



ONLINE-KONFERENZ
DAS KUNSTMUSEUM IM
DIGITALEN ZEITALTER
2026

ONLINE CONFERENCE
THE ART MUSEUM IN
THE DIGITAL AGE
2026

19.–23.1.2026

BOOK OF
ABSTRACTS

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TEILNAHME KOSTENLOS

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ONLINE CONFERENCE

THE ART MUSEUM IN THE DIGITAL AGE – 2026

MON, 19. – FRI, 23.1. 2026

Edited by Christian Huemer, Johanna Aufreiter, Alexandra Sommer, Sylvia Stegbauer
(Österreichische Galerie Belvedere)

Now in its eighth edition, the international online conference explores the complex interrelations between truth, fake and falsified information, and knowledge authority in the context of digital transformation processes. In light of increasing disinformation, AI-generated content, and algorithmic bias, museums face the challenge of rethinking their role as trusted spaces for knowledge dissemination. At the same time, digital technologies open up new possibilities for participation, contextualization, and translation. A keynote lecture, four thematic online sessions, an on-site workshop, and a panel discussion will shed light on current developments, ethical tensions, and concrete examples from practice. At the heart of the conference is the question of how museums can assume digital responsibility and actively contribute to fostering an open and reflective information culture.

DAS KUNSTMUSEUM IM DIGITALEN ZEITALTER – 2026

MO, 19. – FR, 23.1. 2026

Herausgegeben von Christian Huemer, Johanna Aufreiter, Alexandra Sommer,
Sylvia Stegbauer (Österreichische Galerie Belvedere)

In ihrer mittlerweile achten Auflage nimmt die internationale Online-Konferenz die komplexen Wechselwirkungen von Wahrheit, Fake und Wissenshoheit im Kontext digitaler Transformationsprozesse in den Blick. Angesichts wachsender Desinformation, KI-generierter Inhalte und algorithmischer Verzerrungen stehen Museen vor der Herausforderung, ihre Rolle als vertrauenswürdige Orte der Wissensvermittlung neu zu denken. Gleichzeitig eröffnen digitale Technologien neue Wege der Partizipation, der Kontextualisierung und der Übersetzung. Eine Keynote Lecture, vier thematische Online-Sessions, ein Workshop vor Ort sowie eine Podiumsdiskussion beleuchten aktuelle Entwicklungen, ethische Spannungsfelder und konkrete Praxisbeispiele. Im Zentrum steht die Auseinandersetzung mit der Frage, wie Museen digitale Verantwortung übernehmen und aktiv zur Stärkung einer offenen, reflektierten Informationskultur beitragen können.

Keywords: digital transformation, digital technologies, digital humanism, art museum, artificial intelligence (AI), curation, algorithmic bias, digital responsibility, ethics of AI, cultural data

The abstracts are written in the respective presentation language.

Die Abstracts sind in der jeweiligen Vortragsprache verfasst.

MO | MON, 19. 1. 2026

PANEL 1: RECHTLICHE & ETHISCHE ASPEKTE | LEGAL & ETHICAL ASPECTS

Moderation: Sofie Kokas (BMWKMS, Wien | Vienna)

16:30 | 4:30 pm

From Algorithms to Audiences: Navigating AI, Culture, and Policy through UNESCO's Frameworks

Brendan Ciecko (Cuseum, Boston), Andrea Detmer (UNESCO)

Artificial intelligence is rapidly transforming the cultural landscape, reshaping how creativity outputs are produced, experienced, and governed. As AI tools increasingly influence curatorial practices, audience engagement, and institutional decision-making, museums and the cultural sector face both unprecedented opportunities and profound ethical challenges. This session, "From Algorithms to Audiences: Navigating AI, Culture, and Policy through UNESCO's Frameworks," examines how museums can navigate this technological shift while safeguarding authenticity, inclusion, and cultural sovereignty.

Drawing on insights from the UNESCO Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence and Culture, which released its landmark report in 2025, the session bridges international policy frameworks with real-world innovation. Brendan Ciecko, CEO of Cuseum and Expert Advisor to UNESCO, will share perspectives from his work at the intersection of technology and cultural engagement. Andrea Detmar, Project Officer in UNESCO's Culture Sector and Coordinator of the Expert Group, will highlight the organization's efforts to define global ethical guidelines for AI in cultural contexts.

Together, they will explore how AI can be used responsibly to enhance access, creativity, and participation—while ensuring technology reflects human values and cultural diversity. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of emerging global policy directions, practical frameworks for ethical AI adoption, and examples of innovation across museums and heritage organizations. The session invites cultural leaders, policymakers, and technologists to reimagine how creativity and culture can thrive in the algorithmic age.

Brendan Ciecko  is the founder and CEO of Cuseum, a platform that helps hundreds of leading museums and cultural organizations engage their visitors, members, and patrons. Ciecko has been building technology since the age of 11 and has been recognized in *Inc. Magazine* as being one of America's top young entrepreneurs. Ciecko has been featured in *The New York Times*, *WIRED*, *Fast Company*, *Entrepreneur*, *TechCrunch*, *VentureBeat*, *Esquire*, and *PC Magazine* for his work in design, technology, and business. Recently, Ciecko was inducted to the inaugural Forbes "Next 1000" list, named "New Innovator" by Artnet, and included on Blooloo's top 50 "Museum Influencer" list. He is also a Webby Award winner and holds eight patents in the area of mobile technology.

Andrea Detmer  is a Project Officer in UNESCO's Culture Sector and Coordinator of the UNESCO Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence and Culture. She advances AI policies that foster inclusive, diverse, and human-centered cultural ecosystems, leveraging technology for creative expression and heritage protection. Holding a PhD in Higher Education from University College London, Andrea brings over 20 years of experience in education, innovation, and cultural policy across Latin America and Europe, bridging research and practice to promote creativity, equity, and sustainable development.

