ART, ART HISTORY & VISUAL STUDIES

7 December 2015

Proposal to rename the <mark>MA in Historical and Cultural Visualization to an MA in Digital Art History/Computational Media</mark>

We respectively request that the Department of Art, Art History & Visual Studies be allowed to rename the current Master's Degree in Historical and Cultural Visualization to an M.A. in **Digital Art History/Computational Media.** This M.A. also now has two tracks: 1) Digital Art History (the already existing M.A. track, currently named Historical and Cultural Visualization), and 2) a new track in Computational Media & Culture. The name change and the addition of the second track have been approved by the department, the Executive Committee of the Graduate Faculty, the Graduate School, and APC.

Track 1, <mark>M.A. in Digital Art History</mark>: The requirements of the existing M.A. and its objectives remain unchanged, but we have found that the name is not well understood by the outside world. In the past two years Digital Art History has emerged as a well-recognized field within the broader discipline of Art History, and therefore we believe the new name will attract a larger pool of applicants. The new name will also more clearly reflect the intellectual commitments of the Wired! lab and the kinds of research projects underway under its aegis. As importantly, it locates the M.A. squarely within the discipline of Art History as its intellectual home. The M.A. currently has thriving collaborations between Visual & Media Studies, and has many on-going collaborative projects with the Nasher Museum of Art. Finally, for those students who would like to go on to a PhD in a closely related field, an M.A. in Digital Art History would be recognizable and much more intelligible to prospective graduate programs. The goals of the program are for students to understand the critical affordances and potential of digital tools in the study and presentation of historical and cultural materials and to develop a hybrid theory-practice M.A. thesis that demonstrates their expertise in action around a particular art historical subject.

We have just graduated our first group of M.A. students in Historical and Cultural Visualization. **Jessica Pissini** worked with master sculptor Simon Verity and a team of students and professors to create a facsimile of a Nasher Museum artifact from the Medieval period as a way to better understand the process of stone carving and the use of traditional tools. Her thesis project explored ways to digitally research, visualize, and learn about museum objects through virtual tools and applications. The final project will be hosted on the Nasher Museum website. **Henrietta Miers** completed a thesis on the Counter-Reformation fresco cycles of Venice. She created a master database of sites and conducted a photographic campaign to document each

work of art in its original as well as its present location. **Jordan Noyes'** thesis analyzed the Berlin Wall as a site of graffiti interventions. She produced a geo- and time-referenced map that shows the succession of artistic interventions on the Berlin Wall as a series of episodes that reflect political concerns and art as a socially-engaged but ephemeral medium.

<mark>**Track 2, M.A. in Computational Media & Culture**</mark>: This new track is designed for graduate students focused on the study, creation, and use of digital media and computation in the arts and humanities. It provides a hands-on and practice-focused training in media and culture that aims to balance technical knowledge, creative practice, and theoretical knowledge-production. The track is offered in partnership with the Information Science + Studies Program and highlights research and presentation strategies enabled by the information sciences, new approaches to computational processes, and new forms of interpreting quantitative and qualitative data. Students in the track will affiliate with one of the following interdisciplinary Visual Studies labs: Duke Art, Law and Markets, DiG Digital Archeology, Emergence, S-1 Speculative Sensation, Information Science + Studies, or the rotating Franklin Humanities Institute Labs, and create practice-based projects on related topics. The goals of the program are for students to understand the critical affordances and potential of digital media, to develop competencies in data-driven and computational approaches to knowledge production, and to develop a hybrid theory-practice MA thesis that demonstrates their expertise in action around a particular subject. Digital research and production methods undertaken in the program may include: data driven analysis and visualization; interactive/relational database design and search methodologies; interactive publishing and storytelling techniques; generative forms of text, visuals and music production; virtual and augmented reality systems and games; complex systems analysis; new approaches to interface exploration and design; physical computing and interactive systems development.

Current M.A. students and their research interests
Jessica Pissini: Jessica is a second year M.A. student who worked with master sculptor Simon Verity and a team of students and professors to create a facsimile of a Nasher Museum artifact as a way to better understand the process of stone carving and the use of traditional tools. Her thesis project explores ways to digitally research, visualize, and learn about museum objects through virtual tools and applications.

Henrietta Miers: Henrietta is a second year M.A. candidate completing a thesis on the Counter-Reformation fresco cycles of Venice. She is creating a master database of sites and has conducted a photographic campaign to document each work of art in its original as well as its present location.

Jordan Noyes: Jordan is a second year M.A. studying the Berlin Wall as a site of graffiti interventions. She is producing a geo- and time-referenced map that shows the succession of artistic interventions on the Berlin Wall as a series of episodes that reflect political concerns and art as a socially-engaged but ephemeral medium.

Lucas Giles: Lucas is a first year M.A. student with a first class BA in Art History from the

University of Warwick, UK. He is developing a project on the medieval art and architecture of Naples and South Italy.

Zhuyun Zhang: is a first year M.A. student with a BA in art history from the University of Hong Kong. She focused on Italian Baroque art, particularly on urban layout and architecture in relation to papal policy, and was awarded Paul and Petra Hinterthur Prize for the final year student achieving the best result in Western art.