

PAM (Plataforma Arte y Medios) - Archiving and Disseminating Media Arts from Latin America

Valentina Montero

Universidad de Finis Terrae
Santiago de Chile, Chile
vmontero@uft.cl

Vanina Hofman

Universitat Rovira i Virgili
Tarragona, Spain
vaninayael.hofman@urv.cat

Abstract

In the context of the *Archive Presentations* section we would like to introduce PAM - Plataforma Arte y Medios [Art & Media Platform] an independent project which has been active since 2016. PAM was born as an answer to the challenge of researching, documenting and visibilizing contemporary media arts projects and practices developed in Latin America, while generating a theoretical and historical context for present and future interpretations.

Keywords

AST, Histories of Art & Technology, Documentation, Archive, Latin America

Introduction

In their research on media arts preservation and social memory, Jon Ippolito and Richard Rinehart stated that the underdevelopment of strategies and methods for preserving and documenting media arts -and the subsequent difficulties for accessing the artworks- turn them invisible for educational purposes and for history [1].

Ippolito and Rinehart's assessment can also be read in the opposite (and complementary) direction: those artworks that are not legitimated by curators, critics, collectors, educators and historians find a more complex path to obtain resources for their maintenance and get interest in their care. The latter is the case of a great amount of artworks that cross borders with sciences, technology and other fields of knowledge, and particularly of those that were born in some geopolitical regions, like Latin America.

Archiving the Resistance

Artists working in the AST field allow us to compare them with such specimens that are left out of traditional taxonomies, as it was the case of the platypus for a long time. The characteristics of art practitioners that work with technologies and scientific inputs tend to disconcert the artistic field. Their productions fall out of place of traditional taxonomies, which together with other material and historical causes, constitutes one of the main reasons why documenting and preserving AST tend to be a complex task.

Back to the aforementioned comparison, it is worthy to remember that the first time Europeans saw a platypus (1789) they thought it was a sophisticated joke of a taxidermist. The platypus is a curious animal. It has a peak like a duck, a tail similar to beaver's, a body that reassembles an otter; it is a semi-aquatic mammal, but it lays eggs. Its skin has bioluminescent properties, it is shy, playful and smiling, but poisonous and it has more than 40,000 electroreceptors that allow the detection of its prey. To sum up, it is an animal that avoided for a long time to be clearly classified. Probably, media artists provoke this kind of perplexity in the public, critics, institutions, but also in researchers and archivists.

PAM seeks for the documentation and dissemination of the diverse artistic manifestations of the platypus, assuming the task to address them in their plurality and discrepancy. Also taking the challenge to maintain these productions in their dispersion [2] avoiding to force them to fit in previous categories that are alien to them. While doing so, PAM also pays special attention to the overlooked role that Latin American played in media history. Applying a variantological gaze, PAM looks at the unseen events that in a silent way helped to develop the current media arts creative scene [3].

PAM has not set fixed borders and limits, but it has very clear goals and aims. Probably the whole platform is better described as an anarchival strategy [4]: a critical approach to archiving, history and memory through different textual and material tactics.

PAM Futures

It is not easy to sustain a project like PAM. The same fate of many Latin American arts is the one that waits the projects designed to preserve them. PAM will live if it is appropriated by artists and researchers, if its content can be reborn in new histories, projects and creative productions. Introducing the platform in the context of the *New Media Art Archiving Summit* is a way to open and extend its dialogue to unexpected possibilities.

Acknowledgements

It is possible to continue with PAM thanks to the grant ANID / Fondecyt (project ID 14446 - Folio 11230449).

References

- [1] Richard Rinehart; Jon Ippolito, *Re-Collection. Art, New Media, and Social Memory* (MIT Press, 2014).
- [2] Isabelle Stengers, *Cosmopolitics 1*. (University of Minnesota Press, 2010)
- [3] Zielinski, S. (2010). Variantología Latina. ISEA Conference Proceedings - Latin American Forum I: Variantología Latina (pp. 295–296). Ruhr.
- [4] Andrés Tello, *Anarchivismo. Tecnologías políticas del archivo*. (Ediciones La Cebra, 2018)

Authors Biographies

Valentina Montero works as curator, educator and researcher. Lives in Valparaiso, Chile. PhD in Advanced Artistic Production (University of Barcelona, 2015). Her research, texts and exhibitions address the uses and appropriations of technologies and sciences in creative practices from a critical perspective. Currently is Associate Professor at Finis Terrae University; director in the Master in Image Research-Creation at the same university, and professor in the Master of Media arts of the University of Chile. She is director of PAM / Plataforma Arte y Medios and ANID /Fondecyt researcher.

<http://www.valentinamontero.com>

Vanina Hofman is a Lecturer at the History and Art History Department of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili (Catalonia) where she is also Director of the Unit *Aula de Cine*. She develops her work in the field of intersection between arts, sciences, technologies and societies, in a hybrid territory among academic research and cultural production. She is particularly interested in the processes involved in the construction of memory in digital culture, the archiving of media arts, the unconventional arts histories and the digital materialities. She has recently published the book “Divergent Practices of Media Arts Preservation. Remembering and Forgetting in the Digital Culture” (Prometeo Libros, 2019) based on previous fieldwork conducted in Argentina. She is collaborating with PAM / Plataforma Arte y Medios.

<https://www.vaninahofman.com/>