



BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

DAY 1: THURSDAY, 2 OCTOBER

PANEL 1A - CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS AND KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTIONS

Uncovering the Unseen: Archival Structures and Social Narratives in Taryn Simon's Reimagining of the Picture Collection

Yonit Aronowicz, Université Paris Cité

"Any archive is a product of the social processes and systems of its time, and reflects the positions and exclusions of different groups or individuals within those systems." (Breakwell, 2015). This statement resonates in Taryn Simon's *The Color of a Flea's Eye: The Picture Collection* (2021–2022), an archival art project that critically examines how institutional classification systems shape the way we interpret and value images over time. Over the course of nine years, Simon meticulously investigated the New York Public Library's Picture Collection — one of the world's largest circulating image archives, known for its user-accessible holdings and its subject-based cataloging system established in 1915. By intervening in this historical archive, she exposes the hidden structures of supposedly neutral image organization, questioning the role of archives in shaping visual knowledge and cultural memory.

At the heart of the project is a critical reassessment of Romana Javitz, the largely underrecognized superintendent of the Picture Collection, whose vision shaped the archive's accessibility and inclusivity. Under her leadership (1928–1968), the archive expanded its scope to include images of underrepresented subjects, challenging the male-dominated frameworks that defined art photography in the 20th century. Yet, despite her contributions, Javitz remains absent from photographic and curatorial historiographies. Simon's work actively confronts this erasure, paying homage to Javitz as a key figure in shaping the archive's democratic ethos.

Simon's artistic reanimation of the archive, through re-photography and reframing of its materials, uncovers overlooked social and institutional narratives embedded in the Picture Collection. At the same time, it prompts a reassessment of the archive's art historical significance and its relevance as a browsable image resource in a media landscape where databases and algorithm-driven search engines increasingly control image visibility and circulation. This paper examines how Simon's project, by forging a direct link between the historical Picture Collection and contemporary artistic practices, highlights the enduring value of analog photo archives as dynamic sites for reimagining socio-cultural narratives, shaping historical consciousness, and fostering tactile engagements with images.

Susan Dobson: Slide | Lecture. Reactivating slides libraries as art history archives

Audrey Leblanc, EHESS – École des hautes études en sciences sociales

Since 2016, Canadian photographer Susan Dobson's Slide|Lecture ongoing project reconsiders the materiality and meaning of now defunct university slide libraries. Trained in the School of Image Arts at Toronto Metropolitan University in the 1980s, and a photography professor at the University of Guelph, Ontario, since 2002, Dobson critically examines the physical characteristics and content of the slide collections she once used in art history classes, both as a student and an instructor, before the obsolescence of analog photographic transparencies and the advent of digital image projection. Dobson's strict conceptual protocol isolates against dark backgrounds the slides, storage containers, trays, and projector carousels discarded by art history departments. Her detailed and large-scale prints reveal the artist's archaeological fascination with these outdated materials. Moreover, Dobson's fetishistic and nostalgic "fever", "allure" or "impulse" for the physicality of these complex analog objects reveals how these overlooked libraries produce a fundamental archive on the history of the medium. But Slide|Lecture also exposes the biased canonical leanings of art historical curricula during the late 20th century: the titles of past lectures and the number of slides reveal the domination of works by Western male artists and the conspicuous exclusion of a broad range of individuals, communities, and geographies.

Self-reflective, layered, and educational, Slide|Lecture celebrates the analog technology, its objects, aesthetics, and history to better question informal knowledge within the archive, due to the classification procedures, chronologies, and narratives conveyed by photography archives.

Becoming matters. A new materialist approach to art-education archives and its challenges

Renata Cervetto, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya

If the education department constitutes the relational sphere of the museum, what role would its archive play and what aspects characterize it? Within the contemporary art field, archives play a major role in artistic practice as well as exhibition formats, collection policies and the overall heritage of cultural institutions. However, when it comes to analyzing how museums preserve their own practices, specifically those developed by education areas, a lack of systematization of the materials and generated knowledge tends to prevail.

The need to acknowledge the research and creative process developed by art educators, together with the professionalization and study of this field, can't be fully fulfilled without archives that account for the particularities of the job. But how to do this when facing scarce archival infrastructure, lack of interest and support from museum directors towards this department (the invisible work Vs. object value exhibitions); precarious working conditions for sub-hired educators; and lack of resources and time from educators to create their own archives? The materialization and systematization of the entanglements (Barad) between educators, the museum and its audiences may contribute as well to the way the museum narrates and creates its own stories.

Departing from a practice-based PhD proposal, that aims at constructing an anarchive of art-pedagogical practices in collaboration with a museum, this paper discusses how certain ideas of new materialisms, affect and performative studies may contribute to generate alternative approaches to archival practice within museums and its activation on behalf of researchers and the community at large. The notion of repertoire (Taylor), anarchive (A. Murphie) and hybrid archives considering emotions and social practices altogether are specifically addressed.

PANEL 1B - RETHINKING PLACES AND BODIES WITH THE ARCHIVE

Walking Through the Living Image of Dead Things: 'Unearthing' archived bodies in Juha Suonpää's *Isoisä* (2018)

Carlos Idrobo, University of Turku (online)

This paper explores the visual and extra-visual implications of appropriating and intervening in public photo archives to create historical composites, in reference to Juha Suonpää's *Isoisä* (Grandfather, 2018). In this piece, composed of then-and-now montages presented as both exhibition and book, Suonpää explores the cultural and family memory of the 1918 Finnish Civil War by retracing the steps of his grandfather in the aftermath of the Battle of Tampere. His montages, guided by the unspoken steps of his grandfather, materialise absence through a careful temporal juxtaposition of archival and present-day photographs, creating historical fissures in Tampere's contemporary streets and transforming everyday urban spaces into sites of personal and historical reflection. In this paper, I will 1) Situate Suonpää's work within the popular practice of making montages of archival images with contemporaneous perspective-matching photos of the same locations, 2) Discuss how he reactivates the public archive to regain a sense of self and belonging, and 3) Examine the implications of the most salient aspect of his piece: taking dead (and living) bodies of the past to place them in the present time. I conceptualise the photographic image as an archive of movement that reveals how people of the past moved through their world. This 'unearthing' of archived bodies, alongside the temporal dissonance between past and present photographs, may in turn offer new ways to experience and reinterpret walking as aesthetical and political practice and enquiry in places of human loss.

The body as living archive: feminist performance and archival reappropriation in post-dictatorship Argentina and Chile

Nayeli Moctezuma, University Paris Nanterre / University of Cádiz

This proposal explores how feminist performance art in Argentina and Chile (1980–2000) has mobilized the body as a living archive to reconfigure collective memory and challenge official historical narratives in the aftermath of dictatorship. Drawing on Diana Taylor's distinction between the archive and the repertoire, Judith Butler's theory of performativity, and Nelly Richard's analysis of feminist aesthetics in post-dictatorship Chile, the study examines the political potential of embodied memory as a counter-archival practice.

