

Art Data: New Frontiers in Curating, Preserving, Displaying and Connecting Digital Based Arts

Panelists: Anna Frants, Janine Randerson, Alexandra Dementieva

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Abstract

Archiving media and digital art pose non-trivial challenges to everyone involved in the art process. Operating and cooperating on different continents, Anna Frants, Janine Randerson, Alexandra Dementieva, and Natalia Kolodzei will share their experiences with archiving and documenting new media while searching for a sustainable global platform for archiving processes and ways of collaboration among transnational institutions.

Panelists will discuss how the artist, the curator, and the institution that organizes digital art exhibitions and events reason at each stage of the archival process: from the artist's conception to the recording in the conditional archive card, to contemplating on the ways of preserving the digital art heritage.

The possibilities of a unified digital art archive, such as the Connecting Archives project, are significant. Addressing the interoperability of analog archives, and reconsidering and bridging binaries regarding the global 'centers' of new media art practice versus the so-called 'periphery' are other essential issues to be discussed. It is also important to focus on users' expectations from such an archive and how to improve the experience of such an archive on both sides - authors and users.

The panel discussion is focused on the speakers' exchange of knowledge and practical experience, each of whom looks at the problem of preserving and presenting digital-based art from her special perspective. Ultimately, the panelists will outline points of contact by which the easiest and most comfortable path to preservation and representation can be established for all interested parties.

Keywords

Archive, new media art, digital-based arts, panel, Connecting Archives project, world-wide network

Panelists' abstracts

Janine Randerson. Distance and Proximity: Aotearoa Digital Art Network and the Lye Foundation Archive

This presentation explores a specific archive of new media art in Aotearoa New Zealand; the Aotearoa Digital Art Network (ADA) which started with an email list in 2003, as a case study of a living network and archive with a recently remodelled website. This archive holds potential for deeper

relationships to other international media art archives and networks. The Archive of Digital Art (ADA, established 1999, currently based in Austria), shares the same acronym, but we also share similar proclivities and desires to foster networks of artists across time and geographic distance. The Aotearoa Digital Art Network (ADA) builds also on a proximate community, tending to the Indigenous culture and ethos building from our Moana-Nui-A-Kiwa, Southern Pacific geographic region. Although the ADA network was born on the internet, many media artists in Aotearoa locate an ancestor in Len Lye (1901-1980), an interdisciplinary and free-thinking artist, known for his experimental films and kinetic sculpture, which draw on both electronically programmed and naturally occurring energies. I will touch on Lye's historical media art works, including unrealised propositions for programmed sculpture and analogue tape files held at the Len Lye Foundation archive in Taranaki, New Plymouth in Aotearoa. Locally-tended archives such as these exist worldwide, and continue to offer portals to reconnect emergent digital practitioners with the early experiments with emergent media. As a founding trustee of ADA Aotearoa Digital Art network, I have observed that new media art archiving practices at first reinforced binaries regarding the global 'centres' of new media art practice versus the so-called 'periphery', or global 'South', underscoring the timeliness of the recent efforts to bridge these divides.

Anna Frants. CYLAND Media Art Lab: Archiving experience

This presentation reveals our experience with archiving at CYLAND's Media Art Lab. Understanding the importance of preserving digital art and documenting its evolution, we assemble our own archive, which can be divided into three self-contained units.

CYLAND Media Art Lab has been working with sound for many years, both independently and as part of artworks of various genres. In the first ten years of its existence, CYLAND Media Lab gained a lot of experience presenting sound at exhibitions, from media players,

directional sound sources, lounges for listening, and other, more "tangible" works of contemporary art. As a result of the explorations, CYLAND came to the most natural medium for archivation, showing and spreading the sounds — lathe cut records. This led to the CYLAND Audio Archive (CAA) creation in 2013, curated by Sergey Komarov.

The CYLAND Video Archive, curated by Victoria Ilyushkina, has been functioning since 2008. One of the tasks of the archive is to form an open and accessible collection, to protect works of art from being closed in private collections, and to prevent them from becoming obsolete. From the very beginning, CYLAND Video Archive was conceived as a platform for networking and interaction between artists, curators and art institutions that promotes the development of media art and allows a wider audience to follow new trends in digital visual art.

The Made in CYLAND archive consists of works by CYLAND's regular participants, which reflect the laboratory's main goal: creating works incorporating new technologies and experiments in media art, in a creative collaboration between artists and engineers. Here we document all the works, similar to what was proposed by Byeongwon Ha for interactive art - from the idea and technical details with schemes, codes and illustrations to the list of places where the project was exhibited.

Alexandra Dementieva. Different ways of archiving digital works of art

Archiving digital artworks is a complex and ongoing process, as digital technology and file formats constantly evolve. Some general steps that can help in it: create multiple backups, keep track of file formats, consider metadata standards and long-term preservation, and document the artwork.

Conserving digital art without institutional help can be challenging as an individual new media artist.

Some artists elaborated a system for archiving their digital media; for example, Golan Levin created a custom-built server that stores his artworks and metadata and regularly migrates his files to new formats to ensure they remain accessible; Cory Arcangel created a tool called "Preservation Toolkit" that allows artists to preserve their digital artworks. The toolkit includes software and hardware guides and information on best practices for digital preservation.

