



**NARRATIVE AND MUSEALISATION OF NEW MEDIA ART:
A PENDING CHALLENGE, 60 YEARS LATER**

**RELATO Y MUSEALIZACIÓN DEL *NEW MEDIA ART*:
UN RETO PENDIENTE, 60 AÑOS DESPUÉS**

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ABSTRACT

The historiographical account of media arts is yet to be written. The lack of responsibility of the (mis)named “contemporary art museums”, evading their responsibility to include in their collections and to musealize the media art practices created since the middle of the 20th century, demands an exercise of Governance that involves explaining what media arts are; constructing their account; contextualizing them and musealizing them, assuming institutional responsibility with all this new artistic and cultural heritage, which needs to be preserved, organized, exhibited, narrated and disseminated.

This text, written from artistic, curatorial, theoretical, teaching and museum management experience in the field of new media, explains each of these aspects, describing the actions necessary to solve this “pending history” and preserve this “memory at risk” to which the title alludes.

Keywords: New Media Art, Contemporary Art History, Media Art Histories, Digital & Electronic Art Museography.

RESUMEN

El relato historiográfico de las artes mediales todavía está por escribir. La falta de responsabilidad de los (mal)llamados “museos de arte contemporáneo”, eludiendo su responsabilidad de incluir en sus colecciones y musealizar las prácticas artísticas mediales creadas desde mitad del siglo XX, exige un ejercicio de Gobernanza que implica explicar qué son las artes mediales; construir su relato; contextualizarlas y musealizarlas, asumiendo responsabilidad institucional con todo este nuevo patrimonio artístico y cultural, que necesita ser conservado, ordenado, exhibido, relatado y divulgado.

Este texto, escrito desde la experiencia artística, curatorial, teórica, docente y de gestión museográfica en el ámbito de los nuevos medios, explica cada uno de estos aspectos, describiendo las actuaciones necesarias para solventar esta “historia pendiente” y preservar esa “memoria en riesgo” a la que alude el título.

Palabras clave: Artes mediales, Historia del arte actual, historias de las artes mediales, musealización del arte digital y electrónico.

INDEX

1. A preliminary point: musealizing digital art is not the same as digitizing the art museum.
2. Musealizing Media Art, I. New conditions
3. Musealizing Media Art, II. Collections and narrative
4. Musealizing Media Art, III. Conservation and preservation
5. Musealizing Media Art, IV. Exhibition and dissemination
6. Conclusions

1. A PRELIMINARY ISSUE: MUSEALIZING DIGITAL ART IS NOT THE SAME AS DIGITIZING THE ART MUSEUM

Let us begin by making a necessary preliminary distinction: it is not the same to medialize—others would use the less rigorous term “digitize”—the museum of traditional (physical, object-based) art as it is to conceive, develop, and put into operation the museum of non-object-based arts (electronic, digital, virtual, network art, etc.).

Today's digital and digitized society demands communication that considers the new parameters that have brought into operation new forms of communication, information management, and access to knowledge (virtuality, multimedia, interactivity, networked culture, constant flow, "real-time" speed, *glocality*, consensus in the creative act between creator and consumer, etc.). To respond to today's society and connect with its potential visitors, the museum must adapt to these new paradigms and update—or reinvent—its functional structures, exhibition strategies, and educational programs. Some of the world's most visited museums are trying, with the Prado Museum being an exemplary case (see its website with its activities extending beyond its walls: “PRADOEDUCACION is a living project that aims to be the bridge between the Museum and 21st-century society,” <https://www.museodelprado.es/aprende/pradoeducacion>; or its presence on social media -Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/museoprado/> or TikTok: [museodelprado dj.-](https://www.tiktok.com/@rijksmuseum)).

Also, to give just one more example, the Rijksmuseum (see its communication and expanded activities via TikTok: [https://www.tiktok.com / @rijksmuseum](https://www.tiktok.com/@rijksmuseum)).

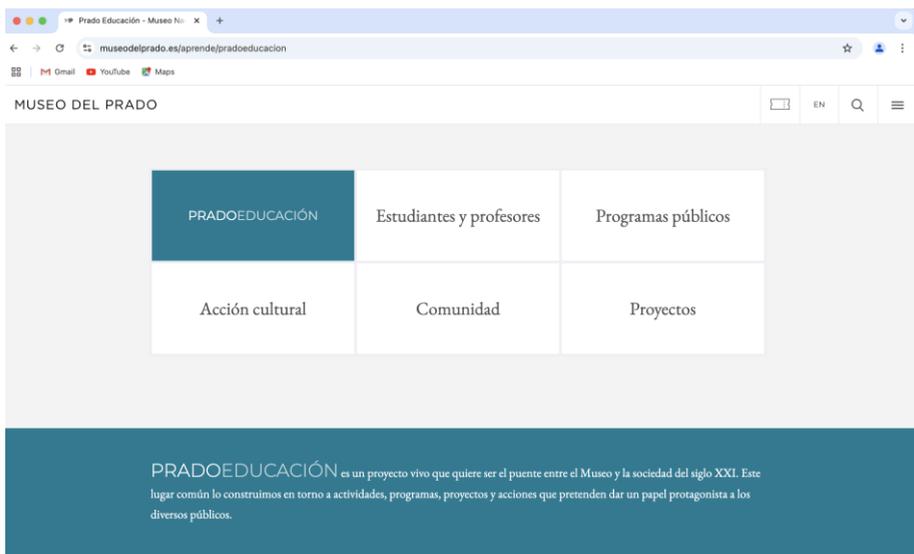


Fig. 1a. Prado Museum. **PRADOEDUCACION**. Structure of its website. (from the Internet)

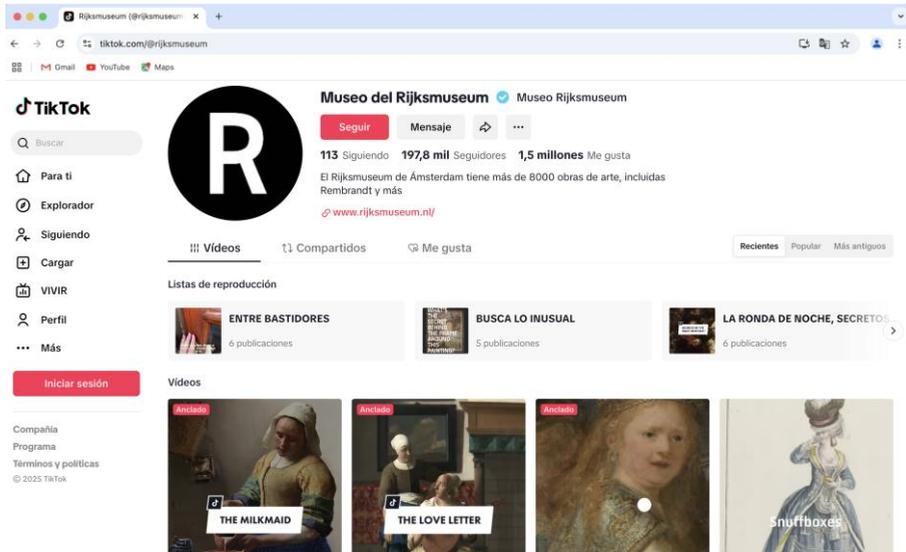


Fig. 1b. Prado Museum. Tik Tok profile. (from the Internet).

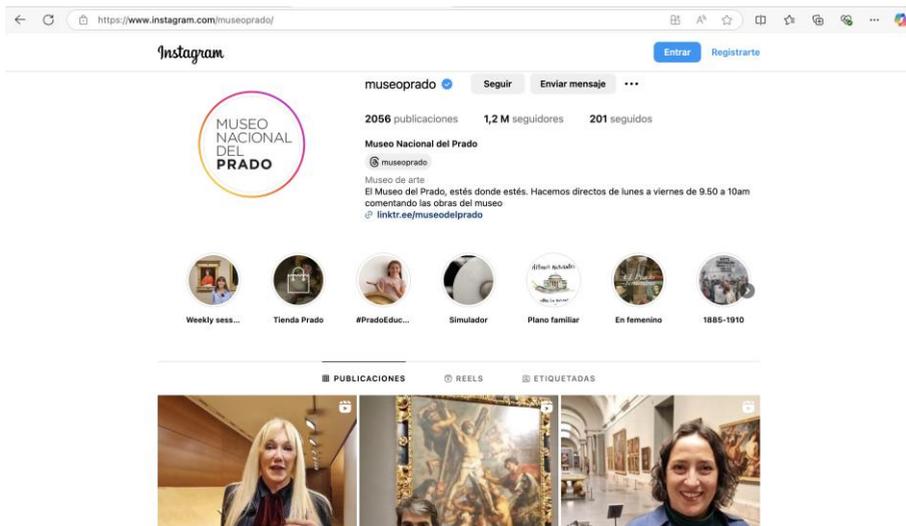


Fig. 1c. Prado Museum. Instagram profile. (from the Internet)

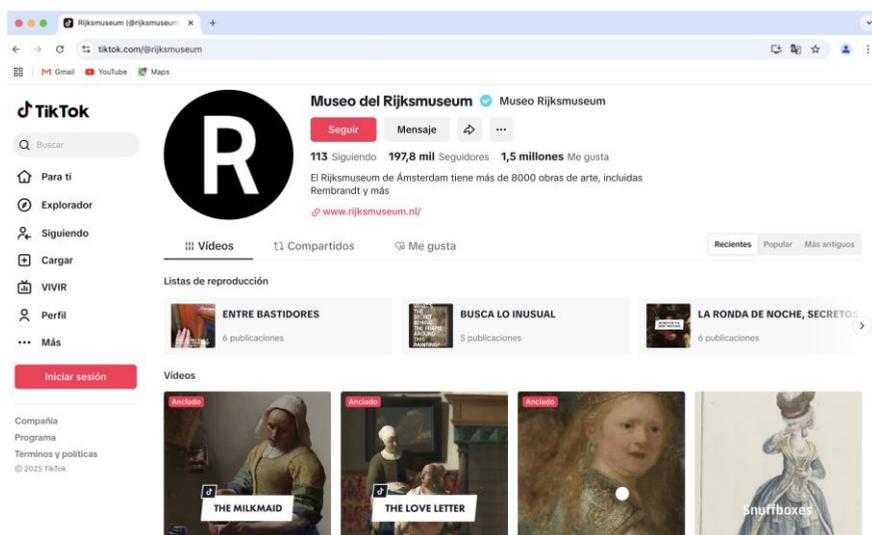


Fig. 2. Rijksmuseum. Profile on TikTok. (from the Internet).

