i-Docs

25-27 MARCH 2020

i-Docs 2020: CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

DEADLINE EXTENDED! Submissions now close at midnight GMT, Sunday 3 November 2019

Following the success of five previous i-Docs Symposia, we are pleased to announce the call for participation for i-Docs 2020. Convened by Judith Aston, Sandra Gaudenzi, Mandy Rose and Julia Scott-Stevenson, and hosted by UWE Bristol's Digital Cultures Research Centre, i-Docs 2020 will be held at Watershed in Bristol's Harbourside on **Wednesday to Friday 25-27 March**. We invite proposals for papers, pre-constituted panels, case studies, posters and projects to showcase. In addition, this time we also want to encourage alternative and remote forms of participation – both to reduce the carbon footprint of the event and to include delegates otherwise unable to take part.

At a moment when we face urgent political, social and environmental challenges, we want to address the potential of evolving documentary forms as a means of creative response, as well as for place-making, convening and way-finding. Donna Haraway speaks of staying with the trouble. We imagine the i-Docs symposium as a space to do just that; to articulate, critically engage with and interrogate how i-docs – which we understand broadly as any project that starts with the intention to engage with the real, and that uses digital interactive technology to realise this intention – can be harnessed to respond to complex challenges at a variety of scales.

At the last i-Docs Symposium in 2018, we expanded the definition of the 'i' in i-Docs to encompass not just interactive, but also immersive, and in second order – intervention, impact, and innovation. These frames continue to underpin our explorations of the form. As in previous editions, we welcome proposals on any aspect of i-doc theory and practice. This year we also highlight three content-based themes around which we are keen to convene debate and support the development of innovative thinking.

http://www.i-docs.org Twitter: @i_docs

Climate and ecological emergency

Any number of deadlines have come and gone, and global carbon emissions are still rising. Meanwhile, deforestation and species depletion are reaching unprecedented levels. From *An Inconvenient Truth* and *The Age of Stupid* to BBC's recent *Climate Change: the facts*, linear documentary has had a significant role in describing these problems and sounding the alarm.

- How are interactive and immersive documentaries engaging with these urgent challenges?
- What formal and textual strategies are artists adopting to engage with post-human perspectives and non-Western temporalities, to make visible, for example, the Slow Violence (Nixon) wrought by environmental collapse on the poor?
- How can networked and interactive media be employed to assist in the work of pressuring governments and corporate interests to take meaningful action?
- If documentary's authority rests on a claim on the real, what role can it play in speculating on desirable futures?

Platform politics and responsible tech

The field of i-docs is predicated on an engagement with emerging creative media technologies – as tools for production, as platforms and modes of distribution and exhibition, and as portals to participation and co-creation. These technologies, though, are increasingly implicated in a number of problematic practices – from surveillance and algorithmic profiling to the energy impacts of vast digital processing. i-doc makers have been exploring resistance through reflexive creative practice – projects like *Do Not Track* on extractive data practices, *Porton Down* on the profiling potential of VR and *Spectre* on the affordances of deep fakes and AI for population manipulation all highlight the possibilities and risks, while simultaneously illuminating the role of i-docs in critical reflection and action.

- How can we disentangle these complex threads critically and practically? How do we ethically and responsibly think through the implications?
- How can the audience remain informed and even in control? How does scale inform our approach here – from data collection of a single audience member or participant, to potential manipulation of entire demographics and populations?
- How do we respond critically to the ceaseless emergence of new creative media technology, and as makers to commissioners' preference for cutting-edge innovation? What is the interplay between interactivity and immersion within i-docs?
- With interactive work being lost as proprietary platforms continue to evolve, what might open, alternative and DIY platforms offer?

Bonding and Bridging: Making locally, thinking globally

It is now clear that the untethered nature of cyberspace is implicated in some of the problematic forms of online behaviour. i-docs practice, however, has seen many innovations over time which have strongly evoked connections with place – from *Gaza/Sderot* through *Bear 71* to recent work like Darren Emerson's *Common Ground*. At the same time, i-docs practice has been a site of co-creative experimentation – projects become both hyper-local and connected to global communities through shared practice and shared commitment to community ownership.

- What new explorations of place are occurring in current and emerging i-docs practice?
- What do the affordances of immersive and interactive media – such as embodiment, a sense of presence, participation and polyvocality – offer for projects aiming to evoke a sense of place?
- In what ways are sites of exhibition being experimented with, for instance as 'out of home' VR (OOH) and location-based experiences (LBE) emerge as popular forms?
- What tensions operate between localism and globalism in immersive and interactive media practice and politics, and how might we navigate these?
- How can co-creative i-doc methodologies connect communities at a range of scales? Or, might co-creative approaches have a particular relevance when interrogating place?

A CLIMATE AWARE CONFERENCE

Here at i-Docs we recognise the potential contradiction between making climate emergency a core theme, yet hosting an event involving a significant amount of air travel. We firmly believe that there is value in the face-to-face encounters allowed by a conference in a physical location. At the same time, we see the flight-intensive conference as an unsustainable model that is increasingly difficult to justify. For these reasons, i-Docs 2020 will engage in a number of experiments in order to help reduce the negative environmental impact associated with flying. Concessions will be available for delegates from outside England and Wales who travel overland to the conference, and we will also consider proposals that can be presented remotely. We encourage attendees who fly to the symposium to offset their emissions through a recommended offset programme. We are keen to explore how such changes can bring about positive impacts in shaping the conference, and will be exploring a range of possibilities in the lead-up to the event.

Further reading on academic flying:
* Trying to Stay Grounded – https://www.odt.co.nz/lifestyle/resilient/trying-stay-grounded
* Climate ethicists flying to conferences? The middle ground regarding voluntarily offsetting emissions – http://justice-everywhere.org/duties/climate-ethicists-flying-to-conferences-the-middle-ground-regarding-voluntarily-offsetting-emissions/
* We Have to Stop Meeting Like This: The Climate Cost of Conferences – https://thetyee.ca/Analysis/2019/07/22/Climate-Cost-Conferences/

SUBMISSION DETAILS:

Proposals of not more than 400 words should be submitted via this online form:
https://gecko.fm/fwfqc
Submissions now close at **midnight GMT, Sunday 3 November 2019**. We welcome proposals for papers, pre-constituted panels, case studies, posters and projects to showcase – please specify what form your submission will take. Please note that due to limited space, we cannot guarantee that all projects submitted for the showcase will be accepted, and we strongly recommend submitting an accompanying paper presentation. Please include a brief bio (max 160 words). Proposals for alternate formats are welcome, and please specify if you are proposing a remote presentation.

Please address any queries to i.docs@uwe.ac.uk

Please also share the call widely!

http://www.i-docs.org Twitter: @i_docs