Another tricky thing in archiving and preserving digital art is author rights. As with any art form, the artist generally holds the copyright to their work, and this ownership can extend to digital art.

However, digital art can depend on specific code languages and technologies, which can evolve and change over time. This can make it difficult to ensure the work remains accessible and functional in the future.

If a digital work is created in a specific video format and later that format is upgraded to a higher quality or different compression, it may require changes to the original work to be compatible with the new format. This can involve re-encoding the original file, potentially affecting the video's quality or other aspects of the work. In some cases, it may be possible to preserve the original work and create a new version that is compatible with the upgraded format, but this can also depend on the specific software and tools used to create the work. Additionally, it's worth noting that changes to video format or compression can also affect how the work is displayed or experienced by viewers, so it's important for artists and archivists to consider these factors when preserving digital art carefully.

I created my own protocol conserving my work: to make multiple copies of work, record detailed documentation, to keep up with technology, etc. And finally, I made a paper version artists book of every work with detailed information, photos and code.

Authors Biographies

Alexandra Dementieva

Alexandra Dementieva is multidisciplinary artist, professor at Royal Academy of Fine Arts of Brussels, Belgium. In her installations, she uses various art forms on an equal basis: dance, music, cinema and performance. Akin to an explorer she raises questions related to social psychology and theories of perception suggesting solutions to them by contemporary artistic means. Dementieva received the first prize for the best mono-channel video at VAD Festival (Girona, Spain). Dementieva is an author of multiple publications (including Leonardo Journal) and organized and contributed to symposiums and panel discussions (including hosting The Leonardo / LASER Talks in Brussels) for universities and festivals. Her works are exhibited worldwide, including Rubin Museum (New York), the Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg), MMOMA (Moscow), MACRO Museum (Rome), the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts (Moscow), Centro de la Imagen (Mexico City, Mexico), Neuberger Museum of Art (USA). Lives and works in Brussels, Belgium.

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Anna Frants

Artist, curator in the field of media art. Frants graduated from the Vera Mukhina Higher School of Art and Design (Leningrad, USSR) and Pratt Institute (New York). Founder of the nonprofit cultural foundation CYLAND Foundation Inc. Co-founder of CYLAND Media Art Lab and Cyfest. Frants' interactive

installations have been showcased at Museum of Art and Design (New York), Video Guerrilha Festival (Brazil), Manifesta 10 Biennale (2014, St. Petersburg), Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg), Chelsea Art Museum (New York), Russian Museum (St. Petersburg), Kunstquartier Bethanien (Berlin), Hatcham Church Gallery, Goldsmiths, University of London (UK), Dartington Estate (UK), Ca' Foscari Zattere Cultural Flow Zone (Venice, Italy), MAXXI Museum (Rome, Italy), National Arts Club (New York), and at other major venues all over the world. The artist's works are held in the collections of the Russian Museum (St. Petersburg), Museum of Art and Design (New York), Sergey Kuryokhin Centre for Modern Art (St. Petersburg) and Kolodzei Art Foundation (New York) as well as in numerous private collections. Lives and works in Miami, USA.

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Natalia Kolodzei

Natalia Kolodzei, an honorary member of the Russian Academy of Arts, is a curator and art historian. Ms. Kolodzei is also Executive Director of the Kolodzei Art Foundation, and, along with Tatiana Kolodzei, owner of the Kolodzei Collection of Russian and Eastern European Art, containing over 7,000 artworks of nonconformist and contemporary art (paintings, sculptures, works on paper, photography, kinetic and digital art) by over 300 artists. Since 1991, Ms. Kolodzei has curated over eighty shows in the US and Europe. She is an author and editor of multiple publications (including Leonardo Journal) and organized and contributed to symposiums and panel discussions (including co-hosting The

Leonardo / LASER CYLAND, CAA, Ars Electronica) for universities and exhibitions worldwide. In 2010 she was a member of Culture Sub-Working Group under the US-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission. Lives and works in Highland Park, New Jersey, USA

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Janine Randerson

Artist, writer and curator Janine Randerson, is an Associate Professor in Art and Design at AUT University, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. Her video, and media artworks are exhibited in the Asia-Moana region and internationally. She often practices in collaboration with community groups, mana whenua, and environmental scientists from urban meteorologists to glaciologists. Janine's book "Weather as Medium: Toward a Meteorological Art" (MIT Press, 2018) focuses on modern and contemporary artworks that engage with our present and future weathers. She has curated programmes with *CIRCUIT: Artist Film and Video Aotearoa New Zealand*. Janine is currently working on the online collaboration *Haupapa: The Chilled Breath of Rakamaomao* (Shearer, Bull, Purdie, Marks, Randerson) as part of the digital curatorial project Huarere: Weather Eye, Weather Ear with Te Tuhi gallery and the World Weather Network. She is a board member of Artspace Aotearoa, and she was a found trustee of Aotearoa Digital Art (ADA) network.

<https://ada.net.nz/>

<http://www.lenlyefoundation.com>

<http://haupapa.space/>