16:55 | 4:55 pm


When AI Doubts Our Existence: Museums, Algorithmic Bias, and the Crisis of Digital Truth

Theresa V. Kennedy (The Black History Foundation, USA)

Museums today stand at the intersection of digital truth and historical distortion. While AI systems promise accessibility, they also risk amplifying centuries-old biases that question or erase Black and Indigenous histories. Generative AI routinely frames non-European narratives as "unverified," while image models whiten or recontextualize Afro-diasporic figures, continuing the colonial aesthetic of authenticity through Eurocentric algorithms.

Through systematic red-teaming work with OpenAI and other enterprise platforms, this presentation documents how visual AI technologies distort historical reality, offering practical mitigation strategies that museums can implement immediately. Red-teaming, a methodology adapted from cybersecurity, reveals specific failure patterns: AI systems question documented archaeological evidence of African civilizations, default to Eurocentric visual standards when generating historical imagery, and flag accurate Black historical facts as "potentially false" while accepting European narratives without scrutiny.

Based on this diagnostic work, I demonstrate actionable strategies for museum professionals: how to audit AI tools before deployment, construct prompts that counteract algorithmic bias, document and report systematic failures to vendors, and develop institutional policies that center community knowledge alongside machine-generated content. These techniques enable museums to become active agents rather than passive consumers of biased technology. However, red-teaming also reveals a foundational challenge: AI systems learn from historical records created predominantly by non-Black, non-Indigenous researchers. Lasting change requires museums to advocate for diversifying who produces archaeological and historical data in the first place. As the EU AI Act establishes accountability frameworks, this presentation offers practical red-teaming techniques that museum professionals can implement to identify bias, protect cultural authority, and ensure that AI serves rather than undermines the mission of inclusive, truthful representation in the digital age.

Theresa V. Kennedy  is the Founder and President of The Black History Foundation, a nonprofit organization advancing ethical technology for cultural preservation. She has served as an AI ethics advisor and red-teamer with OpenAI and Create Labs for Mastercard, specializing in bias mitigation frameworks that address the algorithmic erasure of Black and Indigenous histories. Her work bridges museums, technologists, and community archives to design AI and blockchain tools for provenance, cultural accuracy, and inclusion in digital heritage. Kennedy speaks internationally on responsible AI, data equity, and the future of cultural truth in the digital era.


17:20 | 5:20 pm

Translating Responsible AI into Museum Practice: A Three-Layer Framework

Yan Xiao (Stony Brook University, New York)

Art museums are increasingly adopting AI into regular activities, such as collection management, visitor engagement, and interpretive text generation. However, very few studies contextualize broad AI ethical principles within museum operational practice. Grounded in an analysis of key governance documents (such as the EU AI Act, the National Institute of Standards and Technology Artificial Intelligence Risk Management Framework, and the International Council of Museums' Code of Ethics) and recent academic studies, this study bridges the principle-practice gap by proposing a three-layer framework for responsible AI governance in museums.

The first, normative, layer identifies core AI principles widely adopted across the tech sector, including transparency, justice, beneficence, explainability, and privacy. The translational layer considers how these principles take on new meanings within a museum context. Concepts often shift once they encounter curatorial interpretation. Explainability, for example, means helping visitors understand not only the AI-generated outputs but also how those outputs were produced. The last layer, pragmatic, provides process-level mechanisms, such as bias-detection routines, human-in-the-loop review points, and disclosure standards. To show how the framework operates in practice, the talk examines AI-assisted translation of exhibition texts. The case study reveals how abstract ethics become manageable actions: transparency through standardized disclosure language, checks for cultural bias in training data, and structured human review before final publication. This research thus contributes to a governance design framework that supports museums in adapting high-level AI ethics to their institutional realities and procedural needs.

Yan Xiao  is a Lecturer in the Department of Technology, AI and Society at the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, Stony Brook University, United States. She earned her PhD in Arts Administration and Cultural Policy from Ohio State University and has previously taught at both Ohio State University and Columbia University. Her research examines how artificial intelligence reshapes creative and cultural systems, with a focus on AI authorship,


autonomy, and governance in art, music, and museum contexts. Dr. Xiao's current projects explore ethical and policy frameworks for AI adoption in arts administration and cultural institutions, bridging technological innovation with responsible practice.

17:45 | 5:45 pm

Critical Technological Practice und KI-Ethik: Versuch einer aktualisierten Museumsethik

Sonja Thiel (University of California, Berkeley)

Der Beitrag wirft einen Blick auf die KI-Ethik-Debatte und kontrastiert Positionen aus den Feldern Critical AI und KI-Ethik. Gerade künstlerische Arbeiten aus dem Bereich Critical AI können hilfreich und erhellend sein, wenn es darum geht, Technikentwicklungen zu verstehen und kritisch zu befragen. Critical Technological Practice wird zumeist in diesen künstlerischen Herangehensweisen sichtbar, jedoch weniger in institutionellen Praktiken. Der Beitrag analysiert deshalb die gängigsten kritischen Positionen und Bedenken aus dem Museumsbereich auf ihren ethischen Gehalt und stellt die darin geäußerten Perspektiven explizit zur Debatte. Darauf aufbauend wird ein KI-Ethik-Framework als domainspezifische Museumsethik abgeleitet, das als weitere Diskussionsgrundlage dienen kann.

Sonja Thiel  ist Kuratorin und Philosophin und forscht zum Einsatz und zu den Auswirkungen von KI-Technologien in Museen. Sie war als digitale Kuratorin, Programmmanagerin im Bereich Museumswissenschaften sowie Community- und Outreach-Kuratorin in Deutschland tätig. In ihrem letzten Museumsprojekt arbeitete sie an der Entwicklung einer Software zur Unterstützung der KI-basierten Kuration. Sonja Thiel ist Mitherausgeberin des Buches *KI in Museen* (2023).

