

Historical data exploration: Amsterdam's creative landscape, 1600-present (panel session)

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In this panel session members from the research program Creative Amsterdam: An E-Humanities Perspective (CREATE) present and discuss their research. CREATE researchers collect and enrich digital data on the various cultural sectors of Amsterdam, link existing datasets, and develop novel search and analysis tools (<http://achi.uva.nl/create>). By doing so, they promote an infrastructure for combining, analyzing, and visualizing existing datasets in a network that exposes their relations and interdependencies. In this session, the central aim is to examine how the interaction between historians and their data can be expanded and enhanced.

During the last two centuries, historians have built a treasure trove of information on cultural consumption, production and distribution. But how to turn this into data? And how to access and analyze it in ways that can reveal new relationships, patterns and research questions on the development of Amsterdam as a creative city? In this session we address these questions by means of three cases: theatre (17-18th centuries), heritage (17th century) and cinema (20th century). Each case highlights a different aspect of the promises

and challenges of data exploration in historical research, but they all center on the question of how datasets and analytical tools can meet the needs of historians. After a brief introduction on this central theme, the three cases will be presented (5-10 minutes) and central discussion questions will be posed to the audience.

- The ONSTAGE project exemplifies processes of digitizing historical data. ONSTAGE will contain data on the repertoire, the revenues, and the networks of the Theatre of Amsterdam between 1638 and 1772. Until recently, this information was dispersed, and available only in the form of partial studies and printed datasets. In ONSTAGE project shows how integrating and digitizing historical data fosters new research questions.
- The CANAAN project showcases the meeting of two datasets, originally designed for different purposes. The collection database of the Amsterdam Museum contains metadata on more than 90,000 objects. The ECARTICO database (UvA) contains biographical data on Dutch artists from the early modern period. Aligning the two datasets allows for advanced querying across the two resources.
- The CINEMA project illustrates how existing datasets may acquire new functionality. The Cinema Context database contains information on theaters, people, companies, and visitors of Dutch cinemas from 1896 to the present, and is explicitly structured for research purposes. This project explores how additional functions can be developed in order to allow for, for instance, historical network analysis.