2. MUSEALIZATION OF MEDIA ART, I. NEW CONDITIONS

The traditional museum, even if it responds positively and adapts to 21st-century society, faces the complex challenge of incorporating virtual art in all its practices into its narrative, collections, exhibitions, and educational programs. It was not conceived for this, and even if it were to make the immense effort to adapt its structures, it is obvious that an art whose natural environment is the electronic space and its online networks does not need walls, a physical space. It thrives better, feels more fulfilled, and connects more effectively with its potential audience through screens. The traditional art museum that has adapted to the peculiarities and paradigms of 21st-century digital society knows that its museography strategies and museological conception now involve decentralizing the artwork from the object that sustains and shapes it, to give the archive a central place. This represents the expanded concept of a work of art, encompassing within its core (which now ceases to be physical and becomes digital) all the expanded information surrounding the work, its creators, and its context. The nature of the information that is added—in superimposed layers—to the original work (which necessarily must have been digitized) is multimedia (visual, sound, animated, mathematical, statistical, and textual files) and

transforms the archive that now represents each museum piece into variable data, in constant flux, networked, interactive, and versatile.

Digital works (not digitized) are born from this conception of the data archive. This is why the few museums conceived from their inception as digital art museums possess a different concept and, therefore, a different conceptual and functional structure. They have been conceived as databases that have the capacity to be made accessible (this museography capacity being one more possibility among their multiple layers of form and meaning).

One of the most significant—and advanced—examples of this second model of museum (the one born with the intention of embracing digital art) is undoubtedly the one offered by Google on the Internet: Google Arts & Culture <https://artsandculture.google.com/?hl=es>.

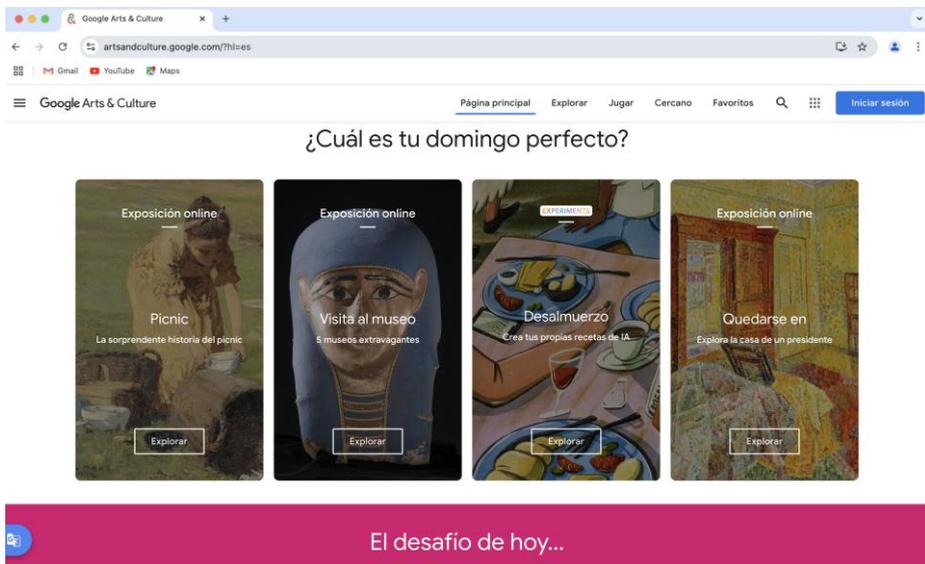


Fig.3. Google Arts & Culture. Page of your website. (from the Internet).

Its homepage is already significantly different from those of traditional art museums (even those that have more advanced adapted to the digital space). It doesn't invite us to visit its collections but rather welcomes us with a surprising: "What's your perfect Sunday?" and "Today's challenge." In addition to the three online exhibitions that appear—as three more options among all the possibilities—the fourth option is "Experiments," which this morning offers "Breakfast. Create your own AI recipes" <https://artsandculture.google.com/experiment/>

food-mood/HwHn-GalZ3up0EA?hl=es. The illustrations accompanying this text —some screenshots of the interactive navigation through this section of the Google museum— goodly demonstrate how different the approach of a “digital art museum” is from that of traditional art museums. It is evidence that a non-digital native audience will be confused and, probably, in many cases, will not even know how to be a user -visitor- of this new museum.

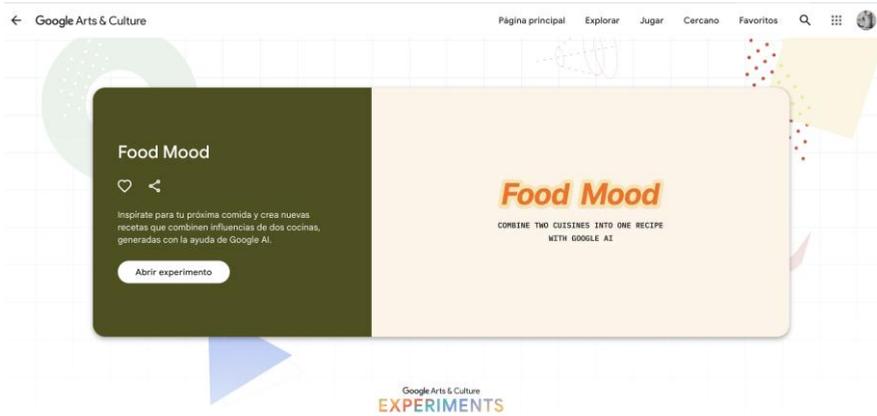


Fig. 4a. Google Arts & Culture. “Breakfast” / “Experiments”.
Website page. (from the Internet).

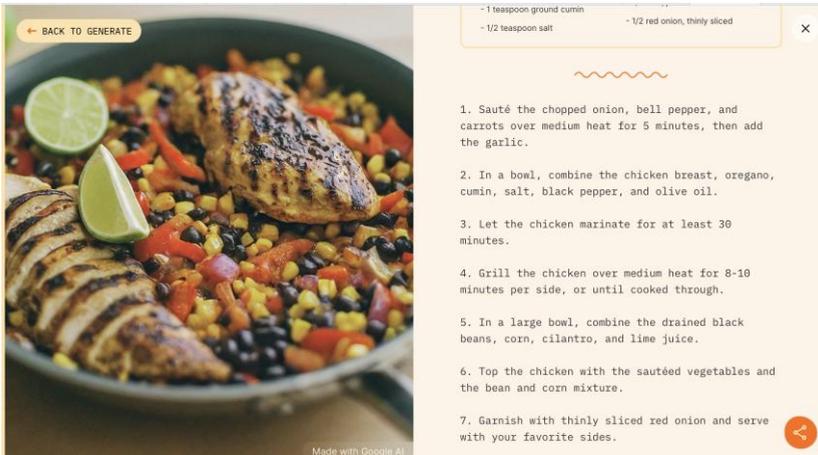


Fig. 4b. Google Arts & Culture. “Breakfast” / “Experiments”.
Website page. (from the Internet).



Fig. 4c. Google Arts & Culture. “Breakfast” / “Experiments”.
Website page. (from the Internet).

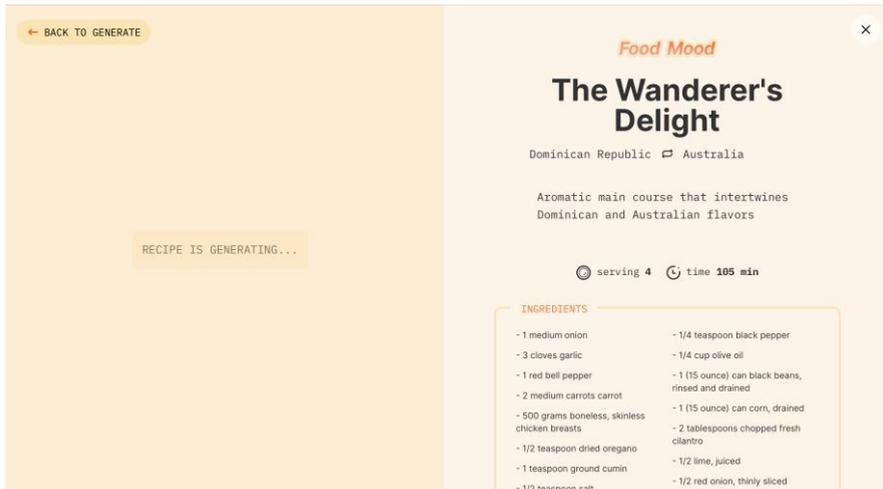


Fig. 4d. Google Arts & Culture. “Breakfast” / “Experiments”.
Website page. (from the Internet).

I'm sure there will be many who don't want to accept this new "museum" as a museum. This brings us to the recent past: the early 1990s. We, the

pioneering digital artists, those of us who signed the “Net.art Manifesto,”¹ desired, in our iconoclastic creative attitude, that art be something that happened in the space-between-screens. Museums would no longer be necessary to house, generate narratives for, and disseminate our digital art—net.art. It was a utopia embraced by many artists, most of the artists who created digital art, and one that we almost grasped—in fact, we came with our fingertips—but, oops, something went wrong: the pontificate of art, the blessing of the new art, now bestowed—*urbi et orbi*—by its audience through its ranking of visits—perfectly ordered by the algorithms of Google search engines/browsers—and its number of likes given, not only eliminated the intermediaries (the specialists, the critics, the historians, the cultural managers), traditional validators of the work of art, (Baricco, 2019), but tried to erase the museum from the face of the earth (from the planet Google Maps).

However, barely three decades after that collective dream, the feeling of abandonment and frustration among those pioneering artists was more than evident: “If I am such a famous and recognized artist, why am I not only not rich, but I can’t even make a living from my art?” and “The traditional museum has forgotten in its hegemonic narrative digital art, which, moreover, is the one that best—if not the only one—capable of representing the *zeitgeist* of this fin-de-siècle era of ours.” What a brutal paradox! We iconoclastic artists who rejected the traditional museum as “the home of our art” are now frustrated and angry with the traditional museum for having overlooked and rendered invisible our productions, the works of art that undoubtedly represent the sign of the fin-de-siècle era between the 20th and 21st centuries.

3. MUSEALIZATION OF MEDIA ART, II. COLLECTIONS AND NARRATIVE

It seems legitimate to ask at this point: why aren't they, why aren't we, content with the existence—and acceptance—of our digital artworks in these online spaces that are alternatives to the traditional museum, which undoubtedly represent, with all due dignity—though we don't know if with the rigor that critics and historians attribute to the traditional model—Google Culture & Arts <https://artsandculture.google.com>, ZKM Zentrum für Kunst und Media

1 “Manifesto: Introduction to Net.Art. 1994-1999” compiled by artists Natalie Bookchin and Alexei Shulgin. Available online at: <https://colaboratorioaim.wordpress.com/2013/03/27/manifesto-introduccion-al-net-art-1994-1999-por-natalie-bookchin-alexei-shulgin/> (Accessed 03/03/2025).

