provides commentary and analysis on 'dead artworks', although the research is limited to media art, which, despite its youth, often dies first. The topic is touched upon in the exemplary exhibition exhibition *Reincarnation of Media Art* curated by Agnieszka Kubicka-Dzieduszycka in WRO Art Center in Wrocław (2019)[2] – a Polish iteration of the concept of Mausoleum of Media Art realized at the Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media (YCAM) by the Japanese artist group exonemo.[3]

The following pages provide an overview of the current debate on the death of modern artworks, including media art. Then, in the context of various conservation approaches and artistic paradigms, forms of its preservation will be briefly mentioned, as well as

sources of broken artworks. A contemporary critical view of forced preservation, excessive archiving and large quantities of artifacts in storage will be presented using a conservationist research perspective. The next section shows how to use broken artworks in the narrative of media art history. The final section includes research on attempts to systematize and name the objects discussed in the article.

Death debate

Fig. 1. [Reincarnation of Media Art](#) exhibition in YCAM Japan.

The 20th century was characterized by new paradigms, and significant changes in the field of art that have affected not only art audiences, but also critics, curators and conservators. Art preservation is complicated, so defining art, as well as deciding what to preserve and at what price, are difficult. Modern art is rapidly degrading due to fragile elements, experimental techniques and unstable new materials. As a result, we often encounter dead artworks that are the result of experimentation, that were damaged in transit or are me-

chanically damaged. Richard Rinehart lists three ways art dies in the context of media art: death by technology, death by institution, and death by law.[4] Maintaining media artworks that rely on outdated technical devices is becoming increasingly difficult as specific models, their replacements, and experts in the technology vanish.

Curators and conservators, along with experts from a variety of scientific specialties, face challenges in acquiring and preserving electronic and digital works. Art conservation theory is evolving to adapt to the problems of newer technologies, which Pip Laurenson describes as a dynamic system, "a set of components, linked together in an organized fashion."[5] She stresses that keeping media art in use is the best preventive strategy. According to Hanna B. Hölling, these artworks, complicated by their media temporality, have the potential to be preserved through "emulation, migration and reinterpretation."[6]. The identity of media art is scattered across different objects, processes and contexts, and the death of art becomes a topic of debate due to the potential volatility of media. This variability is strongly intertwined with the extensive documentation of the work, which in some cases becomes part of the artwork.[7]

Art conservators discuss the death of art, but in the context of its avoidance rather than acceptance. The topic of art mortality was presented at a conference on contemporary art restoration *Mortality Immortality?* (1998),[8] then at another organized by the Getty Conservation Institute (2008).[9], and at a recent INCCA panel entitled *Death of an Artwork* (2022)[10] Rosario Llamas-Pacheco recently summed up the issue by equating the death of art with its disappearance, even though the causes of art death vary from natural degradation to accident to intentional artistic action.[11] Following

Mario Sousa's paradigm of death, Llamas-Pacheco proposes an attitude of accepting the death of a work not only of its matter, but also of its concept.[12] Regardless of the causes of death, collections have to deal with damaged works of art, their broken or replaced parts, which do not constitute a work of art, but are replaceable elements.

Despite preventive conservation, works of art lose parts, have their mechanisms replaced, and sometimes lose their meaning. As in the case of Joseph Beuys, whose *Felt Suit* (1970) is suspended in conceptual and physical limbo in the Tate Collection after being eaten by moths.[13]. Another example, Nam June Paik's works illustrate well the notion of interchangeable parts, and at the same time closely link art with rapidly aging technology, as seen in the review *TV Garden* (1974).[14]. Assuming the artist's awareness, the best precautionary plan, and tracking the technology adoption curve, we must take into account that some technical elements will break down and need to be replaced - but what about the originals?

Reincarnation of Media Art

The original concept for the Mausoleum of Media Art came from artist Kensuke Sembo, during a discussion on media art conservation between the exonemo group and YCAM curators. He and Masaki Fujihata invited artists to "consider the death of artworks and the possibility of their reincarnation in the future."[15] Visitors to the exhibition explored relics and documentation of time-based art in a mausoleum inside YCAM's main building. Audioguide was used to guide visitors through the exhibition, which began with a presentation of Nam June Paik's "death of the work" of CRT monitors from *Video Chandelier No.1* (1989).
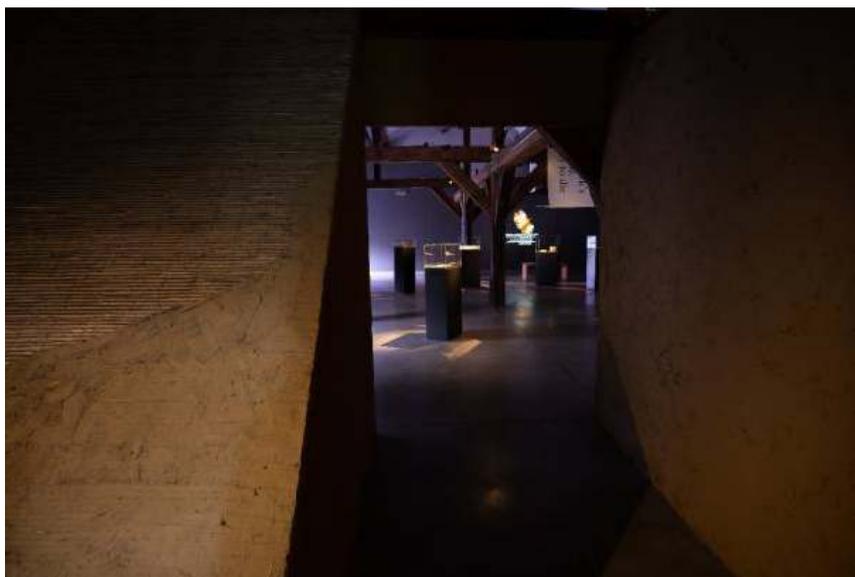
Fig. 2. Reincarnation of Media Art exhibition in Wro Art Center in Wrocław. Photo: Zbigniew Kupisz. Courtesy of WRO Art Center.

The Polish iteration of *Reincarnation of Media Art* was created as part of the 18th WRO Media Art Biennale at the WRO Art Center (2019), a pioneering festival and institution in Poland that has been promoting, producing and documenting media art for 30 years. The exhibition was curated by Agnieszka Kubicka-Dzieduszycka, and the works presented were selected in collaboration with other members of the WRO team. In this case, a synthetic voice led visitors through the mausoleum, referring only to the tomb with the entrance (Fig. 2), and told about the causes of death of the works displayed in the crypts - plexiglass cubes on pedestals (Fig. 3). The audio guide was played on old portable devices like a cassette radio or portable CD player.

Fig. 3. Reincarnation of Media Art exhibition in WRO Art Center in Wrocław. Photo: Zbigniew Kupisz. Courtesy of WRO Art Center.
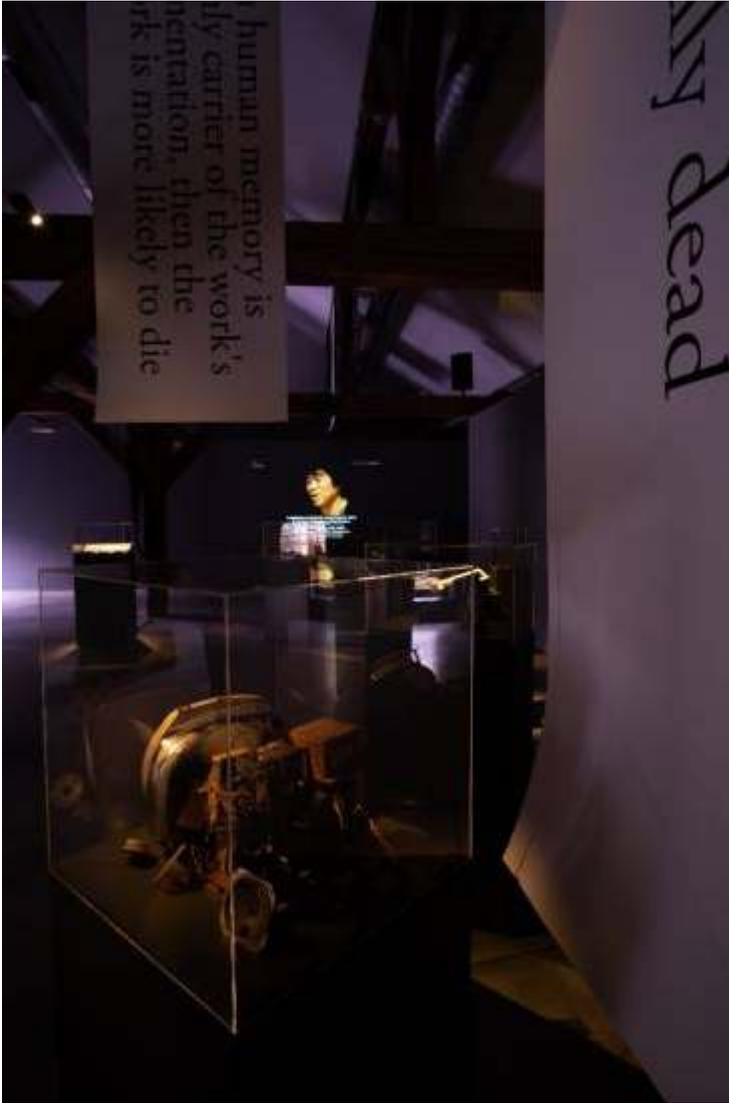
Fig. 4. Reincarnation of Media Art exhibition in WRO Art Center in Wrocław. Photo: Zbigniew Kupisz. Courtesy of WRO Art Center.

The WRO Art Center showed dead works by eight artists collaborating with WRO and YCAM, including a recurring homage to the "father of media art": the Wrocław exhibition also began with Nam June Paik, exhibiting the interiors of a broken CRT monitor from *Zen for TV* (1963), and a U-Matic cassette (1980s). This was followed by works by other artists: a cell phone used in Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's performance *Hemmer Amodal Suspension* (2003); a hard drive with data from *Web Hopper* (1996) by Koichiro Eto; *YMO Techno Badge* (1980) by Masaki Fujihata; old iPhones with apps by Nao Tokui (2008); VHS tapes from the performance *Ucieleśnianie* [Embodyiment] (1994) by Piotr Wyrzykowski; VHS with *Performans na żądanie* [Performance on Request] (2001) by Anna Plotnicka and Pawel Janicki; broken game consoles of the Gameboyzz Orchestra project (2001); broken floppy disks by Lukasz Szalankiewicz aka Zenial and the artist's audio release on floppy disk (1996-2019).

The exhibition in Wrocław was an example of various conservation strategies or relics of dead artworks. Preservation through documentation, which was developed to preserve time-based art, can be applied to Lozano-Hemmer, Plotnicka and Janicki. The light show photo album additionally focuses on viewers' memories. Works of art are also represented by technology, such as telephones, placing them in a historical context. The VHS tapes on display can be viewed as documentation - a record of Płotnicka's performance (2001), but also as an artifact used by Wyrzykowski in a creative act (1994). As Sylwia Szykowna notes, another layer of meaning is object memory, where the objects are tangible intermediaries between historical events. [16)] Broken hard drives or floppy disks (Koichiro Eto) can also be used as a form of mediation. Nam June Paik's TV, on the other hand, best exemplifies the most important aspect of media

art: variability and its implications for conservation strategies.

