Artseum. Building cultural bridges between Europe and Asia.

Follow the Migration of Artists

Did you ever wonder how artists wandered? Where and when they created their artworks and where these works are located today? Then join our journey, learn more about historical artist migration between Europe and Asia and help us to build bridges for future exchange.

Team: #Artseum

Team members

Thanh Cuong Le, Thanh Hung Mai, Jana Spiller, Meike Hopp

Members roles and background

Technical team:

Thanh Cuong Le, Bsc. Mathematics, TU Berlin (Project-Leader)

Thanh Hung Mai, Bsc. Electrical Engineering, TU Berlin

Arthistorical Team:

Jana Spiller, M.A. Student, Kunstgeschichte im globalen Kontext mit Schwerpunkt Afrika, FU Berlin (coordinator for the arthistorical team, organization, design)

Meike Hopp, Jun-Prof. Digitale Provenienzforschung / Digital Provenance, Institut für Kunstwissenschaften und historische Urbanistik, TU Berlin (cooperation partner / supervising and hosting of workshops/hackathons)

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Solution Details

Solution description

If art lovers or students and pupils today want to learn more about artists and their works of art, the first access is usually via the Internet. In recent years, a number of museums worldwide have made digital copies of their objects available. Especially due to the Corona Pandemic, many new innovative virtual exhibition concepts have been developed in the last few months. However, to date there are still no convincing concepts to connect these virtual artworks and exhibition spaces in a goal-oriented way. So far, all these offers remain isolated, the users have hardly any guidance to find their way around this - sometimes very confusing - offer.

Moreover, the historical migration of the artists themselves, and thus the historical migration of their works until they finally reached their present location, is usually completely neglected. As a result, many students and scholars are hardly aware of the fact to which extent artists have moved intercontinentally over the past two centuries and what effects this has had on the worldwide dissemination of their works of art. The goal of the solution is therefore to develop a prototype for a web application together with interdisciplinary students, for example from Universities in Berlin and from the Vietnam University of Fine Arts. In a second step, the works created at the respective locations are to be shown and linked to their current place of storage (if possible also those that are not exhibited). This should not only illustrate the manifold migration processes in the cultural field, but also make visible where certain influences in artistic production come from and how they spread worldwide. In the process of developing the application, the student groups learn much more experimentally about cultural areas and cultural exchange processes between continents than would be the case in a classical seminar context.

Solution context

Museums and galleries have to struggle in the Corona period. By developing the application using the example of the migration of artists and the cultural exchange between Europe and Asia, we could link virtual exhibition concepts worldwide as well as digital objects in museums, in order to give them back their historical contexts. The user can thus not only follow the traces of the artist, but can also find out more about the backgrounds and journeys of the artworks. This draws attention back to the digital Museums and their programs and supports them in particular in Corona times.

The key feature of the project is Visualization of Locations. One of many challenges are the world never stays the same. Boundaries shift in time make it difficult for us to use the current available digital map. Although the demand for a professional Cartographer is undeniable, here are our general idea for the Mapping Framework:

1. Layers: The mapping framework should be kept as simple as the base map as possible. Labels and Boundaries Layers are the 2 basic layers.
2. Key feature: Tracing line for each artists movement will be our main feature.
3. Boundaries shift (optional): there should be different boundaries layers, for example in 19th

Solution target group

The platform to be developed will allow people to comfortably navigate through artworks and artists and learn more about the historical and intercontinental migration of artists and their works of art. The target group is initially the interdisciplinary team of students themselves (learning by doing), but also other students scholars and teachers and people who simply enjoy learning about art. Asian contexts and influences have hardly played a role in European cultural studies so far. The application also enables all those interested in art to find out about the exchange of artists between Europe and Asia (museum visitors, gallery visitors, etc.). Teachers could also use the app in art classes to make lessons more interactive.

Solution impact

The project is all about building the bridges.

We want to:

- encourage and bolster students to work together in an interdisciplinary manner within digital education (mathematics and humanities),

- encourage and bolster the studies of culture and art history to better network between countries, continents and different cultures,

- the encourage and bolster teachers and students not to be insecure when dealing with foreign cultures, but to understand processes of cultural exchange in a playful and visually vivid way

- to give students and scholars material to get started with that should motivate them to undertake further research in this field and to gradually expand and fill the platform

- and also for the people who love to go to galleries and museums around the world comfortably to participate in cultural life as barrier-free as possible, even if external circumstances (e.g. a pandemic) block access to museums.

Solution tweet text

Missing #WorkAndTravel? At the #artseum you will be able to follow the footsteps of artists travelling and working between Europe and Asia. Get inspired and learn how art builds bridges between continents, time and people. #DigiEduHack #Wanderlust

Solution innovativeness

Especially in cultural studies, there is little exchange between (Western) Europe and (Southeast) Asia. Little is known so far about the artists who completed their training in Europe and migrated to Asia in the 19th and early 20th centuries, such as Victor François Tardieu (born 1870 in Orliénas; died 1937 in Hanoi). Vice versa artists from Asia came to Europe to e.g. furnish rooms in palaces, whose names can hardly be traced back to this day. In the future, the platform should not only make it possible to make these names and their works (some of which are scattered around the globe) visible and findable again, but also to network digital museum objects and exhibition concepts.

In addition to the content, the approach is also innovative: For the first time, students of mathematics are working together with students of the humanities on this content. It is planned to extend this transdisciplinary cooperation to a transcontinental level, for example through one or more partner universities/student groups in (Southeast) Asia.

Solution transferability

Even if the project can initially only start from a few individual examples of migrating artists in order to develop a functioning prototype of a web application within the given time, it should of course be expandable and transferable to other regional contexts. After the prototype has been developed by the end of March, the project should therefore be expanded and continued in a second phase with more partners (universities, museums and galleries) in the future. For smaller museums and galleries in particular, such a project offers the opportunity to represent their own holdings; at the same time, it offers users around the world (an almost) barrier-free access to and participation in cultural space. At the same time, the project gives students at universities a previously unimaginable range of insights into historical transcontinentally cultural exchange.

Solution sustainability

- The prototype for the application is planned and designed so that its contents could be supplemented and diversified. We are therefore planning to expand our work temporarily and regionally in cooperation with universities, academies and museums/galleries also in other continents like Africa, America, Oceania to be able to build bridges between cultures around the world.

- Virtual tours or courses in collaboration with galleries and museums (likely smaller ones at first) about an artist or collections could be available in the future. Since we have a map as a visualization and reliable sources, our courses could stand out and be interesting.

Solution team work

We will add a timeline, where you can see how we will proceed working together. We use toggl planer, to have an overview for everyone, when what will be due. Also we use Google docs, Padlet and zoom to collect ideas and stay in contact. We will have some scheduled meetings to discuss the ongoing of the project and two Online-workshops/hackathons with student groups in Berlin and Asia.

The communication with the collaborating attendees will be through Email, Zoom and the use of similar working platforms collecting ideas. The first workshop will be an Input-Session, where we present the main idea and what the task will be for them. The second workshop will be quite bigger and is more communication and exchange led. Everyone will share their progress and there will be space for discussion for the presentation, the interpretation of the information and questions.