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DIGITAL RITES and EMBODIED MEMORIES

Series of Talks | 6 - 9 September 2022
Speakers

6 September

Artistic Entrepreneurship and New Technologies



Tom van de Wetering Multiplying Potential - How Arts Universities Can Help Students to Reflect on their (Potential) Value Within and Beyond the Arts

Abstract

HKU students are usually mainly focused on discovering their own artistry and makership. As an Expertise Center for Creative Entrepreneurship, we encourage students in their graduation year to look ahead to their future career. What value can they deliver in domains within and outside the arts? What do their broader value packages look like and how can they extend their propositions by working together? Specifically, I look at how technological developments impact the creation and development of value packages. For example, how fashion collective Studio PMS has (re)developed itself as a digital fashion agency, and how AI-tools, like DALL-E and Midjourney, can have an impact on the roles of artists and designers.

Bio

Tom van de Wetering works as a program manager of HKU X: the entrepreneurship and talent program of HKU (Hogeschool voor de Kunsten Utrecht). He is also a lecturer within the faculty of HKU Arts & Economics and teaches about creative business models, strategy design and funding. After receiving his master's degree in New Media & Digital Culture at Utrecht University in 2011, he worked for 6 years as a business developer and board member of medialab SETUP and co-founded Open Concept: a design cooperation for social innovation. The HKU Expertise Centre for Creative Entrepreneurship helps students, alumni and lecturers to develop as entrepreneurs, by stimulating their capacity for creative change, their strategic insight and their active enterprising attitude.



Domenico Quaranta New Digital Economies? Blockchains and their (Uncertain) Futures

Abstract

The craze for Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) that erupted in early 2021 thrust the art world into the debate on the blockchain, the decentralised public ledger that holds these tokens, as well as cryptocurrencies, and promises to make “verifiable digital scarcity” a reality. Born out of the 2008 financial crisis and seen by many as the cornerstone of a new, more private, more secure Web3, the blockchain has changed the global economy and is now reshaping the digital environment in which art is increasingly being created, distributed, and exchanged. Is speculation the be-all and end-all of this trend? Will the blockchain's promise of disintermediation destroy the art world as we know it? Are NFTs an opportunity for artists or a scam perpetrated against them?

Bio

Domenico Quaranta is an art critic, curator and educator interested in the ways art reflects the current technological shift. His texts have appeared in numerous magazines, newspapers, books and catalogues. He is the author of *Beyond New Media Art* (2013) and *Surfing with Satoshi. Art, Blockchain and NFTs* (2022) and the editor of several books, including *GameScenes. Art in the Age of Videogames* (2006, with M. Bittanti). Since 2005 he has curated several exhibitions, including *Collect the WW-World. The Artist as Archivist in the Internet Age* (Brescia 2011; Basel and New York 2012); *Cyphoria* (Quadriennale 2016, Rome) and *Hyperemployment* (MGLC, Ljubljana 2019–2020). He lectures in Interactive Systems and he is co-founder of the Link Art Center (2011–2019).



Enrico Bisenzi (NO) Copyright Strike

Abstract

What is the impact of artificial intelligence on copyright infringement procedures? How has Creative Commons changed copyright opportunities? How can the potential of digital communication be exploited without violating the law?

The talk will present 'copyright strikes' in order to discuss the main issues related to copyright laws and rules; the main procedures and tools to protect content on the one hand, and the right to communicate and disseminate information on the web on the other, will be considered. Today, a User Interface must allow for a correct user experience not only for human beings but also for artificial entities, consequently an inclusive design approach must be diffused among artists in order to deal with and take advantage of the technological evolution, avoiding being manipulated by it.

Bio

Enrico Bisenzi is a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome where he teaches design and visualization techniques. He was interested in digital communication even before the spread of the Internet in Italy, working on several editorial and research projects at the National Research Center (Istituto di Documentazione Giuridica, now called ITTIG). In the 2000s, Bisenzi became interested in digital communication on the Web supporting various public institutions and private companies. He has been involved in digital accessibility and usability for decades, contributing to the restyling of Municipalities, Museums, Hospitals, Olympic Committees and several private companies that were grappling with the issue of Inclusive Design, dealing with: optimizing websites for search engines and social networks, taking into account the different linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the various target audiences; providing an appropriate level of readability of texts and content; verifying hosted content, protecting it from possible copyright attacks; checking the responsive effect on different devices, setting them up for long-term preservation.



