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**ON THE COUCH - CAPTURING AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE. A
CASE STUDY ON PAUL SERMON'S 'TELEMATIC VISION'**

By Rolf Wolfensberger

The thesis is a contribution to current debates on preservation strategies for electronic media artworks and is based on a case study on Paul Sermon's interactive networked installation Telematic Vision (1993 -). It thematises a shift from object-centered and artist-informed strategies of preventive conservation and documentation towards an approach laying emphasis on assessing the impact and the context of the artwork being in a state of performance. The case study is designed as a phenomenological research and attempts to test various complementary audiovisual and text-based qualitative methods focusing on recording and documenting audience experience and the reflective accounts of the audience's perception of contemporary artworks. The applied methods in the test case have been adapted from neighboring fields like oral history, visual anthropology, cognitive and social sciences and museum studies. The chosen package of methods comprises a combination of two variants of video observation capturing the audience's behavior whilst using the installation, a series of video-cued recall interviews with participants and polling by a specific questionnaire. The approach has generated a rich panorama of experiential eyewitness accounts and states that such sources yield vital information for the preservation of such time-based and process-oriented artworks like Telematic Vision which emerge only through the lived experience of the audience. But experiential evidence is only useful for preservation issues in unison with other established approaches guaranteeing the integrity of the state of notation of the artwork and providing the material and contextual parameters for its re-presentation. The thesis attempts to fill the experiential gap in a holistic approach to preserve electronic media artworks.

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