

# ESF RESEARCH CONFERENCES

## Rapporteur Report

Partnership:	ESF COST
Conference Title:	Networked Humanities
Dates:	9.-14th October 2010
Chair:	Prof. Dr. Hubertus Kohle
Rapporteur:	Prof. Dr. Claudine Moulin

### General Comments

Any general comments you might have concerning the conference, your role, the scientific area covered by this conference, etc.

The overarching focus of the conference was the domain of Digital Humanities and its interacting with Art History. The aim of this conference was to bring together art historians and other researchers (including digital humanists, museum specialists, pedagogues etc) in order to investigate the intersection between the web and collaborative research processes, via an examination of electronic media-based cooperative models in the history of art and beyond.

The conference aimed at the exchange of ideas and present relevant projects in the field, with contributions spanning from art history (and digital art) to philosophy and cultural studies, from psychology and sociology of knowledge to computer graphics, from semiotics to curatorial practices. It offered a forum for the representation of both diversified and complementary approaches to the topic of Networked humanities

I was engaged in the conference as the ESF/SCH-member on the Programming Committee.

### Quality of Scientific Programme, Presentations and Discussion

Comments on the balance and scope of the scientific programme, the scientific quality of the presentations and discussions.

The conference was divided into 7 sessions, all related to central questions and research outcomes of the conference subject: Scientific Publishing, Art History I, Art History II (both concentrating a. o. on interdisciplinary collaboration, Semantic Web Technologies, Web designs and Web workflows, new didactics of art history), Social Tagging, Museum/Archive, Art and Databases.

The sections were well balanced, each holding between three and seven talks focussing on the chosen topics. Key-note speakers had 40 minutes slots, others (for the most young researchers) 20 minutes. At the end of each talk there was the possibility of asking a few direct questions, at the end of the sections a long discussion time was provided for, which was very well used and of a high general quality.

The scientific quality of the presentations was, as far as I can judge, on the whole high resp. very high. Some few talks from non English-speaking natives were not always easy to follow, as on the other hand natives-speakers of English (esp. American English) were asked not to speak at too high speed. On the whole, communication was very good, open and friendly.

Unfortunately one of the members of the program committee (Lea Rojola, University of Turku, FI) did not attend the conference.

A rather "weak" point was the Poster Presentation, though the presented Posters were excellent, so that we all felt a bit sorry for the colleagues who prepared them. There were only a few of them, lost on big, not really good-looking presentation boards. Maybe next time one could think of putting the poster panels (but nice looking ones) near the coffee break tables, even on the hotel terrace or near the table with the ESF/COST documentation material or even plan a special time slot for the presentation of the posters in the official conference program.

### Informal Networking and Exchange; Atmosphere

Was the schedule and the atmosphere conducive to an easy exchange of information? Was there time and space for an informal discussion? Were younger researchers integrated?

[Name of Rapporteur], [Date]

The schedule of the program left plenty of time for exchange of ideas and informal discussions. The group communicated well both in the official and unofficial parts of the conference. The big number of younger researchers (more as the half of the participants) was well integrated and exchange with senior scholars was lively.

### **Balance of Participants**

Was there an appropriate balance between young and senior participants? Was a balance of national groups and researchers from different (sub)fields achieved?

The balance between young and senior participants was positively unusual, there being far more young researchers present and the senior participants representing absolutely the state of the art in the field of Digital Art History and Humanities. So, there was a real opportunity to exchange point of views between generations and doing foresight of future developments.

The participants came from very different countries from Europe (18 countries, including 5 east-European countries) and abroad (USA, New Zealand, South America), all representing different subfields of the pertinent research areas. More than the half of the participants were women.

### **Outlook and Future Developments**

Will new collaborations emerge from this conference? (How) could the conference outcomes be utilized further? Are there suitable (ESF) programmes or instruments to further the work of the conference?

The final discussion was held rather shortly, but was very pertinent und conclusive, not only due to the fact that discussions had been intensive all through the conference days.

Especially the topic of Social Tagging was pointed out as a subject to explore in further work, and also subjects like working with visual contents and exploring social mechanisms in art history All participants underlined the necessity of intense interdisciplinary collaboration.

### **Follow-up**

What immediate and long term follow-up would benefit collaborations and dialogues that may have begun at the conference?

The conference participants will be keeping in touch; the proceedings of the conference will be published in the digital Journal "Kunstgeschichte".

### **Organisation and Infrastructure**

Were venue, catering and accommodation appropriate for this conference? Were participants satisfied with the on-site administration and support?

The place of the venue is wonderfully situated on the coast, though for participants from outside Italy quite difficult to get to. The positive effect of the location is that conference participants are totally immersed in the conference theme and discussions are fostered on a general and individual level. The catering was good and plentiful. The hotel itself has past its zenith, but the rooms were comfortable and clean, the hotel management was friendly and always willing to help.

The conference room was well equipped and comfortable, unfortunately it had no windows and the internet (which had to be paid for) was very slow and sometimes not working.

The on-site administration and support through COST and ESF were outstanding.

### **Summary & Overall Assessment**

Was the conference successful; were its aims achieved?

The conference can be summed up as extremely successful, with very good contributions and interesting / forward looking discussions. The conference chair (Prof. Dr. Hubertus Kohle) did a great job! In the discussions the topics of social tagging and its outcomes, of the museum and web 2.0 as well of digital publications and their place in research evaluation, ranking, impact factor etc. was raised several times. Regarding this point (i. e. changing publication cultures) we might consider sending the call for the next "Humanities Springs" to the junior participants.

## About ESF Research Conferences

### **The Scheme**

This conference is part of the European Science Foundation's (ESF) Research Conferences Scheme. The Scheme aims to promote scientific excellence and frontier level research throughout Europe and the rest of the world. Conferences aim to provide leading scientists and other participants, including young researchers, with a platform to present their work, to discuss the most recent developments in their fields of research and to network.

### **Conference Format**

The core activities should be based on lectures by invited speakers, who are leaders in their respective fields, followed by extensive discussion periods. An informal exchange of ideas, both inside and outside the lecture room, should be encouraged, and the number of sessions in the daily timetable should be limited in order to allow sufficient time for interaction between the participants. Time should be reserved for a 'Forward Look Plenary Discussion' about future developments in the field.

Participants can take all their meals together to encourage further contact and networking, which can be particularly beneficial to younger researchers who may be less outspoken in the formal lecture room setting. In order to gain optimum benefit from the conference, both the speakers and the participants are asked to stay for the whole duration.

### **Division of Tasks**

The Conference Chair is responsible for ensuring the quality of the scientific programme through the selection and invitation of speakers, and through the selection of participants.

The ESF Conferences Unit is responsible for managing all the logistical aspects of the conference organisation, including the provision of an on-site secretariat.

Further information: [www.esf.org/conferences](http://www.esf.org/conferences)