Karlsruhe <https://zkm.de/en> , Ars Electronica Center Linz <https://ars.electronicart/art/center/en/> , or DAM Digital Art Museum <https://www.dam.org/>

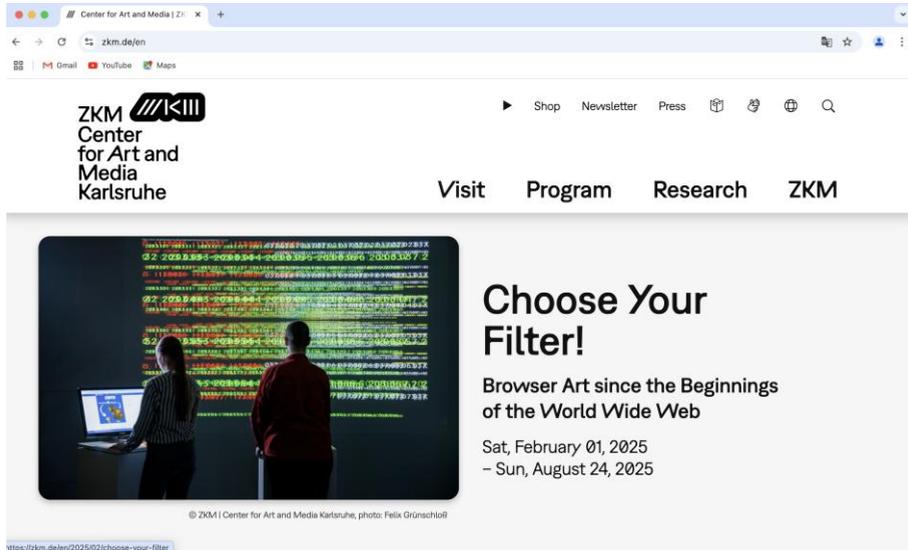


Fig. 5. Zentrum für Kunst und Media Karlsruhe ZKM. Página de su website. (de Internet).



Watch artificial intelligence "think", train self-driving cars, program robots, 3D print and much more! The topics at the Ars Electronica Center range from artificial intelligence and neuro-bionics to autonomous systems and robotics, genetic engineering and biotechnology as well as the profound global changes of our time. Experience fascinating exhibitions and events!

Fig. 6. Ars Electronica Linz Center. Page from their website. (from the Internet).

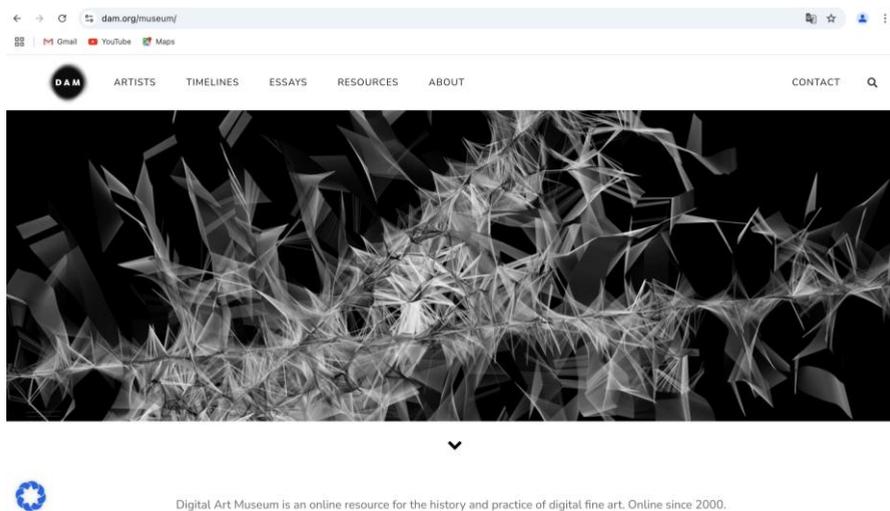


Fig. 7. Digital Art Museum DAM. Page from its website. (from the Internet).

The pride or vanity inherent in every artist may explain this contradictory and paradoxical behavior, this ideological “regression” upon reaching maturity, just a few decades after proclaiming to the world the last *Manifesto* of an artistic avant-garde—net.art. But there may also be some truth, some reality, in this bitter complaint. If the museum—the traditional one, the one we’ve always known, the physical, object-based one—is the institution entrusted by society—ever since it was invented as the current model by Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, the son of the Enlightenment, not the general of the Holy Roman Empire—to select, narrate, and show the people the signs of their culture, of each culture, then the museum of contemporary art (however much we may dislike that its name is a contradiction in itself) has the obligation to collect, construct the narrative, and present—in a specific staging that explains it—the works of art that explain the transition from the analog society and culture of the late 20th century to the digital one of the current 21st century. And it seems more than proven that these are primarily digital, electronic, and networked arts, just as the works of the Impressionists were for the newly created industrial society in the 19th century.

Yes, with sufficient perspective to grasp the magnitude of those changes and the proposition put forth by those new works of art—so difficult to explain at the time—the historians of the early 20th century became convinced that it was precisely these works—in their smallness and fragility, and despite being

“so poorly painted”— and not the immense works of the academic pompier painters —so robust and well-painted— that should hang on the best walls of the great museums, as they best explained the *zeitgeist* of that recently lived era. So why don't we do the same today with all these digital works? It couldn't have been easy for the director of the Louvre or the Jeu de Paume in Paris to take down those enormous paintings of history and mythology from the walls of their best exhibition halls and replace them with those small canvases, so “poorly painted” and depicting such “vulgar” themes of daily life. "It's a sign of the times, idiot," as the economist would say...

To the traditional collections —those that began at the end of the 20th century— generated by the aforementioned art spaces (ZKM, Ars Electronica, DAM), we should add, among others, the International Museum of Electrography of Cuenca (Spain) -MIDECIANT- <https://www.uclm.es/centros-investigacion/MIDE>, founded in 1989, within the University of Castilla-La Mancha, which possesses collections with a narrative of Digital Art, Multimedia Art, Electrographic Graphics, and Copy Art or Mail Art, with more than 150,000 inventoried and digitized pieces, or the Extremadura Ibero-American Museum of Contemporary Art -MEIAC- in Badajoz (Spain) <http://meiac.es/index.php>, which since 2000 has collected and curated digital art and net.art, other collections have been added since the beginning of the present In the 21st century, several collections exclusively dedicated to that digital art so "orphaned of museums", so "fragile, vulnerable and obsolete".

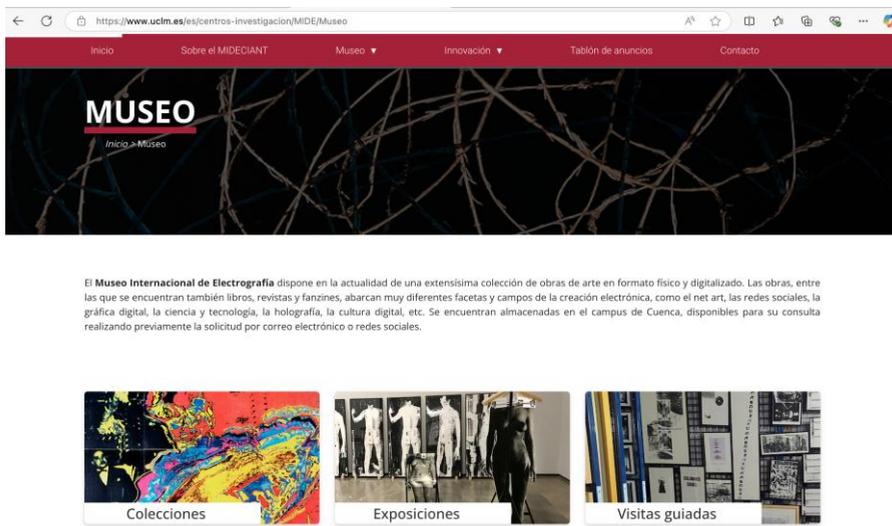


Fig. 8a. MIDECIANT. Page from its website. (from the Internet).



Fig. 8b. MIDECIANT. Collections. Page from their website. (from the Internet).

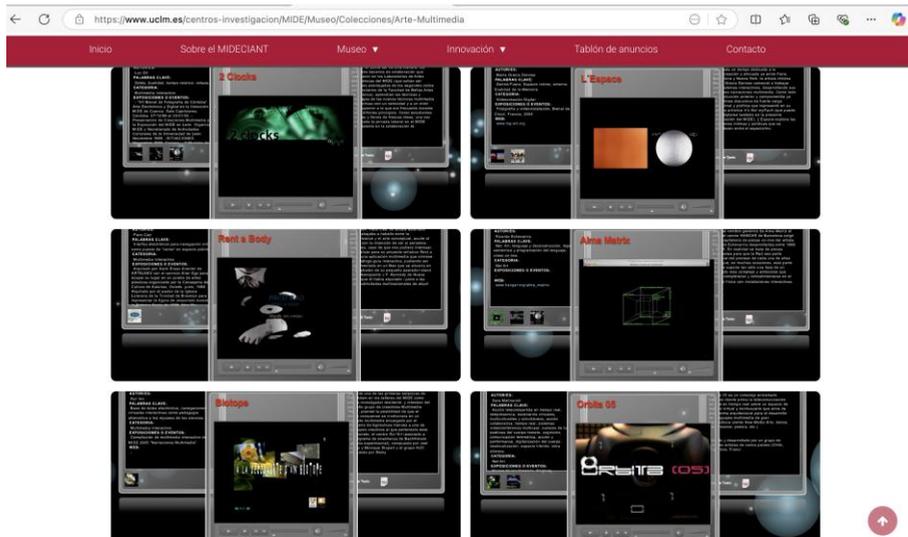


Fig. 8c. MIDECIANT. Multimedia Art Collection. Page from their website. (from the Internet).



Fig. 8d. MIDECIANT. Media Art Research Projects. Page from their website. (from the Internet).

Proyectos del MEIAC en el Espacio Virtual

<p>Turbulence El MEIAC acoge las obras de este renombrado archivo norteamericano de arte digital. Terminadas las tareas de catalogación y de restauración en las obras recibidas, el museo ha desarrollado una base de datos que puede ser recorrida tanto en inglés, como en español, abriendo de esa manera el acceso al público hispanoparlante.</p>	<p>NETescopio El archivo de arte en la red del MEIAC que reúne obras de los más destacados artistas en este medio NETescopio es un archivo en línea destinado a preservar obras de arte digital español, iberoamericano e internacional. La muestra "Técnicas del arte en la red", con obras de NETescopio, ha itinerado por prestigiosas instituciones de Europa y América.</p>		
<p>Red(e).IB Red internacional de instituciones ligadas al arte y la tecnología.</p>	<p>Netart Latino Database Mapa-recopilación de obras de netartistas latinoamericanos.</p>	<p>Netespaña Antología de los principales artistas de arte para la red en España.</p>	<p>Enlaces XE Creada para difundir la creación contemporánea desde su territorio.</p>

Fig. 9a. MEIAC. Page from its website. (from the Internet).

