

April 28, 2014

Mr. Jefferson Bailey  
Primary Investigator/Project Director, NDSR-NY  
Metropolitan New York Library Council  
57 East 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Fourth Floor  
New York, NY

Dear Mr. Bailey,

On behalf of The Museum of Modern Art, I am pleased to submit the attached proposal to host a nine-month National Digital Stewardship Resident (NDSR). This fall, MoMA will begin a new era of management, preservation, and accessibility of its digital collection with the launch of a newly built standards-based digital preservation repository. A 2014-2015 residency would offer an emerging digital stewardship professional a truly unique opportunity to gain full insight into and hands-on experience with the emerging use of this cutting-edge software.

In August, MoMA will deploy its OAIS-based digital repository, as well as release it as free open-source software. After significant research and design, the Museum believes this is the first standards-based digital preservation repository designed for the information needs and requirements of a museum collecting time-based media artworks. As MoMA begins to ingest its collection into the new system and anticipates its adoption among peers, intriguing questions regarding codifying and translating conservation documentation practices to existing standards have arisen. A key focus of a 2014-2015 NDSR resident at MoMA would be working collaboratively with a range of Museum staff to help identify potential gaps between the employed standards and the use cases and needs of conservation. Such work is critical to ensuring the repository is an effective tool both for MoMA and its sister institutions.

The Museum's proposed NDSR project would immerse a resident in a growth area of the digital preservation sector—art museums and conservation—and offer substantive experiences with the broader work of media conservation at MoMA and the dynamic life of a world-renowned museum. The Museum and the two proposed mentors for the project—Kate Lewis and Ben Fino-Radin—are committed to and enthusiastic about the success of this project. Should you have any questions, please contact me or Lesley Cannady, Associate Director of Foundation Relations, at (212) 408-8514 or [lesley\\_cannady@moma.org](mailto:lesley_cannady@moma.org). In the meantime, thank you for your kind consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Lisa K. Millman

## **National Digital Stewardship Residency The Museum of Modern Art, Statement of Interest**

The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) was founded in 1929 as an educational institution dedicated to being the foremost museum of modern art in the world and is committed to establishing, preserving, and documenting a permanent collection of the highest order. Over the years, the preservation mission has expanded to include media conservation, which is dedicated to the display, preservation and documentation of media-based works in the collection. The Museum's robust holdings in this area include audio, film installations, video, and computer-based art, alongside a design collection with digital fonts and interactive design. Several hundred artists and designers are represented, including Vito Acconci, William Kentridge, John Maeda, Steve McQueen, Wael Shawky, and many more.

In the last three years, all of the single channel video works in the collection have been migrated from tape to file, and in autumn 2014, these together with the digitally born works will begin ingesting into MoMA's OASIS-based digital repository. A National Digital Stewardship Resident would begin his/her position at approximately the same time, joining MoMA as it enters a new era of the management, preservation and accessibility of its digital collection materials.

A residency at MoMA would provide an emerging digital stewardship professional with an exciting opportunity to engage in the archaeology of time-based media artworks in MoMA's collection and assist in defining how these works are captured, ingested, and cataloged in the repository. The intent is to identify the gap between the international digital preservation standards currently employed in MoMA's repository and the particular needs within the practice of media conservation. This is particularly relevant for the description of physical media carriers, the provenance of their digital surrogates and preservation masters, and the relationship between disparate components, both physical and digital, of an artwork.

Working alongside two mentors who oversaw the design of the software and are responsible for the safeguarding of the Museum's media-based works in its collection, the resident would contribute to the development phase of workflows, application profiles, and content standards for the cataloging and documentation of digital objects. The resident will also collaborate with the various digital collections stakeholders across the Museum, including colleagues from curatorial, registration, audio visual, and information technology departments. S/he would participate in the Media Working Group—made up of representatives from many of these same departments—to discuss and implement policies for dealing with media works from across the Museum's collection. Additionally, the resident would likely have opportunities to connect with staff from partner organizations in the international New Art Trust, of which MoMA is a member with the Tate and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Founded in 1997, the goal of the Trust is to advance media arts through the support of research and scholarship in the field.