This conservation paradigm constructed by the Variable Media Network refers to practices aimed at maintaining certain parameters of the work's stability, transforming works of art, but in accordance with the intent of their creator.[17] Another approach is "changeability," a concept introduced by Hölling that refers to the possibility of changing one work of art into another, transforming conservation into the continuation of art.[18] Being part of a work of art, Nam June Paik's TV carries at least one ruin-relic value mentioned by Llamas-Pacheco that deserves preservation: cultural, intentional, historical or iconic type.[19] In addition, the artist's signature on the TV with the number *4/12* is reminiscent of Duchamp's gesture and designates a work that is one of a kind.[20]

Reincarnation of Media Art also included an artist survey about the future of their work. Its results, as well as artists' awareness of the preservation of their works, are of particular interest to conservators. This awareness is a topic for a separate study, but it should be mentioned in light of the presence of Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, who promotes *Best Practices for Conservation of Media Art from an Artist's Perspective*.[21]

To summarize the surveys realized as part of the Japanese exhibition: YCAM received 41 responses to a total of 124 surveys, four of which were made public on the project website. Masaki Fujihata responded to Kensuke Sembo's proposal to create an exhibition that looked like an ancient burial in the following way: "Who on earth would want to participate in such an exhibition? […] I don't want to see my works in a tomb."[22] Fujihata was eventually convinced, and several other artists provided responses ranging from a complete

rejection of the work's materiality (Kyle McDonald) to meticulous planning and documentation of the work (Akos Maroy). Yap Sau Bin wrote about re-mediation - a type of conservation - in the sense of "analog→ digital→ analog,"[23] which corresponds with Jussi Parikka's Media Archaeology.[24]

For the Polish iteration, video interviews with the exhibiting artists were recorded and screened at the WRO Art Centre and on its on-line platforms. Among the videos and quotes, one slogan stood out: "A dead work is a forgotten work," according to Zenial; so artists do not want to be forgotten. It should be added that media artists are among the most technologically aware creators, observing new, rapidly changing technologies. To conclude, the *Reincarnation of Media Art* project not only presented different approaches to preservation, but also artists' attitudes and raised awareness of conservation, not forgetting Nam June Paik's reflection "My TV is not always interesting, but not always uninteresting."[25]

Dead artworks

The purpose of this article was to assess the value of the objects displayed in the exhibition *Reincarnation of Media Art*. The most common noun used to describe the exhibited objects was "dead artworks," as the founders of the mausoleum used the concept of death. In an examination of the Wrocław show, Szykowna refers to the exhibits as "relics" and "material remains."[26] Kensuke Sembo, one of the authors of the Japanese proposal, used the more direct term "corpses." The term 'ruin-relic' is also defined by Llamas-Pacheco as: "the state in which the artwork, after the passage of time, [...] has reached a point at which it is no longer capable of facilitating the entity's experimentation."[27]

Therefore, objects should be preserved despite their poor condition or loss of integrity, because they reflect other cultural values and serve as witnesses to history. If one accepts Janina Hoth's definition, such witnesses could be the photographs of the performances presented at the exhibition *Reincarnation of Media Art*. She characterizes the dominant witnesses of historical knowledge, even though they are merely "mediators of a specific point of view."[28] These documents, according to Hoth, cannot be recorded in their current form because of their mediality, but should be re-edited by conservators/archivists and observers.[29]

In this context, the greatest challenge comes from the readymade and the Fluxus movement, in which a document or its copy becomes a work of art, as Filipovic describes using the example of Marcel Duchamp's notes.[30] As a result, it is difficult to have a clear definition of art documentation that could be useful in determining the status of an object. As Aga Wielocha points out, when Fluxus expanded the field of art to include happenings, actions and events, "the distinction between artwork and documentation began to blur."[31]

Actions and performances leave behind material traces in the form of documentation, as well as material artifacts and inanimate actors that are archived and displayed in exhibitions. These objects are crucial to the preservation of performance art because they are unused and inactive, but are preserved for their aesthetic and sculptural value."[32] When an artist modifies a display device to the point where it becomes a sculptural work, as Laurenson notes, "its significance conforms more readily to that of a traditional museum object."[33].

In an interview about dead artworks in the Tate collection, Patricia Falcão describes such things as 'dedicated equipment' and notes that the conservation path would be different in such a case, led by the sculpture conservation department.[34] As a result, such "archived objects" are stored and monitored in a controlled environment alongside the rest of the collection, similar to the storage of *Felt Suit*, where an excavated archaeological relic retains the essence of its *raison d'être*, but no longer functions as such."[35]

Wielocha proposes that artifacts, i.e., the actual components of works of art, can be considered as documentation of artistic practice.[36] The 'archival turn' was already postulated by Hölling, when analyzing media art, she suggested that an artwork could become an archive of itself.[37] If we accept all physical changes in material works, every trace of time will be the subject of future inquiry, so instead of exposing the patina, we should do the opposite, Rinehart recommended.[38] However, preserving each piece is difficult due to storage limitations and environmental sustainability.

In the case of media art, which typically contains electronic, partially replaceable elements, this method can be a challenge. Similar objections are raised by Hoth, who questions the desirability of preserving relics, asking whether an artificial market for relics does not work against the artist.[39] One of the arguments for preserving such a collection is that it is actively used. Annet Dekker defines a digital archive as its "reuse instead of storage, circulation rather than centrally organized memory," and uses "artifacts" to describe both objects and documentation.[40] She adds in the essay that the archive allows for fresh interpretations of art, thus preserving the memory and life of the artwork.[41]

Conclusion

Works of art have been constantly reinterpreted and transformed throughout history. This variability is particularly evident in media artifacts and has implications for the alternative modes of conservation discussed in the article and observed in the exhibition under study. The broken artworks on pedestals were retrieved from private archives and institutional warehouses, among others. Thus, *Reincarnation of Media Art* curated by Kubicka-Dzieduszycka and the WRO Art Center team, exemplified the active, generative management of the archive described by Dekker.[42]

Art objects used as new methods of documentation can create "a different process of knowing knowledge."[43] Barker and Bracker emphasize the need to demonstrate the possibility that inanimate objects continue to resonate in museums or collections after their death.[44] Returning to the idea in the article's title, the *Reincarnation of Media Art* example illustrates that the use of dead artworks as narrators of media art history extends the life of art and supports its preservation.

---

[1] On 25 and 26 January 2008, the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) and the Getty Research Institute presented *The Object in Transition: A Cross Disciplinary Conference on the Preservation and Study of Modern and Contemporary Art*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0l931jxDFqw (accessed 24.01.2022)

[2] https://wrocenter.pl/pl/rma/ (accessed 24.01.2022)

[3] https://rema.ycam.jp/en/ (accessed 24.01.2022)

[4] Rinehart, Richard, Jon Ippolito (eds.), *Re-Collection: Art, New Media, and Social Memory*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014.

5) Laurenson, Pip, "The Management of Display Equipment in Time-based Media Installations," *Tate Papers*, 3 (2005). Available online: https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/03/the-management-of-display-equipment-in-time-based-media-installations (accessed 24.01.2022)

6) Hölling, Hanna B., "The Archival Turn," In *Data Drift: Archiving Media And Data Art In The 21st Century*, Riga: RIXC and Liepaja's University Art Research Lab, 2015, p. 74. Available online: http://www.hannahoelling.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/The_Archival_Turn.pdf

7) Wielocha, Aga, "Art Objects as Documents and the Distributed Identity of Contemporary Artworks," *ArtMatters: International Journal of Technical Art History*, 2021, pp. 106-113.

8) Constantine, Mildred, "Mortality Immortality? The Legacy of 20th-Century Art", 1998, post-conference paper. Available online: https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/newsletters/13_2/feature1.html (accessed 24.01.2022)

9) *The Object in Transition: A Cross Disciplinary Conference on the Preservation and Study of Modern and Contemporary Art.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ol931jxDFqw (accessed 24.01.2022)

10) INCCA Talk in collaboration with CAN! Conversation, on "The Death of an Artwork," held on 19 January 2022. https://incca.org/events/incca-talk-collaboration-can-conversations (accessed 24.01.2022)

11) Llamas-Pacheco, Rosario, "Some Theory for the Conservation of Contemporary Art," *Studies in Conservation*, 65:8 (2020), p. 492.

12) Llamas-Pacheco 2020, p. 493.

13) Barker, Rachel, Alison Bracker, "Relic or Release: Defining and Documenting the Physical and Aesthetic Death of Contemporary

2005: Preprints, London: James & James, 2005, p. 1012

[14) Hanhardt, John G., "Nam June Paik, TV Garden, 1974", in Depocas, Alain, Jon Ippolito, Caitlin Jones (eds.), *Permanence Through Change: The Variable media Approach*, New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and Montreal: Daniel Langlois Foundation, 2003

15) https://rema.ycam.jp/en/ (accessed 24.01.2022)

16) Szykowna, Sylwia, "Zmienna trwałość dzieła – problem pamięci sztuki mediów w kontekście wystawy Reinkarnacja sztuki mediów" [Variable Durability of a Work of Art – The Problem of Media Art Memory in the Context of the Exhibition 'Reincarnation of Media Art'], *Przegląd Kulturoznawczy*, 2(44) 2020, p. 118.

17) https://variablemedia.net/e/ (accessed Jan. 24, 2022)

18) Szykowna 2020, p. 121.

19) Llamas-Pacheco 2020, p. 496.

20) Szykowna 2020, p. 120.

21) https://github.com/antimodular/Best-practices-for-conservation-of-media-art (accessed 24.01.2022)

22) https://rema.ycam.jp/en/archives/essay/reincarnation-of-media-art/ (accessed 24.01.2022)

23) https://rema.ycam.jp/en/archives/qanda/ (accessed 24.01.2022)

24) Parikka, Jussi, *What is Media Archaeology*, Polity, 2012.

25) http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/source-text/31/ (accessed 24.01.2022)

26) Szykowna 2020.

27) Llamas-Pacheco 2020, p. 496.

28) Hoth, Janina, "Historicization in the Archive: Digital Art and Originality," in Grau, Oliver, Janina Hoth, Eveline Wandl-Vogt (eds.), *Digital Art through the Looking Glass*, Krems a.d. Donau: Donau-Universität Krems, 2019, p. 147

30) Filipovic, Elena, *The Apparently Marginal Activities of Marcel Duchamp*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016.

31) Wielocha 2021, p. 109.

32) Hölling 2015, p. 79.

33) Laurenson 2005, p. 4.

34) Author's personal interview with Patricia Falcão, January 7, 2022.

35) Barker and Bracker 2005, p. 1012.

36) Wielocha 2021, p. 106.

37) Hölling 2015, p. 75.

38) Rinehart and Ippolito 2014, p. 213.

39) Hoth 2019 p. 151.

40) Dekker, Annet, "Between Light and Dark Archiving," in *Digital Art through the Looking Glass*, eds. O. Grau, J. Hoth, E. Wandl-Vogt, 2019, p. 133.

41) Dekker 2019, p. 140.

42) Dekker 2019, p. 140.

43) Hoth 2019, p. 150.

44) Barker and Bracker 2005, p. 1009.

PREPARING A HISTORICAL EXHIBITION OF SCREENSAVERS

Marie Meixner

Introduction

The following text deals with the exhibition *Screensaver as a Unique and Shocking Artform* created within the New Media Museums project in cooperation with PAF, ScreenSaverGallery and Galerie XY in Olomouc. It built on several, from our point of view essential, exhibition activities that dealt with the computer screensaver as a distinct artistic entity, whose traces in cultural memory are slowly disappearing.

But how to credibly approach something as ephemeral as a screensaver in a gallery space, which conditions a completely different way of perception than the native screensaver environment of idle moments in the middle of work on one's computer? Especially when they are no longer functional in their original form, for example, due to the discontinuation of support for the obsolete Flash format,[1] and in many cases their documentation is not available?

Fig. 1: Exhibition detail of *Screensaver as a Unique and Shocking Artform*, Galerie XY, Olomouc, 2021-2022.

Fig. 2: Exhibition detail of *Screensaver as a Unique and Shocking Artform*, Galerie XY, Olomouc, 2021-2022.

Screensaver as an artwork

A screensaver is a computer program that was originally designed to protect computer screen or monitor from permanent damage caused by viewing static images for long periods of time. From the perspective of its user (the viewer), a screensaver appears as a moving image - most often a simple form of animation running on the computer screen during moments of inactivity. They had their hey-

day in the 1990s. Since the latter half of the 2010s, when more sophisticated technology pushed CRT monitors out of the market, they have been labelled an obsolete medium.

At a time when screensaver roles were primarily practical, their creators were primarily programmers. While the screensaver has lost importance as a medium in terms of functionality, it has regained importance as it is used in educational works, digital art galleries and also as stand-alone artworks.

