

AniVision Workshop 2025

“Exploring Digital Film Studies: Animation, Ephemeral Film and Visualization”

Speaker Information

Monday, September 29, 2025

Panel 1: Digital Tools, 13:30 to 15:00

Peter Bell: *Moment and Moments in Christian Art. Computational Analysis of Pictorial Narratives*

The biblical story offers narrative strands that are told in such detail that Christian art uses formats that anticipate comics and animation. While the iconography is usually easy to recognize, identifying the points in time of the plot presents a particular challenge.

Peter Bell is full professor for Art History and Digital Humanities in Marburg university. His research focuses are digital art history (computer vision, ai art) and social art history.

Ralph Ewerth: *Using the TIB AV Analytics platform for analyzing disinformation patterns in news videos*

Automatic video analysis enables applications in many disciplines including film and media studies, communication science, and education. In this talk, we present the web-based video analysis platform entitled TIB AV-Analytics (TIB-AV-A) which integrates state-of-the-art approaches from the fields of computer vision, audio analysis, and natural language processing for relevant video analysis tasks. TIB-AV-A provides users with an interactive web interface that enables manual annotation and provides access to powerful deep learning methods without a requirement for specific hardware.

As a use case for TIB-AV-A, we present results from a research project “FakeNarratives” (funded by German Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), project number 16KIS1517) on the analysis of news videos. An example result from this project is our approach for the identification of speaker roles and situations in news, which is a prerequisite for the analysis of narrative patterns.

Ralph Ewerth has been Professor of Multimodal Modeling and Machine Learning at Philipps University Marburg since April 2025 and is a member of the Hessian Center for Artificial Intelligence "hessian.AI". Previously, he was Professor of Visual Analytics at Leibniz University Hannover from 2015 to 2025. Since 2015, he has led a research group

at TIB (German National Library of Science and Technology), the Leibniz Information Centre for Science and Technology, and is a member of the L3S Research Center in Hannover. Prof. Ewerth has published more than 150 scientific articles, particularly on multimodal search, multimodal data analysis, computer vision, digital libraries, and technology-enhanced (human) learning.

Josephine Diecke: *VIAN Light: User-Friendly Video Annotation for Research and Teaching*

This presentation introduces VIAN Light, a cross-disciplinary, web- and desktop-based tool for audiovisual annotation, developed by University of Zurich and TIB Hannover. It covers core features, current development, and behind-the-scenes debates on usability, interoperability, and hybrid workflows.

Josephine Diecke is Assistant Professor of Film Studies at UZH, focusing on digital methods, video annotation, film preservation, and feminist DH.

Panel 2: Animation, 15:30 to 17:00

Ewa Ciszewska: *From Interviews to Open Data: Embodied Knowledge and Digital Tools in Animation Research*

This presentation shows how structured interviews with Polish animation workers, as open research data, sustain animation research. It presents interviews not merely as data-gathering tools, but as relational practices that generate open, reusable, and ethically grounded sources for long-term scholarly engagement.

Ewa Ciszewska is Assistant Professor at the University of Lodz and researches Polish animation history, audiovisual heritage, and Polish-Czech film relations.

Pavel Skopal & Terézia Porubčanská: *Networked Animation: (Social) Network Analysis as a Tool for Investigating Animated Film Production*

The presenters have recently completed a project on the history of the film studio in Zlín, employing digital humanities tools, as well as a comparative project—conducted in collaboration with Polish colleagues—exploring the history of Czechoslovak and Polish animation. This year, they launched a new project investigating Czech animation through Social Network Analysis. The paper presents the results of the completed projects and outlines the research objectives of the ongoing one.

Pavel Skopal and **Terézia Porubčanská** are lecturers and researchers at the Department of Film Studies and Audiovisual Culture at Masaryk University, Czech Republic.

Marco Bellano: *Sound composition and animation: practice, aesthetics, methods*

This presentation overviews sound composition processes and aesthetics in animation, focusing on rhythm as a core element. It outlines historical evolution and expressive possibilities, as a dynamic interchangeability among music, sound effects, and voice, freed from strict realism. Analytical methods for examining sound and music in animation will also be discussed.

Marco Bellano, Tenure Track Researcher and former MSCA Global Fellow at the University of Padua, teaches the History of Animation. Author of books on Trojan (Routledge 2019) and Bozzetto (Bloomsbury 2021).

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Panel 3: Audiovisual History, 9:15 to 10:45**Malte Hagener: *Approaching Weimar Cinema with Digital Methods: An Analysis of 5257 titles***

Digital methods allow for approaching larger samples, if not totalities (of course, the notion of a totality is a dubious claim in and of itself). In recent years, significant progress has been made regarding the digital explorations of larger data sets of (moving) image collections (Arnold/Tilton 2023; Dang et al 2025). When turning to a concrete example, we can ask ourselves what is left of Weimar cinema if we think about it less in terms of the canonical two or three dozen films, but in terms of all the films that have been produced. First and foremost, we have the data that remains of the 5257 films produced from 1919 to 1932. Starting with what is possibly the most simple indicator, namely the title, my contribution presents a preliminary and exploratory data analysis of the titles.

