AFTER-LIFE:

THE DIGITAL FUTURE OF VISUAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

SYMPOSIUM

March 09, 2020

Melbourne School of Design
Glyn Davis Building
The University of Melbourne

AFTER-LIFE:
the digital future of visual history archives

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Design practices and collecting institutions are united in grappling with the management and preservation of born-digital records and the ever-growing demands of digital archival collections.

The annual ACAHUCH symposium for 2020 brings together international and national experts, local professionals and designers. Speakers will assess lessons learned as we seek to continue to preserve, edit and share architectural and design-related documentation, and will discuss how to manage enduring access to digital design records including photographs, moving image, CAD, BIM, and 3D modelling.

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting today, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to their elders' past, present and emerging who have been and continue to be the custodians of these lands. This land was stolen, and sovereignty of this land has never been ceded. This is especially important to keep in the front of our minds as we listen to stories of place today.

Convened by Hannah Lewi, Naomi Mullumby, Julie Willis, Paul Walker and the Australian Centre for Architectural History, Urban and Cultural Heritage (ACAHUCH) and the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, The University of Melbourne.

acahuch.msd.unimelb.edu.au

PROGRAMME

9:00	Registration
9:15	Welcome
9:30	**MUSEUMS AND ARCHIVES**
	Chair: Katti Williams
	Cracking the Plans Collection with Map Nerds and Open Source Software
	Asa Letourneau
	Digital Engagement Initiatives at Museums Victoria
	Deborah Tout-Smith
	Transport for NSW Digitisation Project
	Sarah May Ryan
	Material Culture and the Archive of Yuncken Freeman Architects
	Chantalle Yarrow
11:00	Morning Tea
11:30	**AUSTRALIAN ARCHITECTURE ARCHIVES**
	Chair: Naomi Mullumby
	Mid-life Crisis: the story of the Digital Archive of Queensland Architecture
	John Macarthur
	Hidden Treasures in Council Archives – digitising NSW building
	Noni Boyd and Matthew Devine
	The living archive: design, research and the artefact
	Harriet Edquist, Jenny Grigg and Paul Myelcharane
	Archiving Digital Architectural Records: a framework for architects and archivists in Australia
	Chris Burns
12:30	Lunch

13:15   KEYNOTE
             Don't be Afraid of the Digital
             Martien de Vletter
             Associate Director of Collections, *Canadian Centre of Architecture*

14.00   **INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURE ARCHIVES**
             Chair: Paul Walker

             Archivio Progetti IUAV in the Digital Era: managing an architectural
             collection
             Scott Woods

             Classified: architecture archives in the age of secrecy
             Aaron Cayer

14:45   Afternoon Tea

15:15   **INNOVATIONS IN THE AFTER-LIFE OF THE ARCHIVE**
             Chair: Cristina Garduño Freeman

             The Living Archive of Aboriginal Art: some reflections on a collaborative
             project to support contemporary Indigenous culture-making and digital
             archive-making as expressions of Indigenous knowledge.
             Fran Edmonds, Maree Clarke, Mitch Mahoney and Richard Clenhall

             Encountering the Liminal: creating a digital record and affective encounters
             with spaces of conflict
             Heather Mitcheltree and Mitchell Ransome

             Digdata: embedding digitisation and visualisation workflows into field-
             based research
             Andrew Yip

             MILES LEWIS HERITAGE BUILDING COLLECTION

             Sharing in the Age of Digital Reproduction
             Ben Waters

             Constructing Accessible Digital Heritage
             Meher Bahl

17:00   Drinks and Book Launch

KEYNOTE

Don't be Afraid of the Digital

MARTIEN DE VLETTER
Associate Director of Collections, *Canadian Centre of Architecture*

The Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) in Montreal received born-digital material in the late 1990s, but did not know what to do with it. In 2012, the CCA started a program to investigate, acquire, preserve, exhibit, and publish born-digital material. We asked ourselves how the digital technology has changed and shaped architecture. This curatorial approach was successful: the CCA is now able to preserve its born-digital collections, to access nearly all files, and to make it accessible for research. Martien de Vletter will talk about the successes and the failures experienced in establishing this program, as well as its context.

