2025-26 HIVE Summer Internship Project

Painting Cultural Scenes: visualising non-standard datasets of artist biographies

Primary Academic Supervisor
Dr. Karl Huang

Project Background
In 2026, Videotage, Hong Kong's most established media art organisation, will celebrate its 40th anniversary. As a non-profit organisation that presents, promotes, and preserves media arts in the region, Videotage has built on a wealth of connections with artists, curators, administrators, funding bodies, museums, enterprises and institutions world-wide.

Our research asks: what contributes to the sustainability of non-profit arts organisations and a thriving art scene?

Sociologist Will Straw suggests that "cultural scenes" – emergent phenomena that arise from interactions between people, place, and cultural moments – is at the heart of what drives success. Straw writes that "Scene designates particular clusters of social and cultural activity without specifying the nature of the boundaries which circumscribe them" (2004, p.412). Cultural scenes are emergent "from the excesses of sociability that surround the pursuit of interests, or which fuel ongoing innovation and experimentation" (2004, p.412).

We hypothesize that the "clusters of social and cultural activity" can be mapped from the relationships between individuals, entitles, and events, documented in artists' curriculum vitae and that the "excesses of sociability" can be visualised through these connections, painting pictures of cultural scenes.

Preliminary research experimented with manual methods (e.g., informal conversations, unstructured interviews) to visually map information from artist CVs, resumes, and biographies to sketch "clusters of social and cultural activit[ies]" contributing to cultural scenes. This project seeks refinement, automation, and scalability of the process.

These experiments contribute to a larger research project, Archiving Experimental Arts Scene (funded by University of Wollongong) that prioritises the experience of artists to inform media archiving practices with the aim of enriching the narratives of culture and societies with diverse voices and perspectives.

Project Description, Expected Outputs, Possible Stretch Goals

While visualising connections is not new, a key original contribution of this project is to extract meaningful information from non-standard datasets and self-identified key moments in an artist's professional life.

CV (literally meaning "course of life") is a common format for people to create a picture of their professional "life story." What artists choose to include is fundamental to the stories they tell and how they tell them. By the same token, these connections reflect the contexts and broader environments in which artists work, art organisations form and flourish. These relationships paint the bigger picture of how arts and culture take shape in society.

This internship project aims to test:
- whether data can be extracted from non-standard formats of individual CVs and resumes to create meaningful stories of connections (for users, researchers, audiences);
- how data from a CV i.e. self-identified interactions, people, events, and locations can create meaningful stories of connections;
- what are the key differences between these kinds of pictures and others drawn from standardised database systems (e.g. Elements)?
- what questions (not posed elsewhere) will emerge from these sketches?

The key aim and departure point are similar to those of the 2024 summer HIVE project Graphing Together: Visualising Curtin University's Co-Authorship Network by Kathryn Phillips. The focus is on establishing workflow and protocols in data extraction and visualising emergent patterns.

The expected outputs of this internship project include a prototype built using 5 - 10 CVs, and documented process/ workflow with the inclusion of

LLM AI. The prototype functions as a proof of concept of how meaningful visualisation can be drawn from non-standard datasets.

The stretch goals of the project are additional features such as web-scraping with the use of AI, scaling-up of datasets, and creating an exhibitable output for Videotage's 40th Anniversary celebration in 2026.

Links to background reading and any relevant recent work in the field

Straw, W 2004, 'Cultural Scenes', Loisir et Société / Society and Leisure, vol. 27, no. 2, pp. 411–22.

Swalwell, M et al. 2022, 'Archiving Australian Media Arts: A Project Overview', Preservation, Digital Technology & Culture, vol. 51, no. 4, 155–66.

Videotage n.d., Videotage Media Art Collection (VMAC), viewed 6 September 2025, <https://www.videotage.org.hk/vmac/about>

REWIND Artists' Video n.d., REWIND | Artists' Video, viewed 6 September 2025, <https://rewind.ac.uk/>

Microwave International Media Arts Festival 2021, Connecting the Dots, viewed 6 September 2025, <https://www.microwavefest.net/festival2021/ConnectingtheDots.html>.

What type of visualisation will the student develop or produce?

The internship project will produce a visualisation prototype that is dynamic (allowing changing inputs and outputs) and interactive for the users. The visual design (such as colour palette, font choice, and legends) and usability will be a major part of the learning outcome.

The visualisation can be presented as a VR experience where users/ researchers are immersed in the digital data, allowing them to discover the nature of connections between artists or events through embodied interaction.

How will the visualisation contribute to your research outcomes?
The experimental outcomes of this internship project contribute to the larger research question: how can research on scenes present a new method that ensures the continuity of rich, diverse, and collective storytelling?

While mapping cultural events is not new, this visualisation prototype drawn from non-standard datasets from artists' cvs will create a space for discovering how relationships and connections fuel art and cultural scenes.

If the project is successful, where would you consider publishing the results?
Project findings including methods, experiments, processes, and outcomes will be written up for conference presentations and journal articles.

Conferences may include: International Symposium of Electronic Arts (ISEA) and/ or forums in Australian Network of Art and Technology (ANAT).

Targeted journals are in the field of media and cultural studies such as New Media and Society, Journal of Aesthetics & Culture, and Continuum.

It is possible the visualisation prototype will be used to create an exhibitable work (NTRO) for Videotage's 40th anniversary events in 2026.

Draft Project Timeline:

Week 1

Nov 10 - Full day HIVE induction
Nov 11 - Area and Project Induction with Primary supervisor
Develop project plan with HIVE and academic team
Literature and relevant project review

Project, visualisation and software scoping

Week 2

Intro to data sets and refine/confirm project objectives/tasks/outcomes.

Week 3

Discussion on data, parameters, and extraction methods; Data exploration and extraction.

Week 4

Discussion on data, parameters, and extraction methods; Data exploration and extraction; Commence visualisation development; Check in with relevant supervisors.

Week 5

Data exploration and extraction; Visualisation development; Check in with relevant supervisors.

Week 6

Visualisation development; Check in with relevant supervisors.

Week 7

Visualisation development; Review of prototype and feedback from supervisors; Check in with relevant supervisors.

Week 8

Visualisation development; Discussion on final report and showcase presentation; Check in with relevant supervisors.

Week 9

Focus on report writing and presentation preparation

Finalise visualisation, final report, and showcase presentation

Week 10

Focus on report writing and presentation preparation
30th Jan Final Presentation Showcase Day and final report due

Final presentation and report

Student Experience and Supervision:

How often will you meet with the student over the 10-week period?

At least once a week

Your work desk location and the location of student desk

Karl Huang - 208.305C
Ash Doshi - HIVE, 200A
Student (TBC, likely also in 208)

Student Attributes:

Please indicate any preference for student's academic discipline or field of study

A student with some data science background will be preferred, as the project deals with non-standard data. Data science skills will be an advantage for the first phase of the project when dealing with data extraction/collection/scraping.

What competencies are required to start this project

Beginner - Unity 2D/3D Artistry (assets, lighting, cameras, materials implementation)
Beginner - Unity Programming (C# coding, animation syntax, debugging, problem-solving)
Beginner - Unity Virtual Reality Development (rendering pipelines, scene content design, interaction)
Intermediate - Data structures, analytics, statistical modelling
Beginner - R and/or Python

Do you have any other student attributes you think are important to the project?

A keen interest for working with non-standard data types. In this project we will be extracting data from CVs and mapping them together to reveal or identify cultural scenes.