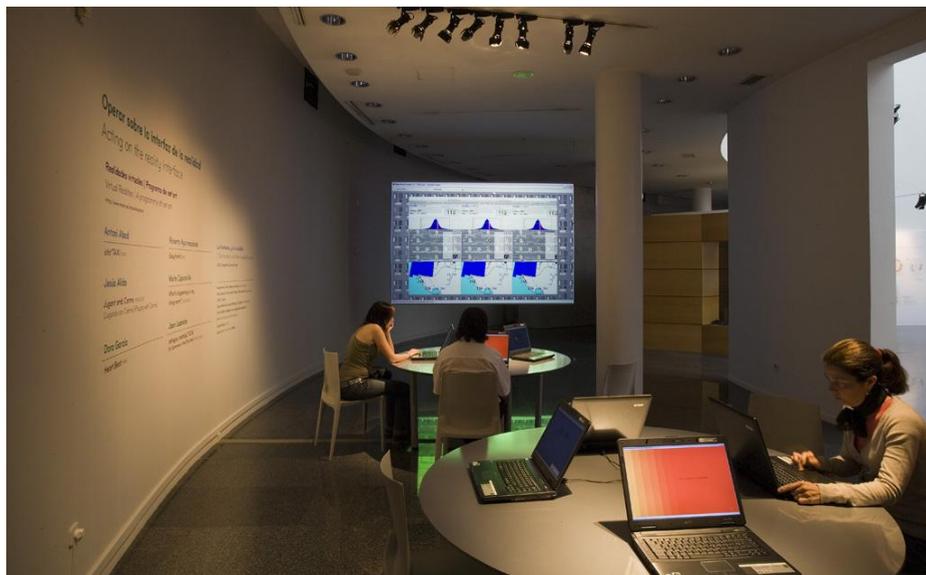


Fig. 9b. MEIAC. Exhibition The Discreet Charm of Technology. Page from their website. (from the Internet).



Fig. 9c. MEIAC. Net_Escopio Project. Since 2008. Page from their website. (from the Internet).



Fig. 9d. MEIAC. Net_Escopio Project Exhibition. Page from their website. (from the Internet).



ARCO'00
Galería Virtual
 2000
 9/15 de Febrero

La primera galería virtual creada por un museo español de arte contemporáneo fue presentada en la edición del año 2000 de la Feria Internacional de Arte Contemporáneo ARCO. Para su instalación, ocho placas de pizarra soportaban ocho pantallas conectadas a otros tantos ordenadores.

[Más info](#)



ARCO'01
Des_Juego/De_Game
 2001
 14/19 de Febrero

La generación más joven de artistas de vanguardia es menos una generación de la MTV, del video o la televisión, y mucho más una generación de la playstation. Los artistas que conocen y viven esta nueva cultura digital no podían dejar de usar este material como punto de partida para sus proyectos artísticos.

[Más info](#)

Fig. 9e. MEIAC OFF. Page from their website. (from the Internet).

Thus, to cite only the Spanish case, in 2003 the NewArt { collection;} was born, formerly known as the Beep Collection of Electronic Art <https://www.newart-foundation.art/es>

It is the result of the shared interests of Marie-France Veyrat and Andreu Rodríguez Valveny, an artist and technological pioneer, and their friendship with Arnau Puig, co-founder of Dau al Set, who proposed holding the Beep Prize for Technological Art in Barcelona. This initial project received a new impetus in 2006 with the creation of the ARCO-BEEP Electronic Art Awards, in collaboration with the ARCO art fair. (From their website).

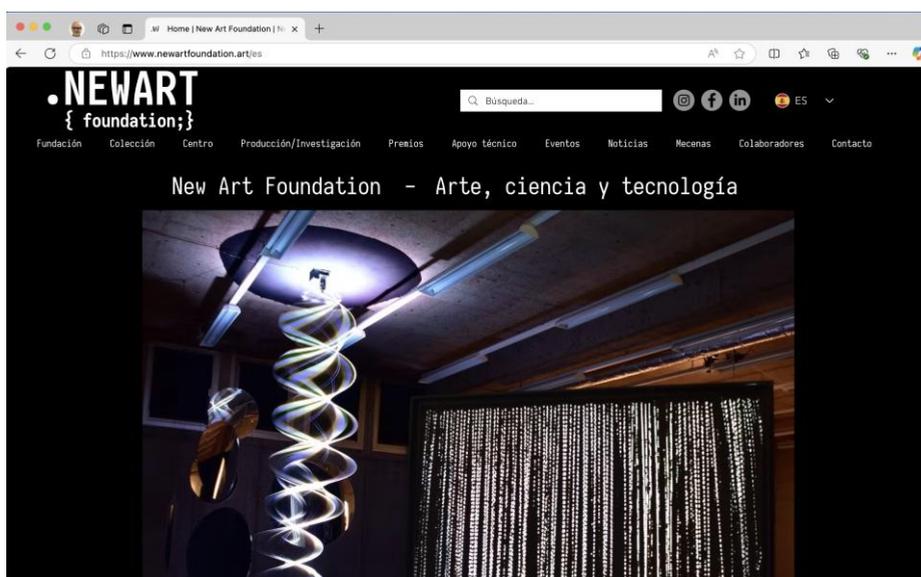


Fig.10a. New Art Foundation. Page of your website. (from the Internet).

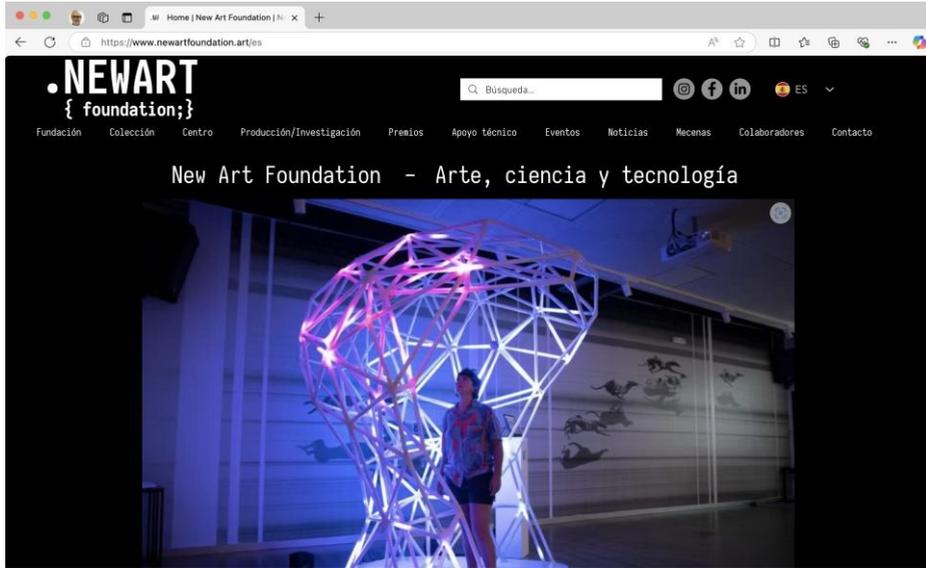


Fig.10b. New Art Foundation. Page of your website. (from the Internet).

This “new impetus” for the creation of the now significant collection of electronic art at the New Art Collection responded to the most intelligent acquisition strategy ever established in the history of New Media Art, because it stems from a profound understanding of the workings of museum logic. This logic links the collector's initial desire with the museum's construction of the narrative of the artistic avant-garde.

When the managers of this Spanish art foundation decided to add to the process of building their collection the purchase of some of these works at the most important contemporary art fair in Spain, they were perfectly aware that the market was still turning its back on these new artistic practices (for the reasons already detailed), so they decided to incentivize the interest of the gallery owners present at ARCO (who are chosen through a pre-selection process and who decide which works they will exhibit -and put up for sale- in their stands) by creating an award for the most interesting work/piece/installation of electronic art, chosen by a jury appointed for this purpose (not exclusively made up of experts in electronic and digital art, but also of renowned critics and curators belonging to the most influential lobbies in the Spanish contemporary art scene). The winning work—which is purchased by the New Art Collection for inclusion in its permanent collection at each edition of the fair—is thus sanctioned—blessed—by the contemporary art establishment. What has happened? A perfectly

calculated operation to integrate electronic/digital art into the hegemonic official narrative of contemporary art.

We will attempt to explain precisely what this functional mechanism employed was, which responds to nothing more than the perverse logic that has always operated for works of art (especially for the *avant-garde*) since the existence of an art market: for a work of art belonging to a new *avant-garde* movement to be included in art historiography with its own narrative, it must be incorporated into the collections of art museums, since only these have demonstrated the capacity and authority to generate this narrative. The historians who construct it understand that only works held by museums, forming part of their permanent collections, possess sufficient importance and value, distinguishing themselves from the rest, to be exemplifications of the *zeitgeist* of their time, and that only through the narrative they construct will they become part of art history, becoming exemplary models that explain or give shape to the spirit of the era in which they were created.

But it turns out that museums, through choices agreed upon by their boards of trustees, only buy works from art galleries (they don't buy directly from artists or private collectors). It's a tacit agreement of "best practices", since through this commercial mechanism the museum, generally funded with taxpayer money, contributes to sustaining the contemporary art market. So, what art galleries sell is what will end up being represented in the museum. The ball is now in the gallery owners' court. Thus, the NAC's strategy of creating the Prize provides them with a significant incentive to present electronic artworks in their booths at the most important contemporary art fair, because, in addition to receiving recognition by making a significant sale, this sale will also be "blessed" by the contemporary art establishment.

Now only the most difficult part remains, the one that most requires the skill of the gallery owner: convincing their clients (the art collectors) that these works are worth buying. With the prize, the gallery has added this no less significant and attractive reason to its list of reasons for its clients. Now, the gallery owner understands the art they sell and has educated themselves in its history and details, so, beyond presenting the potential buyer with arguments related to art as an investment, a safe value in the market from which, sooner or later, they will obtain significant economic benefits, our daring gallery owner who has bet on the complex and vulnerable electronic art will try to educate the collector—their client—about this new art they are about to acquire. And for this, he will need to "borrow" a narrative, a myth-making and mythomaniacal "story" that connects us to the author's deep soul, that artist full of anecdotes and inner stories that highlight the

value of the art he has created and which —because it is avant-garde— has not yet been accepted or understood by his society. And if you don't believe it, just study the creation of the speculative movement that arose in mid-20th-century Europe to highlight (and bring to the hearts of all art lovers) avant-garde movements such as Impressionism or Cubism. Isn't it significant that at the entrance of the monumental Cézanne exhibition at the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum in Madrid, visitors were greeted by an immense poster featuring a historic photograph of the elderly Paul leaving his home in Les Lauves, in 1906, dragging his old chair, to travel to the foot of Mont Sainte-Victoire in order to add a few more brushstrokes —those corresponding to the particular light of that day— to his experimental landscape painting? Weren't the museum's curators, with this sentimental nod (with this artistic inner history that seeks to mythologize the artist who foreshadowed Cubism), appealing to the visitor's emotions and trying to connect them with para-artistic narratives to encourage their interest in visiting the exhibition? It is evident that when someone stands before one of those complex paintings by the French artist, they are enjoying more than just its innovative composition or vibrant chromatism (let's not kid ourselves, small Cubist canvases are not easy to appreciate); they are probably connecting with the spirit of the artist, recalling passages from his famous correspondence with fellow painters who were trying to reinvent painting, which were so clearly captured in that marvelous portrait of silvery tones.

