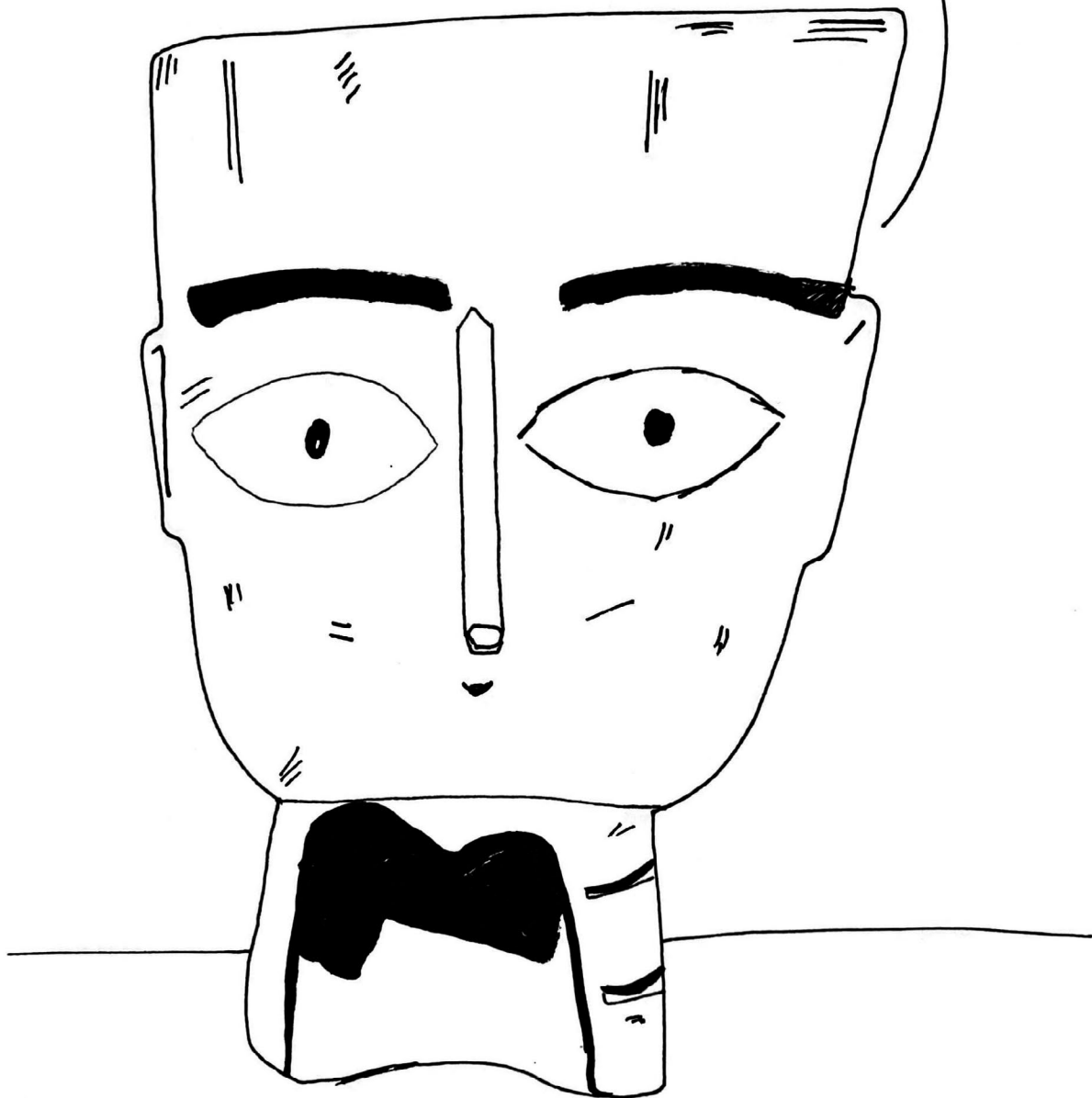


YES! THE CURATOR  
FINALLY! WANTS TO GIVE ME  
AGENCY!



SHARING &  
CHANGING PERSPECTIVES

# Embracing Digital: A Curator's View

Filmmaker Dellair Youssef  
Follows Curator Wibke Schrape  
Behind the Scenes



All images in this article are stills from the film “Embracing Digital: A Curator’s View” by Dellair Youssef.

Wibke Schrape

“Digitization can help make the collection accessible, that is obvious, but what digitalization can do in the museum is so much more, because it helps you to connect all the challenges you have.”

Digital documentation has often been viewed as separate from the day-to-day operations of museums. During the NEO Collections project, Wibke Schrape, curator and head of the East Asia and SWANA collections at MK&G, shares her holistic perspective on digital and digital curation. For her, documentation is about empowering an object throughout its journey in the museum—from its acquisition through the processes of photography, measurement, conservation, and database entry to making it accessible to the public whenever possible.