DI | TUE, 20.1.2026

PANEL 2: WISSENSVERMITTLUNG & QUELLENKRITIK | KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER & SOURCE CRITICISM

Moderation: Markus Wiesenhofer (Belvedere, Wien | Vienna)

17:00 | 5:00 pm

Quellenkunde im Digitalen „reloaded“: Computation, KI und neue Validierungsketten

Gunther Reisinger (NOUS Digital, Wien | Vienna & TU Graz | Graz University of Technology)


Museologische Medienkompetenz entwickelt sich aufgrund des umgreifenden Einsatzes von KI mehr denn je zu Quellenkompetenz im Digitalen, verstanden im Sinne des Erkennens und Gestaltens valider Quellen auch in KI-getriebenen Zeiten. In diesem Kontext behandelt der Vortrag kritisch den aktuell sehr raschen Wandel digitaler Immanenzen, der Museen

jedoch als dynamische Wissensökosysteme neu konfigurieren könnte.

Die Notwendigkeit der aktiven Auseinandersetzung hat die Akzeptanz interaktiver Archive und algorithmisch gesteuerter Wissenssysteme (KI) beschleunigt. Verfolgt wird manchenorts bereits ein durchgehend systemischer Denkansatz, der kuratorische Expertise, Besucherinteraktion und datengetriebene Prozesse miteinander verknüpft.

KI-basierte Werkzeuge ermöglichen neue Formen des Storytelling und erschaffen lebendige Wissenssysteme, die dynamisch auf die Interaktion der Besucher*innen reagieren. Die traditionellen Grenzen zwischen Kunst, Medien und kulturellem Erbe lösen sich zunehmend auf, da verrechnende Techniken die Neubewertung und Wiedererfahrung archivierter Materialien ermöglichen. Ein besonderes Augenmerk liegt dabei auf der Transformation von Interfaces – weg von didaktischen, suchbasierten Systemen hin zu serendipitätbasierten Browsing-Erlebnissen, bei denen Besucher*innen Sammlungen auf assoziativen, nichtlinearen Wegen erkunden.

Eine zentrale Herausforderung ist dabei jedoch die Frage nach Autorschaft und Authentizität: Digitale Objekte stellen traditionelle Vorstellungen von „Quellen“ seit jeher infrage, KI und algorithmische Kuratierung werfen nun völlig neue Fragen zur Mensch-Maschine-Koautorschaft auf. Der Vortrag thematisiert hierzu die sich wandelnde Rolle des Museums als Laboratorium, in dem Kollaborationen zwischen Kurator*innen, Ingenieur*innen und der Kreativwirtschaft neue experimentelle Modelle der kulturellen Teilhabe ermöglichen, und zeigt damit das Potenzial interdisziplinärer Kooperationsmodelle auf, die weit über klassische Auftrag-Agentur-Beziehungen hinausgehen.

Gunther Reisinger  studierte Kunstgeschichte und Musikwissenschaft in Graz und Karlsruhe. 2006 Dissertation zum Thema digitale Quellenforschung in den Geisteswissenschaften an der KFU Graz, Habilitation 2017 an der TU Graz. Lehraufträge und Professuren an der KFU Graz, der HGB Leipzig, der Akademie der Bildenden Künste Stuttgart, der Burg Giebichenstein Kunsthochschule Halle und der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Seit 2017 Privatdozent an der TU Graz und seit 2019 Head of Funding & Research bei NOUS digital in Wien. Seine Schwerpunkte liegen auf der digitalen Quellenforschung sowie auf theoretischen und praktischen Fragen zum Zusammenspiel digitaler Innovationen mit museologischen Methoden: Gunther Reisinger ist bei NOUS Digital verantwortlich für Projektentwicklung im Bereich digitale Transformation von Kulturinstitutionen und Museen. Er beantragt und leitet nationale und europaweite Kooperationsprojekte, unter anderem im Bereich der Anwendung von KI in musealen Feldern.

17:25 | 5:25 pm


Communities of Practice: praxisorientierte Perspektiven auf Wissensvermittlung im Zeitalter von KI

Marc Schuran (checkpointmedia GmbH, Wien | Vienna)

Der Vortrag beleuchtet anhand ausgewählter Praxisbeispiele und aktueller Forschungsansätze, wie analoge und algorithmische Methoden in der Museumsarbeit zusammenwirken. Die Beispiele reichen von Ausstellungsgestaltung und immersiver Szenografie bis zu KI-basierten Vermittlungs- und Forschungstools und zeigen, wie Museen mit neuen Technologien experimentieren, diese interpretieren und in ihre Arbeitsprozesse integrieren. Dabei wird auch reflektiert, wie Museen mit Fragen von Wahrheit, Deutung und Wissenshoheit umgehen, wenn algorithmische Systeme Teil der Wissensproduktion werden.

Diese Beobachtungen werden in einen größeren Zusammenhang gestellt: Wie gehen Institutionen – von Museen über Fachbetriebe bis hin zu Bildungseinrichtungen – mit der Einführung neuer Technologien um, die ihre Lern- und Vermittlungsprozesse verändern? Welche Parallelen lassen sich zwischen diesen Feldern erkennen, und welche Rolle spielt gemeinschaftliches Lernen im Umgang mit technologischen Umbrüchen? Besonders aufschlussreich ist die Gleichzeitigkeit bestehender und neuer Systeme: Wie schon während der Industrialisierung oder der Digitalisierung entstehen neue technische Verfahren, während ältere Strukturen fortbestehen und sich anpassen.

Ein zentraler Aspekt ist die Frage nach dem richtigen Maß technischer Integration: Wie viel KI ist sinnvoll, um eine Erfahrung zu vertiefen, und ab wann droht sie Wahrnehmung oder Verstehen zu überlagern? Der Vortrag illustriert diese Fragen anhand visueller Fallbeispiele und schließt mit einer Reflexion über Chancen, Grenzen und zukünftige Perspektiven des KI-Einsatzes im Museum.


