Archives on Show
Revoicing, Shapeshifting, Displacing
A Curatorial Glossary

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Edited by Beatrice von Bismarck

transforming

reassembling

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sympathizing

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preenacting

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Archives on Show. An Introduction
Beatrice von Bismarck

Archives on Show brings into focus the relation between archive and exhibition, the possible ways in which their relations can be shaped. In the current discourse on archives and their formation, function, and effects, their exhibition often appears as a seemingly natural extension and prolongation into the public realm. Almost as if the archival interior can be mirrored one-to-one into the exterior space, the activities and processes that occur in exhibition, and that develop their own effects, remain in the background as long as the impression of this mirroring can be maintained. Only when the exhibition becomes recognizable as different from the archive does it come into view in its own constructed-ness. In other words, it is only in the deviation of the curatorial situation from the archive that the conditions under which the archive came into being, continues to exist today, and could continue to exist *in potentialis* become apparent. Here, in its being exhibited, the archive opens up to other modes of labor, participation, and functionality, to future writings of history and narratives. The prerequisite for this are the specific qualities, faculties, and methods with which curatorial practice participates in the production of meaning through the making and shaping of relations. The contributions to this publication, each with different procedures and strategies, make this potential of reformulating

Of Dust and Rubies – A Film on Suspension

sympathizing

In 2000, the Sudanese filmmaker, painter and poet Hussein Shariffe (1934–2005) began working on his final film *Of Dust and Rubies*. The filming was done at locations in Egypt, where he had been living in exile for 10 years due to his stance toward the Sudanese regime. His sudden death brought his work to an abrupt end and since then, *Of Dust and Rubies* has remained incomplete; a film in a state of perpetual suspension. In 2018, a group of five individuals came together—including Shariffe's daughter Eiman Hussein as well as the film's main actor Talal Afifi—to discuss how the work of this exceptional director could be presented to the world. On February 14, 2019, the first results were shared at a panel of the Berlinale´s Forum Expanded. This event formed the basis for the film *Of Dust and Rubies, A Film on Suspension* by Tamer El Said (2020, 49').

**Talal Afifi, Eiman Hussein, Tamer El Said,
Stefanie Schulte Strathaus, Haytham El Wardany**
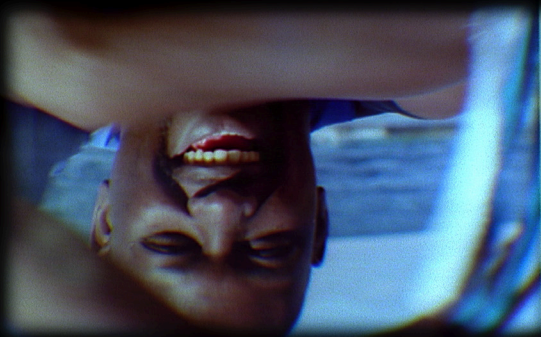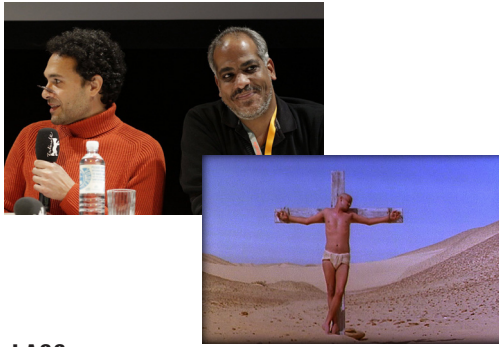
Talal Afifi

Last year, I was invited to the Arsenal Institute to participate in a workshop on the film *Of Dust and Rubies* by Sudanese director Hussein Shariffe. He is a person who has had a precious place in my mind, heart and soul. It was then that my mind started racing … how will we deal with the footage, how can the material be reproduced, how can we present it? I went back and re-read what Hussein had written in the available manuscripts and the script of his last project.

Then came the day when I got to sit with Stefanie, Haytham, Tamer, and Eiman in the cinema in Arsenal to watch the entire footage. I had thought about everything, but forgot one thing: I'd never seen any of this footage before! Even though I was one of the main actors in the film and despite the very close relationship between Hussein Shariffe and me.

When the lights went down and the show began, I was watching something I knew very well, but was seeing for the very first time. More than 18 years had passed between me and those scenes, between me and those moments!

I saw what I never expected to see: I saw myself, my face and features from years ago, my body. It was like nothing else I'd seen…to see my own face in the closeup shots flooded me with memories, scenes and pictures…

My simple life in Cairo, the place I had left my family in Sudan to move to, those years that were a mix of adventures, joys, sorrows and my joining mysterious socialist groups. That was in the late 1990s, when Cairo was a haven for Sudanese people.

Four million Sudanese were scattered across the alleyways, nights, days, furnished apartments, transport, and cafes. Four million Sudanese were in a state of asylum, waiting for the UN to resettle them in countries across the world. Four million Sudanese made Cairo their new homeland, where there was a Sudanese Social Club, a Sudanese Communist Party and a Sudanese Human Rights Organization. The Sudanese were planning for a new Sudan in this new land.

Hussein Shariffe was searching for the spiritual, humane identity of the Sudanese in diaspora, within that space.

The thing that struck me as I watched the material was: Where is the rest of this picture? Where is the life of the Sudanese in Cairo?

The 1990s? Where are their pictures, documents, newspapers, and songs? Is there a need to return to that period? Is it possible to rethink that vital timeframe? That was full of hopes, disappointments, contradictions, and varying horizons?

Is it possible to restore this massive portrait?

A thousand faces passed through my mind, hundreds of friends, acquaintances and colleagues. I thought of the diverse destinies of the people who were based in Cairo at that time and have since departed.

I thought a lot about Hussein Shariffe as he tried to touch on the Sudanese body, to feel their pain and how he didn't forget to paint a picture of it. I thought about Hussein's last gift to me, and after 13 years since his passing, I came to that hall to visit him and I found myself!

Today, I am very excited to be here with my friends—Stefanie, Marcus, Eiman, Haytham, and Tamer—to reintroduce Hussein Shariffe. I feel that this is an opportunity to revisit the lost era in Sudanese memory: Sudan in exile, the nineties of the last century!

Eiman Hussein

On our panel, I read verses from the poem "The Sacred Dust" by the Sudanese poet/writer Muhammed Al Faitory. His poem is among a collection of nine poems by prominent Sudanese poets[1] and writers used for the film *Of Dust and Rubies*. These poems and poets were carefully selected by Hussein Shariffe as they spoke and wrote about different narratives of exile, dislocation and oppression.

In the film, Shariffe visualized and brought to life the poems, he also translated them in collaboration with a professor of modern languages and culture at Durham University. What was unique about this project was the way that the poetry resonated with imagery and visual evocations readily open to cinematic interpretation. The idea of the work was for the imagery to be accompanied by music, with the individual poems being narrated, chanted, and/or rendered dramatically in their Arabic language with subtitles in English. His intention was to create an artistic tapestry that weaved together the themes of exile, dislocation, oppression, the existing Afro-Arab dichotomy in Sudan, the rule of tyranny that bespoke our people, and "not belonging" and feeling like a stranger in one's own homeland.

The project began in 1998 and production started in 2000, but it came to a halt following the sudden death of my father in 2005. So, today to share the work he has done feels incredible in so many ways.

Hussein Shariffe lived abroad for a large part of his adult life, in the UK and in Egypt. Initially he left to study but found it difficult to stay in Sudan for long. He was a painter, a filmmaker and a poet. Like many artists, he struggled to find a home in his homeland. The environment was never conducive and the regime of 1989 was the last straw for him. He left for Cairo and spent the last 15 years of his life feeling he'd been forced into exile.

As an artist, he was deeply impacted by this sense of exile and dislocation, which led many to flee from Sudan. Hussein Shariffe as a person remained a free spirit throughout his life. He spoke and voiced his values through the power of his works using imagery and words. He would say, "*A true artist should respond to life in both time and place—a landscape of the mind, mirroring what goes on around him.*"

As such, cinema was the perfect medium through which to reach a wider audience.

He was a passionate, sensitive, humane person. He was pained by the years of autocratic rule in Sudan; the oppression that was rife, forcing intellectuals and artists like himself to leave their own country. He was a strong believer in democracy. (We were lucky to experience this side of him within our small family unit. Usually in our society fathers are patriarchal figures who have the last say in things. Our model at home was different.) The regime gave him the fuel; in becoming part of the culture of resistance, artists who voiced their opinions through their work…

The poetic visual imagery that he used speaks volumes of that culture of resistance, where the human form was "unwillingly" removed from their home to a state of internal/external exile. It is a powerful feeling that can result in a chronic sense of despair and psychological alienation, the individuals' estrangement from themselves, their work and their world. What is political/personal becomes psychological, each reflecting upon another.

In his own words, Hussein Shariffe describes "the energies of resistance in the shift from the settled domesticated dynamics of culture to its unhoused and exilic energies whose incarnation today is the migrant and whose consciousness is the artist and intellectual in exile. One of the first tasks of the culture of resistance is to reclaim, rename, and reinhabit the land. The search for authenticity, for a more congenial nation."

From a very personal side, speaking as a daughter who has lost her father: We saw how this project was of great importance to him. I saw how he put his soul, life and material and financial belongings into it. It was a film that was fundamental to him and he put so much effort into its making. The entire idea of the film was different.

But if for now I put aside my personal subjective experience and if I ask why this project is important, I would say that *Of Dust and Rubies* coming to life in whichever form it takes and breathes during this period in our lives is momentous…

On a local level, it is a time where Sudan is in a state of public revolt against its oppressors: Since December 2018, we have witnessed peaceful protests throughout the cities of Sudan and beyond. We have witnessed the killings/torture/beatings and unlawful imprisonment of these peaceful protestors and *Of Dust and Rubies* gives voice to that oppression. But the film also gives hope for new beginnings, as voiced by the poets and the imagery. So for the Sudanese, it is the right time.

On a global level, the film voices the universal thread and issues that many can relate to wherever they are located: the loss of home, relationships; the impact of physical and psychological exile; the deprivation of what is familiar to us; the sense of not belonging; the sense of feeling like an outsider, the "othering" because of being different; the sense of being a stranger, an alien; all existential threats of identity, anxiety, isolation, and loss. In the climate we are currently living in, these feelings are even more exacerbated.