Although it no longer serves to protect the screen, it retains its basic formal characteristics. Works created for the computer screensaver have some specificities resulting from this medium:

- It is time-based. It unfolds linearly in time, like film and music. It cannot be consumed in a single moment or at its own pace like a photograph or a painting;
- It's not interactive. It cannot be sped up, skipped forward or rewound;
- It has no real ending or beginning. Screensaver lacks a linear story. It either generatively unfolds in time, or takes the form of a loop or static image (even if the video is presented as a screensaver).

Moreover, its reception is linked to a specific context:

- The screensaver addresses its viewer only in moments of inactivity, i.e. when the viewer is not using a computer and is usually resting from work. These moments may seem ideal for taking in, appreciating, and contemplating art.
- The reception is usually held in a private setting (study, bedroom, children's room, etc.);

- However, it can also take place in a public space, on publicly accessible computers, for example in libraries and school classrooms (but also on personal laptops where the screensaver is triggered in moments of user inactivity, for example in a café or on a train), creating interesting stimulating situations for casual observers, especially if the work has a sound component.

The term screensaver, as seen and used in this text, refers to both a computer program, i.e. a medium or container, and its specific audiovisual content.

Preparing an exhibition for XY Gallery Olomouc

The screensaver is still a basic piece of software on all computers, although its practical purpose (protecting the screen from damage) has completely disappeared with modern monitors. Throughout history, a number of fascinating art projects have been created for this specific medium, which have been the subject of several exhibitions from 2000 to the present day. The exhibition *Screensaver as a Unique and Shocking Artform* was a modified reiteration of these historical exhibition realizations.

The basis of the exhibition, which occupied the entire upper floor of the XY Gallery in Olomouc, was the exhibition *Refresh: The Art of the Screensaver* (2000) curated by artist James Buckhouse with Merrill Falkenberg.[2] The *Refresh* exhibition was realized both online (on the ArtMuseum.net website) and in a physical gallery space (the Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University in Stanford, California).

Traces of perhaps the first exhibition of computer screensavers in

an artistic context, *Refresh: The Art of the Screensaver* has been buried deep in the Internet Archive. Here we discovered the exhibition website with tiny images (typical of turn-of-the-century websites). The only surviving documentation of the installation appears to be one small, blurry jpeg with barely distinguishable content, 19.2 kB in size and 72 dpi resolution. And yet it is very telling and valuable; the only publicly available image documentation of a possibly crucial exhibition of computer screensavers in physical space. However, in communicating with Shanna Dickson, associate registrar of the permanent collection at the Cantor Arts Center, we were able to earmark additional documentation: several photographs taken not by a professional photographer, but by a museum staff member. The photographs provided us with information about the technology (hardware) used for the installation at the time and the spatial setting of the exhibition.

Fig. 3: Exhibition view of *Refresh: The Art of the Screensaver*, Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts, Stanford University, 2000.

Although the online part of the exhibition was supposed to last "indefinitely," it is missing from its original location. The original accompanying texts can still be read at the Internet Archive,[3] but it is not possible to download and run screensavers. The exhibition's website was created by New York-based network artist Yael Kanarek and powered by Intel Corporation, which owns the copyright to the site's web framework and format elements.[4] Fortunately, Kanarek still had the original CD of the exhibition files and a physical printed poster, which she was willing to share.[5] Tomáš Javůrek, the technologist behind ScreenSaverGallery, was able to reconstruct the files. They were first shown online, in the original context of the computer screensaver as an exhibition at ScreenSaverGallery[6] and in the physical exhibition space (white-cube) of Gallery XY.[7]
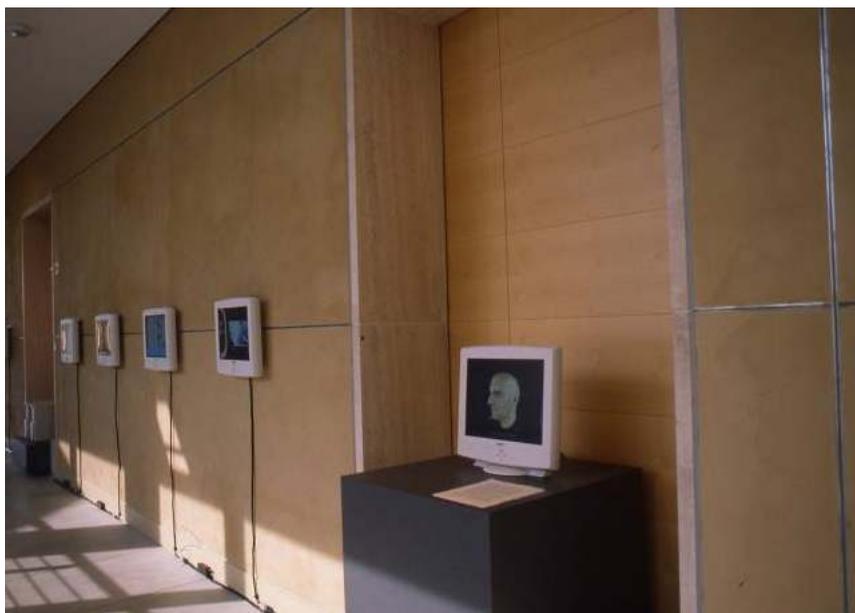
Fig. 4: Exhibition view of *Refresh: The Art of the Screensaver*, Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts, Stanford University, 2000.

We had to contact the curators of *Refresh* not only for permission to use their selections, but also because many of the artworks were not originally screensavers, but other types of art forms: paintings, videos, or even documentaries, and turned into screensavers.[8] In all cases, we had to contact the artists or their gallery representatives to get their permission to present the work on/off-line and to reconstruct the original form or meaning of the work. I was unable to reach Mick and Ted Skolnick in any way, and many of the artists are now represented by galleries, making communication difficult. For example, for Francis Alÿs' work, I obtained permission from Dia:, who commissioned the original work, but could not get any response from David Zwirner Gallery, who now represents the artist. The three screensavers could not be reconstructed and were pre-

sented as static images with explanatory captions in an online exhibition and as printed and framed photographs in the gallery after discussion with their artists. Alexander R. Galloway's *EveryImage* (2000) was originally a server-based work, downloading images in real time from the Rhizome database. *cameraSS* (2000) by the duo Entropy8Zuper was an online performance containing a live stream from a webcam that would need to be re-performed. However, the context of computer use is now quite different (and there was no time or resources to do so). *SoftSub* (1999), a screensaver from C5, was developed in the Mac Classic environment using Flash. These archival issues are now being addressed by the University of San Jose to include C5's work in its permanent collection. Flash-based artworks, such as Yael Kanarek's *World of Awe* (2000), were run on a virtual machine and recorded and then played back as video.

Kanarek described the atmosphere of the effort to preserve obsolete digital works as follows:

> "I tried to work with curator Kerry Doran on an initiative to preserve World of Awe, but they couldn't find resources in the US for this kind of work. In addition to my own work, I founded and led the Upgrade! International for ten years with the support of Eyebeam. I've done various projects with Rhizome and created websites that supported networked art initiatives, including a legacy site for Whitney Artport. Most of the physical and digital artwork has been saved, as well as the old computers that are still functional (fingers crossed). I recently lost some important works due to a lightning interruption. It hurts a lot. I'm writing this cautiously, trying to feel the waters. The sum total

of these creative endeavors seems to offer a timestamp of technological aesthetics, net art, and digital art from 1995-2006ish in New York and beyond."<u>9)</u>

Fig. 5: Exhibition view of *Screensaver as a Unique and Shocking Artform*, Galerie XY, Olomouc, 2021-2022. Photo: Barbora Trnková.
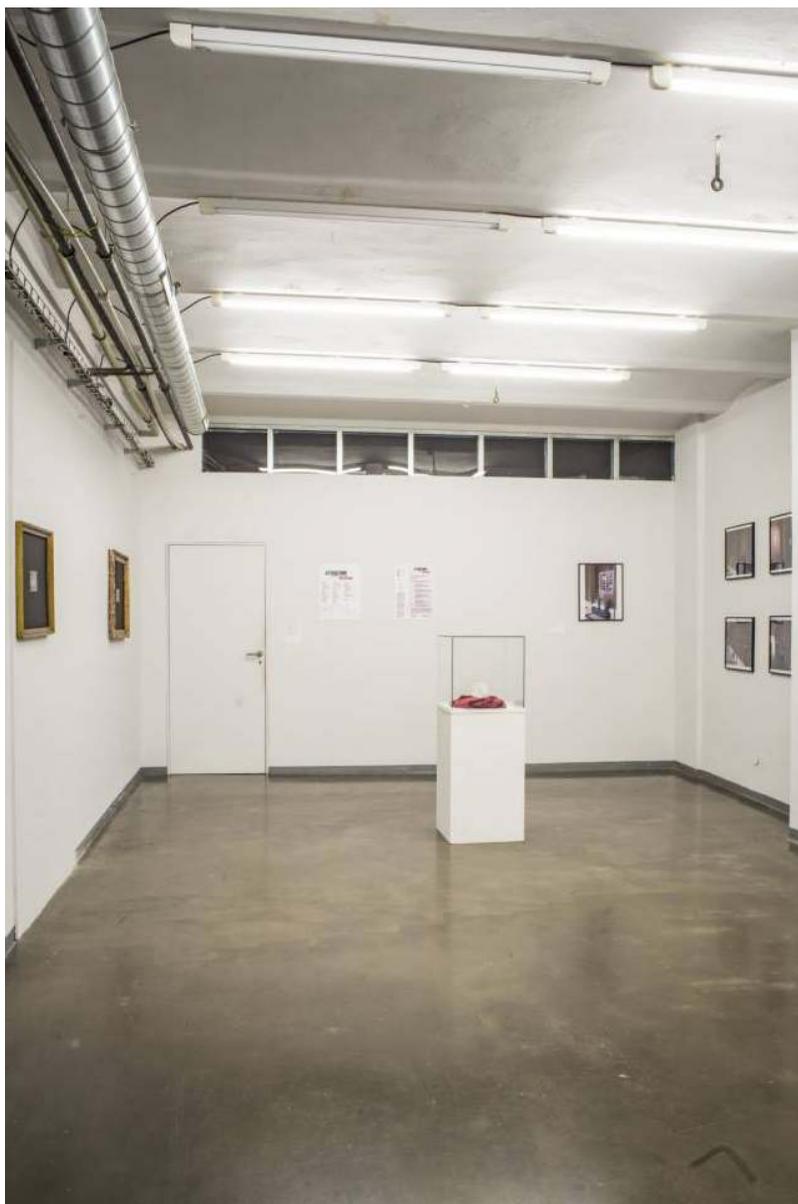
Fig. 6: Exhibition view of *Screensaver as a Unique and Shocking Artform*, Galerie XY, Olomouc, 2021-2022. Photo: Barbora Trnková.

Fig. 7: Exhibition view of *Screensaver as a Unique and Shocking Artform*, Galerie XY, Olomouc, 2021-2022. Photo: Barbora Trnková.

Exhibition design

The screensavers in the online ScreenSaverGallery were presented randomly and in a loop, and each of them was labeled (artist, title, year). It was more challenging to show them in the physical space of Gallery XY. The original technology would have been impossible to obtain under the conditions we had available, so the screensavers ran as videos on a modern monitor, which only minimally and humorously referred to the original solution by its arrangement in space and the inclusion of two "obsolete" PC cases as objects on which the monitor stood. All the screensavers were presented on a single screen, behind each other, unlike in the original exhibition where each had its own space. In contrast, the vertical walls were used to present an interactive screen with the original exhibition website (Yael Kanarek files), photographs of the installation obtained from the Cantor Arts Center, and an xeroxed poster/CD booklet.

Those screensavers that could no longer be reconstructed, despite all efforts, we decided, with the knowledge of their authors, to exhibit using a strategy that references another important digital art exhibition, *Written in Stone: A Net.art Archaeology*. This was a net.art exhibition curated by Per Platou for the Museum of Contemporary Art in Oslo in 2003.[10] His exhibition strategy very originally (and quite successfully) solved the problem of how to present intangible, interactive and rapidly obsolete web-based work in physical space. The key was the exaggerated glorification and seemingly bizarre "objectification" of digital works - presenting them as material objects, or through material objects closely related to the work or its creator. In doing so, Platou presented the spirit/concept/expression

of the work better than if he had shown the work itself in the white-cube space (i.e. in a completely different environment than the one for which it was intended).

