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Training in Time-Based Arts Conservation at the University of Amsterdam

Abstract

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UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

Conservation and Restoration
of Cultural Heritage

Training in Time-Based Arts Conservation at the University of Amsterdam

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TBM Symposium 2018

It's About Time!

Building A New Discipline: Time Based Media Art Conservation

21–22 May 2018, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, New York

Abstract

Artists have always explored new media immediately embraced new media technology, such as film, video and digital platforms ever since they came into existence. One of the biggest challenges in the conservation of these works is the rapid obsolescence of the technological components and insight into which parts are crucial for the identity of the work. Whereas media art collections are growing, both in museums and private collections, they rarely engage a professionally trained conservator to take care of these complex technology based artworks. For this reason, the specialisation of Contemporary Art of training programme in Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage at the University of Amsterdam has included new media art as part of their curriculum since the beginning.

The way in which Time-Based Arts has been offered in our conservation programme has changed over the years, as its implementation depended on the composition of the group of students, the time available, and the budget. Over the years, we have developed a TBA-workshop in collaboration with Dutch museums and Lima, the Dutch platform for Time-Based Arts, involving other University departments and private professionals in the field in order to address the questions and challenges in student workshops within a practical setting. Artworks from various collections have been examined, resulting in treatment proposals, actual conservation treatments, and small-scale exhibitions.

The TBA-workshop fits the theoretical foundation that is laid throughout the master years of the curriculum. During these years, the students are confronted with the dilemmas concerning conservation of complex artworks through several general building blocks, such as documentation, conservation ethics, and artist collaboration, including training in conducting artist interviews. This provides a sound basis for those students that want to specialise in the field of media art conservation to continue in this direction during their two-year post Master programme, which includes work placements.

In this contribution, we will share the setup of the TBA-workshops we have organised so far and discuss our experiences. Currently, we are exploring the possibilities of implementing a TBA-track within the specialization contemporary art, including a formal TBA-module as part of the MA and post-Master programme Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage at the University of Amsterdam.

More info:

<http://www.uva.nl/en/disciplines/shared/faculteiten/en/faculteit-der-geesteswetenschappen/news/2018/04/comenius-teaching-fellows-grant.html>