Focusing on case studies such as Las Yeguas del Apocalipsis, Grupo de Arte Callejero (GAC), and artists like Graciela Sacco and Marta Minujín, the paper investigates how feminist interventions in public space perform memory through visual, bodily, and ephemeral gestures. These performances not only make visible the silenced experiences of political violence, particularly gendered and sexualized violence, but also activate affective and informal knowledges often excluded from institutional archives.

By reclaiming the urban landscape as a site of testimonial enactment, these artists convert public space into a platform for archival disruption and reappropriation. The paper reflects on how the body, as a site of trauma and resistance, becomes both medium and message—a living document that contests the neutrality, linearity, and objectivity of official archives.

Confronting Racism in *Álbum de Desesquecimentos*, by Mayara Ferrão, in the Public Domain Archives of the Colonial Era in Brazil

Ana Catarina Maia, Universidade Nova de Lisboa

The photographic series *Álbum de Desesquecimentos* (2024), by artist Mayara Ferrão (Salvador, 1993), revisits colonial images in the public domain through the use of artificial intelligence. In this work, the artist creates a fiction with an affective bias that operates as a strategy for reconstructing a past silenced by the racist and patriarchal structures of official historiography. The series reimagines the presence of black women in a context of intimacy and affection, highlighting what Adrienne Rich (2010) calls "lesbian existences", by representing kisses, smiles and gestures of mutual care. In this way, Ferrão challenges the dominant historical narrative, which often associates black bodies with experiences of pain and subjugation, shifting the focus to the power of interpersonal relationships and the agency of these subjects in the past. The characters constructed in Ferrão's work are situated in both internal and external spaces, challenging the logic of social confinement historically imposed on black and lesbian women. This study proposes an analysis of images generated by artificial intelligence – subsequently manipulated by the artist using analog techniques – as instruments for contesting the racialized imaginary structured by whiteness. By evoking the notions of male gaze (Mulvey, 1975) and White gaze (Du Bois, 1903), Ferrão's work is analyzed as a subversion of the imagetic tradition that inscribes black female bodies in hypersexualization and objectification.

In dialogue with Hartman (2008), who highlights the absence of historical records that humanize the daily lives of enslaved women, it is argued that *Álbum de Desesquecimientos* operates as a reparative gesture, opening fissures in the linearity of the colonial archive and claiming new possibilities of memory and belonging.

PANEL 2A - QUEERING THE ARCHIVE TO IMAGINE OTHERWISE

Archivo de la Memoria Trans: the vital archive of trans activism in Argentina

Luise Malmaceda, Columbia University (online)

For the conference, I propose to analyze the Archivo de la Memoria Trans Argentina (AMT) as an intervention at the intersection of archival practice, social movement and artistic initiative which navigates between documentary and fabulist registers. Founded by activists Claudia Pía Baudracco and María Belén Correa, the archive emerged as a means to bring together trans survivors and their memories, as well as to commemorate those who are no longer present.

Following Baudracco's passing in 2012, a few months before Argentina's Gender Identity Law was enacted, Correa recognized the urgency of preserving the histories of struggle, resistance, and everyday life of trans and travestís in the country. Today comprising over ten thousand documents spanning from the early twentieth century to the late 1990s, the archive functions as a communal space of remembrance, reinforcing collective survival strategies amidst systemic violence from both the State and civil society. Engaging with debates on archives as places where collective memories can be both forged and disputed, the paper will consider the ways in which the AMT transformed its original goal from being a "encounter of friends" to become a place for political imagination, standing today as the main Latin American reference of its type.

The archive has inspired initiatives in Brazil, México, Honduras, Cuba, Guatemala, among others, and has integrated exhibitions internationally, including the 35th edition of the São Paulo Biennial, in Brazil. Such expansion of AMT's original goal raises key questions about the repositioning of private images within public discourse: How do the personal memories of the AMT collection challenge the dominant narratives about trans identities, for a long time centered in violence or in the exotic? If the archive is helping in making visible histories that tend to be hidden from public memory, inspiring new initiatives of recollection, and bridging the trans communities together, can we say the archive is less interested in the past and more interested in the future?

I argue that AMT not only reveals hidden or suppressed histories, as much of the literature on archival art suggests (Foster, Enwezor, Callahan), but is ultimately more invested in a messianic gesture—one that seeks to construct a different present and reclaim a sense of futurity. Rather than merely revisiting or repositioning neglected past projects, AMT enacts a politics of prefiguration, embodying the future in the present as an imperative rather than a subjunctive—a practice of "living the future now" (Campt 2017, 17). By emphasizing the affective and political dimensions of archival labor, this paper situates AMT as a crucial site for reclaiming civil imagination (Azoulay 2015) and as an active gesture in building the distinct future for which the trans community continues to fight.

Archival ellipses: Dreaming in the gaps of evidence

Sophie Mak-Schram, University of Leeds

The story of Alma Stone Williams, the first black student at Black Mountain College (1933-1957, USA) when education was still segregated, is art historically untellable. Despite there being many archives documenting BMC, and despite Stone Williams mentioning images of herself at BMC, no photographic proof remains. This is a gap in the archive; a gap only recognised in recent years as racial inclusion and submerged histories became a topic of conversation for 20th century art historians. Submerged and oppressed histories, however, need or should not re-emerge using the same methodologies as dominant histories. This paper draws on three years of research prompted by Stone Williams to argue for a queer methodology of imagining in the gaps.

Alongside Stone Williams, this paper considers speculative and fabricated archives that specifically redress the issue of lack of evidence: Himali Singh Soin and David Soin Tappeser's Salt Cosmologies, in which a colonial tax barrier is belatedly visually proven, and Cheryl Dunye and Zoe Leonard's Fae Richards Photo Archive (1996). These archives are not taken as cases but as possible methodologies: drawing from Elizabeth Freeman's notion of "temporal drag" and Cheryl Dunye's self-creation of a historical precedent in The Watermelon Woman (1996, USA), this paper argues for what archival gaps allow and the kinds of desire they reveal for histories and futures. This is a proposition that seeks to unabstract the archival researcher (whether artist or art historian): the desire of seeking a precedent or filling a gap with evidence, is as constructive of histories as the evidence catalogued or lost, particularly when structures of power have historically forbidden certain forms of desire from being evidenced or existing.

Combining queer and feminist theories around close reading and consent, with historical research into queer and racialised representations in various archives, this paper proposes an artistic and art historical methodology of using archival gaps not as limitations but generators of community representations.

Traces and Overflows: Rethinking Archival Presence

Sandro Weilenmann, Maastricht University

How can queer and trans filmmakers work with or against the glaring absences, gaps, and elisions that are evident throughout the archives of LGBTQ+ lives? In recent years, as part of the much broader 'archival turn' in both scholarly study and artistic practice, several contemporary artists across Europe have begun to address this concern, interrogating the epistemological (and other) traumas caused by gaping voids in the material record, and the affective power of fragmentary remains. This paper highlights three case studies of recent works by the artists and filmmakers Philipp Gufler, Jyoti Mistry, and Tomaso di Luca. Merging clips and materials from different archives with new performances, their video-based works test how to feel back to lost figures of the past through archival artifacts. These interventions feature different strategies such as reenactment, voice-overs, blurrings, and abstractions, which render both the abundance and lack nestled in the archive tangible. Their creative tactics manipulate archival holdings as what Daniel Marshall and Zeb Tortorici frame as a "future building practice" (2022, 15), testing the archive's potentialities rather than factuality.

