

**Dušan Barok (University of Amsterdam)**

**db@monoskop.org**

# **New Approaches in Media Conservation**

**Artworks from the Digital Era in Galleries and Museums**

**colloquium,**

**Vašulka Kitchen Brno,**

**The Brno House of Arts, Brno**

**23 October 2019**



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## Multiplace

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**Multiplace** is an annual festival of media art and network culture, held since 2002 in multiple locations in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Austria, Poland, Hungary, and other places. Next to Enter in Prague, WRO Biennale in Wroclaw and Ars Electronica in Linz, it is one of the largest events for media art and culture in Central Europe.

### Contents [\[show\]](#)

The festival is held in Spring, lasts 5-14 days and offers up to a hundred events including performances, exhibitions, workshops, discussions, presentations and screenings. It was coordinated by [Mária Rišková](#) (2002-04), [Katarína Kucbelová](#) (2005), [Zuzana Duchová](#) (2006-07), [Dušan Barok](#) (2008-09), and currently by [Barbora Šedivá](#) (since 2010). Other members of the coordination and program groups included [Slávo Krekovič](#), [Viera Levitt](#), [Magdaléna Kobzová](#), [Zdenka Konečná](#), [Peter Gonda](#), [Katarína Gatialová](#), [Barbora Kalinová](#), [Barbora Námerová](#), [Dáša Peštová](#), [Michal Kindermay](#), and many others.

The festival started as a coordinated event organised by people with a shared interest in presenting new forms of creativity. In April 2002 Buryzone, Jan Koniarek Gallery, Space Gallery, Atrakt Art association, Rokast, Subterra, Czech Centre in Bratislava, and Austrian Cultural Forum in Bratislava joined efforts and during five days organised at 7 locations (in Bratislava, Trnava and Nitra) presentations and performances by media artists, digital filmmakers, video artists, musicians and programmers from Slovakia, Czech Republic, Austria and Finland.

The aim of Multiplace is to serve as a platform for the support of media art, to maintain an open and collaborative environment and to encourage critical reflection on the life in a culture shaped by technologies. Multiplace emphasizes experimentation and encourages collaboration and networking among participants in the network. It awards no prizes.

Since January 2008 the network runs the free culture server [Sanchez](#) hosting more than 80 websites of artistic and cultural initiatives worldwide.

### Open organisation [edit](#)

From 2007 to 2009 the network was an open organisation consisting of [working groups](#) (for more details see [concept](#) and [charter](#) of the organisation). The mailing list communication of each group is publicly accessible.

- [Coordination group](#) (2006-2007), [archive part 2](#) (2006-2010).
- [Program group](#) (2007), [archive part 2](#) (2007-2010).
- [Theory group](#) (2006-2007), [archive part 2](#) (2008-2009).

### Gallery [edit](#)



A4 - Zero Space, Bratislava, 2005 [edit](#)

