Editorial

Harald Klinke, Liska Surkemper

The digital age has revolutionized many spheres of the modern world: society as a whole, the economy as well as our private lives. Financial transactions happen in real time, global communication via the Internet is available free of charge, and the smartphone is our ubiquitous companion. Moreover, the natural sciences have enjoyed tremendous success from using new technology. The vast amount of data contained within the human genome could only be unlocked with the help of computers. And Big Data Analysis has turned into a new method for discovering otherwise hidden structures.

None of that has gone unnoticed in the Humanities. For decades now, the so-called digital humanities have striven to use algorithms to attain their objectives. Robert Busa started with his machine-generated concordance back in 1951, and text mining has since developed into an established method in literary studies. And art history?

Some say that except for using a word processor not much has changed in art history. We have digitized the slide library, but the image database very much still resembles its physical model in function. Can't we imagine much more? Certainly, we can do more with the image database alone. The fact that our art historical data is digital opens up a whole universe of possibilities. And the use of computers will revolutionize our discipline in many ways. The truth is: the future is already here. Research fields and methods have already changed. Digital art history has existed in many ways for a couple of decades. Publications, conferences and Summer Schools on the topic have been organized and many digital projects are popping up all over the world. What has been missing is a means of bringing concepts and projects to an audience of digital art historians who are scattered all over the world and engaging them in a fruitful discourse. What has been missing is a platform for exchange and networking.

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The *International Journal for Digital Art History* (DAH-Journal) provides the opportunity to reflect on changes currently happening and thus make it possible to discuss questions concerning the future of our discipline, for example: what will art history look like in 5 or 10 years? Will art historians become data analysts? How do digital methods alter our traditional objectives? What is our relation to computer science? How do we adapt university curricula to this change?

When the strongest call to action around researchers in the digital human-

ities is to "Get data!" in order to get things started, perhaps it is also the time to ask: what kind of data do we *really* need and for what purpose? Collecting art-historical data is still time consuming, and one has to analyze it, develop algorithms for it and so on. Thus one task of this journal is to report which data sets already exist and are in use, and point out where gaps remain – and discuss which should actually be filled in order to get useful results.

Eventually, we as a community will have to decide which way we want to go with technology. We want to take part in developing and strengthening collaborative work internationally and interdisciplinarily and – amongst other things – bringing art historians and computer scientists together.

Art history has never been afraid of new technology. Think of Heinrich Wölfflin's use of slide projection 100 years ago. He changed the method of art history for good. A professor at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, he was one of the first to regularly use slide projectors in his lectures. Using two projectors at the same time, he was able to compare two art works simultaneously. This fact and the rest of his academic career are well known history. His scientific achievements were a game changer in perceiving, analyzing and presenting works of art in the scientific world and beyond.

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Today, being in the middle of an even larger and broader paradigm shift – the digital revolution – art historians face particular challenges in contrast to other disciplines in the digital humanities. Because we primarily work with pictures rather than texts, we have to deal with issues of computer vision, reproduction quality, copyright issues, and so on. Therefor the DAH-Journal addresses these problems and informs the community of current projects and progress in the field. That the home base of the journal is in Munich, where Wölfflin once introduced a new technology in his lectures, could be a random fact. However, we like to see it as a good omen.

Liska Surkemper, Harald Klinke
(Photo: Janusch Tschech. Artwork „Nachschub": Li-Wen Kuo)

In time the scientific approach, which we today call *digital art history*, will soon be just called *art history*. Again looking back in time, 100 years ago, nobody back then – even those against using new technologies – felt the need to label the approaches of Wöllflin, Warburg and others e.g. *mechanical art history*. One reason might be that it seemed obvious that the epistemic outcomes were still generated by humans and not by the technology – photography or slide projectors. Hence, we emphasize that art historians in their profession as scientists will *not* become obsolete – even if there are some prominent voices who foresee "The End of Theory" and with that the end of science as we know it, as Chris Anderson, publisher of *Wired* magazine, states in his eponymously titled article (Anderson 2008).

The word *digital* in the title of our journal points out that right now, as scientists still try to grasp all the pros and cons of the use of technology, it is of the utmost importance to reflect on and not to blindly applaud every development that is taking place. Beginning in this first issue by examining the fundamental question "What is Digital Art History?", we will dig into its history and present some intriguing results.

The journal is itself an experiment in publishing. As scholarly discours should be freely available, we have decided to publish open access. Since digital questions should be in the digital realm but the physical object remains important in the digital age, we publish online and in print. And believing e-publishing is more than a PDF-file on a web-server, we are probing what scholarly publishing can be and are open to new formats that meet the needs of the Humanities in the digital age. Accordingly, we will be constantly working on evolving our e-publishing format. We invite authors to write on new approaches to publishing work in the digital humanities community and we welcome critique as well as suggestions that help make this journal a worthy representative of our field.

The DAH-journal is already a success. The first tweet announcing the Call for Manuscripts was retweeted 76 times yielding a reach of tens of thousands and gaining 7,800 visits to the website. The interest in this topic is very strong and – we trust – will continue to be.

We would like to thank those people and institutions who have supported us thus far: our advisory board members, the reviewers, the Technical University of Munich and Ludwig Maximilian University, and of course the authors.

We would like to invite everyone to actively participate in the discourse on the future of art history as readers and authors. Hence, we would also like to draw your attention to page 131, where we have published the Call for Manuscripts for the second issue – please, spread the word! This journal is a platform for projects and ideas, for networking, expanding knowledge and pushing forward our discipline, art history.

United States	31,09 %
Germany	17,55 %
unknown	6,65 %
France	4,73 %
United Kingdom	4,16 %
Brazil	2,89 %
Russia	2,51 %
Canada	2,38 %
Italy	1,80 %
China	1,67 %
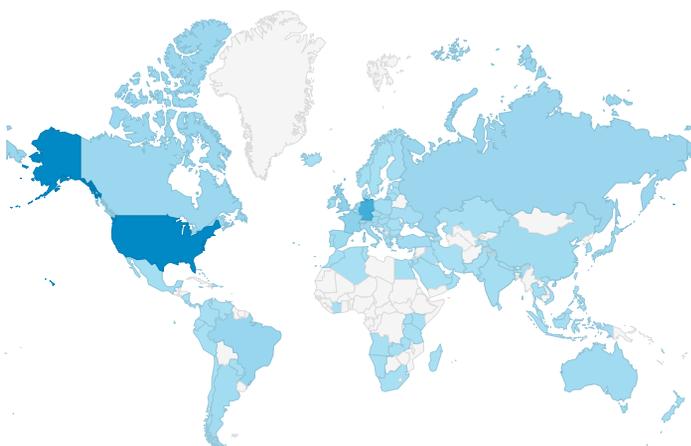
DAH-Journal's website analytics show visitors from all over the world (June 2015)

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