As I argue, the three artworks interweave archival absence and abundance to carve out a space that allows for the seemingly paradoxical simultaneity of mending and breaking away from the relationship to the past. In this regard, they relate to a bigger discursive context negotiating archival historiographies either via narratives of loss or via plentitude (Edelman 2023 Arondekar 2022).

PANEL 2B - ARCHIVAL (DIS)CONTINUITIES AND RESISTANCES

Reappearing: The Sensitive Archive between Erasure and Resistance in Chilean Art (1973-1990) (online)

Roberta Garieri, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

During the Chilean military dictatorship (1973–1990), enforced disappearance served as a brutal form of political and symbolic erasure, creating a lasting fracture in collective memory. In a climate of censorship and state repression, artists created visual strategies to resist the erasure of bodies and histories, challenging the authority of the official archive. From the beginning, Chilean memory has been shaped by a narrative of absence and loss, prompting the development of new visual languages to express what has been silenced.

This paper aims to examine the idea of the “sensitive archive”: an intimate, emotional, yet collective and political archive made up of family photographs, ID portraits, and official documents. The sensitive archive serves as a space for memorial activation and visual reappearance, moving away from any commemorative or institutional functions. Here, worn, fragile, and marginal traces become powerful tools of resistance and recognition. During the dictatorship, artists such as Hernán Parada, Roser Bru, Eugenio Dittborn, Virginia Errázuriz, and Luz Donoso created works that examined the testimonial role of the image. Their approach to photography evolves from documentation to spectral fragments—visual elements that evoke the absence of what has been lost, challenge official narratives, and confront the oblivion imposed by the state. Within this framework, the sensitive archive transforms into a working memory space, aligning with the affective dimensions of archival practice discussed by Ann Cvetkovich (2003): it is unstable, emotional, partial, and deeply political.

This contribution suggests that we should view the archive not as a neutral collection of items but as a space for aesthetic and memorial resistance. Instead of merely preserving the past, these artistic practices create powerful and disruptive images that reveal the absence of the disappeared individuals (*desaparecidos*). They encourage new forms of justice that are rooted in emotional experience and collective memory.

The Pervasive Archive: Iranian Photo-based Artists and the Visual Legacy of the Iran-Iraq War

Hoda Nadaeifar, University of Toronto

In the 2000s, several Iranian artists created photo-based artworks that referenced the Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988). While these artists did not identify as part of a specific artistic movement, they share commonalities: they were all born and raised between the late 1970s and the 1980s, a period shaped by the war and its aftermath in post-revolutionary Iran. They grew up as spectators of wartime imagery and cultural reproductions, absorbing the propagandistic visual culture that pervaded Iran in the immediate post-war period.

This visual saturation—spanning urban murals, photobooks, posters, television programs, and more—profoundly influenced their artistic practice. Unlike the documentary photography of the 1980s, their work transforms those earlier motifs into more metaphorical and abstract forms. At the same time, it exposes the intergenerational mechanisms through which this visual archive persists. By engaging with the war's photographic archive—seeing it, living within it, and inheriting it—these artists demonstrate an aesthetic relationship with the images of conflict.

I introduce the concept of the “pervasive archive” to describe this phenomenon. Just as an archive preserves materials for consultation, the visual culture surrounding this generation of Iranian photographers functioned as an archive-like space, storing war imagery and other artistic representations. These spaces and artistic practices created a culturally generative condition—one in which living within the visual archive shaped forms, composition, framing, and aesthetics.

The specter of modernism haunts the “Lost Territories”: The photographic archive of Sputnik Photos

Dorota Łuczak, Adam Mickiewicz University

The subject of the paper is going to be a photographic archive of “Lost Territories,” created in 2008-2016 by the Sputnik Photos artists' collective, photographers from Central and Eastern Europe, primarily Poland (Andrej Balco, Jan Brykczynski, Andrei Liankevich, Michal Luczak, Rafal Milach, Adam Panczuk, Agnieszka Rayss). The archive gathers individual documentary projects carried out in the territories of former republics and countries dependent on the USSR, but is devoid of structure and imposed classification. Sputnik Photos have created a resource of visual imagery of “Lost Territories,” on the basis of which book, exhibition and site-specific projects are being prepared. These projects take the form of image constellations representing the condition of post-socialist societies and territories. Here, the archive becomes not so much a structure that forces a clear-cut narrative, but a reservoir of images to disrupt social, cultural and political myths. Sputnik Photos reveal the complicated history of communist countries in Eastern Europe after the 1989/91 breakthrough. Rather than enthusiastic images of young, democratic societies, they show the condition of people and the environment after years of Soviet exploitation, ecological disaster and the difficulties of society finding its way in the new realities. In Sputnik Photos one can see what Susan Buck-Morss calls a dream of political, cultural and economic modernization.

The instrumentalization of these dreams by the authorities, however, leads them to be turned against the masses, who were originally supposed to be the beneficiaries of the processes of social transformation. The world shaped by neoliberal democracy and exposed to capitalist hallucination appears here not so much as a dreamland, but a system in which homo sovieticus - to use Svetlana Alexeyevich's term - is lost. In the proposed talk, I will introduce various projects based on the "Archive of Lost Territories" as a form of critical examination of post-communist societies, which after the 1989/1991 breakthrough did not gain an agency, but remained puppets of the historical and modernization process (Boris Buden).

Thinking Visually: Representation, Gesture and Reparation

Ines da Silva Beleza Barreiros, Universidade Nova de Lisboa

Colonialism inaugurated an epistemological tradition molded by image-making and image-reading that remains operational to this day. Thus, images aren't just documents of colonialism; they are colonialism (still) in action. For the sake of historical truth and documental authority, scholars dealing with the visual colonial archive often end up reifying the past in the present, using images as illustrations. Through the process of large reproduction and (re)circulation of this visibility, these often luxurious editions eternalize the colonial complex at work – and at large – in contemporary Portugal. A worldview to be inhabited, reproducible and updatable, this complex serves – yesterday as today – to impose and administer authority. The question then is how to examine colonial archives without eternalizing its spell in the present? How to challenge this enduring colonial complex?

Taking as premise that to know colonialism is, first and foremost, to know what has resisted and has been resisting to it, this talk (1) unpacks some of the ways in which the colonial complex manifests itself in contemporary Portugal, namely in scholarly production; (2) elaborates upon a few devices and assemblages of countervisuality, i.e. new forms of exploring the Portuguese visual colonial archive pursued by artists, scholars, and activists, such as Landra, Grada Kilomba, Alfredo Margarido, Cristina Roldão et al, and Dulce Fernandes; and (3) expands on how to use the visual archives of power to elaborate on a critique of domination, distinguishing image-archive from image-memory. Through this threefold visual and conceptual itinerary – on Representation, Gesture, and Reparation – this paper reclaims the ontology of critique as reparative (rather than at the service of the colonial complex).