Marleen Grasse, “Embracing Digital: A Curator’s View,” in *NEO Collections: From Reimagining Digital Collections to Changing Museum Practices / Von der Neugestaltung digitaler Sammlungen zur Veränderung von Museumspraktiken*, edited by Antje Schmidt and Tulga Beyerle (arthistoricum.net, 2024): 56–61. <https://doi.org/10.11588/arthistoricum.1558.c23010>



Wibke Schrape

“If you understand the database as a kind of network and center of caring for the object, then you get digitalization really into your daily practice of curating.”

Filmmaker Dellair Youssef followed Schrape around the galleries and depot spaces of the MK&G, showing what (digital) curation means in her day-to-day work and how she tackles the many challenges in a hands-on way.<sup>1</sup> We also gain insights on how experts from different departments at the museum are working together to digitize a large-scale William Morris wallpaper and get a glimpse into the 3D digitization of Japanese lacquer works.

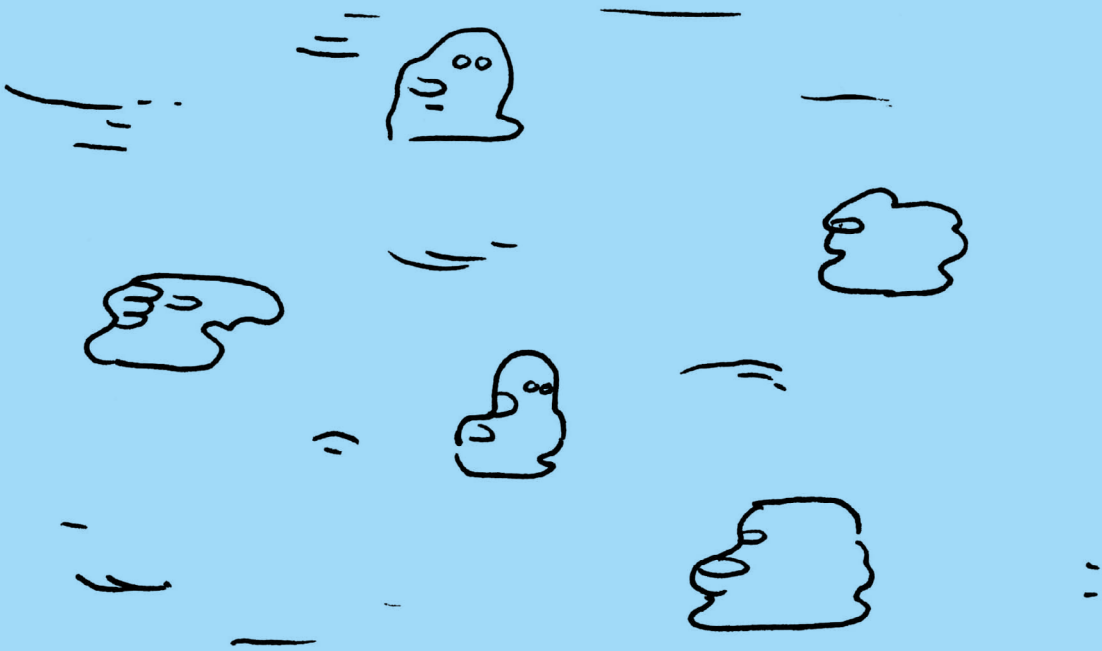
With an estimated total of over 600,000 objects, the MK&G faces a monumental task in fully documenting and making digitally accessible its vast collection. This requires significant resources, care, and expertise—a challenge shared by many museums. While some are just beginning this journey, others have established extensive records. Documentation is an ongoing, never-ending process. New objects are acquired, fresh insights emerge, and previously unseen connections are uncovered. At the same time, technological capabilities and requirements continue to evolve, as do the formats, standards, and methods used in documentation. Outdated vocabularies must be replaced with contemporary, inclusive, and non-discriminatory language to ensure that documentation remains relevant and reflective of current perspectives.

Marleen Grasse

<sup>1</sup> Dellair Youssef, “Embracing Digital: A Curator’s View,” *YouTube*, June 16, 2023, 15:11, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9il4Tz2SJ0s>.







HASE

BLUME

EDO-ZEIT

MEIJI-ZEIT

KATEGORIE : FÄRBER ( KATAGAMI )

DER HASE  
STECKT IM  
DETAIL.



“I think oftentimes that how museum objects are described is fairly heavily focused on what is relevant to museum people, and that might not include value to you or what you understand to be valuable [...] and therefore limits access.”