

DiVersions v2

seven online installations

How could digital collections of cultural institutions welcome different and even opposing views? In the seven on-line installations brought together here, artists rethink the possibilities of on-line cultural heritage through decolonial and intersectional perspectives. What if we would arrange otherwise, invent material ways to move with data and listen to metadata's uncertainties?

Diversions v1

A first version of the physical installations was shown in De Pianofabriek (Brussels) in October 2019. On the basis of reflections and discussions among the artists and with visitors, this second version of DiVersions has been completely reworked.

Guided tours

Several guided tours with artists and organisers are planned in the coming months. Please check the Constant website for latest dates or if you want to visit as a group on other dates, contact:

donatella@constantvzw.org

Publication v1.1

diversions.constantvzw.org

A pdf and wiki publication with articles, reflections and artist contributions was edited in the fall of 2019. A second version of the publication will be launched in iMAL (Brussels) and De Krook (Gent) in December 2020.

Colophon

With: *Collection of uncertainties* (Marie Lécivain, Colm o'Neill), *Sketchy recognition* (Michael Murtaugh, Nicolas Malevé), *When organic trees meet the data tree* (Anaïs Berck), *Material Journeys Through Other Realities* (Phil Langley, Mia Melvær), *The weight of things* (Cristina Cochior), *A new fire ceremony* (Zoumana Meïté, Martino Morandi), *Diff3r3ntVversionsArePOSSIBLE?!. (Z.)*

Scenography: Mia Melvær and Cristina Cochior

Design and development publication: OSP (Sarah Magnan, Gijs de Heij)

DiVersions is initiated by Constant and developed in partnership with: Ugent - Department of Educational Studies, Werkplaats immaterieel erfgoed, meemoo - Vlaams Instituut voor het Archief - Expertisecentrum Digitaal Erfgoed, RoSa - Kenniscentrum voor gender en feminisme.

Projects

Collection of uncertainties

The Collection of uncertainties finds its source in the Belgian digitized heritage collections made public. Thanks to the online catalogues and the progressive digitization of the collections, the search opens up not only to scientific classifications and descriptions but also to the “notes” or “remarks” of the notice. Hence, facilitating cross-referencing and mixing of the keywords from the thesaurus with elements entered more freely. Thus, paradoxically, the more details the scientist or archivist provides - by annotating and thereby introducing nuances - on the origin of an object, the more the fields of the probable, the unsolved and the possible open up to us. Objects sometimes frozen at a date or function can now become objects illustrating doubt, another possible or unclear story. The Collection of uncertainties is composed of all *items* whose notice contains vocabulary with an uncertain tendency, i.e. words such as “probable”, “probably”, “undoubtedly”, “perhaps”, “almost”, “sometimes”, “uncertain”, etc., in French, Dutch or English. It consists of about ten to a few thousand “articles” depending on the languages or levels of uncertainty chosen, with no identical results for translated or similar words. Depending on the additions or modifications, the Collection of uncertainties is in perpetual evolution, much like knowledge, it evolves according to the uncertain knowledge and recognition of the scientific world.

Project developed by **Marie Lécivain** and **Colm o'Neill**, initiated together with **Martin Campillo**.

Collection: **Art and History Museum (Carmentis)**

When organic trees meet the data tree

Wikipedia and Wikidata are used worldwide to train language software, such as translation apps and autocomplete functions in search engines. Wikipedia and Wikidata data is accessible and free of charge, the information is up-to-date and exists in many different languages.

When organic trees look for how they are represented in these databases, cultural and power structures become visible. This work makes it clear, for example, that not all languages are present in the same way. Moreover, the search term tree leads to individual trees, such as the chestnut tree that grew next to Anne Frank's house. Whereas even a child can easily point to a tree in physical life, the concept of a tree is a challenge for programmers in the digital world.

Concept: **Anaïs Berck**

Realisation: **Anaïs Berck, Gijs de Heij**

Trees: all species belonging to the following families:

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_tree_genera

Code: **Python, Sparql, Turtle, Jinja, Imagemagick**

Source code: gitlab.constantvzw.org/algolit/algoliterary_publishing/-/tree/master/wikidata_drawing

Previous version: **Wikified Colonial Botany**

Collections: **Wikidata, Wikipedia**

The weight of things

The weight of things brings forward the space of negotiation that lies behind declaring intangible heritage elements, which remains invisible in the inventory as currently represented through the database. By drawing a parallel between the care work involved in the assemblage of a heritage element and the formalist actants, such as the form for entering elements into the database, this project highlights the "weight" of intangible heritage objects as the narrative space between use and representation.

