

# The Electronic Media Review

Electronic Media Group

Volume Three 2015

Papers presented at the Electronic Media Group session of the 41st AIC Annual Meeting, Indianapolis, Indiana, 2013, and the 42nd AIC Annual Meeting, San Francisco, California, 2014.

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Layout by Amber Hares  
(Original design by Jon Rosenthal, JonRosenthalDesign.com)  
Typeset in Trade Gothic LT and Myriad Pro

American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works  
Washington DC

*The Electronic Media Review* was published once every two years in print format by the Electronic Media Group (EMG), a specialty group of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC), until 2013 and published online only thereafter. *The Electronic Media Review* is distributed as a benefit to members of EMG who held membership during the year of the issue. Additional copies or back issues are available from AIC. All correspondence concerning subscriptions, membership, back issues, and address changes should be addressed to:

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## **PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION OF PHOTOGRAPHIC AND AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS AFTER LARGE-SCALE DISASTERS**

**FENNA YOLA TYKWER**

### **ABSTRACT**

After the collapse of the Historical Archive building in Cologne in 2009, after which about 90% of the holdings were either resting beneath a mountain of rubble or among debris found in an underground railway shaft outside the building, a number of problems arose. More than five hundred thousand photographic and five thousand audiovisual objects were among the salvaged holdings. Each item was in need of a thorough cleaning and adequate repackaging, and, in many cases, additional conservation intervention will be needed. It is estimated that all in all, more than six thousand years will be necessary for conservation alone. Therefore, processes for the mass treatment and restoration of these materials, as well as an exchange of experiences in terms of how this is achieved will be needed, and will be discussed here. The general workflow distinguishes between a first phase of basic conservation measures that can be taken with all items, regardless of catalog number or other criteria. Later on, more sophisticated and costly restoration processes will be prioritized with respect to collections, the individual value of the object in question, and the availability of sponsorship. The presentation looks at the perspectives for the work in a newly organized studio for conservation and restoration of photographic and audiovisual materials at the branch Office in Wermisdorf, Germany. Apart from normal processes of conservation and restoration, the possibilities of reuniting negatives and damaged photographs will be presented and different ways of re-using

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these negatives will be shown. The presentation will also address the possibilities and problems of co-operation with other institutions to make use of available records—in the case of live recordings—from other archives.

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