Finding, accessing, reusing: art making, digital curation and real-world value

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DACS, Oxford Internet Institute and Ruskin School of Art announce PhD selection

DACS, in partnership with the Oxford Internet Institute (OII) and Ruskin School of Art, is pleased to announce that our Doctoral Knowledge Exchange Studentship has been awarded to Laura Molloy, who will investigate the economic and policy-making landscape for visual artists in the UK.
Art making: important to the economy

- “The UK’s ... Creative Industries contribute nearly £90 billion to the economy and employ more than two million people.” (Clark 2017)
- In UK, visual art contributes value to cultural heritage, makes significant contribution to economy (DCMS 2016, Hobson 2012; Economist 2014)
- “continuing to outperform other sectors in terms of employment, having already grown 300,000 jobs in 2011-2015” (Bazalgette Report 2017)
- 5.6% of total number of jobs in UK (DCMS 2016)
- Creative sector jobs at low risk of automation (Bakhshi et al 2015)
- Creative sector brings value to other parts of economy (DCMS 2016, Hobson 2012; Economist 2014, Arts Council England 2011)
... but how do artists survive?

- Visual art making is a profession increasingly under pressure: global art market is growing but most artists are underpaid (DACS 2014, a-n 2014, Arts Council England 2016, Scruton 2016)

- UK Government statistics show category, ‘Music, performing arts and visual arts’: >7/10 jobs self-employed.

- Even small economic advantages can have important impact on viability of individual practice (DACS/Artquest 2014)
Aims

• Develop policy and guidance recommendations; *that*
• Support good practice in digital object seeking, management and dissemination; *which will*
• Benefit visual arts practitioners; *and*
• Support sustainable careers in visual art.
Approach

• Practitioner-centred enquiry
• Semi-structured interviews
• Produces audio, textual and visual data
Modelling workflows, Ruskin School of Art, Jan 2016. Photo: Laura Molloy
Sample

• Visual artists – open to all artforms (NOT specifically ‘digital art’)
• Currently practising in the UK
• Initial invite list provided by DACS
• Spread sought across location and across age groups
Artforms

• Works across multiple forms: 11
  – Multidisciplinary
  – Performance and drawing (x2)
  – Collage and performance
  – Painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking, performance, installation
  – Sculpture, moving image, installation, digital prints on textiles
  – Installation, written work
  – Live art, drawing, installation
  – Painting, mixed media inc. printmaking, collage
  – Glassblower, seamstress, pattern cutter, physical making
  – Sculpture, installation, writing

• Sculpture: 7
• Painting: 7
• Illustration: 4
• Art filmmaker / video artist: 2
• Textile: 2
• Art photographer: 1
• Internet art / ‘new media’ art: 1
• Writing: 1
• Installation: 1
Digital object use, value

• All participants used (created, received, managed, sought) DOs in their everyday working processes

• No participant received RDM training from their art school. (Only 1 received elsewhere)

• 2 participants had structured backup practices

• All registered distress at idea of data loss
Data formats

Image: TIFF, JPG, CR2, GIF, PNG, EPS, EPX, DWG, DXF, AI
Textual: DOC, DOCX, TXT, PAGES, RTF, RTFD, EML
Video: MOV, MP4, AVI, FCP, FCPX
Audio: MP3, WAV, AAC, AIFF, AC3
Presentations: PPT, KEY
Spreadsheets: XLS, NUMBERS
& PDF (image/text), text messages.
Digital object management: self description of knowledge level

- Definitely knowledgeable
- Fairly knowledgeable
- No strong preference
- Not really knowledgeable
- Definitely not knowledgeable
- NR
Digital object management: appetite for training

![Bar chart showing the number of responses to the question:]

- Yes: 20
- Maybe: 5
- No: 5
IPR, copyright for digital objects: self description of knowledge level

- Definitely knowledgeable
- Fairly knowledgeable
- No strong preference
- Not really knowledgeable
- Definitely not knowledgeable
- NR
IPR, copyright for digital objects: appetite for training

Yes

Maybe

No
Value of digital object handling skills

• DOs already important to workflows
• DOs hold economic and cultural value(s), e.g.
  • Documentation as evidence for funding / showing decisions
  • Communication and research outputs
  • Research evidence for artists, art theorists, public
  • Art objects for sale
• DO management not recognised as relevant skillset; likely to be done ineffectively –
• - but when training is a possibility, there is appetite!
So digital skills are valuable!

To participate effectively in emerging digital cultural heritage economy, likely that competence in digital literacy and digital curation:

– can be shown to be relevant;
– is not currently fostered or supported in artists’ training.
Thanks for listening.

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