MUSEUMS AND ARCHIVES

Cracking the Plans Collection with Map Nerds and Open Source Software

ASA LETOURNEAU
Online Engagement Officer, *Public Record Office Victoria*

*Public Record Office Victoria'*s collection contains a rich deposit of nineteenth-century Victorian maps and plans, which span Melbourne's suburban plots through to lonely country roads in the mountains. However, historic maps and parish plans are often listed by their old location names and produced at different scales, creating a challenge for archivists and researchers. Using open source software and crowdsourcing, a quick and cheap solution enabling easier access has been created.

Digital Engagement Initiatives at Museums Victoria

DEBORAH TOUT-SMITH
Senior Curator, Home & Community, in the Society & Technology Department, *Museums Victoria*

Museums Victoria is actively developing a range of digital environments and communication strategies to increase engagement with our collections, support deep research and learning, and enable co-creation. This presentation will provide an overview of recent initiatives, including *Melbourne Museum's Learning Lab*: the first digital learning space of its kind in a museum, which will connect *Museums Victoria'*s collections and stories with communities and support co-creation. Initiatives to support digital access to collections, and the development of born-digital material, will also be considered.

Transport for NSW Digitisation Project

SARAH MAY RYAN
Project Manager, *Transport for NSW Digitisation Project*

Transport for NSW is undertaking the digitisation of its historical archive of over 250,000 photographic assets for the purpose of preservation and accessibility. Sharing lessons learned in the construction of *Transport for NSW*'s project plan, and the framework used, this presentation will outline the steps that the digitisation team is now undertaking to review all digitised content, such as creating a detailed metadata set for each asset, and uploading these into a customised DAM (digital assets management) system. Cross-disciplinary teams are currently in the process of customising our DAM system and making these digital assets accessible online. In an era where both government and private enterprise must employ digitisation of analogue archives to preserve shared history, best practice guidelines and knowledge-sharing principles are vital. The digitisation of these assets will see 100 years of the building of the State of NSW preserved in digital format and accessible online for the first time in its history.

Material Culture and the Archive of Yuncken Freeman Architects

CHANTALLE YARROW
Archival Assistant, *University of Melbourne, Yuncken Freeman Architects Archive*

Working with the University of Melbourne Archive in 2018, Chantalle was involved in the organisation, description, and cataloguing of the archive of *Yuncken Freeman Architects*. Presented with the opportunity afforded by exposure to the architectural drawings of a firm in operation from the 1930's through to the 1990's, she was able to contrast the evolution of drawing format and materiality with the changes of industry and education captured in the collection's other paperwork. In a presentation that will speak to the material culture within architectural archives, and the importance thereof, Chantalle will ask whether digitally-born drawings can also offer such findings.

AUSTRALIAN ARCHITECTURE ARCHIVES

Mid-life Crisis: the story of the Digital Archive of Queensland Architecture

JOHN MACARTHUR
Professor of Architecture, ATCH (Centre for Architecture, Theory, Criticism and History), *University of Queensland*

The *Digital Archive of Queensland Architecture* (*DAQA*) was initiated in 2011 as a digitally native oral history project on post-war modernism. Confused aims, technical limitations, and zealous data collection meant that by the time *DAQA* wrote the book *Hot Modernism: Architecture in Queensland 1945-75* (2015), the database was unreliable, albeit having incredible success in building a community of interest, gathering vast volumes of testimony and scanned images. Now, following the funded project's completion, its large archive continues to grow with a widening collection remit and functioning analytic tools, and is ready to serve as the platform for future projects which assume that infrastructure such as *DAQA* are available. Despairingly, strategies for funding *DAQA*'s maintenance have thus far been unsuccessful. Middle age holds disappointments.