Case study

Concepts & theory

Documentation

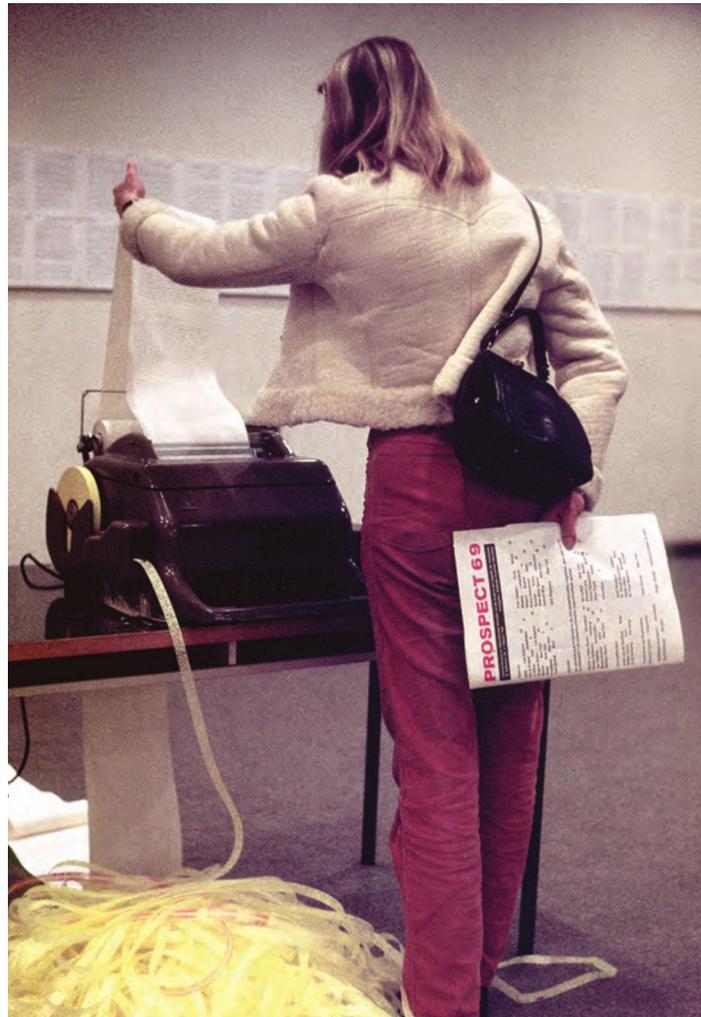
Digital preservation

Institutions & networks

New tendencies

## Hans Haacke, *News*, 1969

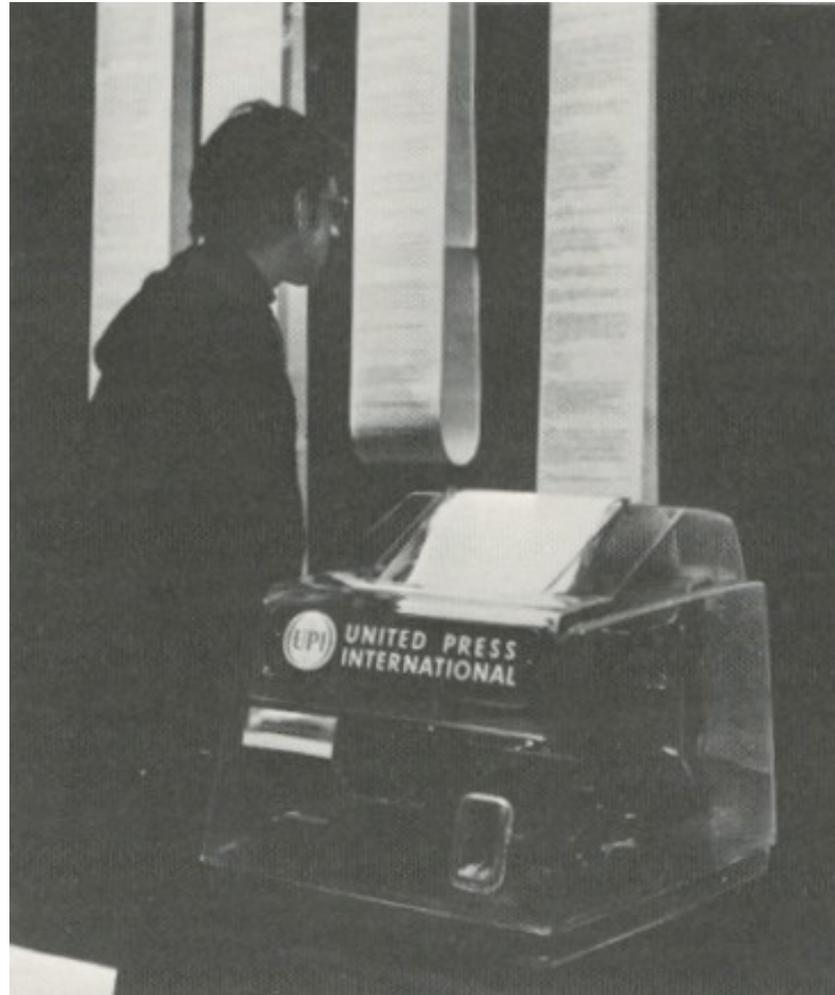
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Exhibition  
*Prospect 69*  
Düsseldorf,  
1969

## Hans Haacke, *News*, 1969

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Howard Wise Gallery  
New York,  
1969

## Hans Haacke, *News*, 1969/1970

---



Exhibition  
*Software*,  
Jewish Museum  
New York,  
1970

## Hans Haacke, *News*, 1969/2008

---



Exhibition  
*Art of Participation*  
SFMOMA,  
2008

## Hans Haacke, *News*, 1969/2018

---



Exhibition *Nothing Stable Under Heaven*, SFMOMA, 2018

# NACCA (New Approaches in the Conservation of Contemporary Art)

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**I: Identity, Authenticity and Values**

**II: Materials, Media and Technologies**

**III: Presentation, Documentation and Reception**

**IV: Professions and Institutions**

The screenshot shows the NACCA website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Content, Groups, Structure, People, Configuration, and Help. A search bar and user information (Hello dbarok, Log out) are also present. Below the navigation bar is the INCCA logo and the full name: INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR THE CONSERVATION OF CONTEMPORARY ART. The main content area features a document card with the title 'List of Interviews Made as part of the New Approaches in the Conservation of Contemporary Art (NACCA) Research Network, 2015-2019'. The card includes a 'DOWNLOAD' button, file size (26 KB), and edit date (07/05/2019). A brief description of the research project is provided, along with the URL 'http://nacca.eu' and the last update date (5 July 2019). A 'USEFUL INFORMATION' sidebar shows a profile for 'dbarok', a member since October 30, 2015, with a 'profile' link. At the bottom of the page, there are social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google+, and a footer with links for HOME, ABOUT, CONTACT, FAQ, DISCLAIMER, and PRIVACY STATEMENT, along with the text 'Follow INCCA on:' and social media icons for Facebook and LinkedIn.

www.incca.org  
(Knowledge Base)

Home > Documents and source > List of Publications Produced as part of the New Approaches in the Conservation of Contemporary Art (NACCA) Research Network, 2015-2019

RESOURCE

## List of Publications Produced as part of the New Approaches in the Conservation of Contemporary Art (NACCA) Research Network, 2015-2019

html • 5 bytes • Edited on 07/05/2019

### DESCRIPTION

Books / Monographs

Kiliszek, Joanna, ed. [2017]. Dziekanka artystyczna. Fenomen kultury niezależnej na Krakowskim Przedmieściu w Warszawie 1972-1998, Warszawa: Akademia Sztuk Pięknych & Fundacja Akademii Sztuk Pięknych, 404 pp. ISBN 978-83-65455-61-1.

<https://wydawnictwo.asp.waw.pl/2018/01/23/dziekanka-artystyczna-fenomen-kultury-niezaleznej-na-krakowskim-przedmiesciu-w-warszawie/>

Kiliszek, Joanna, Dorota Folga-Januszewska, eds. [2018]. Wizualne Niewidzialne. Sztuki wizualne w Polsce – stan, rola i znaczenie, Warszawa: Akademia Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie, 324 pp. ISBN 978-83-65455-79-6. <https://wydawnictwo.asp.waw.pl/2019/01/24/dorota-folga-januszewska-joanna-kiliszek-pawel-nowak-wizualne-niewidzialne-sztuki-wizualne-w-polsce-stan-rola-i-znaczenie/>

Journal articles

Barok, Dušan, Julie Boschat Thorez, Annet Dekker, David Gauthier, Claudia Roeck [2019]. "Archiving Complex Digital Artworks", Journal of the Institute of Conservation, 42[2], London: ICON, 94-113. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19455224.2019.1604398>

### USEFUL INFORMATION



**dbarok**  
member since October 30, 2015

[profile](#)

### ATTACHMENTS TO THIS RESOURCE

**ODT** nacca\_publications\_2015-2019. ...  
odt

www.incca.org  
(Knowledge Base)

## Time-based media art, Media installation is ...

---

the term is useful to “describe installations that have a duration and therefore have to be experienced in the context of the passing of a period of time.”

