DRHA Conference in Turin

DRHA (Digital Research in the Humanities and Arts) is a yearly conference which was established in 1996 (previously under the name Digital Resources for the Humanities) and which has since hosted events and workshops, often practice-based, across several European cities to examine the use of technology in culture, facilitating cross-disciplinary exchange, and promoting collaboration between artists and scholars.

The 2023 DRHA conference, "Performing Cultural Heritage in the Digital Present", took place at the University of Turin (UniTo) with the aim to bring together artists, scholars, educators, curators, digital researchers, and entrepreneurs to discuss the ways in which digital technologies increasingly intersect with the arts and humanities in a variety of sectors. In particular, the conference aimed to celebrate the use of technology in creating participatory, interactive, immersive, inclusive, and accessible encounters with both tangible and intangible heritage.

Cultural heritage plays a key role in shaping societies and access to heritage must remain a key human right. It is through heritage that we understand and reshape our identities, and hence its preservation, presentation, and sharing remain key dimensions of our individual and collective lives. Digital Humanities, Digital Heritage, Digital Creativity, all constitute key practices in our creative economies bringing innovation to several other sectors. It is for these reasons that DRHA 2023 chose to focus on the GLAM sector, looking into how museums and galleries operate through digital media, what role the digital plays in the documentation and conservation of art (including digital art), how digital practices are used in performance, dance, opera, film, curation and music within the museum context, what new trends may be emerging, including XR and AI, what forms of collaboration have also since been established, what this means in terms of accessibility and EDI, and indeed how these practices could be made more sustainable.

The conference also featured a comprehensive exhibition, organized in collaboration with UniVerso, the University of Turin's permanent observatory on contemporaneity. The program showcased eleven digital installations, all presented within the Palazzo del Rettorato. The DRHA Exhibition allowed visitors to experience innovative sound and video installations - such as Generative *Symphony Project – Murazzi Variations II*

by MuTA Collective, *Azman* by Alaa Darwish; *Of This Parish (Screening)* by David Prior; *Prestorjha - Data Sonification* by Enrique Tabone -, VR Experiences and performances - such as *Peaceful Places* by Margherita Landi and Agnese Lanza; *ReImagining the Past: VR Visitor Center Al-Jazirah Al Hamra* by Zlatan Filipovic; *VR Dance Application "Master Dancer"* by John Toenjes; *Odin Theatre: Entangling Practices* by Adriana La Selva and Ioulia Marouda; *A Virtual Drift* by Ananya Rajoo -, video projections, and immersive, interactive events co-created with Artificial Intelligence (AI) - such as *My Father's Song: Interaction Design Installation* by Joan Karlen; and *Lights! Dance! Freeze!* By Random Quark. The DRHA Exhibition featured also, as special event and world premiere, the teaser *UnEarthed: The Beetle Story*, created by Factory42 in partnership with Meta Immersive Learning.

The conference hosted five keynotes: John Cassy, founder and chief executive of Factory 42; Annet Dekker, curator and Associate Professor of archival and information studies and comparative cultural analysis at the University of Amsterdam; Matt Adams co-founded Blast Theory; Christian Greco director of the Egyptian Museums; Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev director of Castello di Rivoli.

DRHA 2023 took place in Turin, Italy, whose rich cultural heritage spans from its foundation in 940 to current developments in digital and immersive cultural forms. The conference host, UniTo, has a long history of collaboration with several local cultural and industrial organizations, including one of the most important Egyptian Museums in the world; the Museo Nazionale del Cinema, a leading institution in film heritage; two contemporary art museums, GAM (Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea) and the Castello di Rivoli. Turin also has a rich history of conservation of historical sites and residences such as the Reggia di Venaria Reale, Stupinigi, and other Savoy residences and castles in the region. Moreover, Turin has a long tradition of Opera and Film Production and hosts one of the most important National Theatres in the country. For several years, UniTo has heavily invested in the cultural heritage sector as well as in digital and immersive media by developing academic programs, research projects and collaborations, scholarships, and PhD programs, as well as partnerships with industry devoted to the interplay between technology, cultural heritage, museums, media, performance and the arts. This compilation of the contributions to DRHA 2023 reflects the diversity and innovation brought by this sector, in Turin and elsewhere, hosting papers from researchers in Europe, the UK, the USA, Taiwan, Australia, Canada, and Cina.

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