Fig. 8: Exhibition view of *Written in Stone: A Net.art Archaeology*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Oslo, 2003.

In gilded frames, marked by time and scratching, photographs of unreconstructible savers were bizarrely brilliant on a black passepartout. The resolution that twenty-two years ago took up an entire computer screen is now barely sufficient for a tiny digital print the size of the once-popular analogue photography formats. Our installation solution included a glass display case and an object on red velvet - the original CD containing the historical files, exhibiting the screensavers in their original form. Throughout the installation, the

contradiction of new and old technologies was emphasized, all of which appear equally fragile and imperfect, and which are destined to become obsolete at the moment of their birth. The expensive large-format colour print, printed directly onto the wall by a vertical printer, failed technologically in its precision and flawless execution. It remains unfinished, the lines don't fit, the paint flakes off.

The entire exhibition in Gallery XY was crowned (or opened) by a mirrored 3D (Windows-screensaver-like) inscription with the exhibition title printed with modern technology directly on the wall, reflected in the entrance corridor filled with mirrors. Perhaps the black mirror of the computer screens evokes for the viewers the impossibility of accurately viewing the period savers through the perspective given by the "mirror of time." As with many screensavers, this is a purely aesthetic solution.

In the case of the exhibition *Screensaver as a Unique and Shocking Artform*, the aim was not to reconstruct the exhibition *Refresh: The Art of the Screen Saver* one-to-one in its original form, but rather to bring it closer through the documentation of its contemporary form and the presentation of fragments of the works in their preserved form with the necessary commentary (whether explicitly through a description, curatorial text, or through the dramaturgy of the space or the presentation of other projects to complement the exhibition). Thus, the 'translation' of the exhibition into a gallery (Central European) environment. This also applied to the following three projects presented on the lower floor of the gallery, which complemented the exhibition as a whole.

Interactive archives of Idle Screenings and ScreenSaverGallery

In the 2010s, two contemporary digital art galleries dedicated to screensavers were born independently of each other: Idle Screenings (2012-2015) and ScreenSaverGallery (2013-present). Starting from different motivations and illustrating different approaches to the medium, they nevertheless stand partly on common ground. Both are the work of internet artists (Jacob Broms Engblom and Mitch Trale - Idle Screenings, Barbora Trnková and Tomáš Javůrek - ScreenSaverGallery) and both galleries were originally created as net-art works.

In our exhibition, visitors could browse the archive of artworks (screensavers) presented in these galleries on computers on the lower level of the gallery, and run and view individual exhibitions at will. They could then install the ScreenSaverGallery (app) from the website screensaver.gallery; and view the current spin-off exhibitions at Gallery XY, namely the reconstructed screensavers from another website.[11)]

Again, we communicated with both the gallerists and the authors of the individual works. The digital data for their presentation was supplied by the former curators of Idle Screenings and ScreenSaverGallery from their own archives.

Fig. 9: Exhibition view of *pocalyptic Screensavers*, Vitrína Deniska, Olomouc, 2021-2022.
Photo: Tomáš Jakubec.

Tablets with documentation materials of recent exhibitions and projects

In the corridor connecting the two exhibition spaces on the lower floors of the gallery, a number of tablets were placed, presenting documentary (often diy) materials of recent projects dealing with screensavers in the context of contemporary art. For the exhibition halls of the Het Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam, the digital artist Rafaël Rozendaal prepared a large-scale exhibition of classic screensavers *Sleep Mode. The Art of the Screensaver* (2017). An unprecedented and daring project are two commercial virtual reality products from the Los Angeles-based studio FLOAT LAND: *Screensavers VR 1.0* and *Screensavers VR 2.0 and Evening Dreams* (both launched in 2019).[12] Their users can find themselves inside the all-enveloping canonical screensavers of the 1990s and 2000s - and get lost in reading studies on screensavers from the likes of Joanne McNeil, D. S. Chun, Steve F. Anderson, Mark America, Bill Stewart, and others. The essays are also currently being prepared for book publication. The online exhibition *screensaver watching you*, curated by Pita Arreola-Burns and Elliott Burns, took place in 2020 on the Off Site Project online gallery website. [13] The selection of works and the design of the website was inspired by the legacy of screensavers and the haunting nature of our digital devices and what lies beyond the surface of the screen. The *Apocalyptic Screensavers* exhibition was realized in 2020 in Queens, New York, at a smaller art gallery called 5-50. It presented videos and prints by American digital artists Sean Capone, Justin Wood, Yoshi Sodeoka and the group LoVid. Instead of official documentation, only a walk-through video of the opening night is available, as the exhibition closed early due to covid. The

theme of the screensaver - as a kind of algorithmic wallpaper on a digital screen - is used to celebrate the allure of pure decorativeness, the almost brazen joy of the artistic process, and the phantasmagorical and hypnotic environments appearing on the computer screen we currently inhabit (i.e. a counterpoint to interior wallpaper or murals). The video part of the exhibition was shown at Vitrína Deniska in Olomouc from 19 December 2021 to 20 March 2022.

Projection with period screensavers

In the outermost spaces of the lower floor, the viewer encountered an improvised large-format projection that was meant to remotely evoke the exhibition *Sleep Mode. The Art of the Screensaver*, contrasting the expensive and accomplished installation in a high-budget institution with the intimate domestic conditions. A selection of the greatest classics recalls the five screensavers for Windows: *Mystify, Starfield, Maze, 3D Pipe* and *3D Text*. Perhaps the impression of something as ephemeral (hence "crumbling under the hands" over time) as the screensaver itself has been metaphorically achieved.

Conclusion

We have chosen to reiterate (i.e. "re-present", repeat) the exhibitions (or re-present the exhibited works), which we have modified in such a way that the original form of the given exhibition is clearly understandable and at the same time it is possible to present the works under the current technological conditions. We have included historical documentation of the exhibition *Refresh: The Art of the Screen Saver*, which forms the core of our exhibition project, so that the form of the screensaver and its evolution as an art form over time, as well as the form of the original installation, are understandable

to viewers. The screensavers for the exhibition had to be first found and then reconstructed from the original files, but the recovery of some files and their presentation was no longer possible. In these cases, available contemporary documentation (screenshots, etc.) was used, accompanied by a caption to give an idea of the original form of the work.

For a better understanding, the exhibition was supplemented by the context of the exhibition's treatment of the screensaver as an art form in an artistic context - a fragmentary approach to several other projects and exhibitions. It was also expanded by the realization of the exhibition *The Limits of ScreenSavers_A SCRAVER AS A UNIQUE AND SHOCKING ART FORM* in an online space, where it was possible to explore the individual screensavers in their original environment, the interface of a personal computer screen, however, insistently marked by a technological barrier (the transformed standard of resolution over the past twenty years, the impossibility of playing the work as such, only its (video) recording, or the impossibility of re-editing individual works), and by a fragment of the *Apocalyptic Screensavers* exhibition in the Deniska showcase in Olomouc, where the video part (i.e. without physical large-format digital prints) of the New York exhibition dedicated to the "screensaver works" of contemporary digital artists was re-introduced. As a whole, it was thus possible to approximate a certain period feeling of several exhibitions.

---

[1] At the time of writing, Flash is a deprecated software that is no longer supported by most web browsers. Adobe announced on its website that it will "stop distributing and updating Flash Player after December 31, 2020" (https://www.adobe.com/products

Software in 1993, purchased by Macromedia in 1996 and Adobe Systems in 2005, and eventually reached "end of life." Although some artists using Flash for web pages switched early on to open standards such as HTML5, WebGL, and WebAssembly, and restored some of their older works in Flash, the obsolescence of Flash has rendered many online artworks, including some mentioned in this text, obsolete.

[2] http://web.archive.org/web/20020409145021/http://www.artmuseum.net/Refresh/exhibit.html

[3] Buckhouse, James, and Merrill Falkenberg, "Refresh. The Art of Screen Saver: Curatorial Statement," *ArtMuseum.net*, October 2000, https://web.archive.org/web/20010123224100/http://www.artmuseum.net/Refresh/about.html.

[4] Email interviews with Intel Copyright Counsel + Senior Counsel | Trademarks & Brands Legal, 6-17 February 2021.

[5] Yael Kanarek revealed that the exhibition was also part of the symposium *Attraction / Distraction: Perceptions of Media Art* held on 4 November 2000 at Stanford University's Department of Art and Art History and sponsored by Intel.

[6] *ScreenSaverGallery presents: The Limits of ScreenSavers_A SCRAVER AS A UNIQUE AND SHOCKING ART FORM*, 2 December 2021 - 24 March 2022

[7] *Screensaver as a Unique and Shocking Art Form*, 13 December 2021 - 10 February 2022

[8] The curators divided the 22 screensavers into four main themes: Web-Based Screensaver (Entropy8zuper!, C5, Alexander Galloway, Content Provider, PK Steffen), Digital Video (Paul Pfeiffer, Patty Chang), Narrative (Yael Kanarek, Jason Spingarn-Koff, Tarikh Korula's, James Buckhouse in Double) and Painting, Graphics and Animation (Glenn Ligon, Francis Alÿs, Chris Finley, Peter Halley,

9) Email, 19 February 2021.

10) http://www.perplatou.net/net.art/. See also Josephine Bosma, "Review: 'written in stone, a net.art archeology' at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Oslo", *Rhizome*, 2003, https://rhizome.org/community/26042.

11) https://screensaver.metazoa.org/screensavergallery-presents-the-limits-of-screensavers_a-scraver-as-a-unique-and-shocking-art-form/

12) https://float.land/ScreensaversVR

13) http://www.offsiteproject.org/

LONG-TERM DIGITAL PRESERVATION IN THE CURATION LIFE CYCLE OF MEDIA ART

Michal Klodner

Can we archive media art?

Memory institutions, especially galleries, libraries, archives and museums (collectively designated by the acronym GLAM), face a specific set of challenges in the case of media art. During the 20th century, art collections were organised according to traditional media such as sculpture, painting, drawing, photography, to which film with its specific photochemical preservation techniques was added after it became established as an art form at the beginning of that same century. However, such selection and protection procedures based on the materiality of the medium used are no longer sufficient for intermedia trends or electronic media, starting with video.

Although media art does not fit in among traditional media and stands outside the structure of their institutions, we can use the example of cinema and the notion of the 'moving image' to illustrate the circumstances of its emergence. By theorising this concept in the second half of the 1990s, Noël Carroll went beyond the 'essentialism' of film, i.e. the assumption that film art has a special essence in its materiality that defines it, and showed that art takes different media forms, and these should not be normative and determining in its future development.[1] Today, we have a name for experimental film forms called 'other cinema', which also includes dis-

cussions about the specific qualities and aesthetics of video. The new generation of artists regarded 'video art' as a dead term. As early as 1989, Mediamatic founder Willem Velthoven responded in this sense to the exhibition *Video-Skulptur. Retrospektiv und actuell 1963–1989*,[2] where, in his opinion, the exhibited works had nothing in common, not even specific qualities of video media.[3] However, Carroll's demand for template-like and consistent staging, which is not art in itself, does not suit any performative and interactive forms, for which we can therefore only refer to certain components of their intermedia dramaturgy as moving images.

What Rosalind Krauss later identified as a departure from media specificity and the rise of postmediality also stemmed from the use of video and film by artists of the 1970s who shook up earlier notions of the artistic medium and pointed out that it was not just a physical carrier, but an experiential apparatus that conveyed its experience to an audience. This is also called 'inventing media.'[4]

In his seminal text from 2000 on curating new media, Steve Dietz identified more than twenty labels used as equivalents to 'new media', including 'computer art', 'electronic art', 'multimedia', 'digital art', 'software art', 'cybernetic art', 'next media', and 'variable media,' stating that new media had lost their immense novelty and curators had started working with practices utilising obsolete media, low-tech and DIY instead of looking for technologically advanced media.[5] No one has actually explained what the medium is in cases of, say, biological art, research collaboration, etc. The more general concept of media art includes any mesh of media in their interrelations, their substitution, even of the electronic for the material, of the relation of the corporeal to the media.