(Laurenson 2001)

“any artwork that has both physical and temporal dimensions.” (EMG AIC)

## Complex artworks, non-object based artworks, changing artworks are ...

---

installations and other types of work with one or more of the following elements:

- variable form (e.g. involving non-dedicated, replaceable components)
- conceptual or otherwise immaterial features crucial for re-exhibition
- process-based
- open-ended

## Installations are 'alive' only when installed

---

"Essentially [time-based media installations] do not really exist until they are installed"

(Laurenson 2001)

"Artists' installations only truly exist in their installed state"

(Scholte and 't Hoen 2007)

"[Some] time-based media works only really exist in their installed state"

(Tate 2012)

"The large majority of time-based media works [...] only exist when they are installed"

(Phillips 2015)

"[Time-based media works are] often only fully realized in their installed state"

(MoMA 2018)

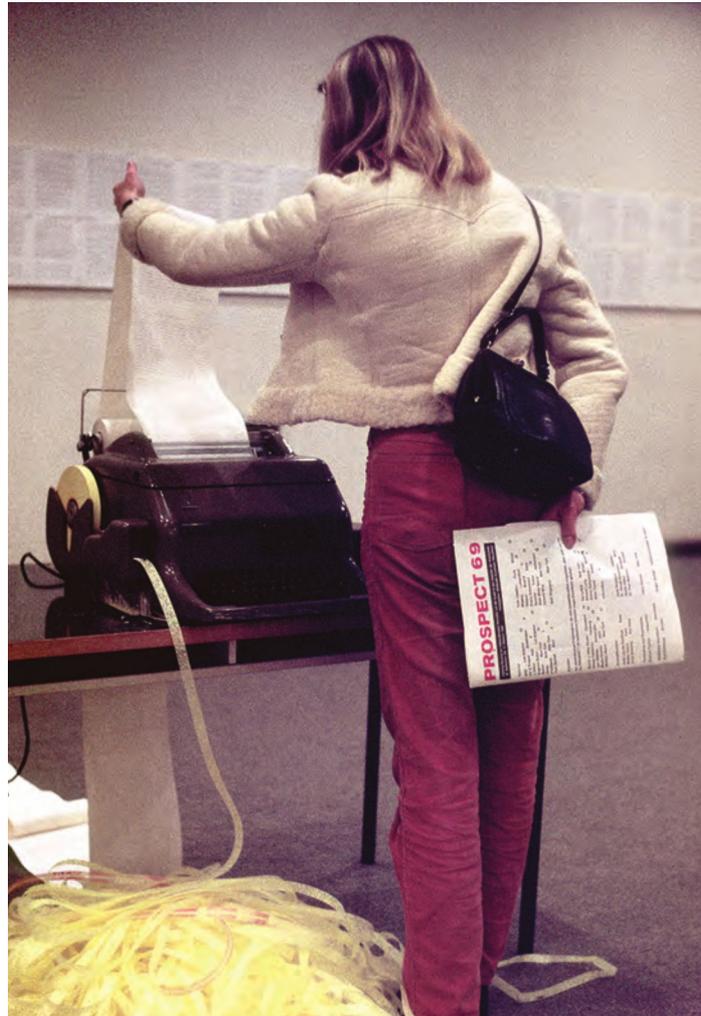
## Conceptual framework for media conservation

---

Pip Laurenson, “Authenticity, change and loss in the conservation of time-based media installations”, *Tate Papers*, 6, 2006

## Hans Haacke, *News*, 1969

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Exhibition  
*Prospect 69*  
Düsseldorf,  
1969

## Conceptual framework for media conservation: Allographic works

---

“In the case of allographic works, whether time-based media installations or musical works, each occasion a time-based media work is installed and each time a musical work is performed, decisions are revisited and sometimes re-made as to what aspects of the work are significant to its identity.”

(Laurenson 2006)

## Hans Haacke, *News*, 1969/2018

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Exhibition *Nothing Stable Under Heaven*, SFMOMA, 2018

# Conceptual framework for media conservation: Work-defining properties

---

Work-defining properties include..

- the artist's instructions
- the past installations approved by artist intended to act as models
- an understanding of the context in which they were made
- ...

# Hans Haacke, *News*, 1969/2018: Artist's instructions

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## Installation [\[ edit | edit source \]](#)

Artist parameters:<sup>[3]</sup>

- a) printer should be placed on a simple table that does not draw attention to itself.
- b) Any printer that produces the news bulletins on paper as they come in, dot matrix or other. In case such paper print-outs can technically no longer be produced in the future, an LED or a comparable presentation could be considered.
- c) New sources, only in English, from all major centers around the world that affect the political events of the time. Inclusion of sources representing opposing sides of conflicts that have repercussions beyond their respective region. All continents should be represented.
- d) The computer program Craig Waldman developed for "The Art of Participation: 1950 to Now" will most likely have to be adjusted, as technology develops.

## Room Requirements [\[ edit | edit source \]](#)

No particular room requirements. Gallery presentation. Will need room for paper to expand.

Courtesy of SFMOMA, 2018

## Hans Haacke, *News*, 1969/2008

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Exhibition  
*Art of Participation*  
SFMOMA,  
2008

## Hans Haacke, *News*, 1969/2018

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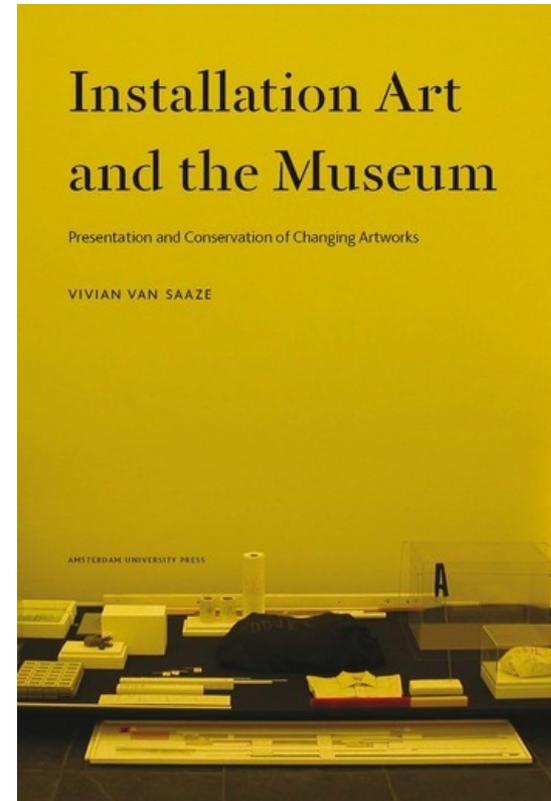
Exhibition *Nothing Stable Under Heaven*, SFMOMA, 2018

# Conceptual framework for media conservation: Artist's intent

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Artist's intent and authenticity  
are 'being done'

They are constructed through  
documentation, artist interviews,  
negotiations, etc.