More broadly, the resident would experience the daily life of the Department of Conservation and have the opportunity to take part in MoMA's wide-ranging educational programs and events such as artist's talks, symposia, film screenings, and much more. With extensive and highly competitive fellowship and internship programs for college, graduate, and post-graduate students, MoMA has significant experience fostering a supportive learning environment for emerging professionals, where their opinions and expertise are valued and their professional skills honed in preparation for the next phase of their careers. The residency would take place at the Museum's mid-town Manhattan site, where its conservation lab and the majority of its exhibitions and programming take place.

**National Digital Stewardship Residency  
The Museum of Modern Art, Identification of Mentors**

**Kate Lewis, Media Conservator**

Kate Lewis is the Media Conservator in the Department of Conservation at The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and is responsible for the conservation and preservation of the Museum's collection of media-based artworks. These holdings encompass audio, film, and video-based artworks, as well as performance and software-based objects. Ms. Lewis oversees the safeguarding of these works from acquisition through display, treatment, and preservation. Prior to joining MoMA in 2013, Ms Lewis was a time-based Media Conservator at Tate, London, where she worked from 2005. She has worked on a wide range of artworks by artists including Tony Oursler, Tacita Dean, Liz Rhodes, Bruce Nauman, and Meschac Gaba.

Ms. Lewis has an M.A. in the Conservation of Works of Art from the University of Northumbria at Newcastle-upon-Tyne and a B.A in the History of Art from the Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, United Kingdom. She has been involved in several international collaborative projects concerned with the conservation of contemporary art and time-based media conservation including *Inside Installations*, *Collecting the Performative*, *Matters in Media Art*—a collaborative project between the New Art Trust and its partner museums, The Museum of Modern Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and Tate—and is part of the expert group for Presto4U: Video Art, Art Museums, and Galleries project. In addition, Ms. Lewis serves on the editorial board of *Studies in Conservation*, a peer-reviewed journal for the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works.

**Ben Fino-Radin, Digital Repository Manager**

Ben Fino-Radin manages and maintains the digital repository that houses and provides bit preservation to all digital materials in MoMA's collection. Over the past year, Mr. Fino-Radin has served as project manager for the development of MoMA's new digital repository, overseeing it's design and development and the implementation of a standards-based approach that employs Archivematica and a new module of AtoM to facilitate digital collections care, management, and preservation planning. As part of the media conservation team, he also assists in the conservation of complex, born-digital, software-based collection materials. Prior to Fino-Radin's arrival at MoMA, he held the position of Digital Conservator at Rhizome at the New Museum, where he led the curation, preservation, and collection development of Rhizome's collection of born-digital works of contemporary art. As a result of his leadership of Rhizome's conservation program, in 2013 Rhizome received the Metropolitan Archivists Roundtable's award for innovation in archives.

In addition to his roles at Rhizome and MoMA, Fino-Radin has worked as an independent consultant for the Whitney Museum of American Art and the artist Cory Arcangel. He holds a BFA in Expanded Media from Alfred University, and in May 2014, will complete an MSLIS (Library and Information Science) and MFA in Digital Art from Pratt Institute.

# **National Digital Stewardship Residency The Museum of Modern Art, Project Proposal**

**Date Submitted:**

April 28, 2014

**Submitted by:**

Lesley Cannady, Associate Director of Foundation Relations

**PROJECT TITLE:**

Adapting Preservation Standards to Meet the Information Needs of Time-based Media Conservation

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

The goal of this project is to use The Museum of Modern Art's new digital repository as a test-bed for serving the information needs, documentation practices, and preservation standards of media conservation in a manner compliant with international digital preservation standards. The project aims to produce deliverables that document workflows for physical media carriers and metadata, content standards, application profiles, ontologies and controlled vocabularies for actionable use in MoMA's digital repository. With this work, the repository and associated standards would be available for potential re-use by institutions stewarding similar collections.

**SPECIFIC PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

- Survey existing metadata standards/initiatives for the description of analog videotape and other tangible media carriers and their relationship to their digital masters
- Engage in the documentation, capture, and ingest of a set of collections materials
- Document gaps between currently implemented digital preservation standards and information needs within media conservation
- Provide recommendations for the application of existing standards, taxonomies, and controlled vocabularies that may bridge identified gaps
- Assist in developing taxonomies for breaking down the complex relationships between tangible media, dedicated equipment, and digital materials
- Research how MoMA's digital repository may facilitate preservation and access of born-digital conservation and artwork records produced by other areas of the Department of Conservation (i.e. sculpture, paintings, photography, paper).