The name of the project comes from the "sorting weight" setting, a function which is only accessible to [immaterieelerfgoed.be](https://www.immaterieelerfgoed.be) moderators. The setting determines in what order the elements should be displayed on the website. Although a common feature of online sites, it is a trace

of the many ways in which moderators imprint the public interaction with heritage and the materiality of intangible things.

As elements of intangible heritage march past the visitor, the order in which they make their appearance can be changed.

Concept and development: **Cristina Cochior**

Site architecture: **Ruben van de Ven**

Interviewee: **Ellen Janssens**

Collection: **immaterieelergoed.be**

Sketchy recognition

Bread, Nose, Kangaroo or Teddy Bear?

A photograph from the collection of the Museum of Musical Instrument is processed by a contour detector algorithm. The algorithm draws the lines it found on the image sequentially. While it is tracing the contours, another algorithm, a sketch detector, tries to guess what is being drawn. Is it bread? A kangaroo? It is a teddy bear.

Sketchy Recognition (working title) is an attempt to provoke a dialogue with, and between, algorithms, visitors and museum collections.

Project developed by **Nicolas Malevé** and **Michael Murtaugh**

Collection: **Musical Instruments Museum (MIM)**

A new fire ceremony

Curatorial proposal for a digital catalogue by AAM 00071.1

For this edition of DiVersion(s) we propose to experiment a prototype of online catalog that enacts and illustrates the dispute between two goddesses: Carmentis, The Roman goddess associated with technological innovation who gives her name to the digital catalog of the MRAH Museum, and the collection object AA0071.1 Tzitzimime (or Xochiquetzal) who is the Aztec goddess that every 52 years threatens the world of destruction, unless humans renew their knowledge during the New Fire Ceremony.

This catalog is meant to enhance and explore the ambiguity of data structuring processes which with their versions and conflicts transpose the colonial history of the museum to digital infrastructures. The aim is to build a cross-eyed relation between the narratives (of origin, authenticity, fathership, power demonstration...) embedded in the knowledge production model of the museum's database and catalog, and the informational structures of hypertext language and internet browsers. (...)

Project developed by **Zoumana Meïté** and **Martino Morandi**

Collection : **Museum for Art and History (Carmentis)**

Material Journeys Through Other Realities

Stacks and volumes of raw material taken out of place when acquired by a museum collection. Shown in its accumulative, collective form, these vitrines contain outlines of great piles, the mass of its body and your body together.

Bring your own hair and bones, come sit with us.

We promise to guide you through it.

Project developed by **Mia Melvær** and **Phil Langley**

Collection: **Art and History Museum (Carmentis)**

Diff3r3ntV3rsionsArePOSSIBLE?!

If we accept that #AnotherWorldIsPossible, then maybe this aspiration should scale and render around us on multiple levels and in multiple domains. If we can think of many manifestations of difference(s), for a variety of experiences/subjectivities and contexts, we should consider not only differences of information and knowledge in terms of content but also its form, logic, experience, and access points. Different versions of different “truths” are not only different perspectives and arguments in the system but potentially different (world-making) systems, models of viewing, and argumentation-making as well. In the case of the monumental Wikipedia project, this should go far. As this digital commons project aims at being free, open, participatory, collaborative, accessible, neutral, accumulative, and universal it also fails to

accommodate different modes of (re)producing itself and therefore relating to different realities. As it has grown to a size of epic proportions it also accommodates hegemonic aspirations and renders Wikipedia admins with fairly notorious reputations for disciplining - normalized. It is the institutional-like protocols and armatures, that are built to sustain a particular vision of encyclopedic work, also reduce the elasticity that was once essential for Wiki (sub)culture(s).

The Hawaiian word “Wiki” means “quick” and was initially used to describe web content development through spontaneous, organic, and incremental web-making; its structure would emerge from the content accumulation and form articulation via constant editing and refactoring. Ward Cunningham (author of the first WikiWikiWeb) was interested in tracking the number and locations of wiki page edits as a sociological experiment and considered even the degradation of a wiki page as part of its process towards stability. ‘There are those who give and those who take. You can tell by reading what they write.’ (Ward Cunningham, 2009) The current state of Wikipedia as a platform leaves little space to imagine such non-formal and non-normalized approaches and/or space for experimentation; the room for diverting from norms is super limited if even possible. Content conflicts as 'edit wars' are hidden under a single tab link and nothing on the front page hints at the impression of the state of potential contestation or even just web-making (power)dynamics.

Diff3r3ntV3rsionsArePOSSIBLE?!. points to some of these issues in explicit and implicit ways by considering queer perspectives as counter-normative positions that are not only antagonistic interventions but also ridicule and hope to retract the dominant logic of single 'neutral viewpoint' objectivity and its oppressive implications.

Project developed by: **Z.**
Collection: **Wikidata**