Vivian van Saaze, 2013

OA at [https://open.org/search?  
identifier=449202](https://open.org/search?identifier=449202)

# Documentation

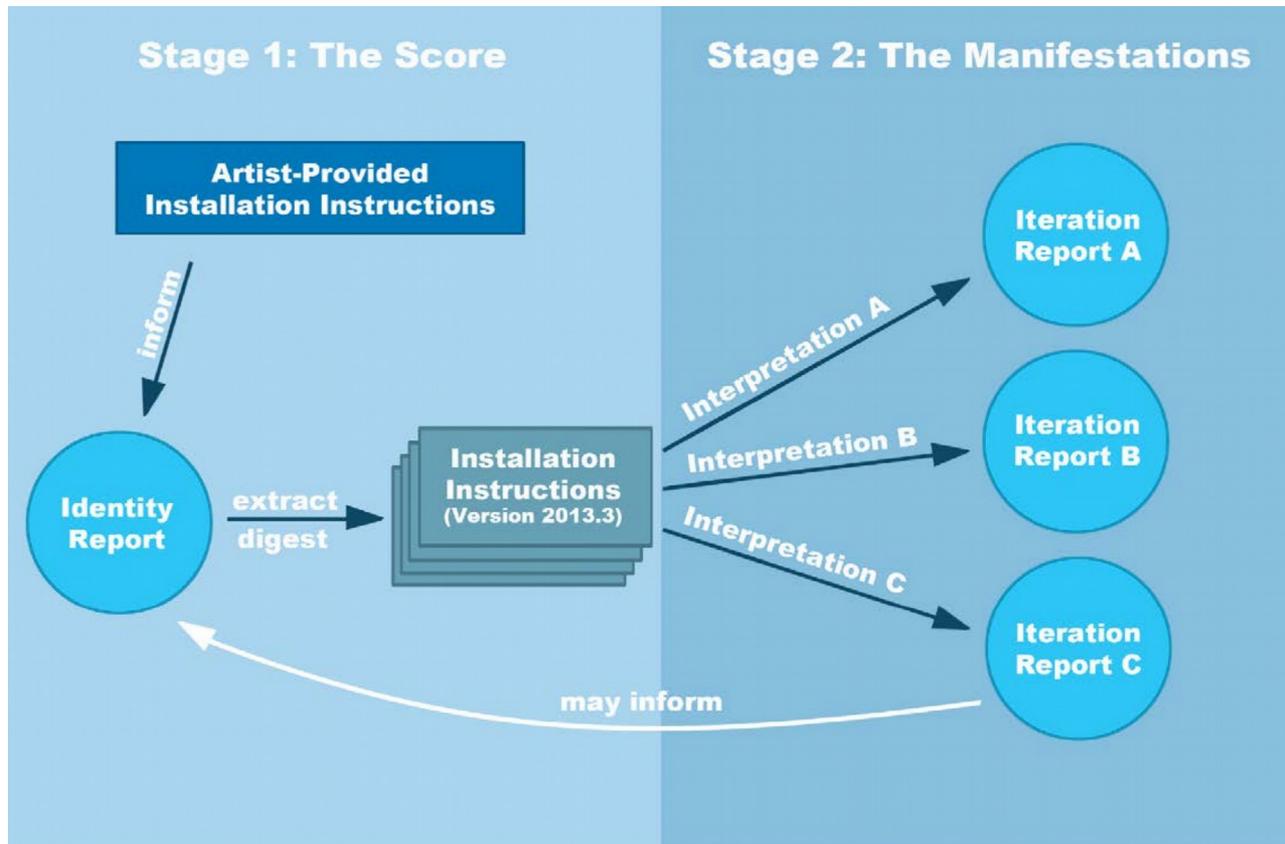
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To document a media installation...

- identify its components and elements  
(possibly including the space and acoustics),
- explain how they are connected,
- describe their roles in terms of aesthetics and functionality,
- establish the factors most likely to prevent each component from fulfilling its role.

(Laurenson 2001)

# Documentation model for media art



Documentation Model for Time-Based Media Art (2015).  
Courtesy of Joanna Phillips.

# Documentation model for media art: Iteration report

## GUGGENHEIM

Conservation Department

## Iteration Report

<b>Artwork</b>	Accession No.:	Thumbnail Image
	Artist:	
	Title:	
<b>Exhibition</b>	©, Year:	
	Title:	
	Date:	
<b>Iteration</b>	Venue:	
	Created / supervised by: <i>(Who had an impact on the appearance of this iteration?)</i>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Curator(s): <input type="checkbox"/> Registrar(s): <input type="checkbox"/> Art Handler(s)/ASaP: <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibition Designer(s): <input type="checkbox"/> Artist(s): <input type="checkbox"/> Consultant(s): <input type="checkbox"/> Media Technician(s): <input type="checkbox"/> Artist Assistant(s): <input type="checkbox"/> External Company: <input type="checkbox"/> Conservator(s): <input type="checkbox"/> Fabricator(s): <input type="checkbox"/> Others:	
Who installed the artwork, for how long? <i>(List names, and/or skill-sets, and add the hours/days per person.)</i>		
Was the artist present/represented during the (entire) install? If not, how (closely) did the artist monitor/influence this iteration?		
Evaluation of this Iteration:		
1. Was the iteration considered to be successful, or less successful? Why? <i>(Source, Date)</i>		
2. Did the artist(s) see and/or approve this iteration?		
3. Were there any unsolved problems or suggestions for future improvements? <i>(Source, Date)</i>		
Images, as installed:		

Public reception of this iteration, including press reviews etc. <i>(sources, dates):</i>			
Visitor feedback and interaction, incidences, damages during exhibition etc.:			
Further documentation of this iteration:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Video: <input type="checkbox"/> Images: <input type="checkbox"/> Artist Interview: <input type="checkbox"/> Artist Assistant Interview: <input type="checkbox"/> Layout / Elevation: <input type="checkbox"/> Wiring Diagram: <input type="checkbox"/> Other:			
<b>Space, as installed</b>	<b>Description/Images</b>	<b>Decision-making</b>	<b>Decided by/ Approved by</b>
	Installation context: space dedicated, or shared with other works?		
	Room shape and dimensions:		
	False walls included:		
	Ceiling height:		
	Ceiling (color, paint [brand, product] etc.):		
	Wall surface (color, wallpaper, paint [brand, product] etc.):		
	Flooring (native gallery floor, carpet [brand, product] etc.):		
	Sound level and insulation (sound abatement, sound panels [brand, product] etc.):		
	Light level, quality and direction; light insulation (curtains [brand, product] etc.):		
	Entrance/exit:		
	Visitor flow:		
	Position and mounting of display equipment (incl. speakers):		
Position and mounting of playback equipment:			