Patamu.com

Protecting your Authorship

Abstract

We will discover with Adriano Bonforti (Founder) and Gianluca Cannavale (Head of Patamu Legal) how Patamu generates a proof of authorship for any creative work, allowing to protect one's creativity and publish or share works safely. The protection is instantaneous and is carried out by means of a legally recognized timestamp. The author keeps all the rights on the deposited works, has no further obligations towards Patamu, and can use, share, or publish works as he/she prefers. The evidence of authorship generated with Patamu is valid in all the 172 countries that signed the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works. The validity of our timestamps is legally recognized and guaranteed by the European Union, as the certification authority that produces our timestamps is certified to be compliant with the EU 910/2014 eIDAS regulation on Digital Trust services. Patamu Registry can be used by anyone interested in proving and protecting the authorship of an artwork or an idea. The Patamu project has won institutional prizes for social innovation and is powered by Innovaetica company.

During the presentation we will talk about Creative Commons licenses and traditional copyright. We will also discuss how it is possible to find a balance between the protection of authorship and the dissemination of one's artistic works. Finally, we will briefly discuss how sharing of creative ideas can spark innovation and generate artistic biodiversity. All attendees will receive a free Patamu Academy account for one year.

7 September

Gamification, Cultural Heritage and Creativity



Fabio Viola
Videogames and Gamification for and as Cultural Heritage

Abstract

Video games represent the largest cultural consumption space in the XXI century. An interactive art form practiced by nearly three billion people around the world who, on a digital canvas, espied literature, architecture, drawing, music, film, painting and photography. If video games can be considered the tenth art form, at the same time they can be a tool to support cultural institutions in reaching and engaging new audiences. From the *Father and Son* video game published by the National Archaeological Museum of Naples to *PlayAlghero*'s playful strategy to the *PLAY* exhibition at the Reggia di Venaria, the presentation aims to discuss the centrality of an engagement design approach.

Bio

After years spent working for entertainment companies such as Electronic Arts Mobile and Vivendi Games on iconic titles like *Fifa*, *The Sims*, *Crash Bandicoot*, *Harry Potter*, Fabio Viola has dedicated his career to the use of playful practices in public and private spaces.

Considered one of the most influential gamification designers in the world, he was awarded the “Design Lessons” award during the Milan Fuorisalone in 2018.

Author of books such as *Gamification - Videogames in Everyday Life* (2011) and *The Art of Engagement* (Hoepli 2017), he is currently an adjunct professor for several Italian universities and academies.

In 2016 he founded the international collective of artists TuoMuseo specializing in the intersection of gaming and cultural heritage. Over the years he has signed productions such as *Father and Son* for the National Archaeological Museum of Naples with 5 million downloads, *A Life in Music*, the first video game in the world produced by the Teatro Regio di Parma, *Past for Future* for the Marta of Taranto and *The Medici Game* for the Uffizi Galleries. Game Designer for several EU funded projects, he is currently curator for the Royal Palace of Venaria of *PLAY - Videogame Art and Beyond*.



Galit Ariel
Possessed: New Body Spaces in Immersive realms

Abstract

As digital mediation, and immersive technologies in particular, blur boundaries between physical and digital embodied presence. In this session, Galit Ariel will discuss emerging frictions and opportunities of redefining embodied presence, identity and interaction. Asking core questions related to:

/ New body agencies and self-expressions

/ New modes of selfhood, from extended selves to digital beings, metamorphic bodies to disembodied selves

/ New embodied interactions and intimacies

/ New body biases, hierarchies and taboos.