DAY 2: THURSDAY, 3 OCTOBER

PANEL 3A - AFFECTIVE HERITAGES AND FAMILY ARCHIVES

Performing family archives: dictatorships through women's gaze

Ana Janeiro, Universidade Nova de Lisboa; Ana Pérez-Quiroga, Universidade de Évora
e Bruno Marques, Universidade Aberta; IHA NOVA FCSH / IN2PAST

In 2004, Hal Foster identified an “archival impulse” in contemporary art, highlighting practices that expose alternative archives and reveal the past as fragmented and incomplete. By interrogating public archives through private ones, they destabilise symbolic orders. These types of archives, when appropriated or (re)created by artists, offer more than mere visual records; they embody cultural, social, and political contexts.

We propose a performative lecture exploring two artistic projects and the historical context of the Iberian dictatorships. The talk examines the lasting imprint of the Portuguese and Spanish dictatorships on second and third generation women, presented by two female visual artists and a male narrator in three acts, with a maximum duration of 20 minutes. The performers engage with projected images throughout the presentation.

In *The Archive is Present*, Ana Janeiro reinterprets her grandmothers' gestures from family albums, using her body as an intergenerational mediator. She dramatizes the rigid postures imposed by propaganda, exposing them as disciplined constructs rather than natural expressions. The artist's body reveals that these gestures are anything but “natural”, rather the result of a disciplined internalisation of composure standards imposed by the dictatorial regime.

Ana Pérez-Quiroga, in *ARCHIVO ANGELITA APXIB 1937-1956* (2019), explores the photographic mediation of objects brought back by her mother upon returning to Spain after twenty years of exile in the USSR. Constructing an archive of images, objects, and testimonies, the artist engages in remediation, transforming symbols and artefacts into images. Her work also enacts re-performativity, using storytelling to confront repression's lingering effects, both personal and collective.

Each artist will separately discuss the motivations and findings of their work, while the narrator both reports and poses questions. The performance highlights how family photographic archives, far from being static repositories, become creative material that challenges the construction of collective memory.

An Immigrants Biscuit Tins: Reframing a Family Archive

Susan Ribeiro, University of Westminster

An Immigrant's Biscuit Tins is a practice-based research project by Susan Ribeiro, centred on reframing an informal family archive as a site of memory, identity and creative inquiry. At its heart are fourteen repurposed biscuit tins kept by the artist's mother, each filled with materials that trace her migration from the Iberian Peninsula to Britain between 1973 and 2020. These include photographs, letters, official documents, annotated recipes and other personal objects that may appear ordinary but carry the emotional weight of a life in transit.

Although never intended as an archive, the tins are approached as affective spaces that offer an alternative way of holding memory, one shaped by care, intimacy and the textures of everyday life. They speak to the quiet, domestic dimensions of migration and the forms of knowledge that remain undocumented, unarchived or emotionally held.

The project emerges from Ribeiro's position as the British-born daughter of Spanish and Portuguese immigrants, shaped by a complex intergenerational memory of language, cultural dislocation and the slow work of belonging. To describe the layered, unresolved and often contradictory nature of this inheritance, she proposes the concept of muddled heritage (Ribeiro, 2025), which attends to the shifting influences that complicate fixed narratives of identity.

This presentation unfolds as a spoken collage, a layered and non-linear composition of poetic writing, image and reflective fragments, drawn from the materials in the tins and reworked through collage and text. Rather than offering a resolved outcome, it explores visual, embodied and affective methods for reactivating the archive, while remaining attentive to the layered, unsettled experience of second-generation diasporic identity in a British context.

Family archives, photographic artefacts and paintings in the work of Gabriela Bettini

Natalia Fortuny, Universidad de Buenos Aires / Conicet

Documentary and photographic archives are often the starting point for new visual and political artifacts that straddle the boundary between documentation and creation. Here I present a constellation of artifacts produced by Gabriela Bettini that highlight the consequences of the crimes of the last Argentine dictatorship, primarily around disappearance and exile, in relation to extractivist practices throughout history. This is a small collection of pictorial, audiovisual, and literary works by this artist, who was born in exile in Spain, country where she still resides.

Under the threatening conditions of the dictatorial context in Argentina in the 1970s, exile became one of the ways to stay alive. For the children's generation, this wandering journey at the beginning of their lives was and will be, above all, an inherited journey. What images support these narratives around exile and disappearance? How do they fit into a much longer history of social and economic inequalities? How do the archives contribute to the construction of that imagined part of their biographies?

PANEL 3B - ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS AND IMMATERIAL HERITAGES

The curator-as-ethnographer

Rita Cêpa, Universidade Nova de Lisboa

Before describing the artist-as-archivist (2004), Hal Foster (1996) introduces the artist-as-ethnographer to characterise an artistic practice that adopts and incorporates methods and themes from ethnography - a subfield of anthropology within the broader humanities and social sciences, dedicated to studying cultures, societies, and behaviours, often through direct observation and participation. According to the art critic and historian, this approach sought to reflect on otherness, critique the primitivist fantasy framework, challenge hegemonic narratives, and reveal silenced voices.

In recent decades, the magnitude of this discourse has significantly intensified and broadened, as evidenced by the rising number of exhibitions and curatorial models that showcase documentary materials, emphasise historical archives and assume ethnographic characteristics. Documenta11 (2002) is one of the first examples to refine and extend this perspective. Under the direction of Okwui Enwezor, the quinquennial exhibition unfolded across multiple transcontinental discursive platforms, incorporating archival practices, historiographical viewpoints, and deterritorialising strategies.

Alongside six co-authors, the Nigerian curator magnified the scope of a polycentric model that firmly solidified the role of the archive as a sociopolitical instrument capable of addressing global challenges such as decolonial thought, eurocentrism, democratic dynamics, creolisation, human rights and migration flows. At a time when the growing centrality of curating as an authorial practice, mediating tool, and research-based critical device is gaining momentum, it is worth considering an analogous terminology: the curator-as-ethnographer. If we consider Magiciens de La Terre (1989), the exhibition curated by Jean-Hubert Martin, as a precursor - albeit controversial, due to its exoticising, essentialist, and superficial outlook - of this archetype, it fully materialises in the work of curators like Enwezor, who widen this method into a more post-colonial, analytical, and politically aware field. Therefore, this article seeks to expand Foster's notion, which manifests not only in artistic practice but also in the discerning gaze of the curator.

The Artist as Ethnographer: Archiving Vernacular Heritages

Maria Manuela Restivo, Centro em Rede de Investigação em Antropologia (CRIA)

In recent years, a growing number of Portuguese contemporary artists have been engaging with vernacular heritages—often referred to as folk or traditional knowledge and practices.