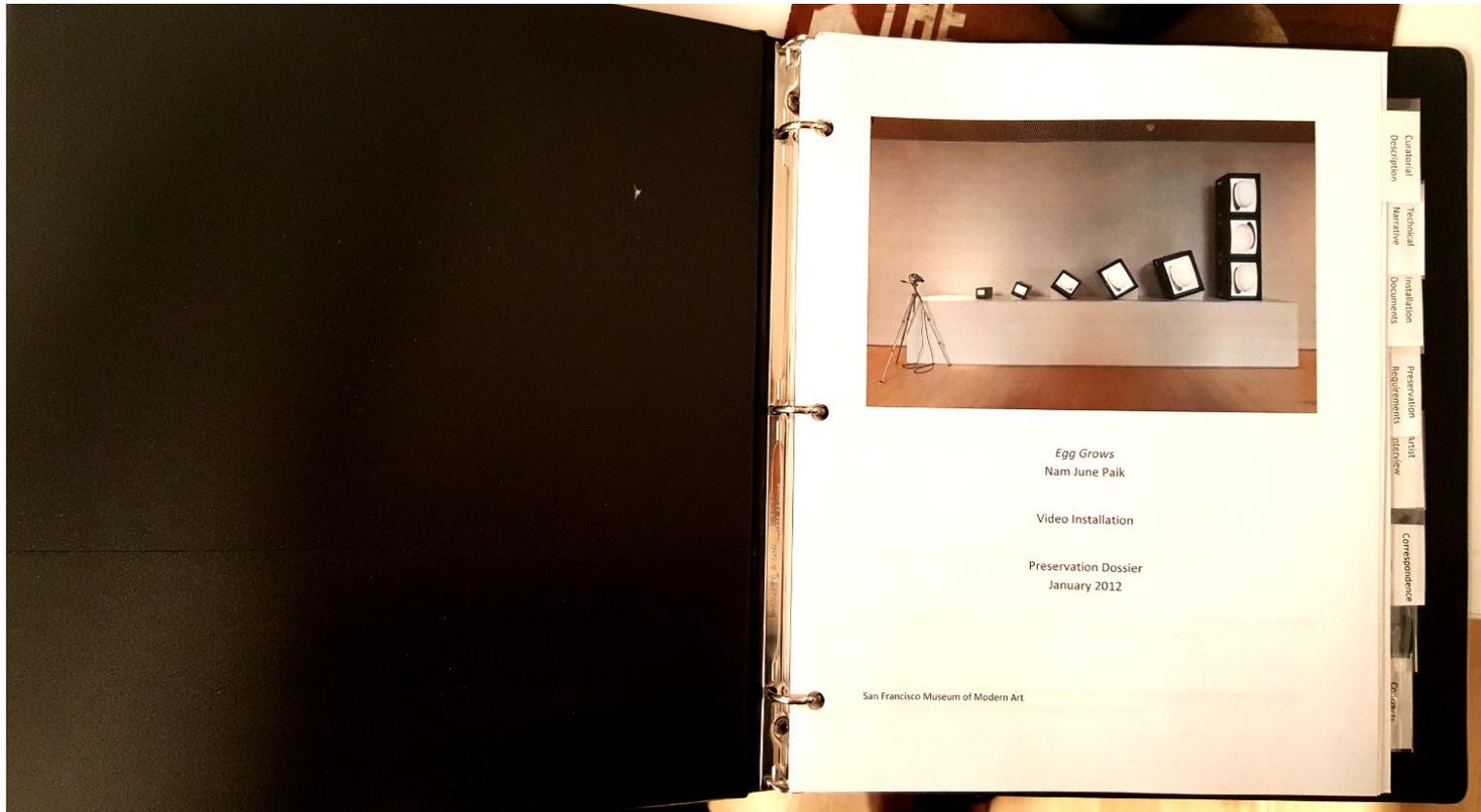
Projection distances:				
Screens (size, material [brand, product]):				
Size of image:				
Placement of image (elevations):				
Preparation of projection surface (reflective paint [brand, product]):				
<b>Exhibition Copies</b>	Format (incl. resolution, frame rate, bitrate, encoding, etc)	SRGM Component No.	Decision-making	Produced by / Approved by
<b>Equipment, as installed</b>	Descriptions (incl. amount, make, model etc.)	Decision-making (if n/a: SRGM component or tracking no.)	Decided by/ Approved by	
<b>Other Installation Components, as installed</b>	Descriptions (incl. sculptural components, stands, benches, pedestals etc.)	Decision-making (if n/a: SRGM component no.)	Decided by/ Approved by	
	Space between plinths and height of plinths: Benches / furniture: shape and position: Other:			
<b>Technical Set-up</b>	Descriptions	Decision-making	Decided by/ Approved by	
	Looped: Timed: Synched: Controlled: Amperage in spacial equipment: Conditioned power: Cabling:			

Pages 1-3 of 4 of Guggenheim Iteration Report, 2012

Courtesy of Guggenheim Museum.

Available at <https://www.guggenheim.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/guggenheim-conservation-iteration-report-2012.pdf>

# Preservation dossiers



Courtesy of SFMOMA

# Preservation dossiers



Courtesy of SFMOMA

## Criteria for documentation platform for media conservation

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- Straightforward navigation through documentation associated with an artwork.
- Support for differentiating between identity and installation of a given work on the one hand, and its respective iterations on the other.
- Support for documenting decision making on the component level.
- Support for linking components and elements of a work.
- Support for multimedia content.
- Version control including history of changes and identification of their authors.
- Integration of the platform within the information infrastructure.