Haytham El Wardany

Watching rushes of unfinished film can really take hold of you. I didn't know that when I was invited to the workshop on Hussein Shariffe's film, for I don't come from a filmmaking background. I come more from writing background.

Trying to read unfinished work is a complex experience for the tension between the work and the material, or the rushes, becomes more intense. On one hand, the material intelligence outlives the work's intentions, on the other hand, the work processes change the material conditions. This dialectic was taking place every moment while we were exposed to the rushes. What to keep? What to omit? And who decides? These questions seemed very difficult questions to me.

One of the things that struck me while watching is the interest and attention Hussein Shariffe paid to forms of life and nature. He was filming in locations that were geographically far apart. The Red Sea to the east, white desert to the west, Aswan to the south and in Qanater near Cairo. In these scenes, the landscape was not just a background on which the events took place, but was an integral part of the scene. Human agents were mostly appearing as integrated in their environment.

This struck me because the landscape images here have a different sensitivity than most Egyptian films I have seen. The 1980s generation of filmmakers in Egypt, the generation of Hussein Shariffe, were more interested in the city and urbanism. They were the first generation who refrained from filming in studios and deliberately filmed in the streets to capture everyday life. Cities became the most dominant living environment in modern Egyptian cinema, which also reflects the inner immigration situation in Egypt to big cities, starting in the middle of the last century. Our eyes became familiar with images of street life, but at the same time we forgot about other ways of life, for instance in suburban environments.

Hussein Shariffe described what he was trying to do while working on his film, saying, "We were looking for sympathetic places."

In the eyes of a Sudanese dissident filmmaker, who is searching for locations sympathetic to Sudanese places, the Egyptian landscape suddenly starts to open itself. In the eyes of an immigrant who is trying to look through an environment, this very environment appeared in details, not as a background of a narrative, but as a foreground for a search.

While watching the rushes, I was neither seeing one place nor the other, but was feeling this sympathy between two places that Hussein Shariffe had been looking for. A sympathy that is a form of solidarity with other forms of life and with other places.

Franz Kafka
The Silence of the Sirens

Proof that inadequate, even childish measures, may serve to rescue one from peril.

To protect himself from the Sirens, Ulysses stopped his ears with wax and had himself bound to the mast of his ship. Naturally any and every traveller before him could have done the same, except those whom the Sirens allured even from a great distance; but it was known to all the world that such things were of no help whatsoever. The song of the Sirens could pierce through everything, and the longing of those they seduced would have broken far stronger bonds than chains and masts. But Ulysses did not think of that, although he had probably heard of it. He trusted absolutely to his handful of wax and his fathom of chain, and in innocent elation over his little stratagem sailed out to meet the Sirens.

Now the Sirens have a still more fatal weapon than their song, namely their silence. And though admittedly such a thing has never happened, still it is conceivable that someone might possibly have escaped from their singing; but from their silence certainly never. Against the feeling of having triumphed over them by one's own strength, and the consequent exaltation that bears down everything before it, no earthly powers could have remained intact.

And when Ulysses approached them, the potent songstresses actually did not sing, whether because they thought that this enemy could be vanquished only by their silence, or because of the look of bliss on the face of Ulysses, who was thinking of nothing but his wax and his chains, made them forget their singing.

But Ulysses, if one may so express it, did not hear their silence; he thought they were singing and that he alone did not hear them. For a fleeting moment he saw their throats rising and falling, their breasts lifting, their eyes filled with tears, their lips half-parted, but believed that these were accompaniments to the airs which died unheard around him. Soon, however, all this faded from his sight as he fixed his gaze on the distance, the Sirens literally vanished before his resolution, and at the very moment when they were nearest to him he knew of them no longer.

But they—lovelier than ever—stretched their necks and turned, let their cold hair flutter free in the wind, and forgetting everything clung with their claws to the rocks. They no longer had any desire to allure; all that they wanted was to hold as long as they could the radiance that fell from Ulysses' great eyes.

If the Sirens had possessed consciousness they would have been annihilated at that moment. But they remained as they had been; all that had happened was that Ulysses had escaped them.

A codicil to the foregoing has also been handed down. Ulysses, it is said, was so full of guile, was such a fox, that not even the goddess of fate could pierce his armor. Perhaps he had really noticed, although here the human understanding is beyond its depths, that the Sirens were silent, and opposed the aforementioned pretense to them and the gods merely as a sort of shield.

Stefanie Schulte Strathaus

I want to speak about mermaids, mermen, and sirens.

When you look at unedited film footage, it is like walking into a landscape you have never seen before or like sailing in unknown waters. You try to orient yourself: The images resonate with your memory, your knowledge, your expectations, your current mental state. The cinematic apparatus is replaced by an inner echo chamber. If you take someone else's images into that echo chamber, it feels a little bit like stealing from that person. In my panel contribution, I will steal from others.

The opposite of unedited is not necessarily linear. Unedited images are words without grammar, or not even that, they are like vocal sounds, when you hear them, you may not recognize their language. Hussein Shariffe was a poet, someone who created language and meaning, and in doing so, he opposed narrative cinema. Sein Kino war ANTIKINO (his cinema was anti-cinema).

The waves
Gently rolling
Or in turmoil
Are an organized intelligence network.
The word travels in coded messages…
Some … underground
The message, deciphered, spreads;
War is declared.

The treasure troves
The cache of gold
And pearls
Are the glittering vaults
Coral webbed
Of many Atlantis.

The Pharaohs knew the wrath of water
In supplication
They invented water-Gods
And sacrificed maidens.

(From the poem "Water Kills" by Hussein Shariffe)

sound from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1HanTOxToA
41:50 - 42:50

This was music from the record collection of the New York Underground icon Jack Smith, which he might have used for *Normal Love* (1963) during one of his live presentations of unfinished films. *Normal Love* transforms Hollywood exoticisms of the 1950s into a queer celebration of images. Legendary Mario Montez is playing a beautiful mermaid, carried away by strong arms.

Mermaids and their male equivalent, the merman, *der Wassermann*, appear in mythology everywhere in the world. Sometimes they are associated with floods, storms, shipwrecks, and drownings. Some of the attributes of mermaids, you can read, may have been influenced by the sirens of Greek mythology. They lured nearby sailors with their singing voices to run aground on the on the rocky coast of their island. "Sirens symbolize both lure and alarm," writes Anselm Franke in our *Forum Expanded* catalogue text, "the mythical and dangerous voices of seduction holding the listener in a deadly embrace and the sirens that sound the alarm of imminent catastrophe."

The screen he calls a membrane—a sensory organ to register the sirens' multiple voices—the drifts and callings of history. A membrane that can be used as a sail. "The trickery, necessary to escape the sirens in the canonical Greek myth might perhaps also be interpreted as a necessary and conscious rejection of the lure—especially the lure and fantasies of homecoming, of fixed identities, of unambiguous meaning and of safe grounds and systemic certainty beyond the bounds of communally or systemically-secured identity. Beyond its gendered heroism then, the Odyssey might tell us today that true knowledge is derived from the experience of migration. And that identity, by some irresistible drift of modernity, has itself become an echo chamber."

Stealing someone's voice:

Susanne Sachsse eading a Franz Kafka text.

After Susanne's reading there should still be images without sound.

relations productive for the deviations between archive and exhibition.

At first glance, the archive and exhibition have a closely interwoven, synergetic relationship with each other. They share practices of selecting, assembling, and ordering materials that are in different medial states. The results of research in archives appear in public presentations; for findings made possible by what is archived, the exhibition can guarantee the visibility and dissemination necessary for their scholarly significance. Curatorial practice participates in the selection processes through which materials find their way into the archive, just as archives in turn provide a breeding ground for curatorially motivated research, and what is already archived can become basic components of curatorial work. The paths of different professionals—artists, curators, scholars of various disciplines and fields, as well as collectors, gallerists or dealers—cross in the spaces that connect the interior of the archive and the outward-facing exhibition situation.

Nevertheless, being "on show" can by no means be considered a natural state of archives, as archival and curatorial practices differ decidedly in the focus they place on two of their central tasks: that of preservation, on the one hand, and that of mediation, on the other. While in the archive the permanent

survival of the collected material defines the essential legitimation and objective of the activity carried out there, curatorial practice focuses on making the compiled material publicly accessible for a certain period of time. In this way, it enables a new assembly of archival materials alongside non-archival materials, as well as with a wider circle of people than that of the previous archival users and brings their assembly to public attention.

The different emphases of archival and curatorial practice result in further differences. They concern the meaning and function of expertise and professionalization of the people involved, the status of the order and the context that archives and curatorial situations establish, the relevance of permanence and temporality of the individual—human and non-human—participants, but also, and quite essentially, of their respective assembly. Between preserving and becoming public spans the spectrum of the different modes of relation that archive and exhibition develop for the human and non-human contributors amongst each other.

In this respect, curatorial ways of dealing with archives have the capacity to ignite heated debates. Their starting point is ultimately the disputed participation in the production of meaning on the part of archival and curatorial practices respectively. While

Grafting allows for reconstitution, restoration, and repair. For new and old skin to fuse, new parts to grow, and new, recombinant things to form. Grafting is by nature coalitional, and "without the infection of purity."[1]

In software, it's called forking. In video, it's called montage. In text, it's called writing. Indeed writing and grafting share the same root, *graphein*—which means to write or *graphium*—the tool by which to write. Graft also means to labor hard, put in effort, persevere with grit. More contemporarily, in our region, it means to use political influence or divert public resources. Grafting as both noun and verb, and as conceit can be useful in articulating the processes and practices that seeded the pad.ma initiative, and continue to nurture its allied applications and instances.