Bio

Galit is a TechnoFuturist and a thought leader within the field of immersive tech. She defines herself as a 'Tectivist' since she is passionate about a future in which technology is integrated into everyday life, but not control it. Her goal is to bridge the gap between pixels, atoms, and neurones to create tools and platforms that help people experience these worlds in new (and better) ways. Galit authored numerous thought pieces, articles and papers, her book *Augmenting Alice - The Future of Identity, Experience and Reality* explores the way Augmented Reality's diffusion will shift cultural and functional paradigms and redefine core concepts related to culture, space, experience and ethics. Galit currently lives in Toronto and is working on art/tech speculative projects, as well as her next book. Through her innovation lab "Future Memory Inc.", helping organizations, policymakers and commercial clients shape their tech futures by exploring immersive narratives, interaction tools and experiences.

8 September

Neurosciences and Humanities



Raitis Smits

The Use of Immersive Technologies (VR and AR) in Arts

Abstract

Immersive technologies coupled with superior virtual environments, artificial intelligence algorithms, faster processors, and biometrics are launching a new era in virtual experiences, entertainment, and storytelling. At the same time these technologies have the potential for reinforcing stereotypes, contributing to massive economic and social disruptions, and implementing new systems of invasive monitoring and control. What do these new developments in VR/AR mean for education, entertainment, social policy, and systems of codified knowledge? Like their predecessors the telephone, television, and mobile phone, what are the impending new vistas and reduced horizons? Biometrics and the uploading and tracking of personal data spans areas from healthcare to advertising, with implications for law, criminal justice, entertainment (gaming), education and sports. Machine learning and algorithms are harvesting and making use of big data in new and startling ways. Some of it allows pinpoint accuracy in determining issues of public health, economics, climate change, storytelling, political leanings, and the migration of populations. What does all this data, in combination with new technologies, mean? Combined with the acceleration of VR/AR and technologies of immersion, how will societies react? What are some current and future artistic strategies that deal with this? The lecture will analyze these questions from the author's artistic and curatorial experience introducing the VR installation *Atmospheric Forest* and RIXC festival exhibition case *Virtualities and Realities* curated by Raitis Smits and Rasa Smite.

Bio

Raitis Smits, PhD, is artist and founding director of RIXC Center for New Media Culture in Riga and curator of the annual RIXC Art Science festival. He teaches as Associate Professor at Art Academy of Latvia, Visiting Lecturer at MIT ACT. In 2017 Raitis was a Fulbright Researcher in the Graduate Center of NYC.

In his artistic practice, Raitis Smits works together with Rasa Smite. Their work has been shown in Post MoMA, Futurium museum, Venice Architecture Biennale, Ars Electronica Center, ZKM, HeK, Van Abbe Museum, KUMU museum and other venues.

Raitis Smits has received PRIX Ars Electronica, Award of Excellence from the Latvian Ministry of Culture, the winner of Falling Walls award, twice nominated for Purvitis Prize in visual arts in Latvia and nominated for the World Technology Award.



Vittorio Gallese **Embodying images. Embodied Simulation and Aesthetic Experience**

Abstract

By exploiting the empirical approach of neuroscience and physiology, it is possible to investigate the brain-body mechanisms enabling interactions with man-made images, shedding light on the functional mechanisms enabling the perceptual experience. In doing so, some of the concepts we normally use when referring to aesthetics and art can be deconstructed. The talk will present some results of the author's research showing that creative expressive processes, in spite of their progressive abstraction and externalization from the body, keep their bodily ties intact. Creative expression is tied to the body not only because the body is the instrument of creative expression, but also because it is the main medium allowing its experience.

Bio

Vittorio Gallese is Full Professor of Psychobiology at the Department of Medicine and Surgery - Neuroscience Unit - of the University of Parma. As a neuroscientist, his main contributions include the discovery, together with colleagues from Parma, of mirror neurons, and the elaboration of a neuroscientific model of perception and intersubjectivity, the Embodied Simulation Theory. His scientific production is attested by more than 300 international publications, the publication of two books as author and three books as editor. Vittorio Gallese received many recognitions and awards. He won the Grawemeyer Prize for Psychology for the year 2007, the Arnold Pfeffer Prize for Neuropsychanalysis in New York in 2010, the Musatti Prize from the Italian Psychoanalytic Society in 2014, and the Humboldt Forschung Preis from the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung, Germany, in 2019. He also received the Laurea Honoris Causa from the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, in 2010.



