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Archiving the Unarchivable – Das Unarchivierbare archivieren

International conference of the documenta archiv

in preparation for the future documenta Institut

Thursday, 22 November – Saturday, 24 November 2018

documenta Halle, Kassel

Third Session:

Time-based Media Art: Bearing the Challenges of Lifecycle Management

Saturday, 24 November

Prof. Dr. Anne Gilliland

Ethics, Affects and Technologies of Recovery and Repair in Twenty-first Century Art Archives

Both the art and the professional/disciplinary archival worlds are increasingly critical of archival voids, silences and irreproducibilities. Some of these are the results of the value systems, costs and legal considerations underlying archiving and conservation methodologies, while others have to do with what aspects of a work or documentation are deemed to be capturable, and whether these are preservable and reproducible given existing technical expertise and infrastructure. The imperative to archive the unarchivable might seem to be a particularly obvious paradox confronting twenty-first century art archives dealing with ephemeral and time-based media, especially digital media. However, emerging digital acquisition, compilation, recovery and repair techniques may also be capable of capturing and surfacing more than was originally intended by either the archivist or the work's creator, with important ethical, affective, cultural and educational implications. This presentation will consider what has been learned from recent movements and innovations in fields as disparate as data science, digital forensics, affect studies and community-based archiving that might be strategically and participatively applied in a twenty-first century art archive.

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Anne Gilliland is Professor and Director of the Archival Studies specialization in the Department of Information Studies, as well as Director of the Center for Information as Evidence, Graduate School of Education & Information Studies at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). She is also the Director of the Archival Education and Research Initiative (AERI), a global collaborative effort amongst academic institutions that seeks to promote state-of-the-art in scholarship in archival studies, broadly conceived, as well as to encourage innovation in archival and recordkeeping education. She is an Honorary Research Fellow of the Centre for Global Research, RMIT University in Melbourne and also of the University of Liverpool Department of History. She has served as a professor at several universities in Finland, Sweden and Denmark, and also worked in such places in Glasgow, Beijing and Zadar. Her interests relate broadly to the history, nature, human impact, and technologies associated with archives, recordkeeping and memory, particularly in translocal and international contexts. Specifically, her work addresses recordkeeping and archival systems and practices in support of human rights and daily life in post-conflict settings.