DH for Breakfast
Wednesday Lectures in Digital Humanities

10
December
9.00—10.00 am

DEPARTMENT OF DIGITAL HUMANITIES
Elisabethstraße 59/III, Lehrsaal SR 81.31

Speculative Reconstructions: Generative AI and the Art Historical Image

Katarina Mohar

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This lecture presents the research of *ARTofAI*, an interdisciplinary project at ZRC SAZU that examines how generative diffusion models can be used as analytical tools in art history.

The project explores how models such as Stable Diffusion, when fine-tuned on small, curated datasets, can support the study of artworks that are damaged or lost. Currently, two case studies are at the forefront of the research: the mural fragments of the 14th Century rotunda of St Nicholas in Selo and the paintings of the 17th Century Flemish artist Almanach, active in Carniola. Through experiments in fine-tuning, captioning, and inpainting, the project tests how textual and visual data influence model behaviour and what such speculative visualizations can contribute to historical interpretation. Early results point to the potential of these models to reproduce stylistic surface features while exposing the limits of compositional and semantic understanding.

The lecture situates these findings within a broader reflection on authorship, bias, and the ethics of reconstruction in digital art history.

Katarina Mohar, PhD, is an art historian specializing in 20th Century art, particularly post-war art in Slovenia and the former Yugoslavia. Her research examines the relationship between art and politics, socialist realism, and digital art history. She is a research associate at the France Stele Institute of Art History, ZRC SAZU, and assistant professor at the University of Maribor. Her work integrates computational methods into art-historical research, focusing on generative image models and methodological innovation.

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