

Digital Humanities Faculty Development Seminar Proposal

The CARTA Innovation Lab: 3D Printing and the Future of Storytelling through Objects

John Stuart, AIA

I propose a presentation that explores the future of 3D printed objects in the service of telling the story of our humanity. Since its founding in 2015, the CARTA Innovation Lab has served FIU students and faculty members, and members of the community, who seek to “further our understanding of and enhance what it means to be human in an increasingly digital age.” This key concern brings the broad scope of the CARTA Innovation Lab and its home base in FIU’s Miami Beach Urban Studios into close alignment with the faculty development seminar theme of “Digital Humanities: Pedagogy, Platforms, and Praxis.”

For tens of thousands of years, humans have formed objects that secured their connections to cultures, beliefs systems, social affiliations and political organizations, and to their desired pasts and proposed futures. Long before the written word and throughout the course of historical time, objects have served to help us understand humanity itself. In our “selfie moment,” as we tend to become more interested in our own narratives and our own personal heroes, the rise of mass customization supported by new 3D printing technology, allows more personalized objects to speak specifically to more customized versions of our own stories.

The projects in the CARTA Innovation Lab explore a diverse range of projects from enhancing affinity for children studying the violin to successfully reducing the time to learn basic mobility and orientation skills associated with limited eyesight and enhancing the practice of healthier living through the printing of models of body parts from CAT scans. Projects in the lab have benefited from digital humanities collaborations between artists, designers, musicians, scientists, engineers, healthcare professionals and clinicians, who work together to overcome the inevitable theoretical and technological challenges.

This session proposes to question what the practice of storytelling through 3D printed objects might look like in the 21st Century.