Let us return to the historiographical rigor of our critical methodology, summarizing what has been said: the complex process necessary for an electronic artwork (of any contemporary art) to be accepted by the museum begins with an intimate, private act that takes place in the art gallery between its potential buyer and the artwork itself, under the mediation of the gallerist: falling in love with a work of art, which makes the collector desire its acquisition. This requires their ability to know, understand, and appreciate these works (aided in large part by the accompaniment of numerous para-artistic narratives —of a mythologizing nature— surrounding their authors and their disciplines). When the gallerist understands that they can obtain a redundant profit from the sale of this type of artistic practice, they set in motion the market machinery that allows them to make a solid investment in this type of product. It is then that he displays it at art fairs, trying to convince the museum that this art should be in its collections. To take that step, the museum appeals to the sound judgment and arguments of art critics, historians, and curators capable of valuing it by generating the corresponding historiographical narratives that contextualize and establish criteria of quality, importance, and interest within the general narrative of art history. From that moment on, the work is done: the gallery owner can sell electronic art

because he knows how to sell it, aided by the narratives of experts and the authority of the museum.

But let's go a step further and analyze, through a few examples from the Spanish art scene, some of the alternatives to the traditional museum as a support, as a "home" for electronic and digital art.

In 2015, the Spanish artist Solimán López, currently based in Paris, <https://solimanlopez.com> created the online website *Harddiskmuseum* <https://harddisk-museum.com>, whose Statement he affirms:

When we mention the word museum, our minds automatically associate it with architecture. (...) With the high-tech bubble and the example of major art centers as cornerstones of the culture of the cities where they were built, brick became synonymous with culture.

But the concept of art, culture, and its meaning can find refuge in other environments. It represents an intangible asset that is maintained and grows within the collective imagination, which may or may not find refuge in a three-dimensional space.

Today, this digital world is moving toward a society where words, expression, and all channels of information expand through social networks, blogs, videos, and an endless array of online offerings. (...) The museum, seen as an art center, cultural space, or gallery, is completely connected to the idea of a three-dimensional space that offers artistic and informational content of interest.

But can't a hard drive be considered architecture? Aren't the memory and work of the artist represented on hanging walls, whether projected or installed? (...) A museum can answer all these questions, but in its broadest, etymologically correct sense, a hard drive can too. (...) *Harddiskmuseum* doesn't intend to veer towards a series of alternative proposals; rather, it attempts to unite urban art, net.art, and other foundations to discuss this structure of art and society, and it tries to draw a blurred line between the figure of the artist, the museum, cultural assumptions, the knowledge society, memory, the art star system, and why not, combine new exhibition models—cooperative, creative, and generative of ideas and reflection. (...)

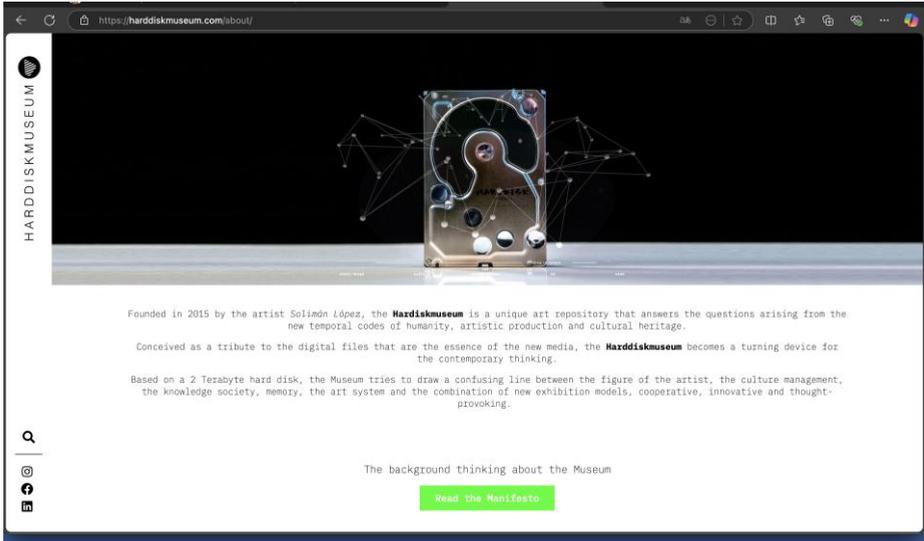


Fig. 11a. Solimán López. *Harddiskmuseum*. Page from his website. (from the Internet).

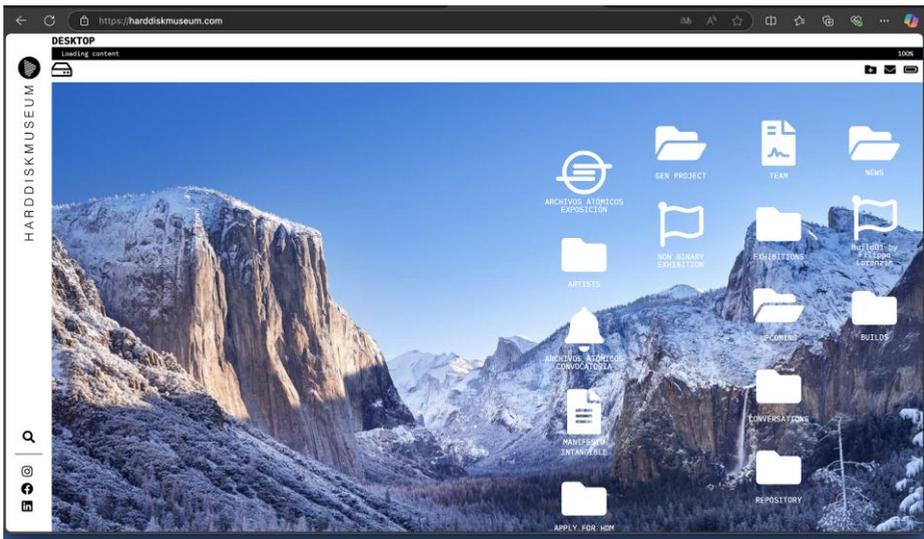


Fig. 11b. Solimán López. *Harddiskmuseum*. Page from his website. (Internet).

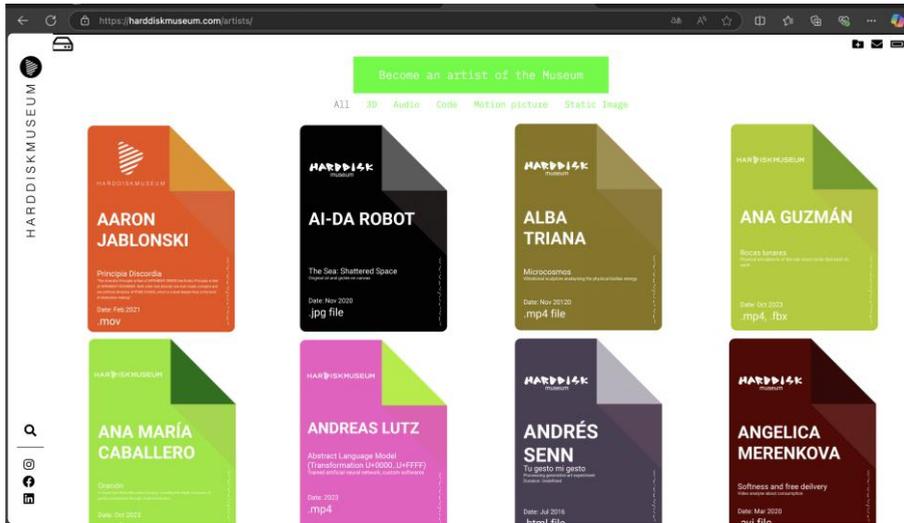


Fig. 11c. Solimán López. *Harddiskmuseum*. Page from his website. (from the Internet).



Fig. 11d. Solimán López. *Harddiskmuseum*. Page from his website. (from the Internet).

As we can see, the story is starting to get complicated. It's no longer just a matter of traditional museums knowing how to communicate through online networks, or even their striving to include digital art in their collections and/or online, adapting new museography strategies, but this virtual art—in most

cases, digital in its original nature— is trying to find its natural space, using communication and access systems and languages, intuitive interfaces, and conceptual and functional structures characteristic of the 21st century, in accordance with the particular and specific way in which younger generations manage digital reality, and which allows it to be fully realized. I am reminded of the *fin de siècle* (between the 19th and 20th centuries) when cinema was trying to find not only its natural and specific language, but also its own communication structure—or device—which it did not achieve until the creation of the projection room, a space in which cinema could be fully realized and where the viewer could be educated as a film spectator.

Thus, interesting initiatives arise, worthy of study, which show proactive models full of potential. Such is the case—to give just a couple of recent and interesting examples— of C/FRA www.cifra.com, a platform dedicated to online art: “You are in the Right Place to Experience Digital Art; Art that matters here and now.” The intro to their website (their online platform) is a declaration of intent that captures and summarizes in just 10 words the new—and revolutionary— conception of “being art,” “being a museum,” “being communication,” “being a device.”