The curation of collections and long-term preservation is based on many different backgrounds and perspectives on what is actually the subject of media art. The expanded concept also includes a form of performativity, in principle rejecting the art market and commodification through objects. Attention is paid to the immaterial qualities of the event, happening or process, creative strategies that have been associated with video art since its beginnings. Sometimes it is just a means to create a unique local environment, other times a record of an experiment that has taken place. The video circuit and environment using a live camera to capture local images is both a technology and an art, as well as a social or societal act. All of these levels can have their own creative contexts and continuities. In the new media emerging since the 1990s, these artistic strategies have their expression in the art forms of hacktivism, net-art, digital communities and online tactical media. Connections to the visual and performing arts cannot be conveyed without a broader understanding of the social background and artistic environment that shaped the origins of these movements. During the 20th century, the theories of Marshall McLuhan and Vilém Flusser also showed us that expression through the medium is not entirely free, but that the apparatus of the medium is a program that produces only a predefined type of message. Despite turning to deeply natural and human modes of expression, artists thus find themselves among the media, that is, among industries as machines of spectacle. As such, current theoretical approaches also include in some ways less common, though no less important, aspects of organisational ecology and non-institutional art.

Current approaches to the creation and management of archival collections are taking place in the postcustodial era, as articulated in

1981 by Francis G. Ham.[6] What he called postcustodialism is a shift away from the mere custody and management of collections or records about them to a more significant social role and mission, in particular by providing access to an increasing amount of digital and automatically processed information. Archives, he argues, cannot afford to insist on their narrow focus and cannot be successful without expanding their strategies for navigating the complex realities of the late 20th century. For Ham, this overlap was already linked in the early 1980s to cooperation between archives in a decentralised computer environment, in which they were to be much more active in the inter-institutional linking of archival programs.

Curatorial life cycle

The curatorial cycle is the conceptualisation of the process of curation and long-term preservation, which deals with a cycle whose individual phases build on each other, recur, and as a whole ensure the preservation and accessibility of collection objects. The theoretical foundation of digital curation draws attention to the fact that the question of digital material is not just one-off digitisation, but that there are a number of typical processes and operations that make up the life cycle of digital objects, which, according to the Digital Curation Centre founded in 2004 by several universities in Great Britain,[7] are typically composed of:

- the acquisition or creation of an object and its description, as well as the planning of this activity;
- choosing material for preservation according to selected policies, or, conversely, discarding it;
- reception at the repository for the long-term storage of objects;

- preservation work and checks concerning format, authenticity, integrity;
- safe storage of objects;
- access, use and reuse of data;
- transformations – migrations and selections of material for new collections.

The requirements of the individual phases should be consistent with each other and no one process should negatively affect another. Digital representations are subject to demanding requirements for long-term preservation in multiple locations in standardised archival formats, preferably using various technologies, regular integrity checks, and description using internationally recognised standards for descriptive, administrative and technical metadata. This means relatively expensive information systems and organisational support and usually requires organisational changes or the creation of new qualifications.One of these new qualifications, alongside specialist conservators, is digital curators, who ensure that data on digital objects and their descriptions from various systems are in the right place, format and quality at the right time. The digital curator essentially combines the theory of information science (the technological side) with the approach of archivists, historians or scientists, working with a theoretical grasp of the art and even with the public presentation of the resulting whole in various media.

Archival and conservation principles

According to Luciana Diranti, an archival collection is defined as 'the entire body of documents of an organisation, family or individual that have been created and collected as a result of an organic

process reflecting the activities of the creator.'[8] These documents, in archival terms also records and recordings, collect during the lifetime of the creator from many layers reflecting his activities in their diversity, complexity and development. This complex and coherent form of the fond creates its authenticity. As an organic whole, it is complete in and of itself, able to function independently, without any added or external authority. The 'respect des fonds' principle is the main basis of archive administration. As such, the fond is not an artificial creation based on the selection of the object or medium, but a comprehensive testimony.

This development since the mid-19th century is reflected in the ISAD(G) standard of the International Council on Archives. It confirms the concept of the fond and defines it as 'the body of documents, regardless of form or medium, organically created and/or collected and used by a person, family, or organisation in the course of that creator's activities and functions' and further subdivides the fond into hierarchical levels of Subfond, Series, Subseries, File, and Item. For these reasons, archival methodology is contextual and develops strategies for evaluating documents for long-term preservation and the continuous maintenance, enhancement, extension, or reconstruction of relationships over time through archival organisation. In contemporary digital humanities, the concept of a fond can also mean a virtual collection that can be formed flexibly by selecting and linking objects.

The curation of the collection should be based on the formulation of a Collection Policy establishing the mission of the organisation, in the case of public institutions the public interest, and is realised in the specific procedures for managing and expanding the collection. In this respect, the curatorial cycle mentions community supervi-

sion and participation, as it is desirable for the whole process to be based on the participation of those concerned and ensures accessibility and equal conditions for the different groups involved.

During digitisation and preservation, the question is how to preserve the original form while ensuring accessibility on current display technologies. In video art, it is not uncommon for artists to work directly with electronic video and audio signals, to exploit the technical parameters of the signals to their limits and to participate in the development of video synthesiser devices, etc. This use of signals was performative in principle and the recording on the medium was essentially the documentation of the experiment. In these cases, it is necessary to deal with the historical documentation of the original devices and to approach their characteristics as much as possible when digitising them. The rule of the highest integrity applies: the most faithful impression of the original signal is chosen as the archive master for long-term storage, and conversion to current displayable parameters and merging of half-frames is performed only on the dissemination copy: 'The new preservation copy should be an exact copy of the original as far as possible: the content should not be modified in any way.'[9]

The repository's claims to the accuracy and precision of its content as an information resource for research are assured by the repository in the form of detecting and ensuring the immutability of the significant properties of digital objects, which, according to Knight and Pennock, provide 'the distinctive characteristics of an information object that must be maintained to ensure its access, use, and meaning in the long term, even after migration to new technologies.'[10] Significant properties must be comprehensible, interpretable and meet the needs of the repository's intended target au-

dience. These properties of digital objects include their appearance, behaviour, quality and usability. Any migration process in a repository must take care to preserve significant features in providing formats for current presentation practices.

Archives and galleries: a difference in approach

While there are some organisations in the world that have focused exclusively on video art and electronic media art since the 1970s, few are located in Eastern European countries. Thus, we have to deal with the effects of a scene defined by informally organised collectives, active at different times, and the institutional interest of larger memory institutions is partial and temporary. If larger memory institutions are currently dealing with media art, they are still limited by the traditional understanding of the medium.

One of the important forms for presenting media art is screening in cinema halls. For much of the art of film forms, this is the original and intended way of engaging with the audience. Experimental film builds on the original mode of presentation and adapts to other forms such as video art or digital art, especially in the environment of art cinemas or festivals focused on experimental, amateur film-making, etc. And yet, even for art-oriented cinemas or those operated by memory institutions, experimental programmes form only a minority part of screenings available only in larger cities, where the majority of attendance is based on feature films in current film distribution. The possibilities and time slots for short film production must be adapted to the selection or composition of the programme. Festivals are important for experimental programmes for this very reason, as their scope and focus can include archive sec-

tions and original works on a larger scale. Non-cinematic forms are quite frequently supplemented with introductions by experts, discussions with the creators, book launches, exhibition openings and other topical forms, creating incentives to use the rich documentary material of the collection and providing a wealth of connections. The expansion of digital projection has also contributed to the presentation of audiovisual works outside traditional cinema halls, which are no longer a prerequisite for cinematic projection, i.e. the 'cinema-going experience' is being relocated to other environments.

In terms of cinema, however, the film form naturally corresponds to mass distribution based on the principle of a technologically reproducible medium of many copies, a method by which archival collections or fonds are also created (to which the prevailing licensing model based on a non-exclusive licence for presentation at multiple sites is related).

Galleries are specific in their individual focus on both the exhibited works and the perception of visitors. A unique introduction to the concept of placement in space and installation stimulating subjective experience and perception is therefore assumed. Black-boxes, shaded and at least partially enclosed spaces adapted for projections in the form of both spatial installations and cinema simulations, began to be used in galleries for the display of moving images and over time have become a permanent feature. Installations in open gallery spaces using shaded projection or various types of screens or monitors that can be part of object installations are also common. The required input signal of the display devices must be taken into account when preserving the material, where both variants of presentation in the original historical form and reconstructed using contemporary display elements on a different principle are used.

Curators should therefore have variants of the work available for historical devices as well as for other possible contemporary formats.

The exhibition space also often works with documentation – a combination of historical text, image and sound materials – either on information panels or digital screens, thus broadening the experience or putting it in the context of the period or artistic movement. Even in galleries, audiovisual works are usually interpreted through accompanying programmes with the participation of the artists themselves at workshops, art historians with lectures and guided tours, and contemporary performances may also reflect the theme. From an archival perspective, a gallery collection may include sculpture or spatial installation, electronic components, and other parts that cannot be stored digitally as forms of a moving image.

Documentation and long-term storage

The main methods of primary research in the acquisition process are archival-documentary analysis, for which the tools of control or identification projection and interview are employed. In the case of screenings, we distinguish between 'identification' or 'control' projection, depending on whether we are going to recognise hitherto unknown content or check and assess the state of the material or the method of digitisation. The identification projection is preferably attended by the curator, the digital conservator, the author or originator of the material, or other participants or witnesses (this may include members of the production crew or group, family members, friends who are presumed to be familiar with the work, etc.). The screening takes place on the basis of a prepared projection list, which is communicated to the participants well in advance. The

control and identification projection produces a record with the date of the screening and a list of participants, which is recorded in the acquisition report.

The second primary research tool is the interview, more specifically the semi-structured interview, which is desirable if there is insufficient and reliable information available on the work. Both on the ethical and procedural level, the semi-structured interview is inspired by the oral history method and therefore it is necessary to familiarise oneself with the basic literature and recommendations for the preparation, progress and transcription of the interview.

In the documentation of the acquisition of the archived copy, we record whether the original media were used, from whom they were taken, what equipment was used and the technical parameters of the transcription. This information is essential for the credibility of the acquisition process, as the aim is, as far as possible, not to archive poor quality copies from obscure sources. The determined facts and circumstances are recorded in the Acquisition and Conservation Report. These structured reports are intended to provide the necessary long-term documentation of the acquisition process, even for decades. The compiled reports are also the first stage in the formal description. The next level is the hierarchical archival description in the access system catalogue, where the entry of this information is further formalised and refined.

Reception into the archive system and providing access

The output of the acquisition and digitisation procedures described above is a data package for entering into a long-term digital preservation system. Prerequisites include:

- a signed license agreement;
- a completed acquisition report and acquisition documentation;
- secured and diagnosed media/media entered in the material register;
- files prepared for acquisition in appropriate formats and agreed naming conventions.

The goal is the receipt of a submission and creation of an archive and dissemination package:

- *Submission Information Package* (SIP) is a complete folder containing digital files for a specific collection object.
- *Archival Information Package* (AIP) is a processed received package stored in an archive system with recorded preservation and administrative or descriptive metadata containing archive masters of digital objects in the highest quality of digitisation.
- *Dissemination Information Package* (DIP) is a received package processed by the archival system stored in an access system containing copies of digital objects in a format suitable for viewing and presentation in access systems, usually in a lower quality.

Archival description and relation to cataloguing

Archival description is specific in that it always describes primarily archived material. It is not a cataloguing description of the collections or a library description, which usually complements the description of the archival material. In particular, it concerns records

of collection objects, their digitised copies and documentation as a tool for their preservation management and reliable retrieval. Archival descriptions are used by the archival staff of institutions, researchers and curators accessing archival material.