Marc Schuran  ist Designer, Forscher und Geschäftsführer der checkpointmedia GmbH in Wien. Seine Arbeit bewegt sich an der Schnittstelle von Gestaltung, Technologie und Wissenskultur. Nach einer technischen und handwerklichen Ausbildung forschte er zu Bildungs-, Arbeits- und Gestaltungsstrukturen in Österreich und promovierte zu den epistemischen Grundlagen von Praxisgemeinschaften und gesellschaftlichem Lernen. In seiner aktuellen Arbeit untersucht er, wie Wissen in unterschiedlichen institutionellen und kulturellen Kontexten entsteht, geteilt und vermittelt wird, mit einem Schwerpunkt auf Gestaltung, künstliche Intelligenz und Lernkulturen im digitalen Zeitalter.

17:50 | 5:50 pm

From Display to Play: Cultural Leadership and the Digital Reframing of Heritage in Fortnite

Marja Konttinen (Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki)

Cultural sustainability increasingly necessitates cultural institutions move beyond passive digital display, toward forms that enable agency and participation. This shift challenges established institutional structures and calls for new forms of cultural leadership, economic models, and digital skills. This talk addresses the question: How can games contribute to cultural heritage, sustainability, and accessibility in the digital age? Using the Finnish National Gallery's Fortnite Art Heist (2024) as a case study, this presentation will analyse how a national museum experimented with structured play to explore new modes of engagement. The project embedded Finnish art within a global virtual environment, testing how cultural meaning could be activated through interaction rather than observation. The analysis examines the organizational requirements and new professional roles, strategic framing, risk negotiation, and multidisciplinary collaboration necessary to authorize and sustain such experimentation within a commercial platform. Drawing on empirical material from interviews and project documentation, the study shows that digital transformation for museums is primarily an organizational process of adaptation rather than a technical shift. The case reveals how leadership decisions, internal culture, and permission structures evolve when institutions experiment publicly with interactive media. The talk concludes that playful experimentation can serve as a mechanism for organizational learning and renewal, offering practical insight into how museums can build digital capacity and cultural sustainability through leadership-driven innovation.

Marja Konttinen  is a creative strategist working at the intersection of games, culture, and education. A seasoned professional in the games industry, she specializes in marketing, brand-driven game projects, and the integration of immersive technologies in the cultural sector. She is completing her master's thesis at Metropolia University of Applied Sciences in Finland, focusing on cultural leadership and playful experimentation through the Finnish National Gallery's Fortnite Art Heist project. Her current research explores how creative industries and heritage institutions can build cultural sustainability through digital participation.

18:15 | 6:15 pm

Cultural Experience Design as Knowledge Mediation in Art Museums

Daniela De Angeli, Simon Ganahl, Sibylle Moser (Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften St. Pölten | University of Applied Sciences St. Pölten), Eva Mayr, Florian Windhager (Universität für Weiterbildung Krems | University for Continuing Education Krems)


In a digital era marked by shifting methodologies, emerging technologies, and polarized debates, how should art museums rethink the mediation of culture? This contribution introduces a transdisciplinary think tank on Cultural Experience Design (CXD), hosted by the European Center for Culture & Creativity in St. Pölten. Through controversy mapping and the critical reflection of case studies, the think tank advances a shared discourse on CXD across research, design, and institutional practice.


Conceptually, CXD takes seriously that museum communication is always received under competing expectations, such as celebration versus critique, curatorial authority versus fast, personalized media consumption, or nature versus culture as differently framed in cultural and ecological debates. These conditions shape how museum work is perceived, trusted, or ignored by different audiences. CXD helps institutions account for this when designing mediation efforts, rather than assuming a neutral or uniform reception.

Methodologically, CXD calls for iterative design processes, ethical sensitivity, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Projects such as MEMORISE and AgonisticGames illustrate how participatory approaches must balance hierarchy and collaboration, and how narrative framing is essential to avoid trivialization. Questions of long-term impact and sustainability remain critical yet often overlooked.


Evaluation procedures need to account for the multisensory, contextual, and affective nature of cultural experiences. While qualitative methods offer depth and interpretive nuance, and quantitative approaches enable comparison and scale, their integration requires careful epistemic alignment. Sampling strategies further shape how diversity and representation are conceptualized and assessed.


By approaching CXD as a site where attention, authority, and participation are produced and negotiated, this contribution can support museums in fulfilling their ethical responsibility for transparent, contextualized, and critically reflective knowledge mediation.


Sibylle Moser  is a professor (FH) of media studies and cultural management and head of the newly founded European Center for Culture & Creativity at the University of Applied Sciences St. Pölten. She holds a PhD in the empirical study of literature and has published on topics such as media modes of poetic reception, text design in contemporary Austrian art, and multisensory perception in Laurie Anderson's work. As a senior fellow at the McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology in Toronto, she conducted research on the role of embodiment in media aesthetics funded by the Austrian Academy of Sciences. She is currently working on a book on multisensory art experiences for Springer Publishers. Her approach to aesthetics and technology is driven by the desire to lower barriers and open contemporary art to diverse audiences.

Simon Ganahl  is a literary and media scholar whose research and teaching focuses on digital humanities and experience design at the University of Vienna and the University of

Applied Sciences St. Pölten. He heads the publishing and design lab Campus Medius and is Editor in Chief of the scholarly journal *Genealogy+Critique* from the Open Library of Humanities. After studying liberal arts and social sciences in Vienna, Hamburg, and Zurich, he obtained two PhD degrees with distinction in communication science and in German philology at the University of Vienna. During his studies, he worked in journalism and in public relations. In his postdoctoral phase, he was a visiting researcher in the School of Media Studies at the New School in New York and a visiting lecturer in the Center for Digital Humanities at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). His research work received several awards and grants, including the DOC and APART fellowships from the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the Schrödinger fellowship from the Austrian Science Fund (FWF). His major book publications are: *Campus Medius: Digital Mapping in Cultural and Media Studies* (transcript Verlag 2022); *Karl Kraus-Handbuch: Leben – Werk – Wirkung* (ed. with Katharina Prager, Metzler 2022); and *Karl Kraus und Peter Altenberg: Eine Typologie moderner Haltungen* (Konstanz University Press 2015).