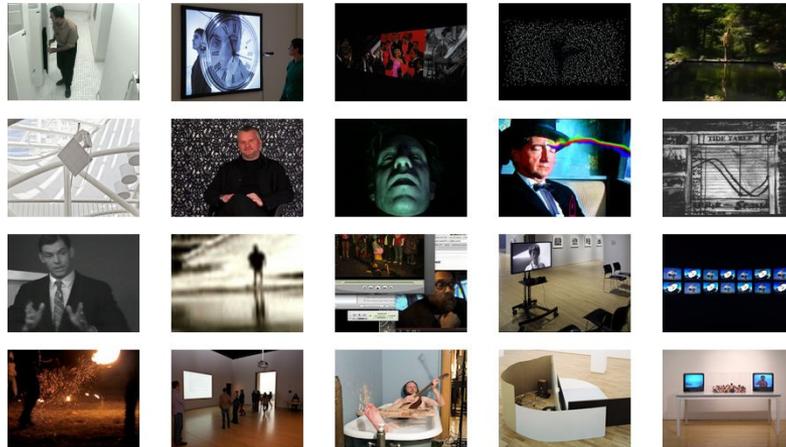
# A documentation platform for media conservation: SFMOMA Media Wiki

## SFMOMA Media Wiki

 Actions ▼

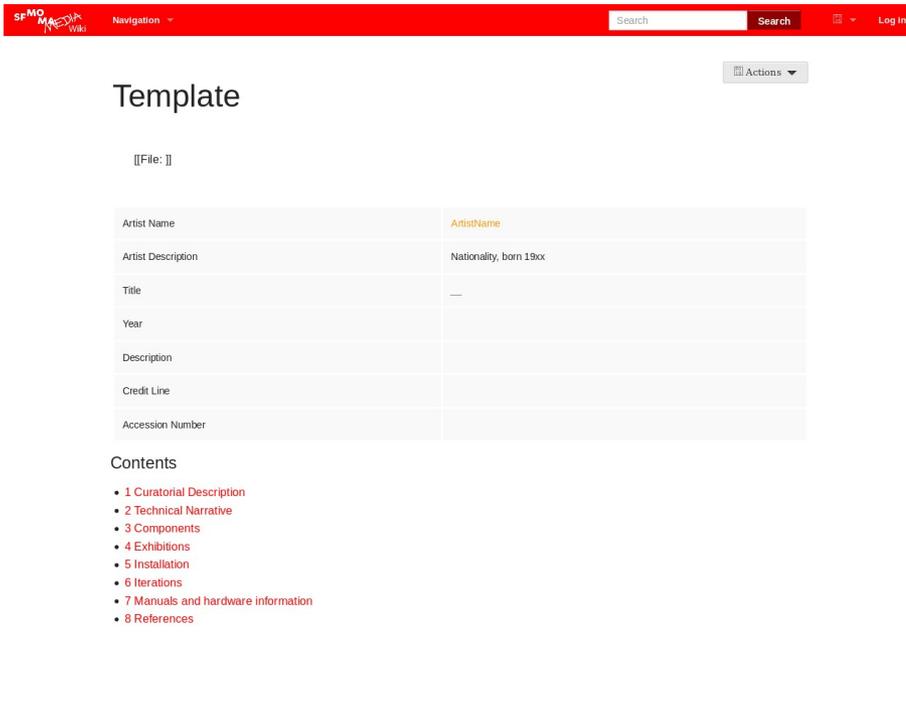
### Welcome!

Search here for **artists** or for **installations!** You can also access these two options in the sidebar to your left. Or you search for artists or artworks in the search bar on your upper right.

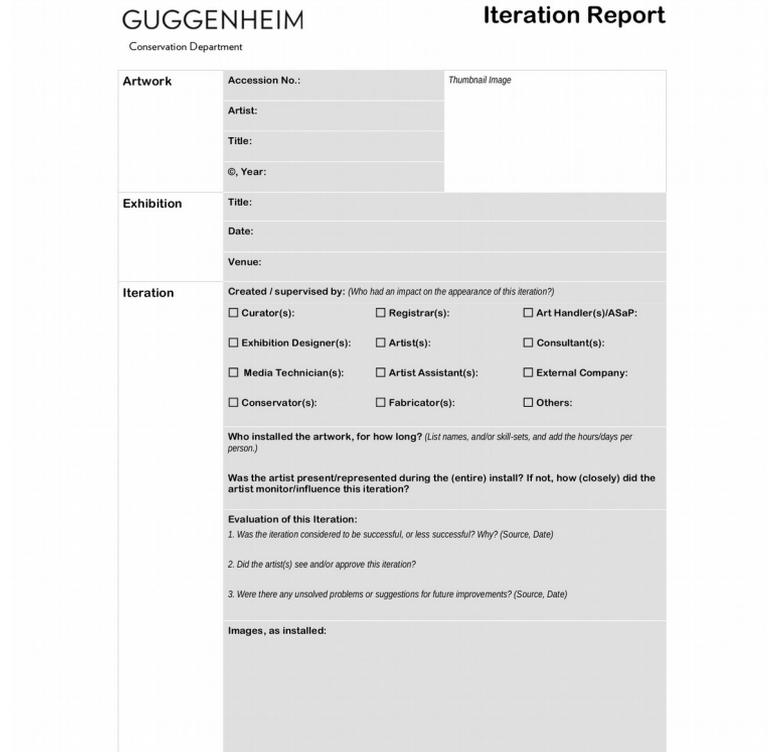


Courtesy of SFMOMA

# SFMOMA Media Wiki: Artwork page template



Courtesy of SFMOMA



Courtesy of Guggenheim Museum

## Wikis for art (preservation) documentation

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ZKM Karlsruhe, 2006-2015

Guggenheim's Panza Collection Initiative, 2010-2016

SFMOMA's media conservation, 2013-

SFMOMA's The Artist Initiative, 2014-2017

NYU's Artist Archive Initiative, 2017-

...

