Technological Revolutions and Art History

Thursday, October 15, 2020
The Frick Art Reference Library and The Museum of Modern Art

Keynote Address: The Great Divorce: How Science and Letters Went Their Separate Ways and Why It Matters

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the sciences and humanities diverged in a great intellectual and cultural tectonic shift, to the impoverishment of each. This talk considers how and why the great divorce took place, identifies some political, institutional, and economic forces that drove it, and tries to clear a peephole back through it to the sorts of thinking that went on before.

Jessica Riskin teaches history at Stanford University. Her latest book is, *The Restless Clock: A History of the Centuries-Long Argument Over What Makes Living Things Tick* (University of Chicago, 2016).

Studying Images Through and With Technologies

This brief presentation will consider some of the ways that imaging technologies have historically contributed to, and shaped, the interpretive work of the fields of art and architectural history. It hopes to engage with notions of images as evidence, images as objects, images as not-text, and images as numbers. In this context, how might we co-imagine the current and future participation of digital technologies within our discipline?

Alison Langmead holds a joint faculty appointment at the University of Pittsburgh between the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Computing and Information. She serves as the Director of the Visual Media Workshop (VMW), a digital humanities lab located in the Department of the History of Art and Architecture that focuses on the investigation of material and visual culture in an environment that encourages technological experimentation. Alison is also the Principal Contact for the DHRX: Digital Humanities Research at Pitt initiative.

Call and Response: Collaborative Research Among Art Historians and Technologists

In April 2020, the Technological Revolutions and Art History committee circulated a questionnaire to assess current technology uses, collaborations, and needs among art historians working in a variety of professional spheres. This presentation surveys the results and identifies areas for future development and collaboration among art historians, data scientists, computer engineers, and technologists. It also summarizes some of the reported challenges to such interdisciplinary work and thereby suggests areas where cultural and professional institutions might focus to facilitate new research.

Tianna Uchacz, a specialist in sixteenth-century Netherlandish art and Columbia University's Making and Knowing Project's Postdoctoral Scholar from 2016 through 2020, is Assistant Professor in the Department of Visualization, College of Architecture, Texas A&M University.

Getting it Together: Field Notes from the Birth of Computational Art History

This talk reflects on early collaborations between art historians, art conservators, and computer scientists that led to breakthroughs in canvas weave matching and water mark identification, developments that enriched art-historical inquiry into Van Gogh, Vermeer, Rembrandt, and more recently, Leonardo da Vinci. Can lessons learned from these earlier collaborations be applied to emerging engagements with computer vision?

Park Doing (pad9@cornell.edu) earned his B.S. and M.Eng. Degrees in Electrical Engineering and his Ph.D. in Science and Technology Studies from Cornell University. He writes about contestations over the nature and proper use of science and technology. His book *Velvet Revolution at the Synchrotron* (MIT Press, 2009) traces negotiations over changing modes of experimentation at a particle physics laboratory. He currently writes about ethical issues in science and engineering and teaches in the Bovay Program in History and Ethics of Engineering at Cornell.

C. Richard Johnson, Jr. teaches at Cornell University and is a pioneer in the development of computational art history. His recent work uses digital signal processing to match manufactured patterns in art supports, principally weave patterns in canvas and inner structural features in antique laid paper.