EVEille Days (Exploration et Valorisation Electroniques des corpus en Sciences Humaines et Sociales)

Numesthesia. Digitally capturing the senses

Led by Anne Réach-Ngô, Marine Parra and Benoît Roux

with the collaboration of Régine Battiston

January-June 2023

Organized over five days from January to June 2023, the EVEille colloquium organized by the Institute for Research in European Languages and Literature of the University of Haute-Alsace (UR 4363) aims to develop, within the ILLE and in collaboration with other players in the world of HSS and digital humanities, a collective reflection on the uses of digital technology, the advantages and innovations but also the obstacles to its implementation, as well as future developments in research practices. The EVEille project intends to distance itself from the «all-digital» discourse and return to a reflection on a digital humanism based on the pooling of intellectual experiments, computer explorations and their appropriation by users, whether they are researchers, librarians and documentalists or managers of cultural centers.

The objective of this place of reflection is not to defend a necessary shift in the HSS towards the digital humanities, despite the strong encouragement from research funding and evaluation bodies which, through the pressure imposed, distort the methods and the questions. On the other hand, it is a question of giving participants who wonder about the interest of the digital humanities the means to examine whether such an orientation can – or not – be relevant in the context of their research or in the treatment of heritage and cultural assets for which they are responsible. It is also about allowing digital humanities project leaders to present their work and discuss the interactions between these different projects, which are still sometimes poorly integrated into team dynamics or the local cultural environment.

How can certain research projects or heritage and cultural promotion projects benefit from veering towards digital technologies? To what extent are the methodologies used rooted in older practices that have proven their worth? Do all projects lend themselves to such an approach? How to go about initiating, pursuing, relaunching or enriching a research project using the digital humanities?

Contacts

Projet-eveille@uha.fr
Registration on Sciencesconf
Blog EVEille
Video channel on Uha pod

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Robert Fludd, *Tomus secundus de supernaturali, naturali, praeternaturali et contranaturali microcosmi historia...*, 1619

Day 5. Sensing the Digital
May 12, 2023 | Utrecht

May 12, 2023 | Utrecht University Library

9.15-10.00 am | Session 1 - Immersive Excursion

"Hands-on session", Manuscript viewing at the Utrecht University Library, led by Dr. Bart Jaski (Utrecht University Library)

Utrecht University, Drift 25

10.30-11.00 am | Welcome Coffee

11.00 am-12.00 pm | Round table "The Materiality of Medieval Sources in our Everyday Research", moderated by Romane Marlhoux

Dr. Bart Jaski is a Keeper of manuscripts and Curator of printed books (rariora) at the Utrecht University Library.

Dr. Ortal-Paz Saar is an Assistant Professor of Ancient History and Classical Civilisation at Utrecht University.

Dr. Sabina Rosenbergova is a researcher affiliated with the Bibliotheca Hertziana (Project "Conques in the Global World") and a Post-doc Fellow at the Center for Religion and Heritage at the University of Groningen.

Dr. Rozanne Versendaal is an Assistant Professor of French Literature and Culture at Utrecht University.

12.00-1.30 pm | Coffee break

1:30-1.50 pm | Introduction

Scientific introduction, Marine Parra, Anne Réach-Ngô and Benoît Roux

Presentation of the Lab project, Lisandra Costiner (Utrecht University)

1:50-3.50 pm | Session 2 - Scientific mediation and exploration, moderated by Michela Lagnena

Dr. Lucille Bréard, **"La forêt ancestrale, sujet de virtualisation"**

Dr. Lucille Bréard has a PhD in Aesthetics and is an associate member of the CRISES laboratory at the University Paul Valéry Montpellier III.

Il s'agira dans cette intervention de questionner le média numérique comme outil de l'art, comme moyen de retranscrire la forêt ancestrale Mata Atlântica, au sud-est du Brésil, un des réservoirs de biodiversité les plus importants. L'artiste Daniel Steegmann Mangrané a utilisé une technologie de pointe pour en scanner une large superficie. Nous explorerons comment le spectateur peut être projeté dans ce lieu inaccessible, via un casque de réalité augmentée, tout en assistant à une dénaturation de l'essence, par la virtualisation. C'est une végétation désaturée qui nous est montrée, mais en même temps nous marchons, l'espace d'un instant, dans un environnement encore sauvage de la planète. Nous irons nourrir la réflexion en croisant des analyses au regard de l'anthropologie et de l'esthétique, pour comprendre les enjeux cognitifs d'une telle expérience.

Dr. Dario Rodighero, **"Surprise Machines: Revealing Harvard Art Museums' image collection"**

Dr. Dario Rodighero is an Assistant Professor of Sciences and Technology Studies at the University of Groningen.

Surprise Machines is a project of experimental museology aiming at visualizing Harvard Art Museums' image collection, opening up unexpected vistas on 200,000 inaccessible objects. Part of the exhibition Curatorial A(i)gents organized by metaLAB, the project explores the limits of artificial intelligence to display a large set of images and create surprise among visitors. To achieve such a feeling of surprise, a choreographic interface was designed to connect the audience's movement with several unique views of the collection.

2.30-2.50 pm | Coffee break

Dr. Marjolijn Bol, **"Making Scents of the Past. Making Scents Last"**

Dr. Marjolijn Bol is an Associate Professor in Technical Art History at Utrecht University.