# Wikis for art (preservation) documentation

Journal **Studies in Conservation** >  
Volume 64, 2019 - Issue 8

Enter keywords, authors, DOI, ORCID etc

This Journal  [Advanced search](#)

1,432 Views

0 CrossRef citations to date

8 Altmetric

Listen

Original Research or Treatment Papers

**From Collection Management to Content Management in Art Documentation: The Conservator as an Editor**

Dušan Barok , Julia Noordegraaf  & Arjen P. de Vries 

Pages 472-489 | Received 07 Dec 2018, Accepted 02 Apr 2019, Published online: 15 Apr 2019

 Download citation  <https://doi.org/10.1080/00393630.2019.1603921>  Check for updates

[Full Article](#) [Figures & data](#) [References](#) [Citations](#) [Metrics](#) [Licensing](#) [PDF](#)



## ABSTRACT

It has been widely acknowledged that reinstallations and re-executions of contemporary artworks substantially rely on available documentation. Especially for installations and performances it is crucial to record the artist's intent, past iterations, and tacit knowledge involved in staging the artwork. The growing presence of contemporary artworks in museum collections increases the importance of documentation as a central focus of collection care. However, collections management systems have limitations in adequately presenting these often rich forms of documentation. Consequently, documentation required for presenting a specific complex artwork is often dispersed across multiple systems, drives, and dossiers inside various departments. In recent years, several initiatives responded to these challenges by implementing a digital

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## In this article

**ABSTRACT**

Introduction

Documenting media installations

Institutional memory through collaboration

# Digital preservation (code, media files)

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## Archiving complex digital artworks

Dušan Barok , Julie Boschat Thorez , Annet Dekker , David Gauthier & Claudia Roeck

Pages 94-113 | Received 16 Jan 2019, Accepted 03 Apr 2019, Published online: 30 May 2019

Download citation <https://doi.org/10.1080/19455224.2019.1604398> Check for updates

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### In this article

**Abstract**

Introduction

*Chinese Gold*: the data

Version control: an introduction

*Git* and *MediaWiki*: a system-level

## Abstract

The transmission of the documentation of changes made in each presentation of an artwork and the motivation behind each display are of importance to the continued preservation, re-exhibition and future understanding of artworks. However, it is generally acknowledged that existing digital archiving and documentation systems used by many museums are not suitable for complex digital artworks. Looking for an approach that can easily be adjusted, shared and adopted by others, this article focusses on open-source alternatives that also enable collaborative working to facilitate the sharing and changing of information. As an interdisciplinary team of conservators, researchers, artists and programmers, the authors set out to explore and compare the functionalities of two systems featuring version control: *MediaWiki* and *Git*. We reflect on their technical details, virtues and shortcomings for archiving complex

## People also read

Article

**From Collection Management to Content Management in Art Documentation: The Conservator as an Editor** >

# Institutions & networks for media conservation today, I.

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## Museums with media laboratories or specialised positions for media conservation:

Tate Modern: Pip Laurenson (formerly), Patricia Falcao, Louise Lawson ..

SFMOMA: Martina Haidvogel, ...

MoMA: Glenn Wharton (formerly), Kate Lewis, ...

Guggenheim: Joanna Phillips (formerly), ..

ZKM: Hanna Hölling (formerly), Morgane Stricot, ...

Hirschhorn

Smithsonian

Art Gallery NSW

M+, Hong Kong

Met, NYC



Guggenheim's media lab

## Institutions & networks for media conservation today, II.

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Electronic Media Group (EMG) AIC, est. 1998

INCCA (International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art), est. 1999

LIMA, Amsterdam, est. 2013 (continues the legacy of Montevideo/TBA)