Daniela De Angeli  is a researcher, interactive designer, and educator with over a decade of experience in creating games and interactive exhibitions for museums. Her work bridges technology, storytelling, and public engagement, with a strong focus on cultural heritage and immersive experiences. Dr. De Angeli is currently Co-Director of the community interest company Echo Games and Professor in immersive media at the University of Applied Sciences in St. Pölten, Austria.

Eva Mayr  is a Senior Researcher at the Department of Arts & Cultural Studies, University for Continuing Education Krems, Austria. She received her PhD in applied cognitive and media psychology from the University of Tübingen. Her research focuses on visualization-based interface design and human-computer interaction for cultural heritage and digital humanities data.

Florian Windhager  is a Senior Researcher at the Department for Arts and Cultural Studies at the University for Continuing Education Krems, Austria. He received his PhD from the University of Vienna in digital humanities with a focus on the visualization of artwork and artist biography data. He coordinates research projects and teaches in the areas of digital humanities, cultural heritage, information design, and data visualization.

MI | WED, 21.1.2026

PANEL 3: DIGITALE VERANTWORTUNG & KULTURELLE DATEN | DIGITAL RESPONSIBILITY & CULTURAL DATA

Moderation: Chiara Zuanni (Universität für Weiterbildung Krems | University for Continuing Education Krems)

17:00 | 5:00 pm

The Open Museum as Knowledge Infrastructure: Ethical and Practical Dimensions of Digital Transformation

Marta M. Świetlik, Gabriela Manista (Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw)


As museums navigate the digital transformation of knowledge, they must rethink their responsibility for truth, transparency, and participation in the age of algorithmic mediation. This presentation explores how the "Collections as Data" framework—formalized in the Santa Barbara Statement (2019) and updated in the Vancouver Statement (2023)—can guide museums in assuming digital responsibility while fostering an open and reflective information culture. Based on an analysis of 131 Polish museum websites listed in the National Register of Museums (2024), the study reveals key infrastructural and ethical challenges: the absence of Linked Open Data, fragmented metadata systems, and limited opportunities for data reuse.

Contrastingly, international examples such as the Rijksmuseum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, alongside smaller project-based initiatives—such as university-led digitization projects or regional open heritage networks—illustrate that releasing interoperable data for research is achievable when institutions collaborate with scholars and adopt FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) data principles. These cases demonstrate how openness can enhance credibility, accessibility, and contextualization.

Yet, as AI-driven tools increasingly shape curatorial and interpretive processes, openness also raises concerns about decontextualization, bias, and loss of meaning. Drawing on recent critical technology discourse, this talk will argue that digital responsibility requires not only transparency and technical literacy but also value-driven collaboration. By implementing Open Science and FAIR data practices aligned with the EU AI Act, museums can act as epistemic agents—creating trustworthy, ethically grounded infrastructures for digital knowledge that bridge truth, participation, and responsible innovation.

Gabriela Manista  is a lawyer with a PhD in social sciences, as well as an expert in digital museology and open access. She coordinates the Digital Humanities Centre, is an active member of its Open Humanities section, and leads EU-funded projects such as Cultural heritage and immersive technologies for innovation forge (HERIFORGE), Policy Alignment of Open Access Monographs in the European Research Area (PALOMERA), and Strategic

Collaboration for Interdisciplinary Research on Open Science in the Social Sciences and Humanities (SCIROS), which explore innovative uses of extended-reality technologies in cultural heritage and education. An active member of the Europeana Research Community, Gabriela is an award-winning research author whose teaching and professional work bridges science, culture, and innovation.

Marta Świetlik  is an art historian, curator, and user experience researcher with a PhD in digital humanities. She works in the Open Humanities section of the Digital Humanities Centre, focusing on openness and user experience in cultural institutions. Since 2021, she has been involved in European open science projects and advocacy, currently participating in Horizon Europe initiatives such as Cultural heritage and immersive technologies for innovation forge (HERIFORGE), which focuses on the meaningful use of 3D technologies in culture. Marta is a member of the Europeana Research Community.

17:25 | 5:25 pm

Rubens Online: An Open-Access Artwork Database for the Digital Age

Saar Vandeweghe, Elise Gacoms (Rubenshuis, Antwerp)

The Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard (CRLB) has been the authority in Rubens scholarship for decades. Since the dawn of the digital age and subsequent proliferation of varying opinions, whether scientifically based or not, such a reliable source is vital. A good example is the recent debate about the Rubens painting *Italicize* in the National Gallery in London. Amid a malestrom of commenting voices, the editorial team of the Centrum Rubenianum centralizes—sometimes dissenting—expert opinions.

Since 2013, the project Digitizing the CRLB has been converting paper volumes into an open-access catalogue raisonné, making Rubens expertise globally available as digital knowledge. The next digital goal of the Rubenshuis is to transform this online catalogue into a user-friendly and dynamic database: Rubens Online. We want to open up expert-level sources to every interested user, with content that inspires interaction while enabling source criticism and digital literacy.

The platform will combine existing scholarly entries with newly added accessible texts, utilizing Application Programming Interface (API) and Linked Open Data (LOD) principles to maximize interoperability and reuse. With over 3,500 entries, we aim to responsibly use AI as an assistive tool for structured data extraction, to de-bias old scholarly texts, and in automated text generation (scientific to accessible texts) and machine translation. Through human-machine interaction in editorial processes, we aim to maintain control, trustworthiness, and accessibility.

The concept of Rubens Online demonstrates how museums can safeguard knowledge and collective memory in the digital age by combining open data infrastructures, transparent AI practices, and sustained human curation.