Borrowing from Francesco Moretti's study of seven thousand titles of British novels (2009), my contribution will attempt to find out something about the Weimar cinema through the titles. Looking at formal characteristics (length, structure), but also exploring semantic avenues, I want to try out some tools and evaluate them in the process. Since digital methods are still relatively new to the field of film history, the paper mainly aims at charting some of the approaches and opening up possible paths for research.

Malte Hagener is Professor in Media and Film Studies at Marburg University. He received his PhD in 2006 (Moving Forward, Looking Back. The European Avant-garde and the Invention of Film Culture, 1919-1939, Amsterdam University Press 2007).

Director of the open access repository „media/rep/“ (<https://mediarep.org/>) and managing director of the Marburg Center for Digital Culture and Infrastructure. Speaker of the project “Digital Cinema-Hub” (Marburg, Mainz, Frankfurt), funded by the Volkswagen foundation, and co-applicant and principal investigator of NFDI4Culture.

Fabian Kling & Frauke Pirk: *From Distribution to Data: Creation and Potential of a Super 8 Home Movie Data Set*

We will present our planned data paper on a data set created by the team of DiCi-Hub at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. It contains approximately 5400 entries on Super 8 home movies sold by the German distributor Piccolo Film in the 1970s and early 80s. We will give insights into our catalogue material, data preparation, data modelling and possible showcases concerning data analysis and teaching.

Fabian Kling is a PhD candidate and research associate at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany. His dissertation focuses on ZDF/Das kleine Fernsehspiel and the interface between film and television history.

Frauke Pirk is research assistant at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz with focus on Digital Humanities in the project DiCi-Hub. Her work focuses on data preparation, data modelling and data literacy.

Gernot Howanitz: *Combining LLM and Topic Modeling for Automated Video Analysis: Contrasting Close and Distant Viewing*

This case study demonstrates how multimodal large language models (MLLMs) can be used for the (semi-)automatic analysis of visual content in videos. By integrating automated textual annotation of individual frames using MLLMs with established Digital Humanities methodologies such as topic modeling, clustering, and visualization we construct a comprehensive 'distant viewing' pipeline. To assess the effectiveness of this approach, we apply it to Olga Abramchik's documentary on the 2020 Belarusian protests. We compare the insights generated through our distant viewing pipeline with those derived from a structured close viewing of the film. Focusing on key scene categories and their temporal dynamics, we show that while the pipeline produces categories broadly consistent with those identified through manual analysis, it also reveals previously overlooked patterns – often linked to distinctive filming techniques or visual characteristics. Although the manual typology offers deeper contextual interpretations of visual elements, the computational approach uncovers structural patterns at scale. Together, these complementary methods yield a more nuanced and layered understanding of the documentary's visual rhetoric than either could achieve independently. Future research can build on these results by enriching the analysis of the visual content with other elements such as audio, camera movements and editing patterns.

Gernot Howanitz is an assistant professor of Slavic Literature and Culture Theory at the University of Innsbruck, Austria. His research interests include Russian, Polish and Czech literature from 1850 onward, Slavic new media, digital humanities, and AI applications in the humanities.

Panel 4: Visualization, 11:15 to 12:45**Eva Mayr: *From Reels to Graphs: Mapping Film Collections***

This talk provides an overview on visualization strategies for digitized film collections. It will outline key challenges, such as integrating distant with close reading, navigating multidimensional data, showing contextual relations, and visualizing semantic film features, and will suggest avenues for future research in film visualization.

Eva Mayr is a senior researcher at University for Continuing Education Krems, Austria. Her research focuses on visualizations of cultural collections for experts and casual users.

Skadi Loist: *Seeing Data Differently: Visualization as Analysis in Film and Media Studies*

This talk examines the role of data visualization in film and media studies, from basic charts to network analysis. Drawing on projects like Film Circulation, GEP Analysis, and an OER on digital methods, it reflects on how visualizations can both enable and obscure research (Verhoeven 2016; Loist et al. 2024).

Skadi Loist is Associate Professor of Film Studies in the Department of Art and Media Studies at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).

Christian Olesen: *Reconstituting Access to Audiovisual Archives for Media Scholars and Artistic Researchers with Visual Analysis*

Zooming in on past and current collaborations with the Eye Filmmuseum and the Netherlands Institute for Sound & Vision, this presentation discusses how analysis and visualization of sensory features and visual concepts not traditionally included in the metadata of digitized moving images may contribute to reconstituting access to audiovisual archives. Focusing on the outcomes of the research project *The Sensory Moving Image Archive (SEMIA)*, Eye's permanent installation *The Film Catcher*, and the recently started project *Archival Landscapes of AI*, the presentation discusses how archival objects and collections may acquire new meanings and contribute to critical agendas in scholarly and artistic research.

Christian Gosvig Olesen is Assistant Professor of Digital Media and Cultural Heritage at the Department of Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam. He teaches in the university's MA programs in Film Studies and Preservation and Presentation of the Moving Image and in the BA Media & Culture. Olesen has been involved in a number of projects at an intersection of audiovisual archiving, digital scholarship and reuse.