Archival description does not replace the existing method of cataloguing description typically used in organisations but is is another layer of description directly related to the establishment of a digital repository and necessary in connection with the registration of material in this repository. Each set of archival descriptions relates to a specific archival institution and archival repository. Other metadata description standards are intended for cataloguing, such as the cinematography standard EN 15907 recommended and used by the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF).[11] In galleries and museums, catalogues can be based on the CIDOC CRM reference model.[12] Cataloguing systems usually describe the artwork as such, while the archival layer acts as a record of the archival material held in the organisation's digital repository for that work. Entity relationships between these description layers are created using identifiers or alternative identifiers. In certain places of the methodology, we also refer to the catalogue for archival description as a repository access system and in terms of the coherence of the proposed procedures it fulfils the function of registration and accessibility even independently without an additional cataloguing layer.

The archival description standard used in this methodology is based on the standard of the International Council on Archives (ISAD).[13] It is used because it is sufficiently general and is suitable for describing a wide range of archival object types and their variable structure; it is suitable as a description system in digital archiving. As such, it is supported and used in software implementations of

repositories, where it enables the registration of digital objects and archival information packages.

The ISAD standard uses seven hierarchical levels of description. The structure of the areas and fields of the archive description is uniform on all levels, though the use of all levels is not necessary. A three-level description at the levels of Subseries, File and Item is used to record the original works, their structure and archived material. The Fond level can be used to manage the content of the repository.
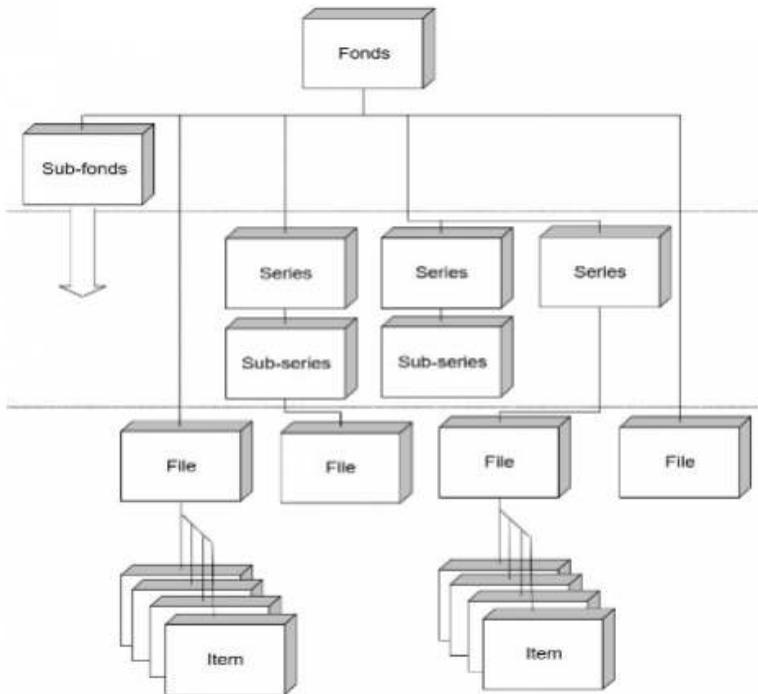
Fig. 1. Model of the hierarchical structure of description levels in the ISAD standard.

As it is not always possible to achieve the full equivalent of a work of art by digitising and archiving only audiovisual material, the material in the package is supplemented with additional information and objects. In terms of making works of art accessible and conveying their historical context, archives also maintain written and photographic documentation material. Material often arrives for archiving in many versions; typically, the version for cinema projection and the loop for installation solutions may differ. The exact digital equivalent of the historically authentic original version may not be suitable for current distribution and differs from the restored version. In the case of performative and interactive art forms, a moving image can refer to certain components of their intermedia dramaturgy. In installations it can be part of a material sculpture, in performances it can be part of an intangible expression. Again, the interview and the acquisition documentation mentioned above must be saved, either in the same or in a separate related package (the same applies to any historical photographs documenting exhibitions, other parts of the performance or installation design, and written documents). The basic requirement of archiving is to cover the entire composition of the original work in question, including its components, their interrelationships and direct documentation. We include this among the considerations when assembling and organising the contents of an archival information package. Completeness and comprehensiveness are also among the main criteria for the entire archival fond, i.e. the total quantity and content of the packages. Although some objects are formalised by memory institutions, e.g. through a metadata profile, they are usually standardised products of industrial production, such as a magazine or a gramophone record. Because the subject field of art is variable and includes unique authorial approaches, it is up to curators and con-

servators to decide how to systematise the contents of the package and the division of packages into fonds and sub-fonds with respect to the media forms they wish to preserve. There are many considerations that curators and conservators take into account in their decisions when processing an acquisition and therefore several dozen elements can be stored for a single work of art. For all of them, an accurate description is needed for their retrievability and to ensure the long-term integrity of the digital files. The entire file or package is then an authentic digital imprint of the original medium in its various aspects.

In principle, we create the package in such a way that as a whole it corresponds to the archival description at the Subseries level and contains all digital objects that hierarchically belong to this and lower levels of the described entity.

```
/ Contemporary_commentaries
├── / Films
│       ├── channel_1_master.mkv
│       ├── channel_2_master.mkv
│       ├── channel_3_master.mkv
│       └── commentaries_cc_by_nc.mov
├── / Documentation
│       ├── acquisition_report.pdf
│       ├── conservation_report.pdf
│       └── installation_instructions.pdf
└── / Installation-IMS
        ├── poster_media_and_us_2007.pdf
        ├── photo01.tif
        ├── photo02.tif
        ├── photo03.tif
        └── photo04.tif
```
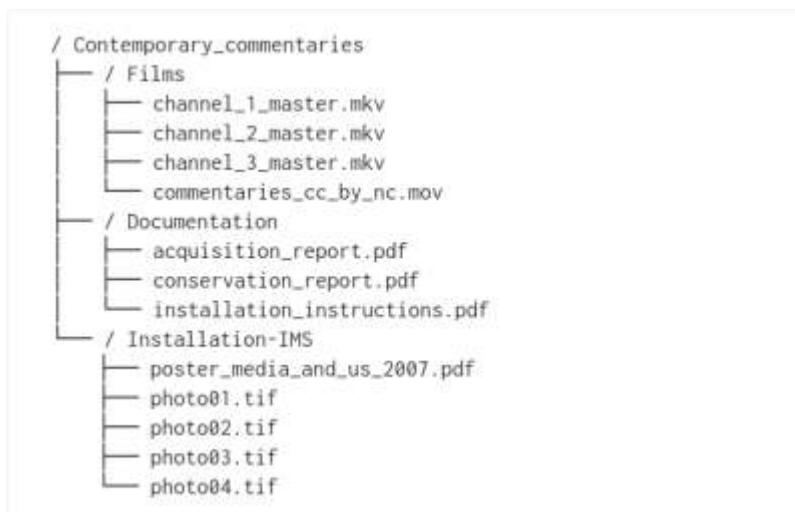
Fig. 2. Sample package for reception and three-level description.

Digital repository

A functional model according to ISO 14721 - Open Archival Information System - Reference Model (OAIS) is a necessary foundation for the implementation of archive systems [14]. It describes the necessary functions and services of the repository in several basic entities.

The Deposit Entity (Receipt) is the external interface to the system and receives packages from the originators, from which archival information packages (AIPs) are then created. Its functions include the validation of input packages (whether they conform to the specified specification), extraction of the contained descriptive information, and the creation of an archival information package according to the required requirements for storage formats, etc.

The Archival Entity (Archival Storage) is the internal interface of the system; it stores, preserves and provides archival information packages. It receives packages from the depository entity and ensures their permanent storage, management and backup, and checks for errors. It also makes packages accessible.

The Data Entity (Data Management) collects, maintains, and makes available both the descriptive package data and the administrative metadata necessary for managing the repository.

The Administrative Entity (Archive Management) handles overall operations, inventory, format suitability, arranges deposit agreements, and migrates or updates content. It establishes and maintains internal standards and rules.

The Planning Entity (Preservation Planning) is responsible for monitor-

ing the external conditions of the repository and making recommendations to ensure the continuity of long-term access to information regardless of technology obsolescence and other risks.

The Access Entity (Access) is the external interface of the system with the target groups the repository serves. It is responsible for receiving requests, controlling access and providing user packages.
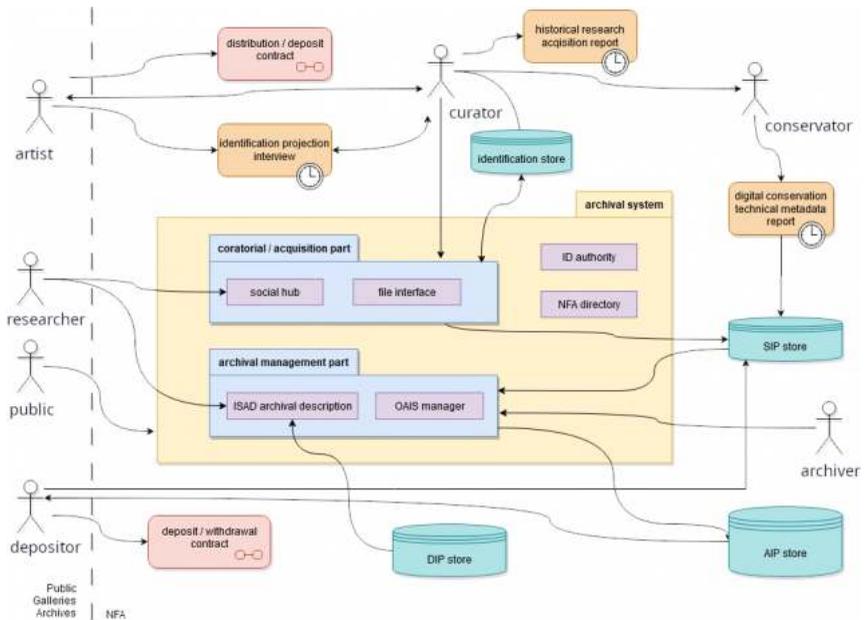
Fig. 3. Conceptual process diagram and block diagram of the research archive system at the National Film Archive in Prague.

For memory institutions, the choice of technology platforms, cataloguing software and long-term preservation systems is a multi-layered set of issues impacting different parts of the organisation. It includes, for example, economic aspects or the question of international compatibility and thus the possibility of archive development

and cooperation. Neglecting these issues can slow communication with technology suppliers or risk creating a very taxing dependency on inappropriate solutions. Thanks to the democratisation of technology, every organisation has the opportunity to organise the right set of tools according to its needs and, moreover, to keep their function in its own hands. Long-term preservation needs require the independence of data storage from specific technologies, especially proprietary types.

For the technical implementation of a repository system, the best solution involves the use of open source software with a public license. The development of such software has been provided by the international archival community for some time and the organisation running the repository can focus on its implementation in relation to the specifics of its material or target community without having to develop and maintain these complex tools at its own expense in the long term, or only share in the development of certain features that contribute back to the community. Archiving is a professional activity for which certification or auditing often requires proof of how it is carried out, which is why archiving service providers use open systems internally.

An increasing number of institutions are therefore forming development consortia and communities around free software with publicly licensed code, which then ensures the long-term usability of entered data and interoperability. Larger organisations include the Open Preservation Foundation, DuraSpace, and, in the field of preservation in particular, the standardisation role of the Library of Congress.

In the OAIS model, the Artefactual Archivematica software corre-

sponds to the main repository management and archive package processing module. This project designation and method of implementation relative to OAIS is generally accepted by the broad archival community. However, all six functional units of OAIS are implemented using additional software (Artefactual Atom or Lyrasis ArchivesSpace) and their close integration with archive package management, which is mainly provided by Archivematica. These form the web interface for archival description and public access.

However, the entire repository system may consist of many other modules, such as an authority for assigning identifiers, a directory for access control, systems for package preparation and package curation, etc.

Conclusion

The implementation of long-term preservation and archival description standards is a complex issue; the processing process can be quite long and the repository operation costly. However, as a result, all detected information is systematically recorded and is comprehensible and retrievable in the long term. The efforts are clearly worthwhile. These standards are essentially a summary of the extensive experience of many organisations and experts who have worked on these issues and the culmination of many years of development, discussions and conclusions in international forums. Access to the public, researchers and lending can then be largely automated with one or a few clicks with high accuracy and richness of historical and technical information.