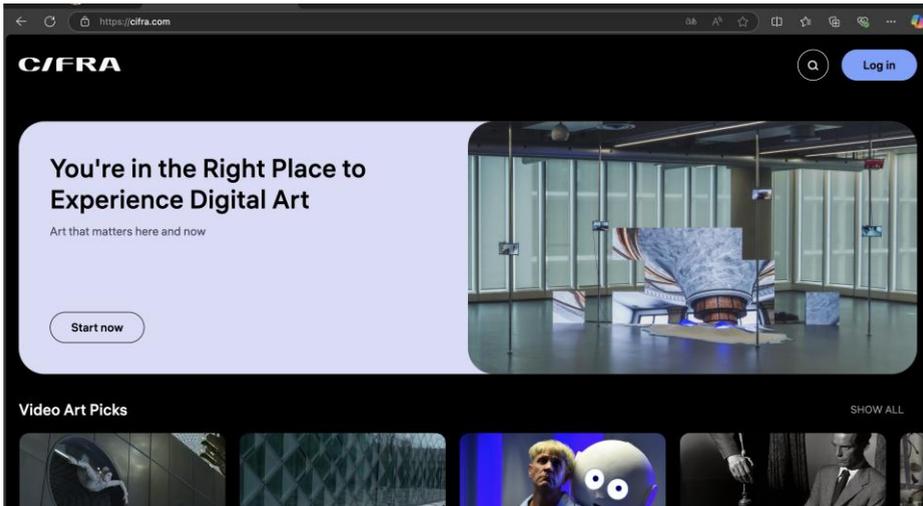


Fig.12a. C/fra. Home page of your website. (from the Internet)

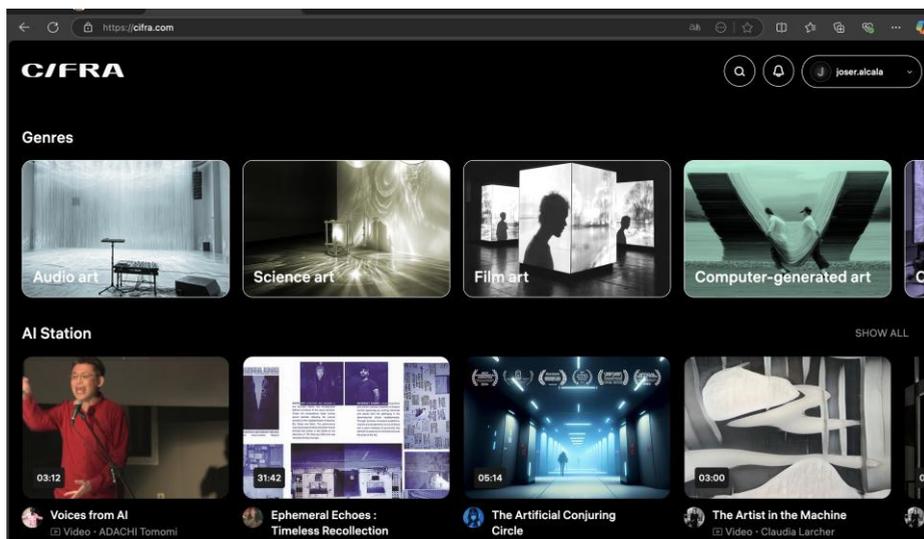


Fig. 12b. C/fra. Page from their website. (from the Internet)

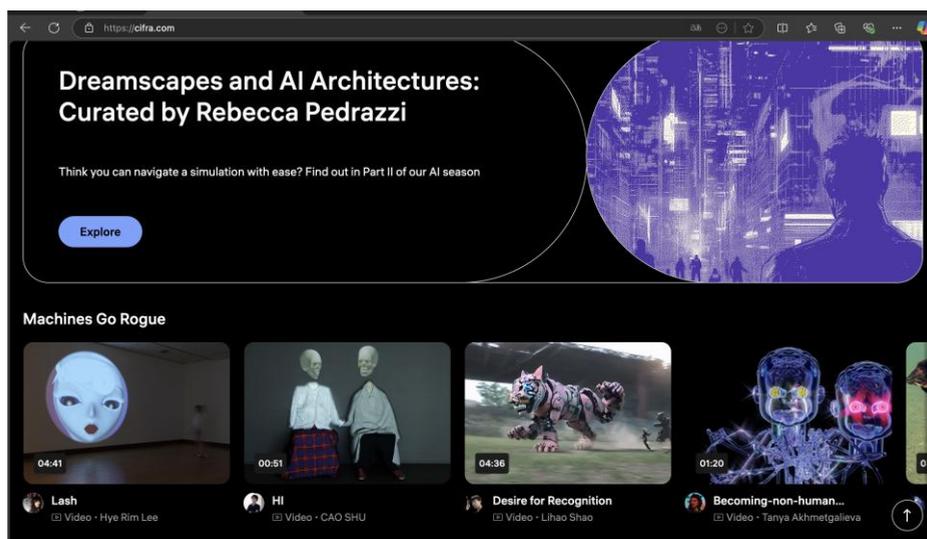


Fig.12c. C/fra. Page of your website. (from the Internet)

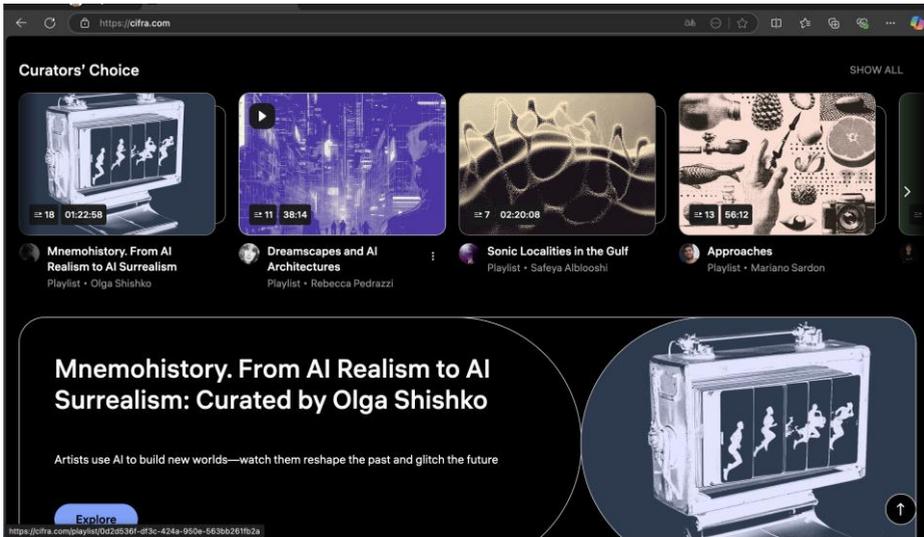


Fig. 12d. C/fra. Page from their website. (from the Internet).

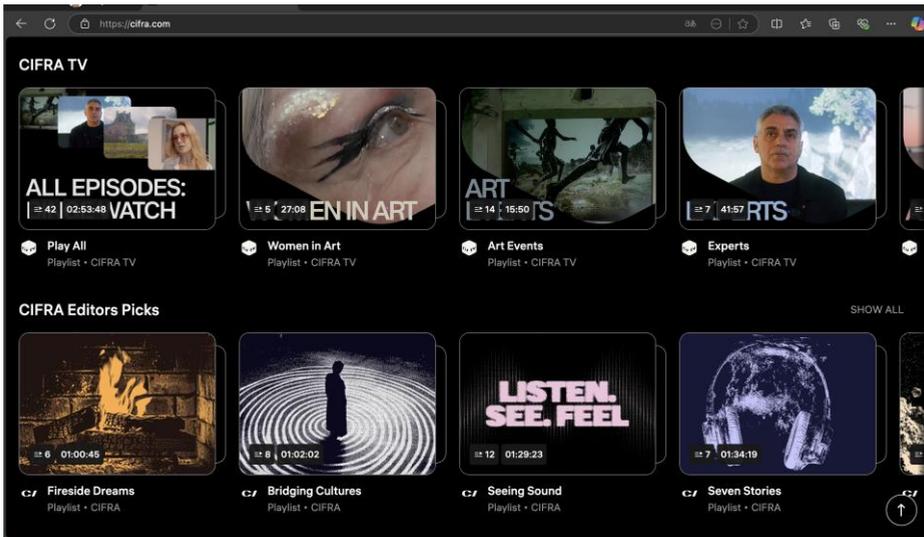


Fig.12e. C/fra. Page of your website. (from the Internet).

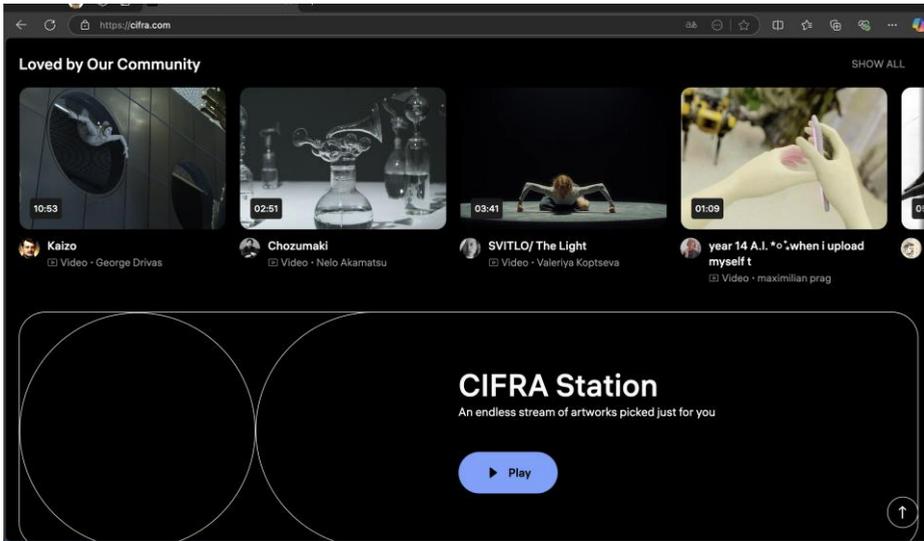


Fig.12f. C/fra. Page of your website. (from the Internet).

Museum-like structures that we see repeated in many other spaces and networks focused on digital and online art. And, in *The Wrong Biennale*—our second example—, now in its 7th edition (current call for entries <https://thewrong.org/>), a biennial exclusively focused on online art, which in its six editions has already showcased more than 20,000 digital works by artists from five continents. The most reputable press has said such relevant things about it as that TWB "actively shapes the narrative of what artistic expression can be in the digital age" (falsewhale.xyz); or "With an audience in the millions, The Wrong could be the world's largest art biennial: the digital world's answer to Venice" (The New York Times). "The Wrong," the journalist uses, ironically referring to the name that David Quiles, its creator and director, chose to use. "The Wrong," "the wrong art," "the wrong artists," as they defined what they saw in its first edition on the screens through the virginal interface of its functional system, freed—thanks to a brilliant technical stratagem devised by Quiles—from the odious control to which Google's algorithms currently subject us in our browsing, in our habitual procrastination on the Internet, and so that nothing can surprise us anymore, because our journeys are always, and invariably, toward unconsciously pre-desired routes, planned—personally for each user/traveler—by that AI that believes it knows us better than we know ourselves. Thus, the journeys through the digital works of the artists present in each edition of TWB become fascinating

itineraries, full of surprising and unimaginable technical stops for each visitor. A soft propulsion machine, a software whose programming is based on the mechanism of pure chance, just as we navigate *Chatroulette* <https://chatroulette.com>, trying to engage in audiovisual conversations -interacting telematic- with random partners, who -located physically in any connected corner of the planet- appear in the space-between-screens that we share tet-à-tete, peer-to-peer, without any pre-established requirements.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://thewrong.org/About>. The page content is as follows:

About.
The Wrong Biennale is an independent, non-profit, multicultural, decentralized, and collaborative art biennial created to showcase digital art to a global audience, and now grown into a massive international community and a reference in the digital art scene.