Saar Vandeweghe is Project Manager of Digitizing the Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard at the Rubenshuis, Antwerp. She holds an MA in Art History (Ghent University, 2019), and an MA in Curatorial Studies (University of Groningen, 2021).


Elise Gacoms is an art historian (KU Leuven, 2012) and a cultural manager (University of Antwerp, 2013). She joined the Rubenianum in 2016 as a Research Associate for Documentation and Archives. In 2022, she transitioned to the role of Coordinator for Content, Digitization, and Data, and is thus involved in all aspects related to the digital accessibility of the various sub-collections of the Rubenshuis. She coordinates the Rubens Online project.

17:50 | 5:50 pm

Museums as Data Custodians in the Age of AI

Birgitte Aga, Julie L. Parisi (MUNCH, Oslo)

As artificial intelligence becomes embedded in cultural infrastructures, museums face an urgent question: How can AI be developed and used responsibly with cultural data? Beyond digitization, museums today are custodians of vast, publicly funded datasets—valuable not only for preservation, but in shaping ethical, creative, and inclusive futures for AI. This presentation explores how institutions like MUNCH in Oslo approach AI not as a purely technical tool, but as a cultural, curatorial, and ethical field. Through experimental projects such as NYSNØ (2024–26), the MUNCH investigates how AI can foster public participation and creative exploration while protecting privacy and authorship. In NYSNØ, visitors drew their way into Edvard Munch's digitized archive using fine-tuned models that processed over 80,000 sketches without storing personal data—demonstrating that AI can support openness and imagination rather than data extraction. Building on frameworks such as the Museums+AI Toolkit by Murphy and Villaespesa, Creative Commons' AI & the Commons: Signals Framework, and the report *AI Commons: nourishing alternatives to Big Tech monoculture* (Varon et al.), we argue that museums must take an active role in defining how AI engages with culture: promoting lightweight, ethical, and rights-aware models trained on cultural data, and ensuring that digital infrastructures remain public, accountable, and creatively generative. In doing so, museums can help shape AI as a cultural commons rather than a commercial frontier.

Birgitte Aga  is Head of Innovation & Research at MUNCH, Oslo. Her work explores the intersections of art, ethics, and emerging technology. She leads MUNCH's research and development projects on AI, digital participation, and cultural data governance.

Julie L. Parisi is Innovation Catalyst and Disciplinary Lead at MUNCH, Oslo. She specializes in participatory design and interdisciplinary collaboration between art, technology, and public engagement.

18:15 | 6:15 pm


Exploring Cultural Knowledge Graph Data using Large Language Models and Retrieval-Augmented Generation

Nicola Carboni (University of Illinois, Urbana–Champaign)

As digital methods become integral to the humanities, the ability to navigate and interpret complex cultural heritage datasets has become a critical challenge for art history. The increasing datafication of museum catalogues has provided scholars with novel opportunities for research, yet data access frequently requires the use of specialized query languages, Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), and semantic queries grounded in unfamiliar schemas and data models. These technical requirements limit the effective use of these resources.

Where traditional information retrieval methods may impose steep technical barriers, emerging Large Language Models (LLMs) offer a natural language alternative by enabling conversational interfaces that transform natural language questions into structured database queries. Among these systems, Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) systems are particularly effective, as they integrate LLMs with external knowledge bases, making it possible to retrieve database content through natural language as well as limit LLM hallucinations. These systems can be used to deploy novel interfaces that facilitate exploration and interaction with complex cultural datasets.

This contribution will present just such a solution, using as a case study the digital documentation of a 12th century Byzantine church, the Asinou Church. By deploying an RDF-based Graph-RAG specifically designed for working with CIDOC-CRM datasets, the de-facto standard of cultural heritage data, we demonstrate how the interface supports the exploration of the iconographic, architectural, symbolic, liturgical, and geographical dimensions of the site. Using this example, we will recognize both the opportunities and constraints of RAG systems in improving the accessibility of digital art-historical resources.

Nicola Carboni  is Assistant Professor at the iSchool at the University of Illinois. He works at the intersection of knowledge representation and data analysis, using computational methods to model, integrate, and interpret historical and cultural data. His current work focuses on using LLMs to improve access to cultural data, and codifying and tracing Renaissance visual vocabularies. He previously worked on image globalization, the semantic exploration of iconographical patterns, and data-driven analysis of Burckhardt's epistolary corpus. Before joining the University of Illinois, he held positions as Postdoctoral Researcher

in Digital Humanities at the University of Geneva, Digital Humanities Fellow at the Harvard Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, and Marie Curie Fellow at the French National Research Center.

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PANEL 4: DIGITALE & MENSCHLICHE AUTORSCHAFT | DIGITAL & HUMAN AUTHORSHIP

Moderation: Hannes Raffaseder (Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften St. Pölten | University of Applied Sciences St. Pölten)

17:00 | 5:00 pm


AI in the Curator's Loop: Designing Transparent and Trustworthy Metadata Displays under the EU AI Act

Richard Palmer, Shehar Bano (Victoria & Albert Museum, London)


Museums are increasingly exploring how artificial intelligence could assist with large-scale metadata enrichment, yet few have implemented such systems beyond small research pilots. Concerns about hallucinations, bias, transparency, and the erosion of curatorial authority have made many institutions cautious about operational use. This paper introduces Project SPOT, a research-led framework and AI-assisted tool developed to operate within the curator's loop, ensuring that AI-generated suggestions support rather than supersede and replace curatorial knowledge and judgement. SPOT identifies sub-objects within artefact images and produces candidate metadata that are subsequently reviewed, amended, or rejected by curators, maintaining clear human authorship throughout the process.

Forthcoming transparency obligations under the EU AI Act add urgency to these discussions. The Act requires public disclosure when content has been generated or influenced by AI, raising new design questions for museums that wish to display AI-assisted information online. Using SPOT as a case study, this paper examines strategies for integrating AI-generated, curator-verified data into artefact webpages while remaining compliant with the Act. It considers both interface-level and metadata-level approaches for signaling AI involvement and analyses how these might affect user trust in institutions long regarded as sources of reliable knowledge.