In principle, archiving is most important in its broad and mass scope and interdependence; it should not single out and focus on

items or a narrow selection. This is where it differs from actual presentation. It is only in the phase of using material from the archive that curation focuses on the specific selection of the content of the collection with the aim of formulating historical and contemporary themes, education or how to present it to specific audiences.

The described method was used in the research repository of the project "Audiovisual work outside the context of cinema: documentation, archiving and accessibility", at the Národní filmový archiv, Prague. The proposed methodology and other results (in Czech language) can be found at https://videoarchiv-nfa.cz/metodika/.

Translated by David Gaul.

The text is also available in the original Czech version.

[1] Carroll, Noël, *Theorizing the Moving Image*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 49-74.

[2] *Video-Skulptur. Retrospektiv und actuell 1963–1989*, Köln: DuMont Buchverlag, 1989, p. 326.

[3] Huisman, Sanneke, Marga van Mechelen (eds), *A Critical History of Media Art in the Netherlands. Platforms, Policies, Technologies*, Prinsenbeek: Jap Sam Books, 2019, p. 70.

[4] Krauss, Rosalind, *A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition*, New York: Thames & Hudson, 2000, p. 2.

[5] Dietz, Steve, 'Curating New Media', *Yproductions* [online]. Available at http://perma.cc/L43W-2V67 (accessed 25.8.2020).

[6] Duranti, Luciana, Patricia C. Franks (eds), *Encyclopedia of Archival Science*, London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015, p. 274

[7] Digital Curation Centre. Available online at: http://www.dcc.ac.uk/ (accessed 30.10.2018).

[8] Duranti and Franks 2015, p. 50

[9] Edmondson, R., *Audiovisual Archiving: Philosophy and Principles*, Paris: UNESCO, 2004. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001364/136477e.pdf

[10] Knight, Gareth, Maureen Pennock, 'Data without meaning: Establishing the significant properties of digital research', In: *Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Digital Preservation, iPRES 2008*, London, 2008, p. 99. Also available at: http://dev.ipres-conference.org/ipres08/presentations_day1/16_Knight.pdf

[11] 'EN 15907: Film identification – Enhancing interoperability of metadata - Element sets and structures', http://www.filmstandards.org/fsc/index.php/EN_15907 (accessed 2.5.2022).

[12] *CIDOC Conceptual Reference Model.* https://cidoc-crm.org/

[13] ISAD(G), *Všeobecný mezinárodní standard pro archivní popis. Přijato Komisí pro popisné standardy, Stockholm, Švédsko, 19.–22. září 1999*, 2nd edition, Prague, 2009. https://www.ica.org/en/isadg-general-international-standard-archival-description-second-edition (accessed 2.5.2022).

[14] *ČSN ISO 14721. Systémy pro přenos dat a informací z kosmického prostoru – Otevřený archivační informační systém – Referenční model*, Praha: Úřad pro technickou normalizaci, metrologii a státní zkušebnictví, 2014.

COLLOQUIUM

NETWORKS OF CARE

[Anna Schäffler](#)

Presented at the [New Media Museums colloquium](#) at the Olomouc Museum of Art, Olomouc, 24 March 2022. 40 min.

YOU CAN'T BUY A BUTTERFLY. NEW METHODS FOR REGISTERING ACQUISITIONS OF INTERMEDIA ARTWORKS AT THE SLOVAK NATIONAL GALLERY

Lucia Gregorová Stach, Mária Bohumelová

Presented at the New Media Museums colloquium at the Olomouc Museum of Art, Olomouc, 24 March 2022. 30 min.

See also the essay New Media Documentation in the Slovak National Gallery by Mária Bohumelová, Michal Čudrnák and Lucia Gregorová Stach in this volume.

VERSIONS OR FRAGMENTED WORKS? RECONSTRUCTION ISSUES OF MEDIA ART INSTALLATIONS AND NET ART WORKS

Anna Tüdős, Márta Czene

Presented at New Media Museums colloquium at the Olomouc Museum of Art, Olomouc, 24 March 2022.

See also the essay Versions, Fragments or Inaccessible Works? in this volume.

ON THE SILVER GLOBE: FROM A VINTAGE PRINT PHOTOGRAPHY TO A COMPLEX MEDIA INSTALLATION. RE-CONTEXTUALISATION AS PRESERVATION STRATEGY

Agnieszka Kubicka-Dzieduszycka, Dagmara Domagała

Presented at New Media Museums colloquium at the Olomouc Museum of Art, Olomouc, 24 March 2022.

See also the essays On the Silver Globe by Agnieszka Kubicka-Dzieduszycka, Dagmara Domagała and Cezary Wicher, and Dead Artworks as Narrators: (Re)use of Broken Artworks in the Media Art Narrative at the Exhibition //Reincarnation of Media Art// in WRO Art Center in Wrocław (2019) by Sonia Milewska in this volume.

WHAT'S LYING ON THE SHELF? – WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN DONE BEFORE THE ACQUISITION AND WHAT IS TO BE DONE NOW?

Jakub Frank, Petr Válek

Presented at New Media Museums colloquium at the Olomouc Museum of Art, Olomouc, 24 March 2022.

See also the essay Special Requirements – Four Cases from the Collections of the Olomouc Museum of Art by Jakub Frank in this volume.

SHAPING INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR COLLECTING MEDIA ART AT M+ HONG KONG

Aga Wielocha

Presented at New Media Museums colloquium at the Olomouc Museum of Art, Olomouc, 24 March 2022.

MEDIA AND DIGITAL ART ACQUISITION WORKFLOW AT ZKM KARLSRUHE

[Morgane Stricot](#)

Presented at [New Media Museums colloquium](#) at the Olomouc Museum of Art, Olomouc, 24 March 2022.

ADDRESSING SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES IN TIME-BASED MEDIA ART COLLECTION AND PRESERVATION STRATEGIES AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ART, ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN, OSLO

Jina Chang

Presented at New Media Museums colloquium at the Olomouc Museum of Art, Olomouc, 24 March 2022.

COLLECTING AND PRESENTING VIDEO INSTALLATIONS FROM THE 1990S: A VISIONARY MOVE IN THE 90S, ESSENTIAL TODAY. THE FIRST MUSEUM OF INTERMEDIA AND THE COLLECTION OF INTERMEDIA ART IN THE MUSEUM OF ART ŽILINA

Miroslava Sikorová

Presented at New Media Museums colloquium at the Olomouc Museum of Art, Olomouc, 24 March 2022.

NM 1-001 - NM 458: THE YOUNGEST COLLECTION AT NATIONAL GALLERY PRAGUE

Eva Skopalová

Presented at New Media Museums colloquium at the Olomouc Museum of Art, Olomouc, 24 March 2022.

NFA VIDEO ARCHIVE: COLLECTION ACCESS AND SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH COLLABORATION

Markéta Jonášová, Michal Klodner, Matěj Strnad

Presented at New Media Museums colloquium at the Olomouc Museum of Art, Olomouc, 25 March 2022.

See also Michal Klodner's essay Long-Term Digital Preservation in the Curation Life Cycle of Media Art (or in the original Czech version, Dlouhodobé digitální uchovávání v kurátorském životním cyklu mediálního umění) in this volume.

THE ACTIVITIES AND HISTORY OF THE N.B.K. VIDEO-FORUM SINCE 1971

Anna Lena Seiser

Presented at New Media Museums colloquium at the Olomouc Museum of Art,
Olomouc, 25 March 2022.

VIDEOKUNSTARKIVET: THE NORWEGIAN VIDEO ART ARCHIVE, THE FIRST TEN YEARS

[Håvard Oppøyen]

Presented at New Media Museums colloquium at the Olomouc Museum of Art,
Olomouc, 25 March 2022.

EXHIBITING PRACTICES OF ARCHIVAL FILM MATERIALS IN NON-CINEMA ENVIRONMENTS

Elżbieta Wysocka

Presented at New Media Museums colloquium at the Olomouc Museum of Art, Olomouc, 25 March 2022.

READING THE PAF

Martin Mazanec, Nela Klajbanová

Presented at New Media Museums colloquium at the Olomouc Museum of Art, Olomouc, 24 March 2022.

VASULKA DIGITAL ARCHIVE

[Kateřina Drajsajtlová](#)

Presented at New Media Museums colloquium at the Olomouc Museum of Art, Olomouc, 25 March 2022.

ROUNDTABLE

Part of the New Media Museums colloquium and PAF Festival, Exhibition Centre Flora (G Hall), Olomouc, 25 March 2022. 74 min.

The moving image has now become a standard form of expression for artists. But what does this mean if we are to understand it as a cultural heritage, something to be preserved for the future? From this perspective, the great challenge in preserving the artists' moving image is its place between two distinct but increasingly overlapping ecosystems: film, with its festivals, archives and distribution platforms, and visual art, with its exhibitions and museums. This roundtable concluded the two-day New Media Museums Colloquium and brings together professionals from across the spectrum of institutions to discuss the state of the art and consider ex-

isting and potential new forms of collaboration. Guests included representatives from national film archives in Czechia and Poland, n.b.k. Video-Forum Berlin, collecting institutions and museums in Central Europe, and artists.

Participants (left to right): Jina Chang (Time-based Media Art Conservator, The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo), Anna Tüdős (C₃ Foundation), Elżbieta Wysocka (Department of Film studies and Digitisation, National Film Archive – Audiovisual Institute, Poland), Anna Lena Seiser (Managing Director, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (n.b.k.), and Head, n.b.k. Video-Forum Berlin), Martin Mazanec (Curator, PAF, and Pedagogue, Faculty of Fine Arts, Brno University of Technology), Sylva Poláková (Národní filmový archiv Praha), Matěj Strnad (Národní filmový archiv Praha), Aga Wielocha (Bern University of the Arts, formerly conservator at M+ Museum Hong Kong), Dušan Barok (moderator), Jakub Frank (Curator of the Collection of New Media and Intermedia, Olomouc Museum of Art), Eva Skopalová (Curator, Collection of Modern and Contemporary Art, National Gallery Prague), Jitka Hlaváčková (Curator of the Photography and New Media Collection, Prague City Gallery.

NEW MEDIA MUSEUMS WORKSHOP, SNG BRATISLAVA

Video: Juraj Starovecký.

This workshop focused on questions surrounding the acquisition process, documentation of individual complex works, their registration in the system, digital archive and repository, restoration and care for technical components and equipment, as well as interdepartmental and interdisciplinary collaboration.

The workshop was organised by Olomouc Museum of Art and Slovak National Gallery and held at SNG Bratislava on 21 September 2021. Other participating institutions: WRO Art Center Wrocław, C³ Center for Culture & Communication (Budapest), PAF Olomouc, City Gallery Bratislava (GMB), Eastern Slovak Gallery Košíce (VSG),

Slovak Film Archive (SFI), Národní filmový archiv, Prague (NFA), Modern Art Gallery Hradec Králové (GMU), Vasulka Kitchen Brno (VKB).

Participants: Dušan Barok, Mária Bohumelová (SNG), Vladimíra Büngerová (SNG), Štefan Cebo (SNG), Michal Čudrnák (SNG), Jennifer DeFelice (VKB), Kateřina Drajsajtlová (VKB), Štefánia Ďuricová (VSG), Jakub Frank (MUO), Veronika Gabčová (SNG), Lucia Gregorová Stach (SNG), Petra Hanáková (SNG), Marián Hausner (SFI), Tomáš Javůrek (PAF), Markéta Jonášová (NFA), Mira Keratová (GMB), Michal Klodner (NFA), Agnieszka Kubicka-Dzieduszycka (WRO), Martin Mazanec (PAF), Michal Šedivý (MUO), Gabriela Štvrtňová (VKB), Anna Tüdős (C³), Adéla Vitvar Kudlová (NFA), Cezary Wicher (WRO), František Zachoval (GMU).
Special guests: Anna Adamczyk (IVF), Marianna Neupauerová (IVF).