**PROJECT TIMEFRAME AND DELIVERABLES**

- **Months 1–3: Orientation and research**
  - Introduction to the Museum, media conservation's responsibilities, and the current workflows and systems for the cataloguing and preservation of MoMA's collection.
  - Shadow Assistant Media Conservator on the capture and preservation of a subset of the Museum's single-channel analog videotape collection materials

- Test ingest and cataloging of single-channel works in digital repository, identifying gaps between employed standards and museum community's information needs and preservation requirements
- Research metadata standards that may meet gap
- **Months 4–6: Hands-on testing and implementation pilots**
  - Adapt identified standards to application profile for MoMA's media conservation documentation needs
  - In collaboration with Digital Repository Manager and mentor Ben Fino-Radin, design and test workflow that applies the recommended standards to a range of video and complex software-based works
  - Begin documentation of proposal to Museum staff for the implementation of identified standards, application profiles, and workflows
- **Months 7–9: Revision and formalization**
  - Consider how MoMA's digital repository may facilitate preservation and access of born-digital conservation records being produced by other areas of the conservation department (i.e. sculpture, paintings, photography, paper)
  - Complete work on documenting the set of complex time-based media pieces within the collection, which include audio, film installations, video, and computer-based art
  - Solicit feedback from mentors and MoMA staff on the identified workflow and methodologies
  - Complete proposal for full implementation of identified strategy into media conservation's current workflow and present findings to key MoMA stakeholders

The resident would also be encouraged to attend or present at conferences or professional gatherings, as appropriate.

## **RESOURCES REQUIRED FOR PROJECT**

2 mentors (Kate Lewis and Ben Fino-Radin), 1 Resident

MoMA will provide workspace and support to the resident in its midtown Manhattan offices. The resident will also work with members of MoMA's Media Working Group, which includes staff from the Conservation, Registrar, Curatorial, Exhibitions, Information Technology, and Audio Visual departments.

## **PROJECT CONTEXT**

MoMA has a long history of collecting and exhibiting time-based media art since it's founding in 1929, as one of the first memory institutions of any kind to collect celluloid film. Time-based media art differs from other more "traditional" works in the collection in that it is dependent on technologies to be properly cared for and exhibited. The Museum's commitment to its historically significant and expansive collection of works of this nature necessitated the creation of a media conservation team in 2007 to safeguard this material. In recent years, the team has grown considerably (from one media conservator to a group of three) to meet the needs and challenges presented by these artworks.

MoMA has necessarily begun to focus more attention on the care of its growing born-digital collection as artists have shifted significantly from working in the analog to the digital and the needs of analog works in the collection face various forms of obsolescence. Media conservation—collaborating with internal colleagues and other institutions grappling with similar questions about these collections (specifically through Matters in Media Art; a collaborative project between the New Art Trust and its partner museums: MoMA, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Tate)—began developing the functional requirements for a digital repository for time-based media artworks. MoMA is now in the final stages of development of an OAIS-based digital repository that employs the best practices established by the broader digital preservation community in libraries and archives, but also integrates the concepts, practices and needs of time-based media conservation. This unique system will meet a significant need within the museum community, not only for effective digital preservation, but conservation management for complex time-based media artworks. To that end, MoMA specifically built the repository as open-sourced software and will make it publicly available for sister institutions.

The Museum anticipates the repository will be deployed this autumn, which would align well with the start of an NDSR residency and present an exciting opportunity for an emerging digital stewardship professional. The resident would work collaboratively with two mentors—Media Conservator Kate Lewis and Digital Repository Manager Ben Fino-Radin—and other MoMA staff to help identify where there may be gaps between the employed standards and the use cases and needs of conservation. This work is essential to providing a more effective tool both for MoMA, as well as other institutions that wish to adopt the system.

## **REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FOR RESIDENTS**

The successful resident will have a graduate degree in Library and Information Science, Audio Visual Preservation, or equivalent. Additionally, the successful candidate will have the following:

### **Specialized Knowledge:**

- Analog and digital media preservation
- General knowledge and understanding of analog and digital video and audio formats
- Familiarity and understanding of ISO 14721:2003 (OAIS)

### **General Knowledge:**

- Art history / contemporary art

## **PREFERRED KNOWLEDGE OR EXPERIENCE**

- PREMIS
- METS
- BagIt
- Python or similar scripting language(s)