Roberto Casati **Shadows in Painting**

Abstract

How cognitive science can be a 'consumer' of artistic data, in contrast to cognitive explanations of artistic phenomena, illustrated with a corpus of visual experimentations in Renaissance art.

Bio

Philosopher, member of Academia Europaea, Research Director at CNRS, Director of Institut Jean Nicod in Paris, and Professor at EHESS, Casati works on issues related to the perception/representation of space and of objects in space. He has published more than one hundred and fifty articles in scientific journals or collections, several books, and has taught and done research at SUNY Buffalo, Turin, IUAV, Dartmouth College, and Columbia University. With Achille Varzi he published two classic contributions at MIT Press (*Holes* and *Parts and Places*); also at MIT Press, along with neurophysiologist Patrick Cavanagh, he published *The Visual World of Shadows*. His present research concerns navigational tools (maps, GPS) to remedy disorientation (*The Cognitive Life of Maps*, MIT Press, forthcoming), and conceptual negotiation regarding environmental problems, particularly in the marine environment. Part of this research takes place during ocean crossings on sailboats (Transat ARC 2019), and is documented in *Oceano* (Einaudi 2022; PUF 2022), and in the anthology *The Sailing Mind* (Springer 2022).

He is also author for non-specialist audience, some of his books have been translated into ten languages, such as *Contro il colonialismo digitale* that generated a wide debate on the use of digital technologies in school. Casati also received appreciation for narrative work, his book *La Lezione del freddo* won the ITAS prize and the Procida - Elsa Morante prize.

9 September

Artificial Intelligence and Art



Maurice Benayoun

The New Values of Art: Transaction and Curation Redefine Blockchain and Unchained Art Practice

Abstract

Human abstractions live in our mind. Human Values such as Love, Power, Peace, Knowledge, are human abstractions. If making art is giving shape to ideas, we can do it in a different way. We can shape human values directly from our mind. Controlling the form just by thinking. Brain-Computer Interaction (BCI) makes neuro-design possible. This morphogenesis of values goes beyond the traditional culture-based representations (allegory for Liberty, the red pictogram of the heart for Love...). Each human value can be considered as a dynamic living form. Its ecosystem is the human mind. Like Nature assessing the evolution of living forms, through EEG (Electro Encephalography) it can assess forms and their relevance in representing abstractions and values. The resulting liquid shape submitted to dynamic forces is like Thought in motion. The generated forms become NFT on the Blockchain, opening the path for new market forces that drive the trade of Human Values. From Sublimation to Reification, artworks penetrate strata of human activities that were out of the artist's reach. Ethics, Finance, Politics, Philosophy become, thanks to transactional practices, the new playground for artist at the world level. The process of neuro design can be considered as HUGAN, were the now common AI GAN (Generative Adversarial Network) opposing a computer-based Generator to a carefully taught computer-based Discriminator may shift the status to the artist. In the *Brain Factory* and *VoV* this is the human brain that plays the role of the Discriminator. In the curatorial process involved in AI generated Art, the artist steps back from the position of designing concepts, it uses new tools that, in the like of paint-tubes, become concept-tubes or rhetoric-tubes. Curating variations to orient evolution of constantly evolving shapes may have become the new present of the artist's practice.