Hidden Treasures in Council Archives – digitising NSW building

NONI BOYD AND MATTHEW DEVINE
Architectural Historian and Heritage *Specialist* and Matthew Devine, Registered Architect and Sessional Academic, *University of Sydney*

This presentation considers a little used resource: the architectural plans submitted to local councils for building approval. With the introduction of scanning, councils no longer microfilm drawings, and instead now have the ability to scan complete files, specifications, original watercolour drawings, and blueprints. A wealth of information is coming to light, including details of unbuilt works by major architects that have yet to be examined by architectural historians. This short presentation looks at the digitising project being undertaken by the Sydney City Council and some of the other NSW councils who have started to make this material available. It is hoped that these digitising projects will serve as a model for other councils, as these architectural drawings are a very important resource in determining the body of work of an architect.

The living archive: design, research and the artefact

HARRIET EDQUIST
RMIT Design Archives*, RMIT University,* Jenny Grigg, RMIT School of Design, *RMIT University,* Paul Mylecharane, *Public Office*

This presentation will discuss a collaborative project involving *RMIT* Design Archives (Prof. Harriet Edquist), Dr Jenny Grigg (*RMIT* School of Design) and Paul Mylecharane from Melbourne design studio Public Office. Through a process of collaborative design, the project is building an innovative proof-of-concept prototype website that seeks to create new ways of displaying both archival objects and the outcomes of research associated with them. The *RMIT* Design Archives houses collections of artefacts from design studios, including architecture, media and communication, fashion, textiles, product, and automotive, that were designed and produced for public consumption. Similarly, the prototype website is being designed to allow the public a rich experience in interacting with the Design Archives' digital assets.

Archiving Digital Architectural Records: a framework for architects and archivists in Australia

CHRIS BURNS
Academic Researcher, Architecture Museum. School of Art, Architecture and Design, *University of South Australia*

This presentation introduces work in progress in Australia on developing a national framework for archiving digital architectural records. It draws on the results of a pilot study (2015-16) and project (2017-18) to develop a draft framework for collecting institutions and architectural practice, and refers to a recent trial (2018-19) of the framework. The presentation will introduce the national framework, outline its key contents, and conclude with guiding principles and steps for archivists and architectural practitioners.

INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURE ARCHIVES

Archivio Progetti IUAV in the Digital Era: managing an architectural collection

SCOTT WOODS
Melbourne School of Design, *University of Melbourne* and Riccardo Domenchini,
Archivist and Curator, *Archivio Progetti, IUAV*

The *Archivio Progetti* is the architecture archive associated with the famed
Università IUAV di Venezia. It is home to over 40 archives containing the student
and professional work of the "School of Venice," as well as that of other Italian
architects, including Giuseppe Samonà, Giancarlo De Carlo, and Vittorio Gregotti.
Given the Italian cultural significance of its holdings, and the precarious future of
Venice, exemplified by the recent flooding event, the digitisation of these drawings,
models, and photographs – including their storage and protection once made
digital – become not merely desirable, but also critically important. This discussion
between Riccardo Domenichini, Archivist and Curator at the *Archivio Progetti IUAV*,
and Scott Woods, *Melbourne School of Design*, explores the current and future
methods for preserving the precious Venetian collection in the digital space.

Classified: architecture archives in the age of secrecy

AARON CAYER
PhD, Assistant Professor of Architecture History, *University of New Mexico*

Since the 1980s, the records of many corporate architecture firms have been sealed
off from public access. Due to the heavy production of military and state projects,
the archives of these firms have been increasingly subjected to government control
and classification. While the history of architectural practice has largely depended
upon open access to archival records, this paper asks: in what ways have the
archives of larger, corporate firms been conditioned by the rise of government
classification systems and practices of secrecy? In what ways can historical
ethnographic tools and practices, as well as digital archives of federal governments,
help historians to overcome such restrictions?

INNOVATIONS IN THE AFTER-LIFE OF THE ARCHIVE

The Living Archive of Aboriginal Art: some reflections on a collaborative project to support contemporary Indigenous culture-making and digital archive-making as expressions of Indigenous knowledge.