Rhizome, NYC, est. 1996, now affiliated w/ New Museum

iMAL & Packed, Brussels

Bern University of the Arts (HKB) Conservation-Restoration MA programme

Die Angewandte, Vienna, Modern+Contemporary Art Conservation MA programme

NYU Time-based media MA programme, est. 2018

CICS Cologne, decision-making model 2019

Atelier für Videokonservierung, Bern, private studio of Agathe Jarczyk

Small Data Industries, NYC, private studio of Ben Fido-Radin

# Decision-Making Model for Contemporary Art Conservation & Presentation

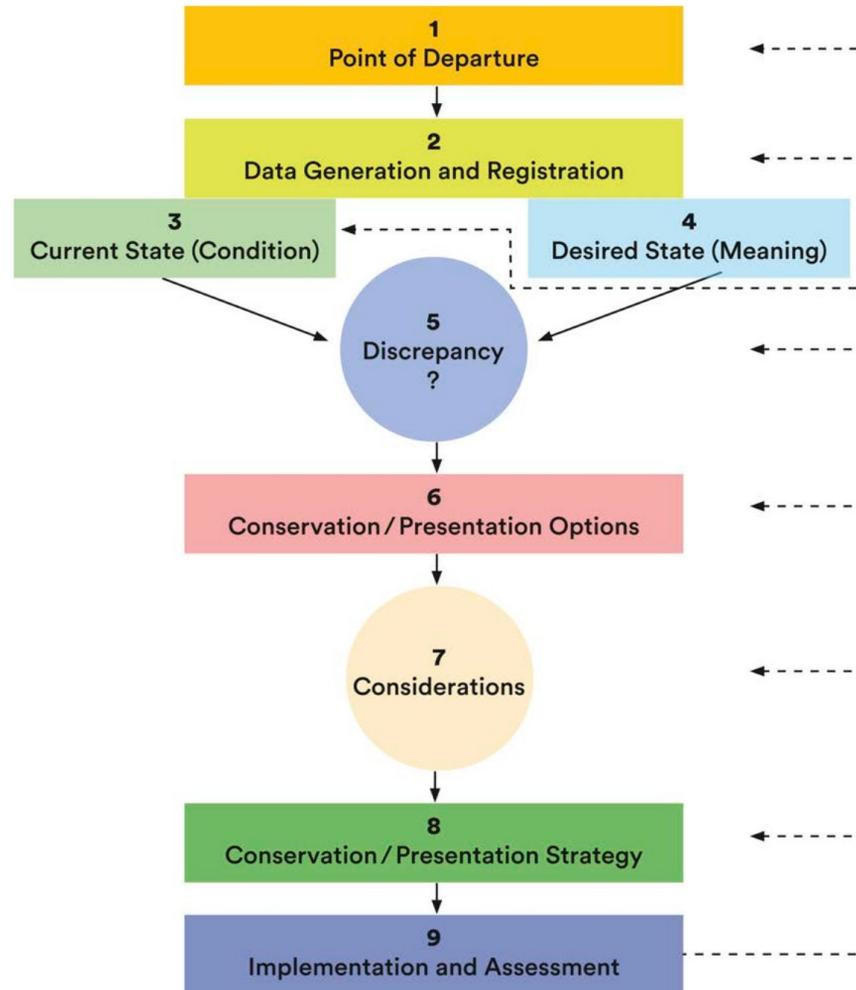


Fig. 14: The revised model

## Performance-based art

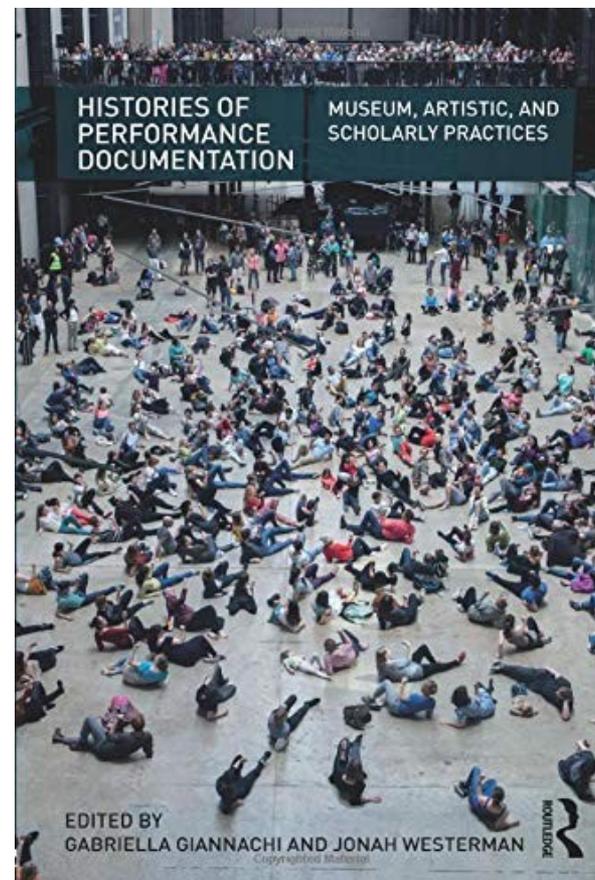
---

Collecting the Performative, research project,  
Tate, 2012-2014

Histories of Performance Documentation,  
book, 2017

Reshaping the Collectible, research project,  
Tate, 2018-2021

PhD dissertations: Acatia Finbow 2017 (U  
Exeter), Helia Marcal 2018 (U Nova de Lisboa),  
Iona Goldie-Scot (Maastricht U)



## Net-based art

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LIMA, Arthost.nl launched 2019

Rhizome's Net Art Anthology, 2016-2019

Exhibition & Catalogue, 2019

Reshaping the Collectible, research project, Tate,  
2018-2021

Annet Dekker's book *Collecting and Conserving Net Art:  
Moving beyond Conventional Methods*, 2018

Ludwig Museum's MAPS symposium, 13-14 Feb 2020

PhD dissertation: Claudia Roeck (U Amsterdam)



**COLLECTING AND  
CONSERVING NET ART**  
MOVING BEYOND CONVENTIONAL METHODS

Annet Dekker



# Ethnographic methods in conservation research

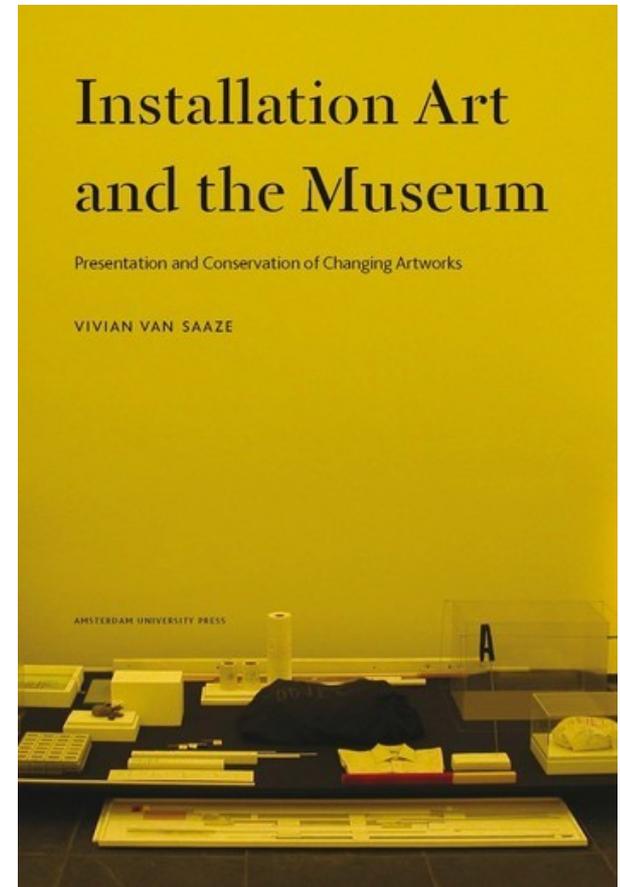
---

Van Saaze's book *Installation Art and the Museum*, 2013, open access

Sanneke Stigter's PhD "Between Concept and Material" (UvA, 2016)

Fernando Domínguez Rubio's forthcoming book *Still Life: Ecologies of the Modern Imagination at the Art Museum* (U Chicago Press, July 2020)

Caitlin Spangler-Bickell's research in NACCA



Symposiums organised by

Contemporary Conservation Ltd, NYC:

*First Crack*, 2015

*Body of Work*, 2018

Anna Schäffler's research into

posthumous caring for artists' estates

at Freie U Berlin

## Networks of care

---

Chapter in Annet Dekker's book *Collecting and Conserving Net Art*, 2018

Morgane Stricot of ZKM on maintaining relationships with pirate communities to obtain obsolete commercial software

Tate maintains relationships with analog film studios

etc..

## Resource on contemporary art conservation

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<https://pad.multiplace.org/>

0xBDx5Y3S9S05\_8G1g8E-w?view

short link: <https://tiny.cc/preservation>

# Thank you

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## Acknowledgements

Aga Wielocha, Annet Dekker, Arjen P. de Vries, Béla Tamás Kónya, Claudia Roeck, Dana Doughin, David Gauthier, Gaby Wijers, Glenn Wharton, Jill Sterrett, Julia Noordegraaf, Julie Boschat Thorez, Karen te Brake-Baldock, Layna White, Lúcia Almeida Matos, Martina Haidvogel, Morgane Stricot, Nina Quabeck, Pip Laurenson, Renée van de Vall, Tatja Scholte, Vivian van Saaze

**Dušan Barok**

**db@monoskop.org, D.Barok@uva.nl**