When bad archiving results in good art

Setting the scene

CERN (1954 - )

P. Higgs, Nobel Prize 2013

T. Berners-Lee, Alan Turing Prize 2018

LHC: 100 m underground
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The Multimedia Digitization

- 1'740 Kg of audio tapes!
- 6'000 video tapes & films
- 420'000 images: negatives, medium & large formats, **Slides**
Microorganism looking for proteins food… with an artistic mood
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Candidates to the trash bin

The mysterious Desk

Among 420K images, a few hundreds suffered - severely.
“Stories of failures are the most popular – they show that it does matter.”

Archivematica Camp on digital preservation, Amsterdam 2018
Well preserved
Eaten by mould
Breaking the mould

AT THE Large Hadron Collider near Geneva, Switzerland, physicists are used to looking for signs of particle decay in the detector. But as they were digitising archival photos of particle collisions, Helvín Wijegunaratne and Yves Leprêtre came across a different kind of decay mould.

For 30 years, this slide was preserved in a mould that marked across the image, eating through the protein in the gelatin-based emulsion. Its achievements had turned it into a chaotic swirl of colours and textures reminiscent of an abstract painting. To save the corroded image an electron beam, visual and laser beam shone a light through the slide and then photographed the information which a photographer herself, without her knowledge, had recorded. The result was a beautiful, almost: impossible scene. The colours and textures, even the destruction itself, are an effect of the corrosion. The slide is a kind of relic. It is a kind of fossil.

The slide was a member of a valuable scientific resource. It is part of the experimental physics department of CERN. It is a unique and preserved companion slide. It is one of a series of images showing a simulation of particle collisions at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC). The beams represent the beams of particles that flew into the detector's cylindrical cavity, and the spray of protons that emerged from the collision created the image. The particles born in the smash-up. Chelsea Whyte

Photographer
Valérie © 2013 CERN
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The VolMeur collection

http://volmeur.com

Exhibition 7 Nov-7 Dec 2018

With a special evening on Time-based art with NYC MFTA dir of Education

Sales on
Some backup slides
Programme: 7 Nov-7 Dec

Vernissages et clôture dès 17h30 Soirées de 18h à 21h

Trente cinq œuvres inédites seront révélées à la galerie Images de Marque du 7 Novembre au 7 Décembre 2018. Des expériences créatives, mix de science et d’art, seront proposées durant l’exposition ainsi que le programme de conférences ci-dessous.

- **7 Nov**: Vernissage VIP avec projection “trésors de la mémoire du CERN”, par Jean-Yves Le Meur et Matteo Volpi (alias VolMeur)
- **8 Nov**: Vernissage public
- **14 Nov**: “L’Histoire derrière les œuvres, le CERN à la fin des années 80” par Horst Wenninger, ex-directeur du Département des Accélérateurs
- **21 Nov**: “Materials for the Arts and the Art of Materials” by John Cloud Kaiser, Director of Education, Materials for the Arts, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs
- **28 Nov**: "Understanding VolMeur artwork with Electron Microscopy" by Elisa Garcia-Tabares Valdivieso, CERN R&D Engineer in material analysis
- **7 Déc**: Soirée de clôture avec “réflexions méta-physiques sur les œuvres périssables” par Rosario Principe

Plus d’info: [http://cern.ch/volmeur](http://cern.ch/volmeur)
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