Bio

Maurice Benayoun (a.k.a. MoBen or 莫奔) is a French contemporary artist based in Paris and Hong Kong, is a new media pioneer, curator and theorist. His work uses a variety of media, including video, computer graphics, immersive virtual reality, internet, performance, EEG, 3D printing, and media art installations. Often conceptual, Maurice Benayoun's work is a critical investigation into the mutations of contemporary society induced by emerging or newly adopted technologies. It has been said of him that he "invented the 3D CGI series when Sesame Street was still fashionable", that he "tunneled under the Atlantic in VR while discovering the world wide web", and that he started the first collection of contemporary art in Virtual Reality when many "expected coloured canvases and white marble". Moreover, Benayoun uses technology and his creativity to activate public spaces, such as the city of Shanghai with QR codes. His actions have transformed the Triumphal Arch into a Peace Monument, and the façade of Hong Kong's tallest tower into a public art space; he has used weather data to forecast the world's emotions, and compared citizens' emotions with financial actions on the façade of a merchants' building. Currently, his work focuses on converting human thoughts into objects, and human values into negotiable tokens.
www.moben.art



Marco Mancuso

CHIMERA: Expanded Bodies and Identities Between Art, AI and Technoscience

Abstract

Technological development and scientific research are diffracted visions of the same contemporary cultural and artistic horizon. Particularly for their interest towards human beings, around a non-hierarchical dialogue with what surrounds us and the consequent formalization in both corporeal and identity terms. If the idea of Artificial Intelligence is today perceived in a nuanced way between super-intelligent machines and expanded human minds, bodyhacking and biotechnologies promise to alter our bodies and to expand formal, sensory, and intellectual boundaries in a context of reality regulated by increasingly intelligent machines, intertwined with widespread networks, metaverses, blockchains and VR worlds. Considered by digital cultures themselves as elements that are still too far and separate, even the contexts of contemporary art look at these areas for their mere aesthetic (and economical) potential. Without adequate thinking on the ethical and social implications that emerge from their overlapping and the importance of a compelling reflection on new ways of dialogue and balance between our expanded bodies and “entangled” elements around us. An ontologically constituted context of different “species”, phenomena, organic and inorganic “objects”, other “living beings”, humans and otherwise.

A very original and fresh investigation of this kind has been carried out in the last fifteen years by a courageous bunch of international artists and designers. In their hallucinated and interdisciplinary dialogue with AI algorithms, networks and in the wet embrace with biology, they have been speculating and developing new narratives, aesthetics and designing our (physical and digital) bodies of tomorrow in the constant changing relationship between human and non-human technoscientific elements. What their research suggests is to definitively overcome the limits of anthropocentric culture, widen the boundaries of different posthuman currents in the interdisciplinary dialogue among art, design, philosophy, and critical theory, formalize an ethical reconfiguration of conformity to its contamination with diversity. Fluid like the expanded bodies which talks about, queer in its very nature in constant transformation, opposed to binarism nature-culture, technology-science, real-virtual, sex-gender, art-design, this lecture tells dreams and nightmares, utopias and dystopias, constraints, and freedom of new human beings in this reconfiguring contemporary era.

Bio

Marco Mancuso (PhD, Digital Cultures) is a critic, curator, and professor. For about twenty years he has been dealing with the impact of technologies and science on contemporary art, design and culture, investigating the boundaries with philosophical thought in search of new ways of dialogue between human beings and the non-human context. He founded the digital art platform Digicult in 2005 and teaches at the Alma Mater University of Bologna, the Carrara Academy of Fine Arts in Bergamo and Naba Milan. He has curated exhibitions and events at national and international level while his essays, reviews and interviews have appeared also in numerous magazines, books and catalogues. He has collaborated over the years with some of the most important media labs and festivals including Transmediale, Sonar + D, Sonic Acts, Baltan Laboratories, STRP, V2, Elektra, Todaysart, Impakt. He is one of the founders of the SSH - Sound Studies Hub of the Iuav University of Venice, partner of the European EMAP / EMARE program and advisory board member for the Future Innovation project of the Museum of Science and Technology of Milan. He has published the books *Art, Technology and Science* (2018) and *Interview with New Media Art* (2020) for Mimesis Edizioni.



Ádám Albert, Kitti Harmati, Attila Mézes Digital Form Creation Lab at the Hungarian University of Fine Arts

Abstract

Alongside analogue-manual form-making (done by hand based on observation), digital modelling and generative form creation are increasingly common. The results of computer-aided form support and generation are now inevitably embedded in our object culture and are becoming a dominant part of art education. In education, the analogue means of creating a form based on observing what is seen comes before the digital. This conditions students at an elementary level to transpose what they see in three-dimensions onto the two-dimensional plane (drawing) and to create spatial forms manually (sculpture). In the future, the uniqueness and novel economy of new technologies of construction (see, for instance, additive processes and 3D printing) will place additional focus on digital form-making.