Https://Pad.ma was written in Mumbai in 2007 as open-source code for open-access content. An experiment bringing together the hybrid skills and positionalities of coder-artists, filmmaker-pirates, lawyer-cinephiles, non-governmental organizations and feminist activists. It grafted a techne of marrying layers of text to marked-up time-based images, a way of nurturing what in an earlier avatar was considered the residue, the remnant—the stuff on the cutting floor, the "no good," that which was excluded from the finished work. Pad.ma proposed to reverse and doctor the process of selection and trimming of footage, by combining the raw material once again with the logs, the transcripts, the location labels and the field notes and making them visible, bringing the post-production and cutting room methods full circle, and the material open to propagation both inside and outside of the archive. A radical system to re-labor on and de-petrify kilometres of tape, created by and in the custody of the many minorities of cultural producers who made up our decolonized, independent and marginal worlds. It triggered them to put the hidden images "on show" and in reserve at once, so they could be found abutting strange and familiar clips and passages, or could be split further only to conjoin with surprising affinities and be constantly open to further incisions: where every cut, as we know in video, is the point of a join.

pad.ma

grafting

As a system and techne like this one matures and improves itself, it forks and branches and new species form. Https://indiancine.ma (2013) is one such instance, where grafting in the corrupt sense of the word has proved tactical. The détournement of digitized film files, in-depth scholarly film analysis as SubRip texts, appended to an encyclopaedic index of regional cinema big and small and cited with archival documents that have been put through Optical Character Recognition display a densely ordered forest, with more species than in our national film archives. And then the different gardens of forked plants can also be grafted together. Yet Another Markup Language (YAML) fuses them into robust online assemblies and illustrates a sensible future of working deeply with public domain moving image archives as a site of production and way of seeing. As an artist-built and artist-run infrastructure and pedagogy honed over years by caring and laboring for the whole archive, from the kernel and the root to the flower and the fruit, pad.ma's ethos (both in the habitual way of being, but also in the way of doing) remains inherently decolonial, and its distributive craft mostly sensible, if marginal. It's every graft and new limb visible, an invitation to spring forth from.

10 Theses on the Archive

DON'T WAIT FOR THE ARCHIVE

To not wait for the archive is often a practical response to the absence of archives or organized collections in many parts of the world. It also suggests that to wait for the state archive, or to otherwise wait to be archived, may not be a healthy option.

This need not imply that every collection or assembly be named an archive, or that all of art's mnemonic practices be, once again, cast into an archival mould. It suggests instead that the archive can be deployed: as a set of shared curiosities, a local politics, or epistemological adventure. Where the archival impulse could be recast, for example, as the possibility of creating alliances: between text and image, between major and minor institutions, between filmmakers, photographers, writers and computers, between online and offline practices, between the remnant and what lies in reserve, between time and the untimely. These are alliances against dissipation and loss, but also against the enclosure, privatization, and thematization of archives, which are issues of global, and immediate, concern.

The archive that results may not have common terms of measurement or value. It will include and reveal conflicts, and it will exacerbate the crises around property and authorship. It will remain radically incomplete, both in content and form. But it is nevertheless something that an interested observer will be able to traverse: riding on the linking ability of the sentence, the disruptive leaps of images, and the distributive capacity that is native to technology. To not wait for the archive is to enter the river of time sideways, unannounced, just as the digital itself did, not so long ago.

THE DIRECTION OF ARCHIVING
WILL BE OUTWARD, NOT INWARD

We tend to think of archiving as the inward movement of collecting things: finding bits and pieces, bringing them together, guarding them in a safe and stable place. The model of this type of archiving is the fortress, or the burning library. This model already provides a clear sense of the limits, or ends, of the archive: fire, flooding, data loss.

Can we think of the archive differently? When Henri Langlois, founder of the Cinémathèque Française, stated that "the best way to preserve film is to project it", he hinted at the very opposite philosophy of archiving: to actually use and consume things, to keep them in, or bring them into, circulation, and to literally throw them forth (Latin: *proicere*), into a shared and distributed process that operates based on diffusion, not consolidation, through imagination, not memory, and towards creation, not conservation.[1]

Most of today's digital archives seem to still adhere to the model of the fortress, even though, by definition, they no longer preserve precious and unique originals, but provide cheap and reproducible copies. These copies can be "thrown forth" on a much larger scale, and with much greater efficiency, than Henri Langlois—or Walter Benjamin, theorist of analog reproduction, advocate of its technological potential, and critic of its practical political use—would have ever imagined. To archive, and to be archived, can become massively popular.

The astonishingly resilient archiving practices around Napster or The Pirate Bay, and the even more virulent promise of actual or imaginary archives far beneath or beyond them—if, for one moment, we could step outside the age of copyright we all inhabit, and fully embrace the means of digital reproduction most of us have at our disposal—not just directly follow the trajectory traced by Benjamin and Langlois, but extend it to a point in the not-so-distant future where we will think of archiving primarily as the outward movement of distributing things: to create ad-hoc networks with mobile cores and dense peripheries, to trade our master copies for a myriad of offsite backups, and to practically abandon the technically obsolete dichotomy of providers and consumers.

The model of this type of archive, its philosophical concept, would be the virus, or the parasite. And again, this model also allows us to make a tentative assessment of the risks and dangers of outward archiving: failure to infect (attention deficit), slow-down of mutation (institutionalization), spread of antibiotics (rights management), death of the host (collapse of capitalism).

HISTORIANS HAVE MERELY INTERPRETED
THE ARCHIVE. THE POINT HOWEVER IS
TO FEEL IT.

Archives have traditionally been the dwelling places of historians, and the epistemic conceit of history has always been housed in the dust of the archives. But in the last decade we have also seen an explosion of interest in archives from software engineers, artists, philosophers, media practitioners, filmmakers, and performers.

Historians have responded by resorting to a disciplinary defensiveness that relies on a language of "the authority of knowledge" and "rigor" while artists retreat to a zone of blissful aesthetic transcendence. There is something incredibly comfortable about this zone where history continues to produce "social facts" and art produces "affect." Claims of incommensurability provide a "euphoric security" and to think of the affective potential of the archive is to disturb the "euphoric security" which denies conditions of knowing and possibilities of acting beyond that which is already known.

Rather than collapsing into a reinforcement of disciplinary fortresses that preclude outsiders and jealously guard the authenticity of knowledge and experience by historians, or resorting to a language of hostile takings by activists and artists, how do we think of the encroachments into the archives as an expansion of our sensibilities and the sensibilities of the archive. Archives are not threats, they are invitations.

Lakhmi Chand, a writer based in the media lab of the Cybermohalla in New Delhi asks *"Kya kshamta ke distribution ko disturb karta hai Media?"*: Does media disturb the distribution of "capacity" or "potential?"[2]

The invitation to think of the ability to disturb the kshamta of the archive seems to be marked by a different relation to time. The idea of capacity marks a time:

This time is neither in the past nor in the future though they may be related, it is a marker of the present—or exactly where you are.

Anna Akhmatova writes in *Requiem*:
> In the dreadful years of the Yezhov terror I spent seventeen months in prison queues in Leningrad. One day someone "identified" me. Then a woman standing behind me, blue with cold, who of course had never heard my name, woke from that trance characteristic of us all and asked in my ear (there, everyone spoke in whispers):
>
>> — Ah, can you describe this?
>> And I said:
>> — I can.
>> Then something like a tormented smile passed over what had once been her face.
>
> *April 1, 1957*[3]

The question "Can you describe this?" was not a question about the possession of a skill, or even the possibility of language to speak of certain things under certain conditions. It is about a moment or a context that arises in which anyone can be faced with the question of: Can you? And they must either answer "I can" or "I can't."

How do we think through the ways that archives challenge us to think about the experience of potentiality. To dwell in the affective potential of the archive is to think of how archives can animate intensities.

Brian Massumi argues affect is critically related to intensity. We are always aware of our potential to affect or to be affected, but this potential also seems just out of our reach. Perhaps because it isn't there actually—only virtually. Massumi suggests that:
> Maybe if we can take little, practical, experimental, strategic measures to expand our emotional register, or limber up our thinking, we can access more of our potential at each step, have more of it actually available. Having more potentials available intensifies our life. We're not enslaved by our situations. … Our degree of freedom at any one time corresponds to how much of our experiential "depth" we can access towards a next step—how intensely we are living and moving.[4]

How do we imagine archival practices as the little practical, experimental, and strategic measures that we pursue to expand our sensibilities. The affective potential of archives is therefore both a political as well as an aesthetic question in its ability to activate ones capacity to act, and it is on the very faculty of imagination and possibility that this conflict is located.

THE PAST OF THE EXHIBITION THREATENS THE FUTURE OF THE ARCHIVE

What is the relation between memory and its display? Between the archive, "the system that governs the appearances of statements" and a culture of appearances?[5] In "Archives of Modern Art" a 2002 essay for the journal *October*, Hal Foster develops three useful stages of the museum as the site of memory, in modern art.[6]

In the first stage, in the mid-1800s, Baudelaire writes that "Art is the mnemotechny of the beautiful."[7] Which with Manet for example, has become the art of outright citation. Here art is the art of memory, and the museum is its architecture.

The second moment occurs with Adorno's essay, the "Valery Proust Museum," which marks a point of suspicion of the museum, as the "mausoleum" of art. The museum is where art goes to die. But, it is also the site for a redemptive project of "reanimation."

The third moment occurs when this reanimation is possible through other means, i.e. through Benjamin's mechanical reproduction. The key difference here is between Benjamin's reproduction, which threatens the museum, and Malraux's, which expands it infinitely. For Malraux, it is precisely the destruction of the aura which becomes a basis for the imagination of the museum without end.

But there are "problems of translation," gaps, between Malraux's Musee Imaginaire, its english name the "Museum without Walls," and the concept of a "Museum without End." Which on the one hand, have fed many a modernist museum architect's fantasy of endless circulation, and views through the glass, while on the other, continue to offer the promise that art's institutional structures can have a relationship with the

world. Foster's account of modern western art's archive ends with a split in art itself, between its display function that appears in spectacular form in the exhibition, and its memory function, which retreats into the archive.

The challenge for the archive, which today threatens the exhibition with its own sensual ability to relink and rearticulate these two functions, is how not to end up as a spiral ramp, or as flea market. In other words, how to avoid the tyranny of the two historical "freedoms": one, the (modernist) formal strategies of audience participation in the spectacle, and two, the (postmodernist) eclecticism in which anything, included and curated, could be accorded "exhibition-value." Or we could put it this way: how does the archive avoid the confusion, that persists in the exhibition (as Irit Rogoff notes about the Tate), between accessibility as entertainment and marketing strategy, and access as something deeper, as something that is "closer to the question."[8]

TIME IS NOT OUTSIDE OF THE ARCHIVE: IT IS IN IT

In his history of the book and print cultures, historian Adrian Johns argues against what has traditionally been seen as the "typographical fixity" which was established by the print revolution.[9] Earlier scholars had argued that scribal cultures were marked by all kinds of mistakes of the hand, and the book was therefore not a stable object of knowledge until the emergence of print technology.