CONTRIBUTORS

Dušan Barok is an artist, researcher and organiser. He is founding editor of the Monoskop research platform for the arts and humanities. Dušan Barok graduated in Information Technology from the University of Economics in Bratislava and Networked Media from the Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam. He worked as Research Fellow at the Amsterdam School for Heritage, Memory and Material Culture, University of Amsterdam, where he focused on the history and preservation of contemporary art as part of the program New Approaches in the Conservation of Contemporary Art (NACCA). He initiated and, together with Jakub Frank, served as coordinator of the project New Media Museums, bringing together art museums and initiatives in Central Europe in developing new approaches to collecting and preserving contemporary art.

Zuzana Bauerová is an art historian and painting conservator-restorer. She graduated in Art History at Comenius University in Bratislava (1999) and Painting Restoration at Fine Arts University (1999). She also completed postgraduate studies in Conservation Management at Academia Istropolitana Nova (2000). She received her PhD in Theory and History of Art from the Faculty of Arts at Masaryk University in Brno (2009). Zuzana Bauerová is a lecturer at the Academy of Arts and Crafts in Prague, where she is also part of the team preparing a new study programme Conservation-Restoration of Arts and Crafts. She is a researcher at the Národní filmový archiv, Prague, where she works on setting up mechanisms for preventive care of the institution's collection. At the same time, for more than 15 years she has been working on projects in the field of preservation, conservation and use of cultural heritage.

Jina Chang is time-based media art conservator at the Nasjonalmuseet, Norway. Initially trained as a media artist (photography at Pratt Institute (BFA) and Studio Art at the University of New Mexico (MFA)), she taught New Media and Video Art at the University of Rochester and Brown University. Upon graduating from the Object Conservation program at the University of Oslo (MA), she conducted a 2-year project surveying, documenting, and devising comprehensive preservation plans for the installation artworks in Nasjonalmuseet's collection. Since 2018, she has been hired full-time, working exclusively with the museum's time-based media and digital art collections. She specializes in the conservation and documentation of time-based media and digital artworks and is interested in the topics of philosophy and cultural studies of conservation.

Michal Čudrnák is Head of Digital Collections and Services at Slovak National Gallery (SNG). He took an active part in transitioning the gallery into the digital realm – from cataloguing of works of art, to digitisation, development of online catalogue of Slovak art galleries and several other websites. Currently, he is working also at the Slovak Design Centre/Slovak Design Museum, setting up a new collection management system and making the collections visible online. Michal graduated in library studies from the Philosophical Faculty of the Comenius University in Bratislava. He was a member of the BURUNDI media lab in Bratislava and co-founded Itchy bit and 13m3 collectives.

Márta Czene is a painter and visual artist. She studied art history at the ELTE University of Sciences and painting at the Hungarian University of Fine Arts (2008). Márta Czene was awarded the

Barcsay Prize in 2004, the Derkovits Scholarship in 2009 and the Strabag Artaward International in 2011. She has had numerous solo and group exhibitions. She lives and works in Budapest. https://www.czenemarta.hu/

Dagmara Domagała is a member of the WRO Art Centre programme team, an author, researcher and art guide. She works with archives, both analogue and digital, digitises tapes and carries out educational work in the WRO Archives and Media Library. She was involved in the production of the television series *Kody WRO* (WRO Codes); co-created the popular *Tapes: Rewind* screenings; co-edited text and audiovisual content for the WIDOK (VIEW) series and the anniversary publication *Rezonans* (Resonance); and curated video programme for the WRO 2021 REVERSO Biennial. Dagmara Domagała is also a project coordinator and exhibition producer. She is currently working on strategies for popularizing digital content.

Kateřina Drajsajtlová is a member of the 4AM association. She graduated in Theory of Interactive Media from the Faculty of Arts MUNI, Brno. She has experience with databases from the Moravian Land Archive and the Moravian Gallery in Brno. She is working on an archival project focused on the inventory base for the Vasulka Kitchen in Brno.

Jakub Frank is a curator, theorist and art historian. He is a curator at the Olomouc Museum of Art, Olomouc, and editor-in-chief of its Central European Art Database project. He holds an MA in Art Theory and History from the Palacky University, Olomouc. Previously, he worked as PR and communication manager at the Plato gallery in Ostrava. Jakub Frank also works as curator at Cella Gallery and Hovorny as well as the festivals Luhovaný Vincent and

Kukačka, a festival of art in public space in Olomouc. He is a member of the Bludný kámen association in Opava and the 8848 collective in Olomouc.

Márk Fridvalszki graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna in 2011 and was a postgraduate Meisterschüler student at the Academy of Fine Arts in Leipzig (2014-2017). Fridvalszki is co-initiator and graphic editor of the art collective and publishing project Technologie und das Unheimliche or T+U (since 2014). He has participated in various exhibitions and art events, including The Július Koller Society w/ T+U, the 34th Ljubljana Biennial of Graphic Arts, Kunstverein am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz in Berlin, Kunstraum Lakeside in Klagenfurt, Kunsthalle Exnergasse in Vienna, Karlin Studios and Meetfactory in Prague. Born in Budapest, he lives and works in Berlin. http://markfridvalszki.com

Jitka Hlaváčková is a theorist working at the Prague City Gallery (since 2006), where she is the curator of the Photography and New Media Collection. She focuses on post-media art theory reflecting the technological context of contemporary life and on current strategies of urban and environmental art in relation to social, gender and community issues. She has produced over thirty exhibition projects/catalogues, including *Sounds/Codes/Images - Audio Experimentation in the Visual Arts* (2019) and *Divination from a Night Sky… The Role of Photography in the Post-Media Age* (2022). In addition, she is the curator of the *Start-up* series for emerging artists and the Projector online video art gallery; co-curator of *m3 - Art in Space* festival (2021) and the *Re-connect Art Festival* (2022); and organiser of symposia such as *Gestures of Emancipation* (2021). She graduated from the Faculty of Arts of Charles University, Prague, with an MA and a PhD in Art History.

Michal Klodner works in the field of audiovisual live performances and independent film. He worked as an assistant at FAMU in Prague and completed his PhD studies on postmediality. At the Národní filmový archiv, Prague, he is involved in digital curation, cataloguing systems, digital archiving and research in the field of documentation, presentation and analysis of moving images.

Agnieszka Kubicka-Dzieduszycka is a media art curator and cultural project manager. From 2011-2022 she taught curatorial projects and art mediation at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Wrocław. Since 1995 she has co-created the WRO Media Art Biennale and the WRO Art Centre programme. Her recent curatorial contributions include exhibitions and art projects realized in Ukraine, Japan and Germany, where she has curated the POCHEN Biennale 2022 in Chemnitz. Her continuous work with Japanese media artists includes the Sapporo International Art Festival SIAF 2020, for which she served as Curatorial Director of Media Art. In 2022 she started a collaboration with the European Capital of Culture Chemnitz 2025, where she directs one of the flagship projects.

Barbora Kundračíková is an assistant professor at the Department of Art History at Palacký University in Olomouc. Since 2019, she has also been the Head of Modern Art Collections at the Museum of Art Olomouc - Central European Forum (SEFO). She collaborates with the Photography Research Centre at the Institute of Art History of the CAS in Prague (internally 2018-2020) and works as a freelance curator (MGLC Ljubljana, Fait Gallery, Trafo Gallery, etc.). Her areas of interest include 20th and 21st century European visual art, mechanical representations (photography, printmaking), art history

methodology and analytical aesthetics.

Marie Meixner is a PhD candidate at the Department of Art Education of the Palacký University, Olomouc. She is a programme and media manager of the annual PAF Festival in Olomouc. She graduated in English Philology, Film Studies and Communication Studies from the Palacký University, Olomouc. Her long-term research and curatorial activities are focussed on the communication and interpretation strategies of internet art. She also specialises in the history and theory of moving image and animation in the broad sense, especially in the relation to digital art and the audience. She is one of the curators at Screen Saver Gallery and the editor of the experimental film section of the *25fps* film magazine. She works as an internet and conceptual artist under her moniker © merry.

Sonia Milewska is an art conservator and media art researcher. She holds a degree in the Preservation of Cultural Heritage from Jagiellonian University and a degree in Conservation and Restoration of Works of Art from the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow, where the subject of her diploma thesis was the restoration of E. Ihnatowicz's cybernetic sculpture *Senster*. She is currently working on issues related to the history and preservation of media art within the MediaArtsCultures program. She is interested in new technologies, living archives, media art and its conservation.

Sylva Poláková works as a film historian, audiovisual curator and archivist at the Národní filmový archiv, Prague. Her main focus is experimental film and the moving image in an interdisciplinary perspective. She graduated in Film Studies at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague. Since 2020 she has been leading the research project Audiovisual work outside the context of cinema:

documentation, archiving and access. She is engaged in lecturing and curatorial activities and contributes to specialised publications, mainly with profiles and interviews with Czech artists working with the moving image.

Anna Schäffler is an art historian and curator. Her research on the contemporary preservation of art and cultural assets includes theory and practice at the intersection of art history, conservation, and curating. Recent projects, lectures, publications, and teaching assignments have been particularly devoted to the possibilities of communicating and making visible practices of contemporary art preservation. In addition to artistic estates, another focus of Anna Schäffler's interests is on public welfare and commons in the context of art, activism, and urban development. She advises artists, private and public institutions on long-term preservation and initiated various projects to experimentally test new formats of preserving artistic legacies between public memory institutions and private and civil society actors. https://www.annaschaeffler.info/

Morgane Stricot is a senior media and digital art conservator at ZKM Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany. She received her PhD from PAMAL (Preservation & Art – Media Archaeology Lab) with a project on the methods and limits of media archaeology as a preservation theory. She studied the preservation of complex digital objects during her MA in Conservation of Media and Digital Art at Ecole Supérieure d'Art d'Avignon, France, and in her fellowship at the Still Water Lab in the New Media Department of the University of Maine, USA. She won the Leonardo award at The Emerging Researchers' Symposium *Media Art Histories ReCreate*, in 2015.

Matěj Strnad is an audiovisual archivist and curator. He heads the Curators Department of the Národní filmový archiv, Prague, and also serves as the head of the Programming and Access to Collections Commission of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF). He graduated from the Centre for Audiovisual Studies at FAMU. Since 2012, he has been working on practical and policy issues related to the preservation of media-based and moving image artworks in Czechia - hosting roundtables, lecturing, providing external assessments of collections and drafting policy documents.

Anna Tüdős holds an MLitt degree in Curatorial Practice (Contemporary Art) from Glasgow School of Art and a BA in Cultural Management and Art Theory from the Hungarian University of Fine Arts. She is a motivated curator with a passion for collaborative practices. She is a member of two collectives, BÜRO imaginaire and Roundabout. Her main research interests include the relationship between humans and public space (with a special focus on playground architecture), as well as the impact of technological developments on society and their implications for health sector and climate change. She has been working with the C3 Foundation on various projects since 2018. http://www.annatudos.com/

Petr Válek is a musician and instrument maker. He lives and works in Loučná nad Desnou near Šumperk, Czech Republic. the VAPE Youtube channel

Aga Wielocha is a researcher and collection care professional specialising in contemporary art. She is a postdoctoral fellow in the "Activating Fluxus" research project at the Bern University of Arts.

She received her PhD from the University of Amsterdam with a project carried out within the New Approaches in the Conservation of Contemporary Art (NACCA) program, and focusing on the lives and futures of contemporary art in institutional collections. From 2019 to 2022, she worked as a conservator at M+ Museum Hong Kong. Prior to her doctoral studies, Aga Wielocha served as a conservator at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw. Her research interest lies in mechanisms and processes of institutional collecting and preservation, with a focus on processual formats of contemporary art formats such as art projects, participatory art and performance.

New Media Museums : Collecting and Preserving Media Arts

Publication made in the context of the New Media Museums project.

Published by the Olomouc Museum of Art, Olomouc, 2022

Edited by Dušan Barok
Editorial collaboration: Jakub Frank
Translations: David Gaul, Zsuzsa Feladó
Video: Kamil Zajíček, Tomáš Jurníček, Jiří Schnapka, Juraj Starovecký
Graphic design: Beata Rakowská

The cover image is the work of Márk Fridvalszki and comes from Home Page, an alternative archive of net art discussed in contribution by Anna Tüdős, Márta Czene and Márk Fridvalszki.