This engagement manifests in diverse ways: through artworks inspired by rural lifeways, like human-nature relationships or ancestral plant knowledge; the incorporation of traditional object-making techniques into contemporary sculpture; or the activation of ancient gestures or bodily techniques through performances.

In the process of creating their works, many of these artists adopt observational and documentation methods that closely resemble ethnographic practices, invoking the historical notion of the artist-as-ethnographer. However, given the inherently intangible nature of vernacular heritages, these artists do more than simply appropriate traditional cultural practices—they actively generate archives of them. Some artists are so meticulous in their documentation that they produce archival corpora capable of contributing to the preservation of these practices, often paralleling or even exceeding the efforts of ethnographers and heritage professionals. Unlike conventional heritage documentation, however, artists engage with vernacular materials in a uniquely fluid and creative manner, simultaneously constructing an archival record and transforming it into new artistic expressions.

This presentation critically examines contemporary artists' engagement with vernacular, traditional, and folk heritages, arguing that through their practices, they not only document but also perform and reconfigure these traditions. Drawing on extensive ethnographic fieldwork in the field of Portuguese vernacular heritages, and interviews with contemporary artists, this talk explores the specificities, challenges, and possibilities inherent in the archives of the folk produced through artistic practice.

Nomadic Memories as Artistic Archives: Central Asian Counter Narratives in Gulzat Egemberdieva's Films

Birgit Eusterschulte, Freie Universität Berlin

Alternative histories of nomadic communities in Central Asia are essential to Gulzat Egemberdieva's experimental documentary films. Raised in Kyrgyzstan, the filmmaker explores the cultural and political history of Central Asia during the pre- and post-Soviet eras through the lens of nomadic cultures. The oral histories of the Pamiris, which represent a nomadic and oral culture in Central Asia, serve as the foundation for Egemberdieva's Counter Archiving. The films oscillate between documentary and fictional narratives, historical footage, autobiography, and video portraits, reflecting a quest for identity across past and present, as well as national and regional boundaries in contemporary Kyrgyzstan. However, how can we recount the history of nomadic communities whose culture does not rely on the written word or the creation of archives? A central question addressed in this paper is how the artist engages with the archive of oral traditions and memories from nomadic cultures to illuminate underrepresented voices and historical scenes.

The artist's method of historicizing raises questions about the filmmaker's responsibility in portraying these histories and narratives while crafting filmic archives. The lecture examines the potential of dialogues (M. Bakhtin) and responsive constellations in artistic historicizing, aiming to confront the archive's limitations, fill gaps, and dissolve hierarchies, thereby initiating a process of decolonization and unlearning.

Simultaneously, this contribution explores how the poetic interweaving of oral tradition, family footage, and personal archives not only illustrates the profound impact of the former Soviet era on the lives of nomadic communities - due to altered borders - but also leads to new forms of labor migration and nomadism, resulting in insurmountable borders and divided families in the post-Soviet landscape Kyrgyzstan. However, how can we recount the history of nomadic communities whose culture does not rely on the written word or the creation of archives? A central question addressed in this paper is how the artist engages with the archive of oral traditions and memories from nomadic cultures to illuminate underrepresented voices and historical scenes.

PANEL 4A - ARCHIVES OF CONFLICT AND THE FIGHT AGAINST MEMORY LOSS

“The need to assert one’s presence is not an uncommon one.” Archiving and Critique in the Practices of Akram Zaatari, Jumana Manna, and Farah Saleh (online)

Rebecca Hanna John, Leuphana University Lüneburg

“For those nations or minorities whose history and culture is under threat of erasure, the need to assert one’s presence is not an uncommon one. One of the ways of doing that is by addressing history.” (Manna 2013)

For about two decades, art historians and curators have been engrossed by the fact that many contemporary artists work with archives. One of the motivations behind this artistic interest is that archives have not only been powerful tools of domination and control “from above”: They can also be used “from below,” as sites of resistance against erasure. They make it possible to reassemble the fragments of history in the aftermath of destruction and rupture—to hold on to history in uncertain times—and can thus serve as arbiters of identity for entire communities. This is also how Jason Lustig describes the “feverish era of collecting” he identifies with regards to Jewish archives compiled in the aftermath of the Holocaust (Lustig 2022).

Similar statements have been made regarding other archiving initiatives emerging from political conflict, postwar and post-partition contexts, and other comparable conflagrations. Jumana Manna’s work, which speaks to ruination and erasure in the context of Palestinian history and culture, is here a prime example. While one can regard such archival strategies as a means of warding off the fear of forgetting across geographies, temporalities, and communities, my focus is geared specially toward contemporary artistic projects that, in the context of Israel/Palestine and Lebanon, share critical and transnational perspectives on archiving.

In my dissertation, which I propose to present at the international conference “Reactivating Archives in Contemporary Art” at Universidade Nova de Lisboa, I observed that several contemporary artists engaged in archival research or the building of artistic archives not only critique the ways in which archives have been used as tools of governance, especially in the context of colonial archives: They also use archives to tell stories of transnational connections, trajectories, and entanglements.

Archives and Traces of Lost Worlds in the Theories of Georges Didi-Huberman and Ariella Aïsha Azoulay

Stijn de Cauwer, Leiden University

In two books from 2019, *Pour commencer encore* and *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism*, Georges Didi-Huberman and Ariella Aïsha Azoulay describe their own family history as the motivation behind their respective theories of images. Both of them had family members that belonged to Jewish-Arabic communities in Algeria and Tunisia, whose cultural practices and histories were erased and largely forgotten. However, both authors derive from this background very different relations towards archives and the possibility to re-activate them. Azoulay will regard archives as colonial and imperialist apparatuses that hide the histories of worlds erased by colonialism. Didi-Huberman, on the other hand, argues that traces of lost worlds are never lost and that archival material can always be re-activated. While Azoulay associates image archives with colonialist destruction, strongly distrusting them or refusing to access them, Didi-Huberman associates images with migration and repeatedly expresses his love and admiration for the famous archives he did his research in. Though in *Potential History*, Azoulay engages in a project of unlearning and refusal, she does produce critical reworkings of archival material in her own artistic work, such as *Errata* and *Un-Documented*, and in her recent book *The Jewelers of the Ummah: A Potential History of the Jewish Muslim World* (2024), she turns to crafting practices such as jewelry making to revive the cultural practices of her relatives. In the light of the theoretical tensions between Azoulay and Didi-Huberman, I will briefly explore 3 experimental digital films by Palestinian makers: *Your Father Was Born 100 Years Old And So Was The Nakba* by Razan AlSalah, *When Things Occur* by Oraib Toukan and *At Those Terrifying Frontiers Where the Existence and Disappearance of People Fade into Each Other* by Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme.