Adrian Johns demonstrates the fallacy of this assumption by looking at the various conflicts that erupted with print technology, and far from ensuring fixity or authority, the early history of printing was marked by uncertainty. For Johns, the authority of knowledge is not an inherent quality, but a transitive one. It is a question that cannot be divorced from the technologies that alter our senses, our perception and our experience of knowledge.

Rather than speaking about "authority" as something that is intrinsic to either a particular mode of production of "knowledge" or to any technological form, John's work demonstrates how it would be more useful to consider the range of knowledge apparatuses which come into play to establish authority.

The preconditions of knowledge cannot easily be made the object of knowledge. It is a matter of making evident or making known the structures of knowledge itself, which emerge in ways that provide definitive proof of the imperfectability of knowledge.

Archives are also apparatuses which engage our experience and perception of time. This is particularly true for archives of images, since photography and cinema are also apparatuses that alter our sense of time. The traditional understanding of an archive as a space that collects lost time sees the experience of time as somehow being external to the archive itself. It loses sight of the fact that the archive is also where objects acquire their historical value as a result of being placed within an apparatus of time. The imagination of a video archive then plays with multiple senses of the unfolding of time.

In her reflections on the relationship between photography, cinema and the archive, Mary Anne Doane states that photography and film have a fundamental archival instinct embedded in them.[10] And yet this archival nature is also ridden with paradox, because of the relationship of the moving image to the contingent. The presence of the contingent, the ephemeral, and the unintended are all aspects of cinematic time, and the challenge of the moving image as archive is the recovery of lost time, but within the cinematic.

The recovery of the lost time of cinema and the contingent can be captured through an experience of cinephilia, for what cinephilia names is the moment when the contingent takes on meaning—perhaps a private and idiosyncratic meaning, but one in which the love for the image expresses itself through a grappling with the ephemeral.

The archive is therefore an apparatus of time, but its relation to time is not guaranteed or inherent, it is transitive and has to be grafted. The archive of the moving image grasps this problem in an erotic and sensuous fashion, grafting the experience of time as an act of love.

Negri speaks in *Insurgencies* about the love of time: These two registers, of love— of time, and of cinema allow us to think about the cinematic and archival apparatus of time, and the way they shape our relation to our time and the time of the image.[11]

April 2010, Beirut[12]

spinning threads
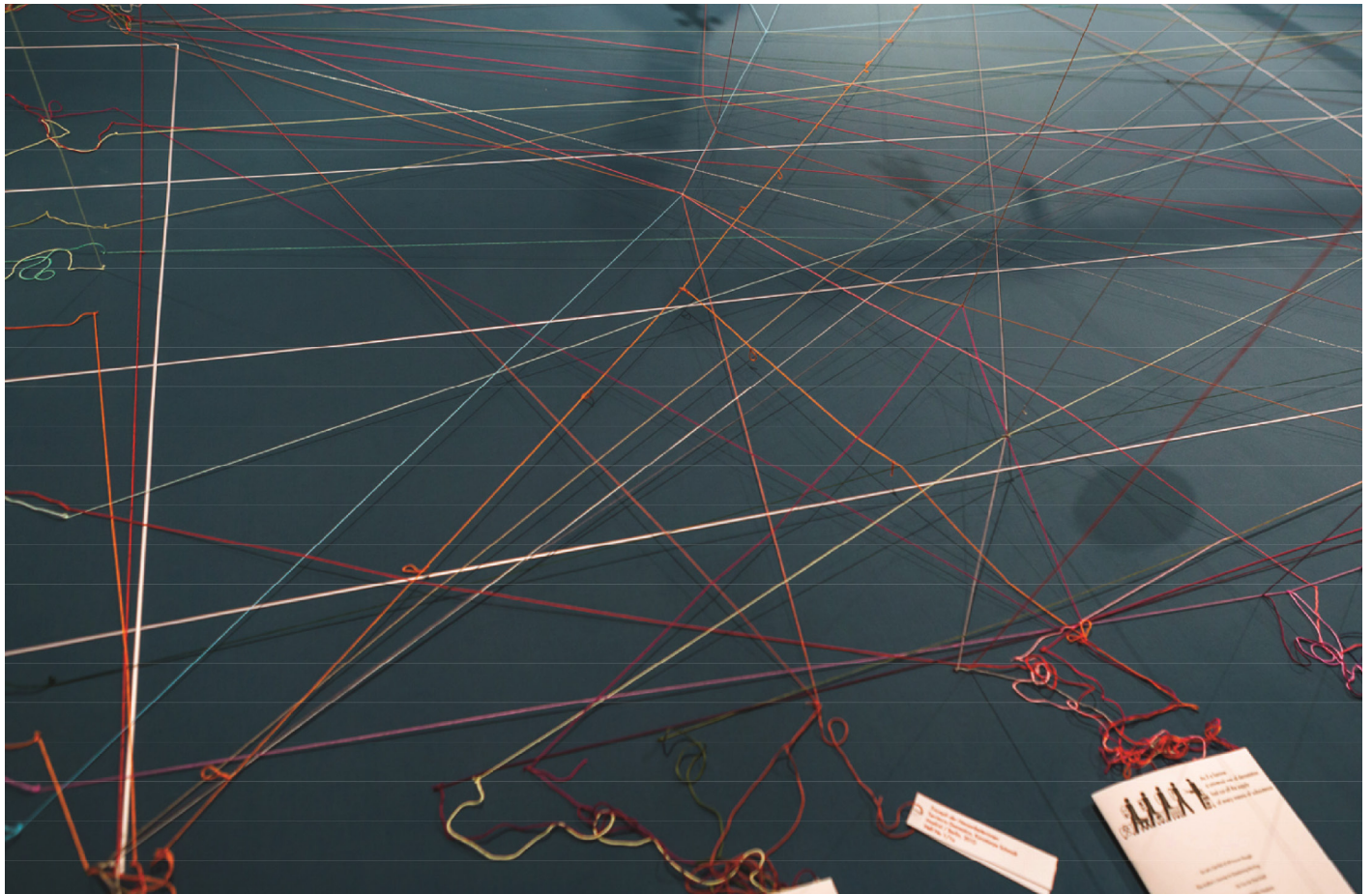
Potosí Principle–Archive
Alice Creischer, Andreas Siekmann

In her drawing-room in Petersburg, the maid of honor Anna Pavlovna encourages conversation as "…the foreman of a spinning-mill when he has set the hands to work, goes round and notices, here a spindle that has stopped or there one that creaks or makes more noise than it should, and hastens to check the machine or set it in proper motion."[13] It is in this way, both abysmal and industrial, that Leo Tolstoy describes the chatter of courtiers in the drawing-rooms of Petersburg shortly before Russia entered the war against Napoleon. At the same time, Tolstoy's description can offer a backdrop for how we can spin threads in our own way—not for the factory nor the court, but for each other. The Potosí Principle Project and Potosí Principle–Archive have seen themselves as a kind of independent spinning-mill which can create a meaning that is able to retain us all as joint actors for a societal purpose.
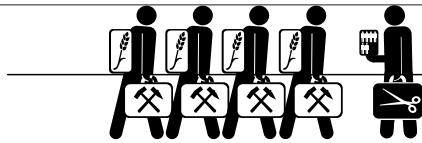
There is a primitive accumulation that is merely so called

As if a famine,
a universal war of devastation
had cut off the supply
of every means of subsistence

There are human rights to have rights over humans
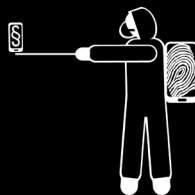
As if in place of the
numberless indefeasible freedoms,
one single, unconscionable
freedom had been set up
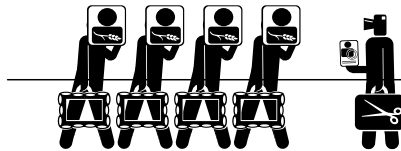
How can we sing the alien song in the land of the Lord?
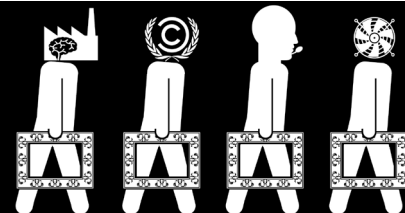
As if all work will cease
and universal laziness
will overtake us
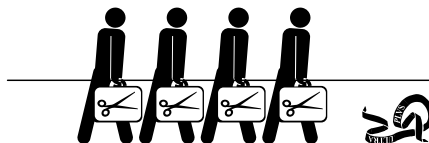
The world upside down
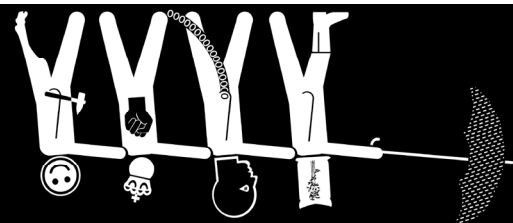
As if we had nothing to lose
but chains

In October 2010, Haus der Kulturen der Welt held the exhibition *The Potosí Principle*. It had previously been shown at the Reina Sofia Museum and, subsequently, at Museo Nacional de Arte and Museo Nacional de Etnografía y Folkore (MUSEF) in La Paz. The exhibition was conceived in response to an invitation from the Reina Sofia Museum and was developed in close collaboration with all participating institutions.

The project was inspired by the city of Potosí, a mining town in Bolivia. It is said to have been greater and grander than London and Paris in the sixteenth century. The story goes that a bridge could have been built across the Atlantic, all the way to the port of Cadiz, with the silver that was shipped from Potosí to Europe. However, the Spanish king was in such debt that, before even reaching the port, the silver was reloaded into ships destined for stock exchanges across Europe. This established a crucial set of circumstances for the development of industry, banking, colonial trading companies, their warships and slave ships, and agricultural business, as well as for the displacement, impoverishment, and conversion of people into labor—both in Europe and in the colonies. It was the beginning of a principle that has operated globally from the very beginning. This project has sought to demonstrate that modern European society and its economic system can never be conceived outside of their colonial conditions and crimes. It is about showing how these conditions are still present everywhere to this day.

The mentioned set of circumstances triggered the production and circulation of images. At first, they were shipped to the colonies. There, they were used for the production of local imagery. In this exhibition, some of these images have been displayed to bear witness to the fact that cultural hegemony is not a symbolic

dimension. Rather, it is a form of violence. It was from this perspective that we invited friends and fellow artists to respond to the baroque images from Potosí.

