

Lecture on Humanities Informatics

THE HUMANITIES ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION INSTITUTE
(HATII)

The Crisis of the Archive.

*Charlie Gere,
School of History of Art, Film and Visual Media,
Birkbeck College*

Date: 25 November 2004

Time: 16:00

Venue: BOYD ORR 412 (LT B)

Sponsor: The Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute (HATII), <http://www.hatii.arts.gla.ac.uk> and the Digital Curation Centre (DCC), <http://www.dcc.ac.uk>

Abstract:

Through the work of new media artists Jon Thomson and Alison Craighead and of the philosophers Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler this paper will address the 'crisis of the archive' in the age of real-time systems of information and communication. Such systems offer unprecedented access to what is happening right now. At the same time they present us with a burgeoning crisis about how we might archive the plethora of material that they produce and how we make decisions about what to archive. This crisis first emerges with the techniques of mechanical reproduction developed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but it is now becoming more urgent with technologies such as the Internet and the World Wide Web. Thomson and Craighead's work, in particular their recent installation *Short Films about Flying*, offers an ironic and witty take on this crisis, while Derrida and Stiegler's ideas present us with tools with which to think about its consequences.

Biographical Sketch:

Charlie Gere, Lecturer in Digital Art History in the School of History of Art, Film and Visual Media, Birkbeck College and the director of Computer Arts, Contexts, Histories, etc... (CACHE), an AHRB-funded research project looking at the history of early British computer art, and Chair of Computers and the History of Art (CHArt), will be taking up the post of Reader in New Media Research in the Institute for Cultural Research at Lancaster University from January. He is the author of *Digital Culture* (Reaktion Books, 2002), and is currently researching the relation between art and speed from the early nineteenth century up to the present day, for his forthcoming book *Art, Time and Technology: Histories of the Disappearing Body*, (Berg, 2005).