

# Activating Museum Data for Research, Scholarship, and Public Engagement

hosted by Translocations at the Institut für Kunstwissenschaft und Historische  
Urbanistik at TU Berlin In collaboration with Pitt Rivers Museum Oxford University

September 30 - October 3, 2019

Application Deadline: 15.09.2019

Info Session: 10.09.2019



UNIVERSITY OF  
OXFORD

SciencesPo  
MÉDIALAB

TRANS  
LOCAL  
TIMES



This workshop launches a collaboration between scholars interested in exploring data of cultural material to pave the way for new visualization tools and scholarship of cultural collections. This collaboration takes the form of a data sprint, a form of data-centered workshop designed to deliver a better understanding of datasets and conducive to formulate research questions based on their complex exploration.

The advent of digitization and digital modes of exhibitions have exacerbated the possible facets of artifacts. Museums digitize their objects with the multiplicity that digital data forms and current technology can produce: objects are reproduced in high resolution images, contextualized with documentation of every exhibition and textual information about the creator's life and career, and meta-data about all museum operations such as restoration, transport and storing, and provenance, a detailed history of the object before entering the museums' collection. The networked object appears in the life of the museum's database. Today we can understand every facet and movement of individual objects, inscribe them into a larger history of the institution with every link that has ever been drawn in exhibitions, press releases, loans, material or art historical descriptions. To date museums display their digital collection with highly curated and restricted access online and a study with complete access to a museum database is unprecedented. We organize data driven workshops with our institutional partners that give our selected group of participants access to their collection database. The data sprint brings together data experts, researchers from disciplines in the humanities with a focus in art history, developers, designers, and museum staff of different institutions. Collectively, participants will explore through data visualization and software development the role, history, and social context of cultural assets in contemporary society. Through the study of the acquisitions, circulation, and preservation of cultural objects we aim to develop new technologies that will allow a 'distant reading', a quantitative approach to find abstract patterns as described by Moretti (2015) and a deep dive such as case studies and qualitative analysis of objects in museum data collections.

## Eligibility

The data sprint is open to scholars, students and museum personnel. Participants from outside of Berlin will receive a travel stipend subject to the release of the funds. Proposals for the participation should relate to a pedagogical or research project in the digital humanities and museum contexts. For pedagogical proposals, participants may revise an existing course or create a new course in which museum data is incorporated into the syllabus as an outcome of the data sprint. The data sprint will produce new open-source technology that can be used in teaching and research. Participants attending the workshop will be required to write a paper or blog entries that will be published during and after the workshop.

## Submitting a Proposal

Proposals not more than one page should provide (a) an introduction to your research interest, (b) a list of possible programming/design skills (including languages and programs) (c) a description of past projects in museum contexts or relevant to the data sprint (d) learning outcomes that are relevant to your research practice.

Proposals should be submitted to Dr. Anne Luther until **September 15th** using the following email address:

[a.luther@tu-berlin.de](mailto:a.luther@tu-berlin.de)

The data sprint is funded with the generous support of Volkswagen Stiftung