In 2017, we were asked by Haus der Kulturen der Welt to build an archive of the Potosí Project. We were immediately taken with it. We also knew then that we didn't want to create an archive in the conventional sense. We were rather interested in the project's blind spots. For instance, we had not been able to address the financial crisis that began at the same time as the project in 2008; there were only a few references to economies in Europe, including to silver mining in Saxony and the Peasants' Wars, or as to why the subject of neoextractivism, which was so closely related, had only been covered to a limited extent. And we were also keen to see how the practice of the artists involved in the project had developed.

Initially, we intended for the archive to be developed in collaboration with all the institutions involved in the project. But this was not feasible due to the coup in Bolivia in 2019 and the pandemic. Instead, the archive ended up incorporating these very events. It now comprises 36 notebooks, which are divided into four chapters. This structure follows the original chapters in the Potosí Project and revises them at the same time.

Our question concerning primitive accumulation became one about a crisis, about how overproduction can bring about hardship.

The question of human rights as a sedative for exploitation became one regarding the monopoly of bourgeois freedom, which displaces or incorporates all other rights.

The question concerning the role of art within this freedom was transformed into the recognition of the dreaded idleness that would ensue should communism be introduced.

"At this moment of lockdown and the dispossession not only of the means of production but of all social relations in zoom conferences and supply chains logistics, we must repeat the … fear of communism as the downfall of industriousness and culture: the culture about whose loss the bourgeois laments has long been for many only a training to act and live like a machine and according to its regimes."[14]

And the question about a world upside down, which we formulated in the first project, now had to be posed more urgently, "as if we had nothing to lose but chains." Consequently, all chapter headings in the archive start with "As If." They are alienated quotations from the *Communist Manifesto*.

The contributions to our archive are collected across the different chapters: artists' notebooks, notebooks on topics as extractivism, work, debt, the inquisition, the 2019 coup in Bolivia, machine capitalism, growth of assets in 2008, decolonizing practices. The texts include interviews, letters, historical sources, narratives, poems, and excerpts from books and films.

Other than the structure divided into chapters and booklets, many other connections have appeared, as if the archive had a life of its own and could speak to itself. Sometimes these were concepts or stories, friendships or struggles, similarities or image trajectories. We eventually yielded to the archive's own life by spinning threads from one notebook to another.

In May 2021, the archive was exhibited at Haus der Kulturen der Welt. It was conceived as a reading room, with its notebooks laid out on a table where the public could read them. The notebooks' threads created a fabric on the table, which also merged with individual images and objects in the space. These threads also revealed a shared artistic practice, one that doesn't stop asking, "How can we sing an alien song in the land of the Lord?"

some emphasize the service-providing function of curating, which is primarily committed to the expertise of those who selected, organized, and now research the archival material, others insist that every curatorial situation generates a difference that goes beyond the previous meaning of the individual contributors as well as the context in which they were previously located. The arguments expand on the general discussion about the tasks and potentials of the curatorial as an independent, meaning-generating cultural practice that has been going on since the 1960s among actors in the art field, especially artists, critics, and curators. What is contested is the power with which the archive writes history, laws, and norms, participates in their preservation, and brings them to bear in sociopolitical terms.

At issue are the preconditions that enable and regulate access to archives and thus their use in general. Disciplinary backgrounds and the correspondingly attributed expertise are just as much a part of this as professional positions—as archivist, curator, scientist, or artist. And yet, historically, archival and curatorial fields of activity originally merged in the figure of the curator. According to Stefan Nowotny, its development can be traced back to the *curatores rei publica* around the year 100, who had the public good in mind, but also the preservation of order and the

parallelizing

Two Plots from the Exhibition Book of Facts

Iman Issa

I.

It is common for museological critiques attempting to rectify the colonial history of their collections to view and treat historical artifacts as intact objects, which have lost part of their essence as a result of being severed from their original habitat. Indeed an examination of the last twenty years of museological practices will yield many instances where art historians, museum directors, and curators took it upon themselves to remedy this purported gap between object proper and the museum as its new environment. The remedy might take the form of more elaborate displays with carefully phrased historical information about use, function, and lineage, as well as the cultures from which these objects originated. In rare cases, the results have been illuminating, but in most cases these practices have added little real knowledge while doubling down on the initial violence of appropriation.

Assuming the relationship between the object in the world and the one in the museum as a matter of a loss of depth implies that it would again be feasible to conceptually extract the object from its new surroundings in the museum and link it to its former self with "the higher resolution" that was in the outside world. The idea being that one can presumably rescue these artifacts from the "deforming" mechanisms of the museum, returning them to an imagined non-ideological space where they can testify to their previous life as it really was. In this conception, the museum is thought of as a monolithic structure, in which any content is at best a cooperative victim to its fixed rules of perception, education, and the imparting of knowledge. A remedy to such deforming mechanisms of the museum might then take the form of either revealing the workings of these mechanisms, or supplying alternative histories to the objects in it, histories that claim to take better account of marginalized narratives or attempt a more non-biased imparting of information. What is however, never contested in this conception of the museum, be it affirmative or critical, is the role of the museum in imparting knowledge about these objects' past. For even in the most divergent of such alternative histories, that role is doubly affirmed and remains largely unquestioned.

But could it not be that once an object enters the museum, it becomes impossible to separate it from its new habitat without completely altering it, and that the far more poignant and less violent display is the one that takes this into account: a display that stresses the gap to the outside world as opposed to trying to eclipse it? Could it not be that the act of appropriation and introduction of artifacts into museums is much more severe in its violence than commonly believed, that not only does it sever an object from its culture, location, previous and functional life but it does so absolutely, without leaving any possibility of a rectification?

It might be that objects in museums and those in the outside world live on parallel lines that never intersect, regardless of how similar they sometimes appear to be, and regardless of the numerous conversations in which they can both partake. It might also be possible to imagine the artifacts in a museum refusing their designated role of victimhood to their new habitat, opting instead to become active players not only in what they display about themselves but in the very constitution of what that habitat is. It is possible to imagine them reclaiming the museum into a place they themselves form, a place where they can exhibit a version of themselves unavailable elsewhere, not as faint reflections of their previous lives or proxies for abstract concepts of distant lands and other cultures, but as entities in the here and now bearing witness to their current situation, that is a result of past violence as well as an indistinguishable part and parcel of the new surroundings in which they find themselves. A curatorial handling of these artifacts will then require a light hand, an act of active listening to them and what they need. It may also require unusual methods when displaying these artifacts. For example an object may need to be partly or wholly covered, hidden, replaced, or altered in a variety of manners. It may even, under these conditions, contently allow itself to be called "art."

Installation view 2021, ~~Perez Art Museum, Miami, 2015,~~ ~~MoMA, NY, 2017,~~ ~~Guggenheim Museum, NY, 2016,~~ ~~MACBA, Barcelona, 2015,~~ ~~Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, 2017,~~ ~~Egyptian Museum, Turin, 2017,~~ ~~Sharjah Art foundation, Sharjah, 2015 ...~~
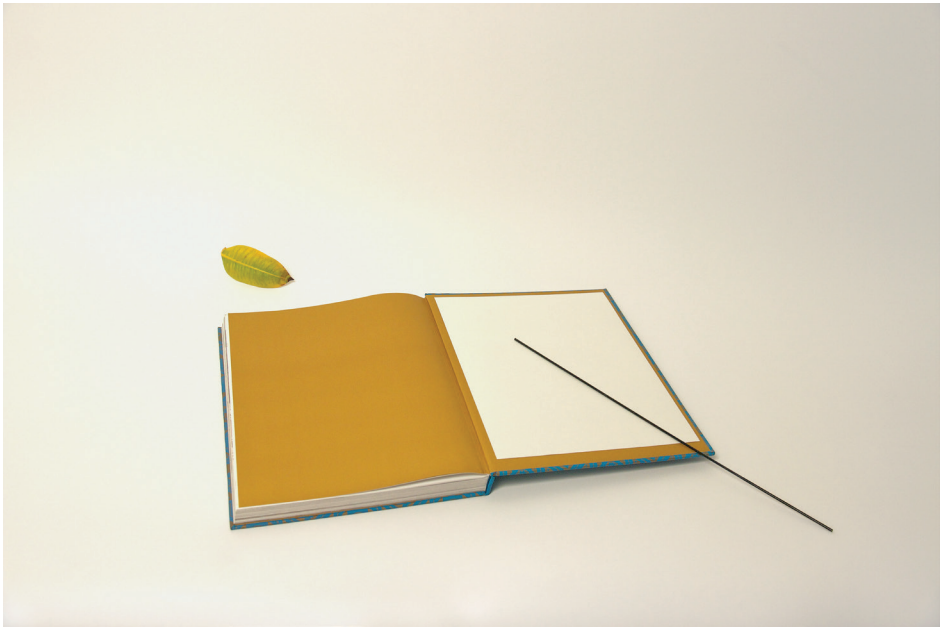
Untitled Illustration from Page 13 of Art of the Past Twenty-two Centuries *Exhibition Catalogue*, 2013 or 2018 or 2021