Is it possible to reconstruct the scents of the past? Why should we try? Just as one plays music to bring historical scores to life, following historical recipes for scents connects us to the practices of the fragrance makers who left them behind. In the ArtLab of Utrecht University, the DURARE team collaborated with researchers from *Het Geheugen van Geur* (project of De Jonge Akademie of the KNAW) to reconstruct a historical "fragrant water" from a seventeenth-century recipe. We used hands-on experimentation to release the fragrance from its text. Yet, the products of our own experiments were at least as ephemeral as the historical fragrances we were studying. So, how should we best digitally "capture" the results of these olfactory reconstructions? And, more specifically, how can we evoke historical scents in the digital worlds used to communicate our research?

Dr. Carlotta Capurro, **"Touching Digital Heritage"**

Dr. Carlotta Capurro is a Postdoctoral researcher in Digital Art at the Utrecht University.

The digitization of cultural heritage has allowed the creation of high-resolution 3D replicas. These objects can be handled in place of the originals and offer the possibility to explore cultural heritage in new and more inclusive ways. This presentation discusses an innovative approach to communication for museums and heritage collections, where an interactive 3D-printed replica of an object is used as a tangible interface and storytelling device, allowing a multi-sensory exploration of heritage.

Dr. Marieke Hendriksen, **"Understanding tastes of the past through digital and performative methods"**

Dr. Marieke Hendriksen is a Senior Researcher in History at the Humanities Cluster of the KNAW in Amsterdam.

Just like books, paintings, and music, historical foodways are an important part of our history and heritage. But simply reading recipes won't do the trick: it is hard to understand how historical ingredients and dishes tasted, and how people in the past experienced and valued such tastes. In the project *Tastes of the Past*, we aim to develop a standardized protocol to reconstruct and evaluate historical tastes, and to connect contemporary to historical evaluations of taste. This new method will help us understand our food history and heritage better, and will provide new historical information on shifts in tastes.

3.50-4.00 pm | Coffee break

4:00-4:45 pm | Session 3 - In Search of Tools

Dr. Lisandra Costiner, **"AI Art Generators and Creative Practices: A Practical Workshop"**

Dr. Lisandra Costiner is an Assistant Professor in the History of Art at Utrecht University.

This practical workshop will introduce participants to the potential of AI Art Generators. Participants will gain an understanding of how such engines function, their strengths and limitations, and learn how to best deploy them in creative practices.

5:30 pm | Closing Remarks

Numesthesia

After the first two editions devoted to the constitution of research data (2021) and their ethical foundations (2022), the EVEille project wishes to explore the place of sensoriality in digital representation, by questioning the participation of the five senses in the processing and transmission of scientific corpora and cultural objects. While the field of museography has long invested in digital devices for heritage valorization, the humanities have only recently taken up the question in the conduct of research projects.

By coining the neologism of *numesthesia* – born from the contraction of *numérique* (digital) and the Greek term *esthesia* which designates apprehension through the perception of the intellect and the senses – the EVEille project presupposes that in the field of Humanities, sensory apprehension is not only called upon to *restore* to large audiences the phenomenological reality of a scientific object that is offered to the intellect of the expert. The notion also suggests that the epistemological approach *engages sensible* devices of digital mediation to access, *through the senses*, the thickness of the scientific object and this, from the phase of investigation of the data itself.

The five days will follow a progressive path, from the most minimal digitization to the most advanced exploitation, in order to question the regimes of sensoriality that intervene in the digital communication of the scientific, cultural and patrimonial object. It will be a question of examining the way in which the five senses are solicited in a variety of ways, from the initial apprehension of the object of research to the production of a new scientific artifact, henceforth dematerialized, while passing by the various devices of its conversion to the digital format. We will study in particular the sensitive mechanisms implemented by the digital devices examined during the presentation of case studies, which could be from literary, linguistic or historical studies, as well as from the fields of musicology, art history, archaeology and more broadly from cultural studies.

D5. Sensing the Digital

During the "Sensing the Digital" day, we will finally consider the way in which the digital world invites to sensory experience the research object after its investigation. Can we feel the object through digital devices? Or can we only study it, consult it in the practical sense of seeing and representing. What does this relationship to the sources bring to our apprehension of the works? The question of the public and the result exposed to the user is often projected, but the impact of the specialist on the work from the research process itself is scarcely addressed. We particularly think of the place of the senses in the research process, in the elaboration of the scientific questioning itself during the analysis of the sources and objects and more largely in the ways of reading or observing the digital documents.

Practical information

To assist:

In-person | Utrecht University, Drift 25 (Room 002)

Registration (free): https://tinyurl.com/eveille

Online | the connection link will be sent after signing up on the Journées EVEille 2023 sciencesconf website

Scientific commitee

Régine Battiston (UHA, ILLE), Guido Braun (UHA, CRESAT), Bram J. M. Caers (Leiden University), Pierre Cubaud (CNAM), Marie-Luce Demonet (Université de Tours, CESR), Tony Gheeraert (Université de Rouen, CÉRÉdI), Nicolas Genis (Université de Lille, HALMA), Renske A. Hoff (Utrecht University), Madeleine Hubert (Bnu, Data Lab), Jelle Koopmans (University of Amsterdam), Isabelle Lefèvre (UHA, SUAC), Véronique Lochert (UHA, ILLE), Marine Parra (Utrecht University), Ambre Philippe (Fondation Catherine Gide), Anne Réach-Ngô (UHA, ILLE), Martine Robert (Université de Rouen, ERIAC), Benoît Roux (Université de Rouen, ERIAC), Franck Varenne (Université de Rouen, ERIAC).

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