

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

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ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION AWARDS GRANT TO MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE TO SUPPORT THE PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION OF BORN-DIGITAL MEDIA

Planning grant supports initiative to establish techniques and technologies for the long-term preservation of born-digital objects and to allow for new directions in collecting

Astoria, Queens, NY, October 5, 2017—Museum of the Moving Image (MoMI), the nation’s only museum dedicated to film, television, and digital media, has been awarded a grant in the amount of \$375,000 from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to support the creation of a sustainable institutional infrastructure for the preservation of born-digital works, while also developing a high-quality model that elevates practice throughout the field. With such a framework established, MoMI will be able to collect and preserve digital material relating to film and television production, and digital artwork, such as the animated GIF commissions supported by Giphy currently on view in *The GIF Elevator* installation at the Museum. The Mellon-funded project will eventually extend to social media platforms and virtual reality.

“Because they are made out of bits and bytes, these ‘objects’ are often created, manipulated, and viewed digitally, requiring brand new preservation strategies and technologies,” said MoMI Executive Director Carl Goodman. “We are honored by this award from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. For the past two decades, the Museum has been at the forefront of exhibiting digital media works, from early video art to video games and animated GIFs. This grant will enable us, for the first time in our history, to have an infrastructure for the collection and preservation of such work.”

The grant project, “Born Digital: Pathways Towards Preservation,” will be led by Barbara Miller, Ph.D., Senior Curator of Collections and Exhibitions, with support from other Museum staff. The heart of the Museum’s collection—2% of which is on view in the core exhibition *Behind the Screen*—focuses on the objects created as part of the process of making, promoting, and distributing film, television, and digital media. These include set models, production equipment, and publicity materials. Miller said, “This is a fantastic opportunity for the Museum to build capacity for collecting, preserving, and exhibiting recent forms of digital art and vernacular culture, as well material that is now likely to be born-digital instead of physical, such as costume and production designs, and other artifacts of production.”

The Museum has partnered with Small Data Industries, a conservation studio and consultancy founded by Ben Fino-Radin, to conduct activities including a review of current institutional practice; a series of case studies offering in-depth materials research; developing a pilot digital preservation repository for the collection; and facilitating dialogue with colleagues at other museums, libraries, and universities facing similar challenges in the conservation of born-digital art and cultural heritage.

“Ensuring the longevity of born-digital content is essential to preserving the cultural record of our time. With this grant, the Museum of the Moving Image will take an important leap forward toward embedding the necessary infrastructure to make the responsible stewardship of this material mission-critical,” said Alison Gilcrest, Program Officer for Arts and Cultural Heritage at the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

About Museum of the Moving Image

Museum of the Moving Image (movingimage.us) advances the understanding, enjoyment, and appreciation of the art, history, technique, and technology of film, television, and digital media. In its stunning facility—acclaimed for both its accessibility and bold design—the Museum presents exhibitions; screenings of significant works; discussion programs featuring actors, directors, craftspeople, and business leaders; and education programs which serve more than 50,000 students each year. The Museum also houses a significant collection of moving-image artifacts. In 2017, the Museum opened *The Jim Henson Exhibition*, a critically acclaimed new permanent exhibition devoted to the artist, filmmaker, and innovator who revolutionized puppetry for the screen.

About Small Data Industries

Small Data Industries is a conservation studio and consultancy providing services and support for the collection, exhibition, preservation, and storage of time-based media art. Founded by Ben Fino-Radin, Small Data Industries works with institutions, artists, galleries, and collectors to bootstrap the ecosystem of support for born-digital and technologically complex works of art.

About The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation endeavors to strengthen, promote, and, where necessary, defend the contributions of the humanities and the arts to human flourishing and to the well-being of diverse and democratic societies. To this end, it supports exemplary institutions of higher education and culture as they renew and provide access to an invaluable heritage of ambitious, path-breaking work. The Foundation makes grants in five core program areas: Higher Education and Scholarship in the Humanities; Arts and Cultural Heritage; Diversity; Scholarly Communications; and International Higher Education and Strategic Projects.

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MUSEUM INFORMATION

Hours: Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. (group visits only by appointment). Wednesday–Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday, 10:30 to 8:00 p.m. Saturday–Sunday, 11:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Museum Admission: \$15 adults; \$11 senior citizens (65+) and students (18+) with ID; \$7 youth (3–17). Children under 3 and Museum members are admitted free. Admission to the galleries is free on Fridays, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Film Screenings: Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays, and as scheduled. Unless otherwise noted, tickets are \$12 adults / \$9 students and seniors / \$6 children 3–12 / free for Museum members at the Film Lover level and above. Advance purchase is available online. Ticket purchase may be applied toward same-day admission to the Museum’s galleries.

Location: 36-01 35 Avenue (at 37 Street) in Astoria, Queens, NY.

Subway: M (weekdays only) or R to Steinway Street. Q (weekdays only) or N to 36 Avenue.

Program Information: Telephone: 718 777 6888; Website: movingimage.us

Membership: <http://movingimage.us/support/membership> or 718 777 6877

Museum of the Moving Image is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and has received significant support from the following public agencies: New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; New York City Council; New York City Economic Development Corporation; New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; Institute of Museum and Library Services; National Endowment for the Humanities; National Endowment for the Arts; and Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation). For more information, please visit movingimage.us.