Untitled Illustration from Page 11 of Art of the Past Twenty-two Centuries *Exhibition Catalogue,* 2013 or 2018 or 2021
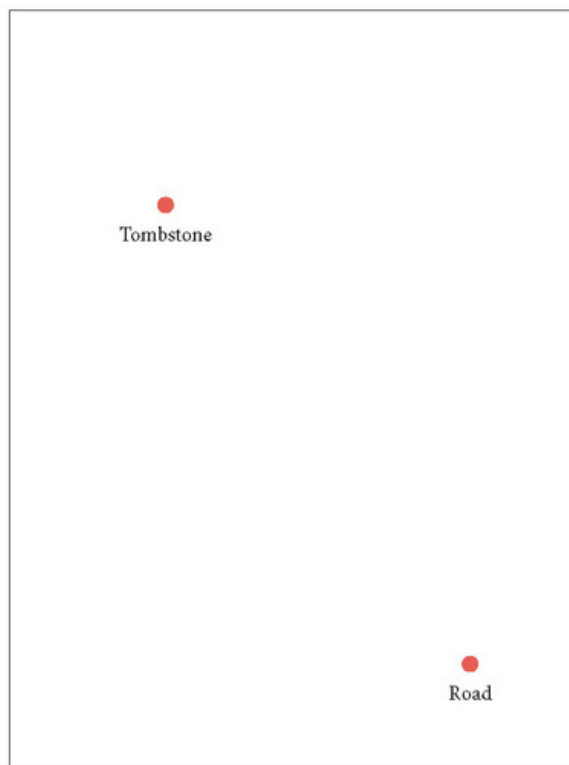
Fig. 4
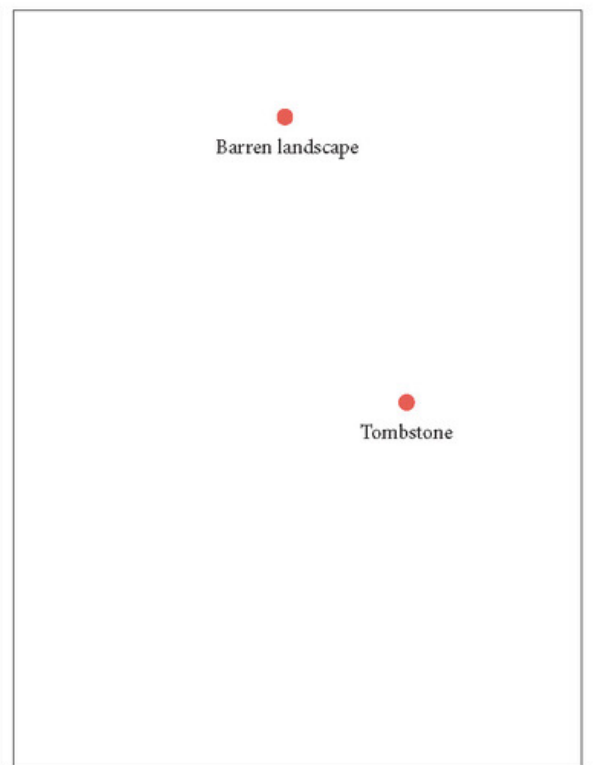
Fig. 5

2021 Installation Detail of Figure 4 and 5, two black-and-white photographs depicting two different types of script on the headstones of twelfth-century graves. The script with rigid lines and clearly defined figures was used to mark the graves of those who believed in the direct transmission of the words of God. Whereas the script with angular forms, and vegetal and floral designs, was used to indicate the graves of those who believed that although the words of God were holy, his book was the result of human transmission.

II. The relationship between an exhibition and an image documenting it, might be compared to the relationship between an artifact in a museum and an idea of its previous self in the outside world. Similar to how ethnographic artifacts in museums are often considered to be a reduced version of their former selves, exhibition images are commonly discussed as a flat counterpart of a more nuanced and sensually richer reality, taken to lack the depth, and full extent of information their three dimensional referents possess.

To defend the exhibition space in relation to images documenting it as the sight of a superior original confronted with a bad copy of itself, requires a mental extraction of the material on view from the medium imparting it and a linking of it to another version of itself, in this case the one inhabiting the three dimensional world. But can a material be successfully extracted from its medium in such a manner? And if it is, would not one end up with an abstraction more slippery in its effects, and overwhelming and total in its alteration than a mere matter of losing depth or dimension? Would not one in arguing for the superiority of the exhibition end up limiting it even further to a fixed concept, while presumably defending it against the flattening mechanisms of documentation?

With all that has been written about images and the inadequacy of the representational model and with everything that is now known about the invention and history of photography and the departure of digital technology from the imprinting or preservation of a so called physical reality into the generation of one, one can embrace a different story about image documentation, not the one that laments their abstracting potential or accuses them of the manipulation or degradation of reality but the one that accepts them as a reality in their own right. Images have a relationship to other realities but that relationship is more likely to be equal in status, than hierarchical. They can be imagined as parallel entities to the world they reference, the world by which they are also referenced. And like other parallel entities, they can be the means to access aspects of that world that may otherwise remain hidden. In 1986 Serge Daney claimed that "Nothing happens any longer to humans, it is to the image that everything happens." But it may very well be that everything still happens to human beings but the image is now one of the few places where what happens can be registered. Like the curatorial handling of objects in museums that carefully takes note of the status of these objects, a rigorous documentation endeavor may entail having to alter the images one produces or happens upon. One may need to flip some of them upside down after being snapped, or have them erased, color altered or washed out, or replaced by other hand drawn or computer generated images, or have them scanned, tweaked and then printed again in three-dimensional form, or have them animated; made to start moving, or replaced by completely different images or by nothing at all. This, granted one is after images registering their parallel world, images that one can also decide, this time hesitantly, to call "art."

suspending

Suspending the Archive

Stefan Nowotny

In line with a number of more or less recent theorizations of the archival function, in my talk in the CuMMA Discourse Series I wanted to highlight the fact that archives are always more than just collections of documents or "knowable" contents. Which is also to say that, in order to counter the limitations of a given archive, it does not suffice to simply add new documents or accounts to the existing ones, or even replace the latter by material that we might consider "more appropriate." Rather, archives perform a regulatory function as to what we can or cannot know – or say.

This is the lesson to be learned from works like Michel Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge*. And this is also why I spoke about a certain critical task to "suspend the archive" in its very functioning, because if we consider the archive to be what always already regulates what we are able to know or say, then we would have to suspend it, or make it inoperative, in order to know *differently*. Whereby I imply, of course, that to "know differently" is not the same as to simply learn, know or communicate new and other things, things that weren't part of our (or someone else's) knowledge before.

By addressing four characteristics of the archive during my talk, I was trying to provide this consideration with a conceptual framework that would allow for an articulation of some crucial contemporary concerns with regard to the question of the archive. These characteristics are the following:

The archive is *logo-logical*, i.e., it both provides and imposes a logic to what can be said, to what counts as a meaningful statement. However, by doing so, the archive also operates on a threshold which, as Foucault has clearly stated, "separates us from what we can no longer say, and from that which falls outside our discursive practice."[1] Hence, it regulates not only what we can say, but also what we can *not* say.

By the same token, however, the archive is not only what separates us from "what we can no longer say," but also from *what we may not be able to listen to*. It seems crucial to me to expand, in this way, the scope of Foucault's argument beyond his own formulations. Because, how can we listen to something that doesn't "speak to us"? And how could something that is said by someone other than "ourselves" possibly speak to us, as long as we are not able to make sense of it because it "falls outside our discursive practice"? And finally, who are "we" in all of this? Or again, how is a discursive "we" supported or even constructed through archival practices? – Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's question "Can the Subaltern Speak?"[2] has its place here, as well as her negative answer to this question and all the debates it provoked.

The archive is *hypomnesic*, not anamnesic. This is in direct reference to a passage from Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever*[3] and draws on a distinction going back to ancient Greek philosophy, especially Plato. The significance of this distinction is, in

short, that it reminds us of the importance of an external and material carrier of whatever might be registered in an archive, or whatever we may memorize or commemorate through an archive. We do not simply "recall" things or snatch them from oblivion to ascend to their truth ("anamnesis"); we rather engage in certain "techniques of repetition" (Derrida) when we memorize or commemorate, and these involve materialities and technologies underpinning the very possibility of such repetition so as to allow it to operate (the prefix *hypo-* means "under" or "beneath" in Greek).

The archive is a *dynamism* rather than a passive container of records and registers, of the outcomes of certain protocols or things taken into account. This, in a way, sums up the three previous points. But it also more specifically reminds us of the fact that archives will always "actively seek," as it were, to defend themselves against anything that cannot be processed in accordance with their operative principles. They will do so by regulating significations, categories, predications, enunciative positions, and by either conforming or discarding whatever is not recognizable and thus challenges them. It may well be that a self-destructive drive operates in the very heart of this "repetition compulsion" of the archive, as Derrida has suggested; but the flipside of this is that the archive will also not cease to defend itself – to death.

In spite of everything that has been stated about the archive, the archive does not coincide with everything that is enunciated in one or the other way. In other words, the archive may limit the realm of the "sayable", but it does not confine the realm of the "enunciable", "talkable", "gesturable," etc. Enunciations that do not comply with the archive surround us in fact all the time, as a polyphony that is not (and cannot be) recognized or represented by any archive. In view of this, I would like to describe the task of contesting the archive through an amazingly condensed passage from Stefano Harney's and Fred Moten's book *The Undercommons*: "Our task is the self-defense of the surround."[4]

As suggested above, the task to question or contest the archive not only involves considerations about what we are able to say or even ask, but also of what we are able to listen to. In the quote from Harney & Moten, there is a significant shift with regard to the subject and the task is precisely to enable this shift: "our" task is about a defense of something that is *not* "ours," because it is a "self-defense." In the same way, listening involves the task to pay attention to things that we might not be prepared for, not even (and perhaps especially not) by any question that we may have asked. In this sense there are no "proper" questions, as long as what is supposed to be "proper" about a question always already confines what we are ready to listen to. Or to put it differently, raising questions – which are actual questions – always involves the task of questioning ourselves, both as those who ask these questions and as those who receive the answers.

Of course the archive will constantly interfere with all of this because it forms and informs the knowledges on which even our questions are based. Which is precisely why I emphasize possible ways of *suspending* the archive. After all, every ability (and let's not forget that the archive is not only limiting, but also *enables* us to know what we know, or say what we say) bears in itself the ability to *not* actually perform that ability, that is, to suspend it.

So when asking ourselves how we can work in relation to archives, but also to what has no presence or voice in the archive, I would say that there are two main approaches. The first is to try and destabilize dominant or hegemonic categories, discourses, modes of display, etc., which is not an easy process because the mere fact that we might have embraced the idea "that every archive is incomplete" does not assure us that the archive, as a dynamism, is not continuing to perform its function. The second approach is that we try to engage with the "surround" of the archive, that is, the enunciations, gestures, practices which "fall outside our discursive practice" (Foucault) – which of course again is all but an easy task.

On the other hand, we engage with things or persons that "we don't know" all the time: we encounter them when going to other places or just around the next corner, we learn about them, we become friends with them, we fall in love with them. So why shouldn't we work with them? The point about contesting the archive is not that we understand its incompletion and then try to make it complete. The point is, precisely, that we learn to

suspend it when we encounter a trace of something (or someone) we don't know, instead of instantly trying to incorporate such traces into what we know. This of course involves processes, experiences, and also some readiness to become someone else than we have been before these processes and experiences.