By framing AI as a transparent, curator-controlled partner in the creation of cultural data, the paper contributes to current debates on human-machine interaction, digital provenance, and the museum as an epistemic actor in the digital public sphere.

Richard Palmer  is TechLead in Digital Media at the Victoria and Albert Museum, specializing in web development, data infrastructure, and the complex connections between systems and cultural content. His work focuses on improving data quality, interoperability, and digital access to collections through scalable, curator-supportive tools and standards such


as the International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF) and Linked Art.


Shehar Bano  is a Data Engineer at the Victoria and Albert Museum. She specializes in building data pipelines and applying AI technologies to enhance the understanding and accessibility of museum collections. Her interests include the responsible use of machine learning, transparency in AI-assisted processes, and the development of human-in-the-loop systems that respect curatorial expertise.

Co-authors

David Walsh  is Senior Lecturer in Computer Science at Edge Hill University. His research focuses on digital cultural heritage, web-based systems, information retrieval, artificial intelligence, and user experience (UX) design for digital cultural heritage platforms.

Daniel Campbell  is Senior Lecturer in Web Development and Web AI at Edge Hill University. His research focuses on web engineering and the integration of artificial intelligence into software systems, with a particular interest in machine learning for software repositories, ontology-driven application development, and intelligent web-based interfaces.

Paul Clough  is Principal Consultant in Data Science and AI at TPXimpact and Emeritus Professor of Information Science at the University of Sheffield. His research and applied works span information retrieval, digital cultural heritage, and human-AI collaboration in public-sector and cultural contexts.

Mark M. Hall  is Senior Lecturer in Computing and Communications at The Open University. His research focuses on the intersection between computation and human users, particularly in exploring large or unfamiliar datasets, interface evaluation for open-ended exploration, and methodological clarity in the Digital Humanities.

17:25 | 5:25 pm

Eine künstlerische Neuinterpretation der Naturalien- und Kunstkammer von Stift Göttweig mit KI als Mitgestalterin


Viola Rühse (Universität für Weiterbildung Krems | University for Continuing Education Krems), Markus Wintersberger (Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften St. Pölten | University of Applied Sciences St. Pölten)

In dem künstlerisch-wissenschaftlichen Projekt „GöttwAlg – Wunderkammer(21). Barock digital“, das 2025/26 vom Land Niederösterreich gefördert wird, wird die heute nur fragmentarisch überlieferte Naturalien- und Kunstkammer von Stift Göttweig mittels künstlicher Intelligenz (KI) künstlerisch neu imaginiert. Mit VR- und AR-Applikationen können Besucher*innen die neue Wunderkammer in einer Rauminstallation interaktiv erleben. Darüber hinaus werden 3D-Drucke und mit hybriden Drucktechnologien aufwendig erstellte

Kunstdrucke präsentiert. Durch die Verbindung von historischem Erbe und digitaler Gegenwart sowie durch einen dezidiert menschenzentrierten Einsatz von KI wird ein positives KI-Nutzungsbeispiel geschaffen. Dieses setzt sich deutlich von den vielen kommerziellen KI-Anwendungen, die derzeit beispielsweise in Social-Media-Feeds zu finden sind, und dem weitverbreiteten Missbrauch von KI, wie zum Beispiel Deepfakes, ab.

Beim Entstehungsprozess der Werke werden die zeitliche Distanz zwischen der neuen und der barocken Wunderkammer, die Möglichkeiten der heutigen Technologien und die herausfordernden Fragen, die sich bei der Nutzung von KI-Anwendungen in Bezug z. B. auf Datentraining, Kreativität, Urheberschaft sowie Energie- und Wasserverbrauch stellen, kritisch reflektiert. Sehr deutlich werden in dem Projekt auch die Defizite von KI-Anwendungen in Bezug auf barockes Kulturgut, weshalb eigene Datensets erstellt werden. Im Paper werden ausgewählte Werke der in Arbeit befindlichen neuen Wunderkammer analysiert. An diesen wird gezeigt, dass das Projekt neue Perspektiven auf die Vermittlung von monastischem Kulturerbe ermöglicht und eine Zielgruppenerweiterung unterstützt. So wird exemplarisch ersichtlich, dass KI-Anwendungen neben den vielen gesellschaftlichen Herausforderungen auch Chancen und Perspektiven insbesondere für kleine Museen mit geringerem Budget bieten.

Viola Rühse  ist als Senior Researcher an der Plattform für Nachhaltige Entwicklung (SDGs) der Universität für Weiterbildung Krems tätig. Von 2021 bis zur Schließung 2025 leitete sie an der Universität für Weiterbildung Krems das Zentrum für Bildwissenschaften. Sie studierte Kunstgeschichte und Germanistik an den Universitäten Hamburg und Wien und promovierte an der Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst Leipzig mit einer Studie über Siegfried Kracauers Filmschriften (*Film und Kino als Spiegel. Siegfried Kracauers Filmschriften aus Deutschland und Frankreich*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022). Von 2022 bis 2024 leitete Viola Rühse u. a. in Zusammenarbeit mit der Kunstuniversität Linz und der Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien zwei Forschungsprojekte zu Archivierung und Analyse von Medienkunst. Außerdem organisierte sie 2023 und 2024 gemeinsam mit dem Belvedere in Wien zwei Summer Schools zu den Themen Digitalisierung und digitales Sammlungsmanagement in Museen. Ihre aktuelle Forschung konzentriert sich auf Fotografie, moderne und zeitgenössische Kunst sowie Film mit besonderer Berücksichtigung von Frauengeschichte und kritischer Theorie. Darüber hinaus arbeitet sie als Fotografin und Kuratorin.

