"Unlearning Media Art: Reimagining in Archiving, Curating, Breathing".

* Panel Abstract by Morten Søndergaard (Panel Chair)

In Statement of Intermedia Higgins writes that “the central problem [of media technologies] is now not only the new formal one of learning to use them, but the new and more social one of what to use them for?”. (Higgins, 1967)

What Higgins is pointing towards in this, arguably, formative text for the conceptualization and identification of

‘media art’ is the process of not only unlearning the ‘old habits’ of art but also in a more speculative way unlearn the ways technologies are being employed in imaginings of probable and possible futures.

It is possible to claim that the early foundation of media art is fueled by a call for engaging with the ‘social problem’ of media technologies. Simply to learn how to use them is not enough.

This could be said to be the ‘cultural’ problem of media art, leading to a more humanistic question of what we really ‘learn’ from media technologies? How do we ‘unlearn’ bad habits and avoid constructing new ones?

This panel adresses this question from three critical perspectives, all centered on actual learning situations with international students of (new) media art. It is possible to see media art as a memory system that enables us to retrace the processes of formal ‘learning’ and social ‘unlearning’ since the early foundations of media art. If we follow these artistic and scholarly traces, a genealogy of shifts and turns appear - some made it into a more formal ‘art history’, others only exist as unheard or invisible traces behinds screens of a global culture of media-generated attention-economy and (false) consciousness. So, how might we activate unlearning processes and ask students to reimagine not only the future of the field, but also its pasts?

1. Anna Nacher: Unlearning as pedagogical strategy: (Re)breathing

2. Alessandro Ludovico: Unlearning the digital dispositif: (Un)Archiving

3. Morten Søndergaard: Reimagning Media Art: (Un)curating