The Wrong brings together established, emerging, and underrepresented artists and curators to explore creativity and contemporary digital art in a positive and constructive environment, presenting a diverse range of styles and mediums to a global audience, promoting inclusivity and encouraging cultural growth and experimentation.

Held every two years, The Wrong Biennale connects curators, artists, institutions and the public, to build an exhibition of exhibitions, earning widespread recognition and accolades from the global press, art community, and public.

Notably, it has received awards such as SOIS Cultura and an honorific mention from the

Join.
The next edition takes place from November 1st, 2025, to March 31st, 2026, and it aims to artistically explore the transformative potential of AI-influenced art, video, text and sound.

Check the open call to [join as curator or artist](#).

Follow [@thewrong.biennale](#) on Instagram for updates on open calls, deadlines and infos.

Press.
"Actively shaping the narrative of what artistic expression in the digital age can be." - [Fakewhale.xyz](#)

"Counting its viewership in the millions, The Wrong just might be the world's largest art biennale — The digital world's answer to Venice." - [The New York Times](#).

"Exploring the unconventional with a deep sense of community and diversity." - [CLOT](#).

Next.
2025/26 Nov. 1, 2025 - Mar. 31, 2026.
2027/28 Nov. 1, 2027 - Mar. 31, 2028.
2029/30 Nov. 1, 2029 - Mar. 31, 2030.
2031/32 Nov. 1, 2031 - Mar. 31, 2032.

Past.
2013/14 Nov. 1, 2013 - Jan. 31, 2014.
2015/16 Nov. 1, 2015 - Jan. 31, 2016.
2017/18 Nov. 1, 2017 - Jan. 31, 2018.
2019/20 Nov. 1, 2019 - Mar. 1, 2020.
2021/22 Nov. 1, 2021 - May. 1, 2022.
2023/24 Nov. 1, 2023 - Mar. 31, 2024.

Team.
Graziela Calfat. CEO.
Alejandra Raschkes. CFO.
Patrick Lichty. Board Director.
David Quiles Guilló. Artistic Director.
Jen Talbot. Operations.

Fig. 13a. The Wrong Biennale. Call for its 7th edition. Page from its website. (from the Internet).

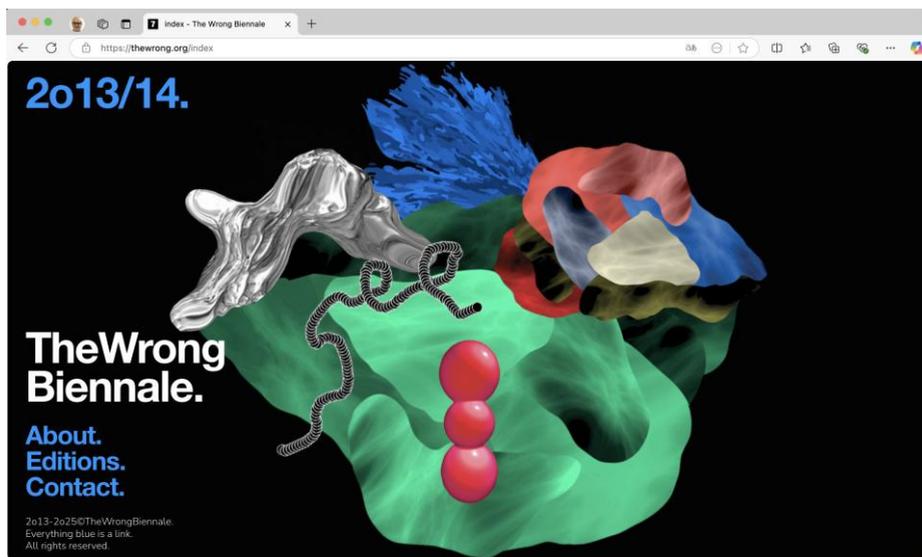


Fig. 13b. The Wrong Biennale. Page from its website. (from the Internet).

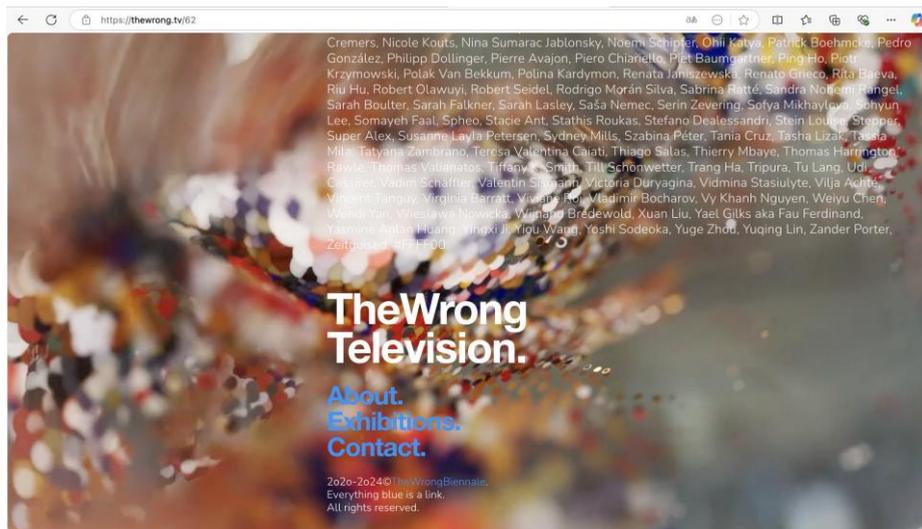


Fig.13c. The Wrong TV. Page of your website. (from the Internet) <https://thewrong.tv/>

All of which leads us to observe not only a paradigm shift in art and culture, but a true revolution in contemporary society. This is how Alessandro Baricco explained it when he stated that:

(...) many are the revolutions that change the world, and they are often technological; but few are those that change people and do so radically: perhaps these should be called Mental Revolutions. The curious thing is that, instinctively, we place our revolution, the Digital Revolution, in the second group, among the mental revolutions. Although it seems to us clearly a technological revolution, we attribute to it a scope that technological revolutions usually lack: we recognize its capacity to generate a new idea of humanity ²

4. MUSEALIZATION OF MEDIA ART, III. CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION

However, just when we thought everything was settled, that new forms and structures of museum presentation for New Media Art had taken root in the functional culture of the new user, another significant obstacle arises before those responsible for and managing museum institutions (whether traditional or postmodern): the conservation and preservation of New Media Art works hesitantly incorporated into their collections. The virtuality and immateriality of their media, the vulnerability of their archiving systems, the voracious and rapid obsolescence of their techno-functional systems (software, hardware and operating systems), the monetized competition of their standards, the reluctance of users to engage in constant retraining and learning —all complication upon complication for these two fundamental tasks of museum presentation of new media, aimed not only at preserving their heritage but also at maintaining active accessibility.

This situation creates an urgent need to incorporate into the restoration and conservation departments of modern and contemporary art museums qualified technical personnel specializing in digital, electronic, and virtual works. Several advanced degrees and specialized courses, as well as Master's and Post-graduate programs, already exist at universities specializing in the conservation and restoration of digital and multimedia art (such as the one at the Polytechnic University of Valencia, among the most renowned). These programs provide sufficient technical and theoretical training for specialists in this field, who

2 Baricco, Alessandro: *The Game*. Barcelona: Anagrama, 2019. P.34.

should be integrated into the permanent staff of museums that already possess permanent collections of New Media Art.

Due to the obsolescence of the software and equipment used to create and produce these works, and the special conditions they require for their proper exhibition—in a museum neither architecturally designed nor technically prepared for it—their restoration is often an arduous and complicated task, if not impossible. There are reference examples of these problems that have gone viral in the world of Media Art museography, such as the difficulty in maintaining the old television monitors—which operated with transistors—that the South Korean artist Nam June Paik—a co-founding member of the Fluxus movement—used to create his video installations. The Vostell Malpartida Museum in Cáceres, which has several of these video installations in its permanent collection, has not yet found a solution for replacing these TV monitors when the originals become unusable and irreparable. Viewing these video installations through modern flat LED screens that replace the bulky original transistor monitors leads to a distortion of the object-sculptural perception of the installation conceived and created by its author.

This same problem, if not even more complex, is presented by the pioneering works of interactive multimedia or net art from the 1990s, which are no longer manageable by the new operating systems of current computing, nor can they flow through current browsers, and therefore have become inaccessible. Committed to this enormous technical challenge are some of the few museums interested in these works of New Media Art, such as the Rhizome program, created in 1996 and linked, since 2003, to the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York, which aimed to find effective museography strategies for their preservation and conservation:

In addition to conserving individual works of art and other cultural artifacts, the Rhizome Preservation Team develops infrastructure, research and tests new preservation methods, and participates in open-source software projects. The program began in response to the needs of *ArtBase*, Rhizome's archive of digital artworks. Today, its goal is to develop approaches to digital art conservation in support of the field as a whole.

(From their website: <https://rhizome.org/tags/preservation/>, accessed 06/03/2025).



Fig.14. Rhizome. New Museum of Contemporary Art. Website page. (from the Internet).

This pioneering digital art preservation and restoration program received a substantial sum of money in 2014 from a prestigious North American cultural foundation to implement an ambitious project for the restoration of historical digital artworks. The project employed a technical strategy of reprogramming some of these pieces (a selection of over one hundred of the most representative historical works), choosing HTML for this purpose. The result, while a highly commendable achievement, was nevertheless disappointing for many of its creators, who found their code translated and thus distorted, no longer recognized as their own. Let's not forget that for many pioneering artist-programmers of electronic art, the true beauty of their pieces lay in the personality of the programming of their code - it is no coincidence that among the most radical movements of New Media Art there exists Codex Art, which bases its language and graphic style on the creative personality of the code created during the programming of the piece.

This negative experience led those responsible for the Rhizome program to review their approaches and operational strategies and address the issue more efficiently and within a framework of greater museum stability. The result is the current Conservation Service at the New Museum:

Conservation Services

The Rhizome conservation team specializes in the conservation of web art, digital artworks, and multimedia publications. We offer services to collecting institutions, community organizations, and artists' studios seeking to provide long-term access to a web project, CD-ROM, artist-created game, etc., online or offline.