Markus Wintersberger  studierte bei Bernhard Leitner an der Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien. Seit 1995 ist er als freischaffender Medienkünstler tätig. Seit 2006 lehrt er experimentelle Medienproduktion an der Fachhochschule St. Pölten und leitet dort die Meisterklasse Experimentelle Medien. Markus Wintersberger ist darüber hinaus künstlerischer Leiter digital von Vdonaukanal in Wien und Kurator des Festivals „Lucid Dreams“ in der Bühne im Hof St. Pölten. Er leitete u. a. die Projekte „Wearable Theatre. The Art of Immersive Storytelling“ (Förderung vom FWF), „Intermedia Motion Tracking in AR/VR (IMTA)“ und „smART Data BRIDGE Krahuletz“ (2024, Förderung vom Land NÖ, www.smartkrahuletz.com). In seiner Arbeit erforscht er experimentelle Medienästhetik und

hinterfragt konventionelle Realitätswahrnehmungen durch interdisziplinäre forschungsorientierte Kunst. Markus Wintersberger erhielt zahlreiche Auszeichnungen, darunter der Niederösterreichische Landespreis für Medienkunst (2009) und der WSE-Preis (2013).

17:50 | 5:50 pm

Beyond Authenticity: Museums as Anchors of Verification in the Age of AI-Generated Video


Leslie P. Zimmermann (Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen, Mannheim)

Video has established itself as a dominant format. The rapid advancement of generative AI marks a critical escalation: It transforms the long-known possibility of manipulation into a scalable and hyper-personalized reality. This radically escalates the public collapse of visual testimony, dissolving the "seeing is believing" maxim for mass audiences.

This turn complements the established information crisis (what is true?) with a profound verification crisis (is the evidence itself real?). This challenges institutions that mediate truth. For museums—whose public trust increasingly depends on the transparency of their scholarly and curatorial processes—this moment requires a mission recalibration.

We map four challenges: (1) an asymmetry of persuasion in which AI-optimized synthetic video outcompetes evidence; (2) the erosion of collective memory via "synthetic histories"; (3) a pivot from merely displaying content to modeling verification, demonstrating curatorial methods (selection, validation, contextualization) as a transferable model of critical inquiry; (4) cultivating methodological literacy within the core principles of verification.

As the uncertainty of digital video grows, we contend that museums must serve as anchors of verification literacy. This requires transferring their core competencies to tackle the challenges of AI-generated content. The crucial difference to other truth-mediating institutions lies in the method of transparency: Museums do not just publish their methods; they curate, narrate, and exhibit them. By transforming their (inherently imperfect) methodological processes into a public-facing pedagogical act, they achieve two goals: They critically reflect on their own practices and empower the public by demonstrating critical inquiry in an accessible, object-based context.

Leslie P. Zimmermann  is a Research Fellow and AI & Digital Strategy Manager at the Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen Mannheim and lectures at the Chair of Late Medieval and Early Modern History at the University of Mannheim. Previously, he worked as Digital Strategy Officer at the Bavarian Office for Non-State Museums and as a Research Associate at the Städel Museum in Frankfurt am Main. He studied art history at Goethe University Frankfurt as well as philosophy and sociology at the University of Kassel. Since 2025, he has served as Co-Chair of the Documentation Working Group for the German Museums Association (Deutscher Museumsbund). His research focuses on digital transformation and AI in the cultural sector,

the critical analysis of technological developments, and innovation towards the future of museums.


18:15 | 6:15 pm


AI in Museum Social Media Practice: Uses, Perceptions, and Future Directions

Sophia Bakogianni (Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Athens), Cassandra Kist (University of Strathclyde, Glasgow)

Generative AI is reshaping the visual and narrative landscape of social media, creating an environment where synthetic images and algorithmically produced texts circulate as cultural content. For museums, whose authority has traditionally relied on factual authenticity, this shift raises urgent questions about trust, authorship, and the integrity of institutional knowledge. This presentation introduces a research-in-progress study investigating how museum communication professionals are responding to the emergence of AI-assisted and AI-generated content in social media contexts. Rather than presenting complete results, the study examines the conceptual foundations, methodological design, and ethical stakes of the project.

Drawing on emerging literature in digital heritage, platform studies, and the ethics of AI in cultural communication, we propose a mixed-method approach combining an international survey with semi-structured interviews. The aim is to explore not only if and how AI tools are being adopted, but how museum professionals negotiate their trusted institutional identities in a media environment where seeing no longer guarantees knowing. The presentation argues that social media teams are on the front line in responding to and being affected by generative AI: These teams must make key decisions regarding the public use or non-use of AI, carefully treading institutional boundaries shaped by the values of truth, authenticity, and authorship. We conclude by arguing that these key decisions have the potential to re-code museum identities grounded in alternative functions and values.

Sophia Bakogianni  is an archaeologist and art historian at the Hellenic Ministry of Culture in Athens. She has a PhD in social information systems from the Open University of Cyprus. Her dissertation, entitled "Understanding Museum Social Media Experience," investigates user interactions with museums on social media. Her research interests lie at the intersection between cultural heritage and digital technologies, focusing on user-centered approaches and sociocultural analytical frameworks. She is a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Communication, Media and Culture at Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, where she evaluates user extended-reality experiences in virtual cultural environments. Currently, she serves as a Research and Studies Officer at the National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government, in a seconded position. Bakogianni has worked as a research associate in several EU-funded cultural heritage research projects.

Cassandra Kist  is a Chancellor's Fellow in Computer and Information Sciences at the University of Strathclyde. She uses participatory, ethnographic, and co-creative methods to study digital cultural heritage practices (of professionals and publics), bridging heritage studies and human-computer interaction. In turn, she aims to intervene in the design and use of digital technologies for supporting access to and engagement with heritage. She holds a PhD in information studies (University of Glasgow) (as part of the EU Horizon 2020 project POEM—on Participatory Memory Practices) and a Master's in museums studies (University of Toronto).

COLOPHON

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