‘Doing Representation Otherwise.’ Art, Archives and Violence

Julia Rensing, University of Basel

In the face of ongoing wars in Gaza, Congo, Ukraine, and many other regions, we are confronted with a constant stream of violent images – if we dare to look. These emerging archives, documenting crimes against humanity, raise ethical dilemmas that remain intensely debated. The question, as Susan Sontag posited, of “regarding the pain of others,” is not only pertinent to the visual representation of current conflicts but also to so-called ‘colonial archives.’ These photographic collections, built during the colonial era by European settlers, missionaries, and officials, are largely composed of images that objectify and exploit their subjects both visually and physically. How should we engage with such violent imagery? What are our moral obligations to face photographs of painful pasts and colonial continuities reflected in today’s visual regimes? Where theoretical discussions stall, artistic practices offer concrete methods to move beyond a perpetuation of violence in images.

This presentation explores the potential and limitations of contemporary art that engages with archival repositories or the idea of 'the archive' itself. We turn to the works of Belinda Kazeem-Kamiński, Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, Stephanie Syjuco, and Huda Takriti, who develop methods to protect photographed subjects from further exploitation, for instance by (partially) blocking the viewer's gaze. Artist Tuli Mekondjo changes the historical photographs' emotional resonances and the modalities of viewing by rendering certain scenes opaque (Édouard Glissant). And artist Gabrielle Goliath disregards historical archival repositories but instead builds alternative archives to document experiences of injustice in a more sensitive manner. Based on these case studies, we will assess how artistic practices reshape discourses on the uses of archives, while also confronting the ethical boundaries of artistic engagement with archives, centring the question: what risks arise when artists manipulate and refigure historical materialities and reframe histories?

The Subversive Stitch: Gender, Archive, and Memory in the Work of Silvina der Meguerditchian

Elif Karakaya, University of Rochester / EHESS Paris

This paper examines how Silvina der Meguerditchian, a Berlin-based artist and granddaughter of the Armenian Genocide survivors, mobilizes textile and fiber art to transform the archive into a gendered site of memory and historical critique. Since the late 1990s, she has produced textile collages by repurposing archival photographs and documents of Ottoman Armenians.

Focusing on works such as *Friendship/Entanglements* and *Texture of Identity*, I explore how Der Meguerditchian's crocheting of archival images generates a feminist counter- archive that confronts inherited histories of displacement and denial.

Her practice extends beyond textile into a broader fiber-based approach, encompassing installations and performances where thread becomes both material and metaphor. These aspects of her work echo feminist fiber art of the 1960s–70s, which challenged modernist hierarchies that dismissed craft as feminine and decorative. While not explicitly aligned with that movement, Der Meguerditchian critiques similar exclusions by reactivating fiber's embodied, affective, and political potential.

Taught crocheting by her grandmother, Der Meguerditchian reclaims a feminized practice as a method of archival intervention. By stitching together images of Ottoman Armenian families, she symbolically reconnects communities fractured by genocide and diaspora. In this context, the carpet emerges as both a personal inheritance and a cultural-historical signifier—linked to the gendered political economy of the late Ottoman Empire, where Armenian women and children labored in post-violence recovery through carpet production. Her fiber-based works thus weave together the intimate and the collective, activating the carpet not just as a site of memory, but as a form of resistance.

Through what art historian Rozsika Parker calls “the subversive stitch,” Der Meguerditchian transforms needlework into a reparative, critical act—one that invites collective negotiation over archives, complicity, and historical accountability.

PANEL 4B - CREATING COMMUNITY WITH(IN) ARCHIVES

Broadcasting the Archive: Radio Art as Epistemic Disobedience

Giulia Crisci, IUAV University of Venice

How can radio art become a space for rethinking the sonic archive? This paper explores how the radiophonic dispositif enables a decolonial and affective approach to archival practices, positioning voice, resonance, and orality as tools of epistemic disobedience.

The paper focuses on two case studies. In *La radio des images qui s'écoutent* (2016-2022), Yasmina Reggad works with sonic fragments retrieved from the official archive of the Algerian national radio—materials granted to the artist but still largely inaccessible. These recordings from the post-independence era reflect a time when Algeria opened its airwaves to global anti-colonial struggles. Reggad reactivates them through live performance, transforming listening into an act of collective witnessing and political presence.

Frictional Conversation (2001-ongoing), a long-term project by Yasmine Eid-Sabbagh, unfolds over a decade in the Palestinian refugee camp of Burj Al-Shamali (Lebanon). Faced with the inaccessibility of formal archives, the artist began working with the family photographs that people had carried with them. The digital repository takes shape through extended conversations and relationships around these images, resisting archival forms that reproduce colonial violence and stereotyped representations of refugees. Public iterations of the project never display the photographs; instead, they materialize as performative actions called “possible futures.” One such future, proposed at Documenta Fifteen, was the creation of a community radio station in the camp.

Drawing on Ariella Aïsha Azoulay's *Potential History*, both projects articulate the epistemic task of unlearning imperialism and refusing the logic of the shutter. They reject the archive as a silent and fixed repository, opting instead for distributed, performative, and relational forms. Through radio, they propose new politics of listening and modes of memory-making in which the archive becomes a site of futurity and collective agency. Broadcasting, here, is not dissemination but insurgency—queering the linearity of time and reclaiming the archive as a living, sounding practice of resistance.

Nature, Archive and Community: Exploring the spiralling kinships of Luta Ca Caba Inda and Mediateca Onshore

Tom Vickery, University of Leeds

This paper is interested in the relations of ecology and community within the Luta Ca Caba Inda (LCCI) contemporary archival arts project. LCCI began in 2012 as an experimental digitisation of filmic material housed at the Bissau-Guinean Institute for Film produced in the late colonial and early postcolonial period. Ostensibly guided by artist Filipa César, operating as a global cine-collective, the project has snowballed into many collaborative re-animations by filmmakers, artists and researchers.

This paper will look specifically at Mediateca Onshore, a Media library built in Malafo, Oio, that works with the programme to run workshops and community gatherings aiming to develop South-South knowledge networks surrounding ecology, solidarity and art.

Approached as an eco-critical art history, this paper will frame LCCI's archival engagement through its use of re-animated cinema as a tool of assembling ecological community. By recognising the process of drawing together diverse human and non-human actors, aesthetic forms, and critical imaginaries across time and space to involve them in spiralling kinships, this project seeks to determine LCCI's potentiality in provoking future facing possibilities in the face of dominant, arborescent knowledge formations. It will engage with the alternative potentials imagined by the previously submerged perspectives weaved into contemporary discourse by the Mediateca platform through its various archive-led community outputs across performance, visual media and agroecology. In turn, this will guide broader discussions around the purchase of Mediateca Onshore as an environmentally conscious arts project operating at the intersection of community and ecology and the role of archival cinema in building ecological community within and beyond contemporary Guinea-Bissau.