In this context I would like to introduce the notion of the *superstes*, which in Latin means both "survivor" and "witness," in order to address a type of enunciation which, precisely, falls outside a given discursive practice: *testifying speech*. And I suggest that we consider the following fragment from a lost piece by Plautus as a locus classicus on this subject: *Nunc mihi licet quidvis loqui: nemo hic adest superstes* ("Now I am allowed to say everything I would like; there is no witness present").[5]

It seems clear that these words are spoken by someone who has an interest in maintaining a certain order of sayabilities; whereas the sheer possibility of a *superstes* being present in this speech situation evokes some kind of "fear of suspension" with regard to these sayabilities: in the presence of a witness there is no longer undisturbed license to say everything one wants to say – even if the statements put forward may be well-ordered according to a given order of sayabilities.

This may help to clarify what I mean by "suspending the archive": I am not dreaming about dismantling the archive altogether. I would even be very hesitant to claim that there is such a thing as a "discourse" of the *superstes*, which could challenge the discursive order of the archive. And I am also somewhat skeptical about strategies that attempt to transform existing archives by alternative ones: even if they take into account that the archive cannot easily be dismantled, but they tend to ignore or downplay the fact that not all enunciations easily translate into a discourse. What I'm interested in are moments of suspension, like the one evoked by the quoted fragment.

This is also about futurities buried in the past: because whoever and whatever was silenced in the past was not only violated in a bygone moment of time, but also deprived of a possible future. I don't think, however, that these futurities buried in the past can be actually "liberated." History is not reversible, if only for the fact that it is not a collection of things that happened, but of lives that have been lived – and deaths that have been died.

Furthermore, I don't think that anyone can simply decide whether or not to take part in archival processes in the sense that we are discussing here. Simply because we are in many ways always already speaking from within the archive, in terms of a "historical a priori" (Foucault) that structures and regulates our knowledges and discursive practices. I also don't think, therefore, that it is possible to step out from its shadow. There is no "outside" of the archive, in which we could comfortably position ourselves.

As suggested above, there are, however, multiple forms of expressions, enunciations, exchanges which constantly "surround" the archive from within and without. They coexist with any archive, or in a certain sense even precede it. And yet, they do not translate into knowledges or statements as produced and governed by the archive. "Suspension," on the other hand, relates precisely to an activity that we are already engaged in, that we would usually continue to carry out, and that we may even be very likely to re-engage in. Suspending this activity may therefore allow us to consider, weigh, contest it *as such*: that is, not only with regard to its results and outcomes at a given moment, but with regard to the ways in which these results and outcomes are constituted and regularized through an activity that usually is our own. In this sense, we are *only* ever able to suspend the archive, not although, but precisely *because* we are always already speaking, or listening, from within it.

Techniques of suspension, by the way, have long been a powerful means to create new insights, produce new constellations, or engage in transformations and self-transformations through a disengagement from habitual investments and self-investments. The role of *epoché* in phenomenological philosophy, of free association and free-floating attention in psychoanalysis, or strike action in social and political combats are but a few examples. But also, on an everyday-life level: How would we ever be able to have a real conversation with someone, if we weren't able to repeatedly suspend whatever we might feel urged to say, so as to let the other person speak? And if we weren't able to actually listen – and this not exclusively on our own terms (which

would amount to not listening at all) but through a practice of understanding the other which requires a disengagement from our "own" habitual patterns of understanding?

Finally, the question of the archive, as discussed here, should not be too quickly conflated with other – albeit related – questions, such as questions about collections, corpuses, bodies of possible references or evidences, etc. The concept of the archive raises an important and specific question, which is not only about the materials assembled or accounted for, but about the functionalizing taking place in the very act of assembling or accounting.

This being said, I do nonetheless consider primary sources and documents as highly important. Looking at them just doesn't dispense us from asking how they were produced and preserved so as to come to our attention in the first place, and which precise function they are given in the production of knowledges. For example, primary sources certainly have a crucial function in order to establish historical *facts*. But this still doesn't mean that there may not be a point in questioning – not the sources or the facts themselves, but the ways in which their specific function might dominate the kind of knowledges in which we invest ourselves and thus occlude our access to (or interaction with) other possible knowledges (such as, e.g., with regard to the lives actually lived in given circumstances: the affects, desires, hopes, fears, pains, thoughts, futurities expressed through these lives).

After all, hegemony never resides in "objects" themselves, but precisely in how we engage with them.

For this reason, there is also an enormous ambivalence to the role of new technologies, which extends far beyond the immediate context of this discussion. On the one hand, it is true that new technologies enable marginalized voices to express themselves, or also to maintain or build social relations that are important to them and provide new circuits of communicative exchange. On the other hand, this doesn't in itself mean that hegemonic relations are actually being transformed. And more importantly, these technologies involve new regimes of representation and self-representation, which have an impact not only on existing proportions or disproportions of representation, but also on how subjects and groups invest themselves into new modalities of (self-)representation.

Hence, I do of course believe that it is necessary to think carefully about contemporary ways of framing symbolic spaces – and this certainly not only with regard to what might be called the "periphery." Just as institutions, however, technologies were never simply means to facilitate the achievement of pre-defined ends; they transform the lives we live – individually, relationally, in terms of our sense of belonging (e.g. to a group). To give a very simple example: social media may help us to have, or keep in touch with, a great number of "friends"; but they simultaneously modify or even transform the meaning that "friendship" has to our lives. And why shouldn't something similar apply to the "heritage" we assume or renounce, the "history" we memorize or commemorate, or the "archive" we intend to construct or deconstruct?

What I hope for is that through practices of suspension of the archive (or ways of rendering it inoperative) things that *are not* sayable may nevertheless *become* sayable, or at least interfere with existing regimes of sayability. However, importantly, "becoming sayable" is not simply about the replacement, complementation, or countering of existing sets of statements through new ones. It is about abilities and about ways of enabling new modes of both saying and listening. Moreover, I would like to recall a sentence Arthur Schnitzler wrote in 1911 that significantly resonates with Freud's psychoanalysis: "The soul is a vast domain." *Anarchival* enunciations are a vast domain too, and I would hope for new ways of relating to them: ways that go beyond the alternative between the outright dismissal of such enunciations and the type of foreclosure that can be operated through even the most well-intended archival strategies of accounting for them.

transforming

The Kinjeketile Suite is a multi-media installation with a range of archival material including photographs, magazines, political pamphlets, fabrics, and plants, arranged on a series of wooden structures. Short audio vignettes, interspersed throughout the installation, and performances by actors lend a multivoiced and fragmented narrative to the work. The installation brings together two pivotal moments in the history of Tanzania: the Maji Maji Rebellion triggered by the spiritual medium Kinjeketile Ngwale in 1905 and Tanganyika's independence in 1961 led by Pan-African activist Julius Nyerere and his social Ujamaa governance. These two events bring memory, folklore, and history together in the formation of the Tanzanian collective national identity.

It had been three years since independence and the army insists on increased wages and Africanization.

What would have been a labour strike in civil society became a mutiny in this military context.

The group of soldiers make their way to the state house to make their demands known to Nyerere but he is not to be found.

Nyerere's advisors have placed him into hiding.

Sylvanus Olympio, prime minister of Togo was assassinated by his own military. He was the first African leader of an independence state to be murdered. He would not be the last—and Nyerere did not want to be next.

With great regret Nyerere called on Britain, Tanganiyka's former ruler, to intervene. The marines quickly disbanded the 1st Tanganyikan rifles and the other mutinies that had spread across the country.

The British military centred their operations from the national stadium where, three years earlier, Nyerere had officiated the emergence of Tanganyika's independence.

The sisal estates found along the Morogoro road have long been etched in my memory. They were a reoccurring motif in my journey to our ancestral village. The regularly spaced plants added a rhythm to that particular stretch of the road.

Brought to Tanzania via Hamburg sisal became an important cash crop since its introduction as a raw material for rope and fiber. When researching the Maji Maji War, I met with an elder outside of Songea who told me his forefather had escaped the Germans' mass hangings but tells me his life was full of remorse as he had been made to confect the rope from which his fellows were hanged. The villagers who would not let him forget that he returned but many others had not.

Continuing my research in Mahenge, sometime later, I would again journey along the Morogoro road but the sisal landscape now evoked another memory.

From there, the trail led to the Ngarambe River into which the huge snake was believed to have vanished.

The day following the incident, Kinjeketile, who lived 300 yards from the river, was taken by a spirit.

It was nine o'clock in the morning. Everyone saw it, they were basking outside when they saw him go on his belly, his hands stretched out before him toward the river. They tried to get hold of his legs but he cried out that he did not want to be pulled back.

Then he disappeared into the pool of water.

His relatives slept by the pool overnight waiting for him to reappear.

Those who knew how to swim dived in, but they did not see anything. So they waited, and the following morning, at about nine o'clock, he emerged unhurt and with his clothes dry, just as he had been when taken from them the previous day.

After that he began talking of prophetic matters.

He said, "All dead ancestors will come back …

No lion or leopard will eat men.

The lion was sheep, and the European was red earth or fish of the water. Let us beat him."

The work of this new man spread far.

A huge snake of a size and type never seen before, and having the head of a small black monkey, paid a visit to the house of one Mzee Machuya Nnundu near Ngarambe.

The snake was too big for the house so its coils overflowed outside while it kept its head at the entrance of the house.

It had large, red, glowing eyes. It was colored like the rainbow, one of the attributes of the divinity, Hongo.

On the third day the huge snake disappeared.

Two women who had been harvesting that afternoon suddenly beheld a man dressed in a dazzling white robe — too white to look at in the glaring afternoon sun.

Before they could run away in fear the man disappeared and he and the snake were never seen again.

Subsequent examination by the villagers revealed that the trail of the snake disappeared at the point where the man in white had first been seen and was renewed where he had disappeared.

commoning

Interfacing the commons: Curatorial system as a form of production on the edge

Magdalena Tyżlik-Carver

This first paragraph refers to events and movements of students, activists, and intellectuals in response to the effects of capitalist crises in Europe and beyond at the end of 2000's. In 2009, Edu-factory Collective published one of the collections that responded to the transformation of the knowledge commons in the context of neoliberal universities facilitated by the global networked infrastructures.[13] WikiLeaks is another example of organizations that, as early as 2006, responded to the need for transparency of information by establishing an online platform for whistleblowers and for publishing censored and restricted material.[14] Projects such as Open Source Embroidery, Arctic Perspective, or my curatorial and research project Common Practice are representative of how the subject of commons was being addressed by curators and in art works at the time.

