



UNIVERSITÉ DU  
LUXEMBOURG



C<sup>2</sup>DH  
LUXEMBOURG CENTRE FOR  
CONTEMPORARY AND DIGITAL HISTORY

## Call For Papers

# Doing Experimental Media Archaeology: Practice & Theory

7 September 2022, Kulturfabrik, Esch-sur-Alzette

8-9 September 2022, Science Centre Differdange

**Organised within the context of the project "Doing Experimental Media Archaeology: Practice & Theory" (DEMA), funded by the Luxembourg National Research Fund (FNR)**

### Keynote Speakers

Erkki Huhtamo (University of California Los Angeles)

Lori Emerson (University of Colorado Boulder)

### Hands-On Demonstrations

Aleks Kolkowski (DEMA project / independent artist and researcher)

Tim van der Heijden (DEMA project / Open University of the Netherlands)

Karin Bienek & Ludwig Vogl-Bienek (illuminago)

There has been a growing interest in the use of experimental approaches to the study of media histories and their cultures. An increasing number of scholars researching at the intersection of media history and theory are breaking new ground while working with archival sources and artefacts in experimental ways, e.g. through historical re-enactments and hands-on simulations. In their 2014 essay "Experimental Media Archaeology: A Plea for New Directions", Andreas Fickers and Annie van den Oever underline the heuristic potential of hands-on approaches for re-sensitising scholars to the materiality of bygone media technologies and the tacit knowledge involved in their technical, social and cultural usages: "*Doing re-enactments with old media technologies in an experimental media-archaeology lab will produce new historical, ethnographic and empirical knowledge about past user practices and media experiences.*"<sup>1</sup> Historical re-enactments, for instance, can create new insights about the sense of time and temporality that is inscribed in the materiality of media technologies and bring about more awareness of the spatiality and social dynamics involved in past media usages. Hands-on experiments will also enable a better understanding of the constructivist nature of, e.g. film and video, photographs and audio recordings, as

---

<sup>1</sup> Andreas Fickers & Annie van den Oever, "Experimental Media Archaeology: A Plea for New Directions", in: A. van den Oever (ed.), *Technē /Technology: researching cinema and media technologies, their development, use, and impact*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014, p. 276.

historical sources, and allows us, in essence, to experience past media usages as social and cultural practices.

While the heuristic potential of experimental media archaeology has been traced before, the practical and methodological challenges of hands-on work in this field as a new means of knowledge production have been largely unexplored. One of the objectives of the project "Doing Experimental Media Archaeology: Practice & Theory", in which context this conference takes place, has therefore been to explore the heuristic possibilities of an experimental study of past media technological objects and to systematically reflect on the methodological underpinnings of doing experimental media research. In other words, the shift within the field of media archaeology from discourse-oriented to hands-on, experimental research practices has now reached a critical point where a thorough groundwork on theoretical and practical notions underpinning DEMA has been strategised.

The conference *Doing Experimental Media Archaeology: Practice & Theory* offers a platform for a discussion on how to widen the reach and inclusivity of hands-on approaches to experimental media research and education. Thereby, attention will be given to further develop best practices and to refining the protocols for documenting and archiving media archaeological experiments and the tacit knowledge they aim to capture.

**Proposals may include the following topics:**

- Hands-on media history
- Object-oriented archaeologies of media technologies
- Experimental approaches in media research
- Historical imagination and hands-on media history in practice-based education
- Intersectional media archaeology
- Histories of use and representation
- Global media cultures: non-Western media archaeology and histories of use
- Historical re-enactments and reconstructions in the field of music and sound technologies
- Media historical approaches to radio and communications technology
- Archaeologies of computing and gaming
- Strategies of documentation in media archaeological experiments
- Tacit knowledge and verbalisation strategies
- Learning by doing and the art of failure
- Transmedia storytelling in hands-on research and teaching
- Best practices in archiving histories of use
- Sustainable approaches for demonstrating working objects in heritage institutions

As the very nature of experimental media archaeology is interdisciplinary, practice-based and often interinstitutional, we are looking forward to contributions from media scholars, but also from artists, media professionals, museum curators, collection management specialists, educators and more.

**Submissions**

We invite you to submit a max. 300 word abstract for a 20 minutes presentation, including a short biography of the speaker and contact details at: [dema@uni.lu](mailto:dema@uni.lu). We also welcome proposals for panels with a duration of 60 minutes. We furthermore invite participants to perform a media archaeological

experiment, object lesson or re-enactment as part of the conference, proposals for such a performance may follow the same guidelines.

**Deadline** for submission: 15 June 2022. Confirmation will follow shortly thereafter. A selection of papers will be submitted for a peer-reviewed edited volume, being prepared by the DEMA project team.

### Opening event

The conference will take place on 8 and 9 September in the Science Centre in Differdange, Luxembourg. A special opening and public event is organised at the Kulturfabrik in Esch-sur-Alzette on 7 September in the evening (18:00-20:00), with live re-enactments by:

Aleks Kolkowski: Auxetophone and Stentorphone air-assisted gramophones, live demonstration of original and replica models using a newly-built, giant exponential horn.

Tim van der Heijden: Kinora motion picture technology (ca. 1907), live demonstration of original and replica models.

Karin Bienek & Ludwig Vogl-Bienek (illuminago): 'Magische Lichtspiele' - Magic Lantern Show

### About the conference organisers:

Prof. dr. Andreas Fickers (University of Luxembourg), Dr. Stefan Krebs (University of Luxembourg), M.A. Christianne Blijleven (University of Luxembourg), Dr. Aleksander Kolkowski, Dr. Tim van der Heijden (Open University of the Netherlands).

The conference is supported by the Luxembourg National Research Fund (FNR) and takes place within the context of the project "Doing Experimental Media Archaeology: Practice & Theory", hosted by the Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C<sup>2</sup>DH) of the University of Luxembourg.

For more information about DEMA, see the project website: <https://dema.uni.lu/>.



**Doing Experimental  
Media Archaeology**