Since 2014, Rhizome has built a sophisticated conservation infrastructure that manages legacy software environments accessible via the web or local computers. This encompasses encapsulated servers running outdated versions of ColdFusion, PHP, Ruby, etc., on desktop systems such as a 1999 version of Mac OS or Windows 98, including contemporary browsers, plugins, and other dependencies. (From their website: <https://rhizome.org/tags/preservation/> , accessed 06/03/2025).

All these examples highlight the complexity and difficulty of managing, conserving, and restoring New Media Art works and pieces, which only provide further reason to address it from the perspective of contemporary museography, in an exercise of institutional responsibility and governance.

The most curious aspect—which becomes frustrating upon witnessing the still-present resistance—is that the cost and maintenance of specialized personnel and the infrastructure and equipment of these workshops, laboratories, and studios for New Media Art in museums—especially the largest and best equipped ones— would be significantly less than what they allocate annually to the restoration and conservation of traditional physical works. It is not, therefore, a problem of budgetary resources, but rather a question of mindset, of a new museography culture, which must be driven by the exercise of responsibility that the new digital society and its own cultural dynamics impose upon them.

Once this responsibility is assumed, a final phase appears on the horizon of this new museography: the management of digital (virtual) art. To address it with the necessary guarantees, we cannot overlook the fact that the museum is subject to the dynamics established by the art market, since, as we have analyzed, it relies heavily on the selection and curatorial work carried out by art galleries. The main problem is that the contemporary art museum is based on the "White Cube" model of the past 20th century, which only considered the management of physical objects and their exhibition—from parameters of their maximum aesthetic appeal— on the floors and walls of the museum building³.

3 For further information, see Alcalá, J.R.; Fernández, L.; Rico, J.C.: *How to Hang a Virtual Painting? Exhibitions in the Digital Age*. Gijón: Trea, 2009.

However, all these new works and materials produced by New Media Art artists are characterized by having provoked a crisis of such magnitude in Western art that they have been able to undermine the traditional paradigms on which it was based, since Renaissance art, having remained unchanged for the last six centuries. Thus, the new art has moved from the production of objects to an attention to the process; from an interest in the image to an interest in its concept and from an iconoclastic attitude; from the painting as a final object to the archive (the work as a document); from the specificity and specialization of artistic techniques to an interdisciplinary character; from the manual nature of the artistic product to its technologization (from craftsmanship to the industrialization of the work of art). From the coherence and harmony between artist and art institution to its radical and programmatic rejection (although a trend towards an attitude of incoherence among the media artist has been sighted in recent years - especially among the pioneering net artists in their attempt to re-establish a presence in the museum); from the need for a historical perspective between artistic production and its musealization to the real-time historicization of contemporary artistic practices through the constantly fluxing network space; from the constant support of the art institution for the creation of artistic literature in each new movement or avant-garde to the lack of interest in all these new practices, which has resulted in the almost total absence of materials and documentation on the subject in the museum, thus preventing the creation of that aforementioned para-artistic literature that would allow the construction of the necessary mythomania around its artists and their productions.

All these profound changes in the concept of artwork and artistic practice, from the specificity of New Media Art, place the museum-center of contemporary art at a new crossroads: the urgent challenge of embracing the specificity of digital art and, therefore, the need to reinvent itself, revising its museography policies, which implies a change in collecting, conservation, and exhibition strategies, as well as the obligation to modify —updating— its hegemonic narratives.

5. MEDIA ART MUSEALIZATION, IV. EXHIBITION AND DISSEMINATION

But the problems for digital and online art in relation to the museum don't end there. A new, no less complex and novel front opens up: its dissemination. Because, while it's true that we've seen how, in the last decade, most museums (large and small, powerful and humble) have established educational departments, hired webmasters and community managers, integrating them into their professional staff

with the aim of incorporating new strategies for promoting and disseminating their traditional collections into social media and the digital sphere, adapting the traditional language of art history and conventional museography to the new ones that have emerged with the rise of the network society, in order to capture the attention of younger audiences, the fact is that carrying out this same operation with the heritage of New Media Art implies forcing the transformation and adaptation of the museum to the new conditions (already mentioned) even further.

The museum as we know it now works with repositories, archives, and lists. It integrates into distribution platforms (websites, blogs, online social networks, events, etc.). It establishes new institutional policies based on objectives and strategic actions that consider the new museography devices and approaches to the care of all this new artistic heritage (such as international observatories, network communities, new disciplines—such as Media Archaeology)⁴. This is the reason why, in parallel with this necessary new “museum education” on the part of institutional leaders (and also historians, critics, and curators of contemporary art), many attempts are being made to find comprehensive solutions that satisfy all these new needs and challenges posed by the musealization of New Media Art. Solutions that involve the conception and creation of complete systems, of platforms that assume in their creative and functional genesis the peculiarities of all aspects involved in this new management of media arts: collecting, classification, archive management, conservation and restoration, control of authorship and ownership, Efficient dissemination in the electronic space (websites, the Internet and online social networks), curated and on-demand exhibitions, etc.

See, for example, the proposed conceptual device “Terminal” and its technical tool “Tetra Art,” developed by digital artists José-Ramón Alcalá-Mellado, Fred Adam, Juan-Alonso López-Iniesta, and engineer Manuel Escuin, and registered with the Intellectual Property Registry of the Valencian Community on August 21, 2021⁵. This is a pioneering system designed to address the challenge of museum management, obsolescence, and the potential for being forgotten by digital artworks. This system is based on the use of data centers as storage environments for digital files. Terminal-TetraArt is presented as a comprehensive solution to the

4 To expand, see: Jussi Parikka: *What is Media Archeology?*Cambridge: Polity. 2012; Jussi Parikka: *A Geology of Media*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2015; Zielinsky, Siegfried: *Deep Time of the Media. Toward an Archeology of Hearing and Seeing Technical Means*.Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press. 2006.

5 For further information, see: Alcalá-Mellado, J.R. and López-Iniesta, J.A.: “TetraArt: A system for the conservation and existence of digital art linked to programming code.” *Conservation of Contemporary Art*. Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2021. Pp. 11-22. <https://ladigitaldel-reina.museoreinasofia.es/idurl/5/103507>

problems faced by digital artworks, particularly those linked to obsolete or outdated computer technologies.

This system not only seeks to preserve the code and essence of the works, but also to facilitate their exhibition and commercialization in a contemporary context, challenging the traditional paradigms of art museography. The proposal responds to the need for a theoretical and practical framework that allows digital artistic practices, often marginalized or misunderstood by traditional art institutions, to be fully recognized and valued within the canon of contemporary art. TetraArt is the techno-functional tool that, within the conceptual architecture of Terminal, offers a response to this need by creating a digital ecosystem that ensures the existence, preservation, and accessibility of digital artworks, respecting their originality and their technological and cultural context.

At a technical level, TetraArt is conceptually based on the same idea as Rhizome at the New Museum: not reprogramming the codes of digital works but rather using the original hardware and software with which they were created, implemented on powerful data center machines. Technically, TetraArt is based on meta-software for data center federation, operating system emulators, and tools for curating and disseminating information about the works. For communication with the user, it uses a private cloud that guarantees data sovereignty (through the federation of Aire Networks data centers), ensuring that, wherever the works are hosted, the museum/gallery/collector ultimately owns them. It considers the Patriot Act (USA), digital certification via blockchain, and the acceptance of NFT digital objects. This prevents leaks (high-security intranet), using high-level encryption and guaranteeing the long-term permanence of the data entered (the files of the digital artworks and pieces). The federated data center model that Terminal-TetraArt relies on belongs to the identification system through Gaia X (which is a European data ecosystem funded by the EU). All these features implemented in the system allow—and guarantee—efficient and secure management of digital works, promoting their dissemination and understanding to a wider audience, which underscores the importance of adapting art conservation strategies to current technological realities. It represents a significant advance in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage and demonstrates Spain's potential as a leader in technological innovation applied to contemporary art.

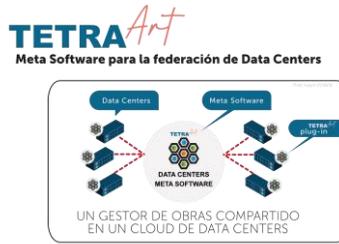


Fig.15a. TetraArt. Metasoftware



Fig. 15b. TetraArt. Emulador



Fig. 15c. TetraArt. Online curatorial projects



Fig. 15d. TetraArt. Online Exhibition Hall Manager



Fig. 15e. TetraArt. Mediatization



Fig. 15f. TetraArt. Online sales

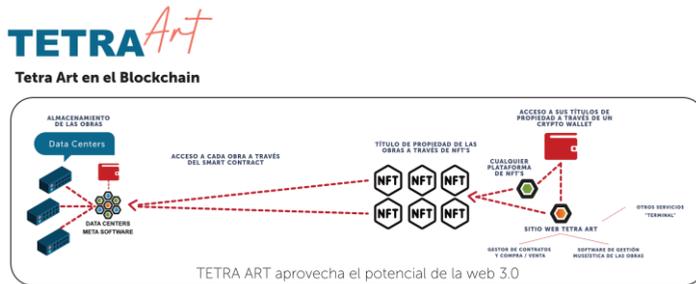


Fig. 15g. TetraArt. Blockchain



Fig. 15h. TetraArt. Economic model

6. CONCLUSIONS

In summary, New Media Art encompasses a vast and diverse array of artistic practices that utilize new media and technologies, and which are characteristic of the 21st century. Due to their virtual nature and constant online flow, these practices are difficult to integrate into the collections of traditional contemporary art museums, which lack a historiographical narrative for them, and they present a significant challenge for exhibition in the typical "white cube" museum spaces. Furthermore, there is a profound and complex problem concerning the obsolescence of the techno-functional systems employed by these virtual artistic creations. In any case, given that these artistic practices are genuine representations of the zeitgeist of our time, their contemplation and engagement by museums is unavoidable, which requires an exercise in governance.

All these necessary efforts to assume, from an institutional perspective, the contemplation and integration of New Media Art into the museum's collections and exhibition spaces, which have been ongoing for the last 35 years, must generate a field of action and methodological procedures that allow museums and art institutions (public and private) to fulfill their governance, that is, to undertake the task of embracing the artistic practices encompassed in New Media Art as new forms and languages of contemporary art, which requires an update of their museographic policies and an adaptation of their spaces, infrastructure, and resources. To achieve this, they must first identify the specific artistic heritage of their geopolitical area to subsequently musealize it, which implies: managing it, conserving it, restoring it, narrating it, exhibiting it, disseminating it and positioning it (and positioning themselves institutionally) in "Networks of trust" (internationalization).

In any case, and in parallel with this effort at adaptation by the traditional museum, New Media Art is diligently seeking its own museum space, proposing new platforms that, from a revolutionary techno-functional conception and structure, allow all these artistic practices to be fully realized. There is still a long way to go, but it is as necessary as it is urgent.

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