Remembering Panaf 1969: The Archival Impulse of Zineb Sedira

Youri-Hammache-Sigour, Université Paris Nanterre / Università di Roma La Sapienza

On 21 July 1969, at the height of the Cold War, when the eyes of the Western bloc were riveted on the images of the first step on the Moon, a cultural event opened in Algiers whose scope and resonance - both artistic and historical - are difficult for us to imagine today. And yet, the First Panafrican Cultural Festival, or "Panaf" as it came to be known, succeeded in bringing together under the banner of the arts delegations from some thirty African nations, having recently freed themselves from the colonial yoke. Panaf tends to assert itself as a unicum in the contemporary, post-colonial history of Africa. In the absence of subsequent editions on this scale, it stands out as the only cultural and interdisciplinary event invited by a national government, the young People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, to unite the African intellectuals and artists present around a new definition of "cultural Pan-Africanism".

Despite the non-visibility of the archives and the serious gaps in the historiography of Panaf, the memory of the festival's greatness and historic dimension seems to live on in the collective memory not only of people of Algiers, but also of artists from the diaspora, such as Zineb Sedira, who punctuated her installations at the Jeu de Paume in Paris and also the French Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2022 with references to Panaf. Based on Sedira's private archives that she collected herself amazed by the echoes of the event, those installations will be shortly shown yet again at the Centro de Arte moderna Gulbenkian in Zineb Sedira's solo show "Standing Here Wondering Which Way to Go » (18 Sep 2025-19 Jan 2026). For that occasion I intend to question the origin of this memory and explore the value of such an "impulse" from Zineb Sedira's archival practice, replaced into the current process in which numerous contemporary artists are reconsidering the Pan-African and Pan-Arabic utopias of the 1960s-70s.

Carrie Mae Weems' *Family Pictures and Stories* and the archive of Black photography *Ariel Evans, University of Texas at Austin*

In 1978, contemporary artist Carrie Mae Weems began collecting and making photographs of her immediate and extended family and recording their stories via audiotape. Tales of sharecropping and racial violence in the U.S. South, escapes north, labor in northern factories and farms, and present-day occasions and affections appear in this archive, which six years later Weems assembled into the earliest mature work of her now-legendary career. Titled *Family Pictures and Stories* (1978-84), this installation of captioned photographs and audio recordings is at once family album, sociological documentation, artist statement, and institutional critique.

This paper offers a close reading of *Family Pictures and Stories* historicized by Weems' engagements with archival practices of both Black and white-dominated U.S. art spaces and institutions at the turn of the 1980s. Showing how *Family Pictures and Stories* evinces methods from the African American oral tradition—methods designed to maintain historical memory across the violent ruptures in Black life and history wrought by apartheid—this paper considers these artistic choices in light of Weems' involvement with contemporaneous efforts to recover, preserve, interpret, and distribute the history of Black and/or women photographers. I simultaneously situate *Family Pictures and Stories* amid Weems' graduate studies at the University of California San Diego, where Martha Rosler and Allan Sekula developed influential theories about the institutionalization of photographic archives as a form of social control. Describing how Weems' installation welds these archival frameworks in dialogue, I suggest that *Family Pictures and Stories* spotlights and negotiates the racial and gendered segregations that structure the potential relationships among artists and audiences; and how they change over time. Ultimately, I consider *Family Pictures and Stories* and its movements through mainstream art institutions as a form of memory activism, one that intersects personal and collective pasts to demand new histories and just futures.

PANEL 5A - ARCHIVAL GAPS AND THE POWER OF FICTIONALISATION

Tunga's Catalogue Raisonné: Research and Archival Reactivation in the Artist's Personal Archive (online)

Julia Cavalcante de Andrade, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, and Martina Benassi, Instituto Tunga

This paper aims to present part of an archival research experience in the collection of the contemporary Brazilian artist Tunga, focused on the development of his Catalogue Raisonné, currently being published by the Cahiers d'Art Institute. More specifically, it offers reflections resulting from the reactivation of his personal archive — largely unpublished — as a way of revisiting his life and work through the exploration of personal documents, old photographs, correspondence, videos, interviews, writings, and projects. These materials were accessed through the Tunga Institute, which is responsible for the preservation, conservation, cataloging, and dissemination of the artist's extensive body of work. The research draws on two main theoretical and methodological references: *Nebulosas do pensamento urbanístico* (2018), by Margareth da Silva Pereira and Paola Berenstein Jacques, and *O Desafio Biográfico* (2009), by François Dosse. From this trajectory, reflections emerged on the very nature of the archive, understood through four perspectives: (1) the archive as biographical and artistic excavation, in which family memories, childhood and youth recollections, and the creative process behind the works over time revealed not only Tunga's life trajectory but also the processes that shaped him and the paths he opened; (2) the archive as a puzzle, with documents appearing in a fragmented manner, like clues to be assembled, allowing for the construction of a narrative even in the face of inevitable gaps; (3) the limits of the archive, through the recognition of absences, agencies, and protagonists, understanding that archival traces do not represent the totality of a life, but suggest possible fragments; (4) the role of the researcher, in acknowledging her own non- neutrality in handling and interpreting sources. From this experience, more than merely revisiting Tunga's life and work, the study proposes a reflection on the archive itself as an active space for the production of memory, narrative, and debate.

Archiving Roberto Chabet (online)

Ringo Bunoan, University College London

This paper is a reflection on the author's exhibition, *Archiving Roberto Chabet*, held in 2009 at the Jorge B. Vargas Museum in the Philippines. Anticipating the concepts of impossible archival imaginaries and imagined records (Gilliland and Caswell, 2016), the exhibition was an artistic response to the gaps in the archive of Filipino conceptual artist Roberto Chabet (1937-2013), which was also assembled by the author for Asia Art Archive in 2009. Consisting of the author's reconstructions of Chabet's unrealized and undocumented works, the exhibition was installed in the museum's basement and could only be seen through a closed but clear glass door. A homage to Chabet's 1974 exhibition *Bakawan*, it also brought to fore issues of access and vantage points in the process of remembering and archiving the histories of Philippine conceptual art, which was mostly unwritten and misrepresented due to lack of publicly available research material, prior to the launch of Chabet's archive at AAA.

Embodying the spirit of a 'living archive' (Hall, 2001), it has since led to further reconstructions of Chabet's works, the creation of new works by other artists, and wider research on conceptual art in the Philippines. Consisting of the author's reconstructions of Chabet's unrealized and undocumented works, the exhibition was installed in the museum's basement and could only be seen through a closed but clear glass door. A homage to Chabet's 1974 exhibition *Bakawan*, it also brought to fore issues of access and vantage points in the process of remembering and archiving the histories of Philippine conceptual art, which was mostly unwritten and misrepresented due to lack of publicly available research material, prior to the launch of Chabet's archive at AAA. Embodying the spirit of a 'living archive' (Hall, 2001), it has since led to further reconstructions of Chabet's works, the creation of new works by other artists, and wider research on conceptual art in the Philippines. Emphasizing the multiple and entangled roles of the artist and archivist, and their communities, it shows the value and impact of shared knowledge, collective memory and reconstruction in preserving and caring for the legacies of Filipino conceptual artists. An affective counterbalance to the Western framework of individual authorship, ownership and authenticity in art and archives, it serves as an example of an artist-centred approach to creating archives of conceptual artists and contributes to the mapping of encounters between art and archives, and archival art practices in areas and contexts beyond the scope of dominant art history and archival discourse.