Bios

Ádám Albert is an artist, educator, and researcher. He is an Associate Professor and head of the Department of Artistic Anatomy, Drawing and Geometry at the Hungarian University of Fine Arts as well as director of the Art and Art Theory College for Advanced Studies. Currently, he is heading the Hungarian work packages of the European project *EU4ART_differences*. Between 2017 and 2020 he was the leader of the research project: *Artistic research and cooperation — Inter and cross disciplinary projects, research infrastructure development and capacity enlargement at the Hungarian University of Fine Arts*. In the framework of its subproject entitled *The Role of the Interaction of Verbal and Visual Modalities in Fine Arts Education*, the Visual Art & English dictionary was published, in which he worked as the editor. As a further outcome of the project, Albert and his colleague Imre Lepsényi founded the Digital Fabrication Laboratory which operates within The Hungarian University of Fine Arts in the Department of Artistic Anatomy, Drawing and Geometry.

Albert works in a variety of media, often using forgotten craftsman techniques, typically working with materials from private and institutional archives. His works are featured in the permanent collection displays at the Hungarian National Gallery and Ludwig Museum - Contemporary Art Museum Budapest.




Kitti Klaudia Harmati lives and works in Budapest. She is a fresh graduate from the Hungarian University of Fine Arts, where she studied Graphic Arts. At the university she has been a coordinator and team member of the Art and Art Theory Advanced College since 2017, and a laboratory assistant in the Digital Form Creation Lab since 2019. She has also gained experience at Hochschule für Bildende Künste Dresden and the Fine Arts Academy of Rome during EU4ART short term mobilities, and in 2021 she was awarded a National Excellence Program research scholarship, working on the topic of data visualization of headcount data from the Hungarian University of Fine Arts.

Kitti took part in group exhibitions both in the Kunsthalle der HfBK (Dresden, Germany) and the Vasarely Museum (Budapest, Hungary). She has also been represented in an anthology titled *Now I know, daylight*, published by Pilot Press (London) in 2021. In 2022 Kitti curated *The Man Who Stepped in Paint*, a group show at MKE PROFIL (Budapest).

Attila Mezes is a stone sculptor-conservator artist from Želiezovce. In his early years he became interested in music and he studied piano. Between 2009 and 2013 together with her twin sister they won the Piano in Modern Rythm four-hands piano competition four times. In 2016 with musical band Double Twins, he won third place in Mihály Tompa National Contest in the category of Sang poems.

He studied sculpture in the Secondary School and College of Arts and Crafts in Budapest. He studied conservation in the Hungarian Universi-

ty of Fine Arts, where he worked on numerous 3D projects in the Digital Form Creation Lab. His thesis details restorative additions made with the help of 3D, including digital scanning, digital modelling, and additive manufacturing. In 2021 he made a public sculpture called *Flora* in memoriam to the village Kovácspatak.



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function inout (d) {  
  return d/io  
}
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INOUT (Walter Maiorino, Alessia Mutti, Francesca Paganelli and Eleonora Scarponi)

INOUT in dialogue with UNIVERSON

Abstract

INOUT will interview Universon, an emerging multimedia artist experimenting with different technologies, including Artificial Intelligence. Universon will describe "[S]", a virtual world where experiencing an alternative life is possible.

A focus of this dialogue will be on the mimesis of reality and human experiences given by algorithms and calculating their limits.

Bio

INOUT is a collective formed by Walter Maiorino, Alessia Mutti, Francesca Paganelli and Eleonora Scarponi. The group focuses on digital and generative art through the use of AI. The dialogue with UNIVERSON is the first result of the ongoing project *Artificial Research / Artistic Intelligence*, investigating with machine-learning technologies the semanticization of artificial experiences.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101016460