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INTRODUCTION

Media art history/stories

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The signs are that we are witnessing a blooming of the “digital humanities”. Technology is reshaping and remodelling traditional research, teaching and outreach in humanities and introducing new methods, techniques and even epistemological frameworks that reflect a new image of knowledge always under construction. Art history faces similar challenges in terms of hybridizing the possibilities offered by the ICTs, but also faces an additional challenge of having to chronicle a set of artistic practices that are directly associated with the media (including the digital media), namely, media art, which has already acquired a few decades of a history of its own.

A lengthy history exists of taxonomic labels that arrange and order artistic practices associated with science and technology (fax art, net art, electronic art, digital art, software art, game art, bioart). Nonetheless, these practices could all feasibly be (or even already have been) branded as media art, an umbrella term for a wide range of practices that use the media as a support, tool or central theme. Developments associated with the coining of the term “new media” to refer to the digital media and the theorizing of Lev Manovich have long been overtaken by a whirlwind of scientific and technological advances that, time and again, push back the horizons of innovation.

In view of the above, we need to ask some key questions. How can we document the history of media art? How can we account for the complexity and heterogeneity of media art practices and discourses? Are existing methodological tools, techniques and epistemological frameworks as used by contemporary art historians adequate, or should we seek out other approaches? What role do the media and tools – or even the very spaces and places of artistic practice – play in the actual construction of media art history? What explanatory role do materiality and technology play in artistic practices? Should media art history be tackled in conjunction with the histories of science and technology and of the media? How

can we ignore the geographic heterogeneity of media art histories in this globalized world and our networked society? Where should this new art history be written?

The authors in this monographic issue of *Artnodes* reflect on such questions, proposing possible answers and discussing historical perspectives. By doing so from a range of different geographical viewpoints, they relocate the place where the history is written. They also consider other forms of relocation, for instance, the transformation of the archival, storage, maintenance, distribution and commercial systems that contribute to the construction of history, or the introduction of a feminist perspective on the configuration of art history.

José Ramón Alcalá and **Vicente Jarque** from the University of Castilla-La Mancha critically evaluate the utopian relationship between art and technology of recent decades. **Núria Rodríguez Ortega** from the University of Málaga analyses the relationship between the digital humanities and the current challenges faced by art history.

Aramis López Juan from the Complutense University of Madrid describes the pioneering experience of the University of Madrid Computer Centre in the 1970s in what were early steps in computer art. **Ricardo del Farra**, an Argentine researcher based at Montreal’s Concordia University, provides a historical overview of avantgarde Latin American electroacoustic music, rescuing it from oblivion and describing projects that even today are riveting and which allow us to view our present – and even glimpse into the future – from a relocated past.

From Chile and Argentina, respectively, the curators and researchers **Valentina Montero** and **Vanina Hofman** reflect on the construction of notions of memory, politics and participation through a case study based on a net art work. Colombian researcher **Andrés Burbano**, based at the University of the Andes, describes various visual, audio and computer technologies that were developed in

Latin America in parallel with similar developments in other parts of the world.

Daniel López del Rincón and **Lourdes Cirlot** from the University of Barcelona reflect on the art historiography process itself through their discussion of bioart history and, in doing so, confront the methodological challenges posed by the discipline. York University, Toronto, researcher **Roberta Buiani** describes new ecological thinking in art and science as applied to the presentation of the microscopic.

Lucía Haydée Stubrin from the University of Buenos Aires reflects on methods used in collaborations between art and science. **Raquel Caerols Mateo** from the University of Antonio de Nebrija discusses – with the aim of generating new paradigms of creativity at the interface between art, science and technology – the visions of the artist Roy Ascott from conversations held with him and an analysis of his works.

Artist and researcher **Sandra Álvaro** describes a topology of art in the information age, setting out different approaches to the concept of space adopted by artistic practices associated with technoscience. And, in terms of another kind of relocation, this time related to gender, **Maia Creus**, an art critic from the Sabadell School of Design, reworks recent media art history from a feminist perspective while critically reflecting on artists' use of technologies.

Pau Waelder, curator, art critic and academic based in Mallorca, examines current art market dynamics by analysing key online art work sales. Finally, the Austrian art historian **Nina Weinhart** reflects on the archival, taxonomic and documentary dynamics surrounding media art and on possibilities yet to be explored.

All of these articles make up this monographic issue, which we hope will be a source of interest and reflection for our readers.

Recommended citation

ALSINA, PAU (coord.) (2013). "Media art history/stories" [online node]. *Artnodes*. No. 13, p. 2-3. UOC.

[Accessed: dd/mm/yy]

<http://journals.uoc.edu/ojs/index.php/artnodes/article/view/n13-alsina/n13-alsina-en>

<http://dx.doi.org/10.7238/a.v0i13.2040>

ISSN 1695-5951



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