From the Studio to the Archive: Managing Artistic Legacies in a Historical Context

Sara Quintero Pomares, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, and Diana Angoso de Guzmán, Universidad de Salamanca

Managing an artist's legacy presents significant challenges. When an artist passes away, they leave behind not only their body of work but also a vast archive. An artist's archive encompasses all the documentation accumulated in their studio: letters, memos, contracts, photographs, and press clippings. In the dichotomy between the personal and the institutional, the personal aspect prevails, as it is often family members—children, widows, or siblings—who take on the responsibility of preserving these archives. This dynamic raises critical questions about preservation versus natural deterioration and, more importantly, about who decides what is preserved and based on what criteria.

This research examines the tensions between personal and institutional archival practices in Spain, focusing on the period of the first democratic transition and beyond. It explores the archives of artists from two different generations: Paco Cortijo, a member of the *Estampa Popular* collective, active during the first transition following Franco's dictatorship, and Chema Alvargonzález, an artist from a later period. In both cases, women (a daughter and a sister) have taken on the custodianship of the archives, driven by the conviction that these materials hold significant historical and cultural value. Both Paco Cortijo and Alvargonzález were deeply engaged in social and political movements, and their artistic practices reflect a strong commitment to collective activism. The preservation of their archives extends beyond personal memory, serving as a means to map a complex and politically charged period in Spain's history.

This study investigates the strategies employed by these custodians and the measures taken to safeguard these archives. How can these efforts contribute to broader discussions on archival management? What approaches can be developed to ensure that these materials remain accessible and relevant? By addressing these questions, this research problematizes the role of personal archives in constructing historical narratives and explores sustainable strategies for their conservation.

PANEL 5B - ARCHIVAL GAPS AND THE POWER OF FICTIONALISATION

Making Space and Filling the Gaps: Constructing a Fictional Archive to Retell the Stories of the Exiled Citizens of the Aegean Sea

Vasiliki Stasinaki, Belfast School of Art, Ulster University

National histories are typically shaped and organized around official state archives. However, what occurs when histories that exist on the fringes of the official national narrative are scattered across smaller, unofficial, or domestic collections? This proposal prompts a discussion on how a fictional archive, created through artistic practices and methods, can be employed to fill the gaps and address the absences found within state archives. The goal is to reintroduce these marginalized stories into the present. For this call, I propose a hybrid presentation format, combining a paper presentation with a small exhibition of printmaking works.

The narratives I focus on are central to my current PhD research, which examines the marginalized histories of the islands of the Aegean Sea, which during the Greek Civil War (1946-1950), were used as places of exile for political dissidents by the Greek state. Although these stories form a significant part of modern Greek history, they remain largely underrepresented in the official state narratives and archives. Through this hybrid presentation, I will discuss how my research, which engages with smaller 'unofficial' archives and previously undiscovered domestic collections, led me to uncover a large body of handmade artifacts created by the exiled citizens during their displacement, both as a means to survive but also as an act of defiance against the authoritarian regime. This discovery prompted the creation of a fictional archive to address the gaps left by institutional records, utilizing the same artistic techniques employed by the exiles. Building on the tradition of artists who use the construction of fictional archives as a device, I aim to merge my archival findings with myths, oral traditions, and songs. This process culminates in a series of linocut and mixed media prints, which reframe and retell the stories of the political dissidents who lived on those islands.

"A Lively Community of Creative Women": Parafictional Relations as Research Strategy in The Natalie Brettschneider Archive

Clare Sully-Stendahl, University of King's College

Since the 1990s, Vancouver-based artist Carol Sawyer has been "researching and documenting" the life and art of Natalie Brettschneider, described as a Canadian-born Dada artist excluded from the avant-garde canon.

In mounting her ongoing exhibitions of The Natalie Brettschneider Archive, therefore, Sawyer's project initially appears to straightforwardly engage with both "artist as archivist" traditions and with the field of revisionist feminist art history—a scholarly tradition that has self-reflectively invited much critical discussion. As scholars such as Griselda Pollock have argued about attempts to retroactively integrate women artists into the "archive" of the canon, such projects run the risk of forcing them into a dominant narrative that may not have the methodological capacity to conceptualize them on their own artistic terms, instead placing them into a structure that was foundationally constructed on their exclusion. From this perspective, women artists invisibly constitute the marginal boundaries against which patriarchal art history is defined, in a totalizing system of scholarship in which there may not, in some bleak critiques, be any true "outside" to the broad archive of the canon at all.

My research argues that what has been overlooked in these discussions is the "outside" of artists who never existed. Brettschneider is, in fact, a fictional creation of Sawyer. By weaving a fictional history with a factual past, Sawyer engages in the emerging genre of "parafictional art"; moreover, I argue that the intersection of real and fictional archival material in Sawyer's project inventively bypass the pitfalls of even the most well-intentioned identity-based exhibitions and research projects. Many of Brettschneider's friends, collaborators, and artistic peers are real, as Sawyer cleverly integrates archival materials pertaining to the works of real women artists who are then encountered and interpreted outside of the totalizing canon of art history. Simultaneously, Brettschneider's points of contact with real people grant her legitimacy while encouraging viewers to reflect on how women artists like her have been obscured in the construction of actual archives. In my presentation, I will discuss how Sawyer thus implicitly uses the structure of parafiction to suggest potential new paths for contemporary feminist art history and archival research itself: paths that are more joyful, playful, and performative, and that demonstrate that imagining new approaches to art history may require imagining new forms of the past.

Lost voices?: artists responding to missing archives

Thomas Laval, Université de Lille

The 1990s saw a shared feeling, among scientific and artistic community, of a loss of confidence towards the Western humanities, due to their attachment to an outdated universalist and imperialist horizon. This was notably noticed in 1994, when Homi K. Bhabha, in the introduction to his book *The Location of Culture*, referred to the broader meaning of the postmodern condition as an awareness of the epistemological "limits" of the great ethnocentric modernist narratives, which are also the enunciative boundaries of a whole range of other histories and other dissonant, even dissident, voices, that of - women, colonized beings, the bearers of policed sexualities, among others. These silenced voices are also those of artists who, by virtue of their history or trajectory, carry with them and within them the narratives of this lacunae. The observation established by Bhabha, together with a practice-theory articulation inherited from the conceptualisms, enabled artists to exploit these gaps in their practice.

In response to the call for papers *Reactivating Archives in Contemporary Art*, I will pose the following question: how do contemporary artists negotiate telling their stories, stories of their peers, when testimonies, documents and archives are absent? To provide a possible answer we will analyze Zoe Leonard's photographic series *The Fae Richards Photo Archive*, dating from 1993-1996, and Walid Raad's plates entitled *My neck is thinner than a hair* from 2001. These two works enable us to consider historical lacunae through the creation of fictional archives and narratives, as a way to fill gaps in the writing of history along with its material acceptation.