FRAN EDMONDS, Senior Research Fellow, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, Melbourne School of Culture and Communication, *University of Melbourne*
MAREE CLARKE, (Mutti Mutti / Wemba Wemba / Boonwurrung), Independent Artist; MR MITCH MAHONEY (Boonwurrung), and RICHARD CLENHALL, Deputy Director, Centre for Health Equity, Unit Head, Health, Humanities and Social Sciences Unit, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, *University of Melbourne*

In the summer of 2019, the *Mutti Mutti/Wemba Wemba/Boonwurrung* artist Maree Clarke invited family, friends, and a team of researchers including student volunteers, to participate in a series of weekend art-making workshops in her backyard. The workshops were focused on creating works for an exhibition to be held in Maree's hometown of Mildura, and provided a basis for understanding the relationality between her photographic collection from the 1990s and her ongoing endeavour to continually revitalise the knowledge and practice of her Ancestors through contemporary art-making. This presentation will discuss the workshops and explore how the intercultural and intergenerational knowledge exchange that emerged from them provides an insight into the interconnection of everything – a concept fundamental to Indigenous knowledges – alongside our ongoing work to support archive-making via a digital platform that responds to these knowledge systems.

Encountering the Liminal: creating a digital record and affective encounters with spaces of conflict

HEATHER MITCHELTREE, Melbourne School of Design, *University of Melbourne* and MITCHELL RANSOME, Melbourne School of Design, *University of Melbourne*

Since the establishment of the Cypriot buffer zone, the UN-patrolled area has remained largely untouched, serving as a spatial divide between the north and south of Cyprus. Through our work, we have been documenting and creating a 3D archive of the heritage architecture within this zone, examining the ways in which emergent technology might be used to create an enduring digital record of the architecture and urban fabric within conflict zones. In the context of ongoing conflict and division, these 3D digital scans and resultant affective installation pieces give access to politically sensitive spaces, and provide a link to narratives of identity and place amid ongoing division.

Digdata: embedding digitisation and visualisation workflows into field-based research

ANDREW YIP
Research Fellow, iCinema Centre for Interactive Cinema Research, *University of New South Wales* and Director*, Ultra High-Resolution Scanning Lab*

Research into historical and archival material necessarily generates new, specialised archives, especially in the case of cultural heritage site exploration and visualisation. Managing this data provides challenges including data registration, storage and access, but it also presents opportunities to interrogate the data in real time through visualisation methods ranging from statistical analysis to embodied visualisation. Through a case study of the excavation of the palace of the Roman Emperor Maximian Herculius, in Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia, this paper explores how a top-to-tail visualisation workflow can be established on-site to collect, store, and visualise an evolving archive of cultural heritage site data in real time.

MILES LEWIS HERITAGE BUILDING COLLECTION

The *Miles Lewis Heritage Building Collection* project is the digitisation of over 300 items collected by Professor Lewis throughout his career. The collection is used in the Faculty's teaching program; MSD envisions that the 3D scans will enhance the current digital methods of teaching.

Sharing in the Age of Digital Reproduction

BEN WATERS
Siii Lab and Melbourne School of Design, *University of Melbourne*

Recent advances in technology and connectivity present a revolutionary opportunity to enhance learning, creativity, and innovation, and to engage new public audiences, through the reproduction and sharing of cultural heritage collections*. Siii Projects* (Spatial Investigations in Imaging and Information), a design agency that applies innovative technologies to the digitisation and visualisation of material culture, has been engaged to 3D scan and archive the University of Melbourne ABP *Miles Lewis Heritage Building Collection*. This project presents the opportunity to provide open access to this collection in a new digital format now and in the future, preserving and transmitting knowledge and culture for present and future generations.

Constructing Accessible Digital Heritage

MEHER BAHL
Digital Curator and Researcher, Melbourne School of Design, *University of Melbourne*

This presentation focuses on the creation of accessible digital archives for the Built Environment, and the role of metadata and audio-visual recordings in capturing the essence and history of the collection. Metadata and provenance information are fundamental to enabling future researchers to interact with the collection, and also enhance the existing body of built environment and heritage knowledge.

NOTES