At the start of the third decade of the twenty-first century, the struggle over commons continues. Over ten years ago, when writing this text, I worked with the concept of immaterial labor to understand how commons is reconstituted in the context of networking technologies. The article is based on hypothesis that there is a relation between commons and curating and

At the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century, the commons are everywhere. Or to be precise, the struggle over the commons, as well as the ideological appropriation of the concept of the common by the market, is all around us. Movements such as edu-factory or a recently launched project of co-research, Uninomade2.0, current students struggles in the UK to protect access to free education, or global discontent with methods and forms of state control as exerted over the WikiLeaks site in recent months are only the Western examples of struggles over what is considered to be a common good, in these cases education, knowledge, and information.*

We can observe an increased interest of art and curatorial projects in the commons as a subject.[1] Starting from the assumption that curating is always linked to some form of collaborative production, especially when taking place with the use of socio-technological networks, my proposition here is to think of curating as facilitating forms of collaborative production which, when taken together, are part of some common yet unenclosed activity. Specifically, my focus is on the ways in which immaterial labor is mobilized in such a context. What Lazzarato says about immaterial labor has been applied to the field of curating and curatorial systems.[2] Relevant here is Lazzarato's description of immaterial labor as "the interface" which links it to immaterial commodity enlarged and transformed by the process of consumption. It is exactly that place of intersection and transformation where many curatorial systems using social technologies in the production of events, situations, and forms of knowledge, operate. By proposing to think of curatorial system as an interface, I want to

that this relation can be productively explored as part of digital and networked infrastructures. Both curating and commons employ forms of organizing and managing; they are productive of relations that are ambiguous and precarious; and they refer to individual and collective subjects (not always human) and objects (not always things). Commons is a location for forms of commoning, and commoning is about negotiating access, figuring out, and becoming part of something, such as a movement, resources, relations, and so commons always involve human and nonhuman subjects/objects.

Recognizing that commons is not a utopian dream but a struggle to compose things with others, this article asks: What is the role of curating if understood as an activity that is part of making commons? This question is illustrative of curating that is not just about curating art, what I refer to elsewhere as "not-just-art curating."[15] To answer this question, I propose here to think of curating as an interface, where interface is both a location and a process of being in between, always on the edge, between locations and fields of art, technology, and politics, with the aim to intervene into agential relations that are supposedly given in such context.

analyze how curating is a practice on the edge as it precariously balances between the struggle over and appropriation of the commons which it facilitates to produce.

From the abundance of various definitions of the commons, I want to start from the definition of the commons articulated by Massimo De Angelis in an interview for *e-flux*.[3] He recognizes three elements which are part of the commons where "the third and most important element in terms of conceptualizing the commons is the verb 'to common'—the social process that creates and reproduces the commons." The concept of *commoning* which De Angelis takes from Peter Linebaugh's book *The Magna Carta Manifesto*,[4] I understand as referring to constantly negotiating and learning how to share and produce common resources. And it is in that sense that this concept is most useful when considering how networked art and curatorial projects engage with the issue of the commons—not just as a subject but as a practice in common.

The Free Software movement, peer-2-peer networks, or Amazon's Mechanical Turk are all examples of different approaches to processes that create social and capital relations in the context of digital cultures. At the same time, they fall under two categories described by De Angelis as two sides of the same coin. Enclosures, argues De Angelis, are a "continuous characteristic of 'capital logic'" and "a force with totalizing drives that exists together with other forces that act as limit on it."[5] He says, "it is either capital that makes the world through commodification and enclosures, or it is the rest of us—whoever that 'us' is—that makes the world through counter-enclosures and 'class struggle.'"[6] It can be argued that a project like the Free Software Foundation (FSF) initiated in response to early attempts to limit open and free access to free software, is an example of the latter. It is interesting to notice that one way that FSF organizes access to resources is through the use of free software licenses (GNU GPL) while, at the same time, the organization propagates certain practices of engaging with free software which ensure freedom to run, copy, distribute, study, change, and improve it.[7] As such, the FSF or indeed the

Free Software movement in general, is an example of a social process that creates commons related to software production and circulation and an interface that frames the forms of contact that have to be engaged in order to access those resources. A similar capacity for organizing forms of interaction is a feature of a curatorial system, and my argument is that exactly this faculty makes it possible to think of a curatorial system as an interface.

So, what is a curatorial system? Firstly, we need to identify various elements that are part of this system. Curating is one of them, but also online platforms, networked tools, software, and publics as users/producers/immaterial laborers. However, the notion of a curatorial system also recognizes the interactivity among all the elements, the relations generated, and forms of production mobilized within the system. If a curatorial system is a collection of contingent elements (technology, networks, users/producers, curating, immaterial labor) understood as different forms of agency which interact with each other within it, then the system becomes an interface that facilitates and frames a way to access those elements also from the outside. Similarly, the organizational functions of curating, also understood as immaterial labor, become operative in such a system, as they "manage social relations" and extract "social cooperation."[8] Joasia Krysa's notion of immaterial curating recognizes the political dimension of curating by situating it within the context of immateriality, and she considers the immaterial curator as "akin to the figure of the manager, or in Lazzarato's terms 'facilitator.'"[9] Furthermore, she identifies the curator as "central to the new forms of participatory management."[10]

Immaterial labor is an interface of "a new relationship between consumption and production" which, instead of being based on consumption of commodity and in consequence its destruction, "enlarges, transforms and creates the 'ideological' and cultural environment of the consumer."[11] The appropriate question to ask next would be how this relationship is interfaced not just within but by a curatorial system? I would argue that in a networked art context, a curatorial system is an interface which translates this process of ideological transformation and communicates it to the public. And this takes place through engaging workers' subjectivity as a productive force that turns consumption productive,

this "real and proper social process that for the moment is defined with the term communication."[12] What is being produced and in effect what is "communicated" by the curatorial system is exactly the point here: namely, whether it is possible to access each element of the system and in what way.

If one is interested in curating as a form of agency that can redistribute power relations, or, as the case might be, facilitating environments for production and reproduction of the commons, there is a need to re-consider immaterial labor in its potential to become an emancipatory practice that doesn't end at the point of reproducing capital relations but actively develops immaterial practices of "commoning."

** Curating in/as common/s is the model with which I reconsider immaterial labor as represented in posthuman curating in its potential to become an emancipatory practice.[16] This model, however, is not a manifestation of the common as a network of social and technological relations organized through labor as resources or community. Rather, commons are recognized as always in motion, becoming, transforming into relations that are other than market relations and productive of another kind of sense, another kind of sensing, and sense making with phenomena and things that are more-than-human, post-human, or even inhumane.[17] The challenge here is directly towards what and who is considered resource, and by whom, or for what? Refusing resource formation is a practice of holding a space for another way to form relations in common/s and paying attention to the effects and affects that result from intra-actions in which we (curators and curatorial institutions) are complicit.

In her recent book *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism*, Ariella Aïsha Azoulay introduces the photographic camera shutter as demanding: "what sort of things have to be distanced, bracketed, removed, forgotten, suppressed, ignored, overcome, and made irrelevant for the shutter of the camera to function, as well as for a photograph to be taken and its meaning accepted. What is suppressed and made irrelevant is excised by the shutter."[18] As Azoulay claims, the shutter documents objects, but it rarely documents the people who owned these objects in the first place. Azoulay argues further that the shutter is a colonial object and speculates on its origin dating not to the nineteenth century invention but to 1492, the year of the colonization of America. Potential History claims colonialism as a regime that governs innovation and the development of new technologies, and it calls for the unlearning of imperialism by unlearning its origins, refusing the stories that the shutter tells, and acknowledging that the shutter's neutrality is an act of violence.[19]

My short text "Interfacing the commons" addresses the changing labor relations in the context of what was then termed digital economy.[20] More recently, discourse around digital economy has been critically shaped by such concepts as "data extractivism,"[21] "data colonialism,"[22] or "surveillance capitalism."[23] Each of these concepts recognizes, in different ways, the steady progress towards imbalance in economic, social, political, and legal relations that are infrastructurally dependent on digital platforms and their related technologies. The general use of these platforms is regulated with the tool that is popularly known as Terms & Conditions. If traditionally, Terms & Conditions contained mere contingency details, it is apparent that when platforms regulate how their technologies are used, contingencies have become an operational model. In such a model, labor relations seem to become secondary to property relations. In other words, contingencies to be managed are redefined as ownership of data produced on the platform, but without ever addressing two important facts: that it is the users who produce data with platforms mining data, and that this relation is not a contingency but a business regime that sustains the revenue source for the platform.

And so, when interfacing the commons, there is a need to acknowledge colonial sentiments that govern increasing numbers of digital systems and platforms, and how such sentiments are naturalized in tools and technologies of which Terms & Conditions contract is one example. Azoulay argues that technologies are not neutral, but they embody sentiments that are then operationalized. If curating is a technology, as argued by a number of scholars,[24] then the question important to any curatorial work, exhibition, collection, documentation, or archive, is: What sentiments are embodied in curatorial systems that as curators and curatorial institutions we engage in, and how do we lead them out of the colonial framework?

law.[1] However, over the course of the differentiation of professions in the art field in the 1960s, the fields of activity of the archivist or collections curator on the one hand and those of the developing independent curator on the other began to separate. Part of this development were different role definitions in which those bound to an institution were also committed to it in terms of content, socially, and economically, while those with a certain degree of institutional in-dependence structured their work in a project-like manner along the lines of subjectivized perspectives in dealing with institutionally archived material.[2]

Moreover, curatorial engagement with archives complements the effects of change that go hand in hand with their use anyway. Every interaction with the archival institution and its holdings generates dy-namics, as additional actors join in, who for their part bring with them and develop their own properties, experiences, and histories, as well as relate in differ-ent ways to the histories and experiences already attached to the institution and its holdings. With an understanding of archive less as a storage than as a system, in this sense André Lepecki speaks of the body in dance as an archive whose movement within the archive can result in its rewriting. Entering an archive entails disorder and difference; the body, as Lepecki quotes choreographer, researcher, performer, and

transfictioning

TRANSFICTIONING

[Trans]   as related to the concept of across or beyond.
A testing of pre-assumed boundaries.

[Fictioning]   referring to the ways in which reimagining our
relationship to reality occurs.

[Transfictioning]   a hyper-fiction that relates to simulacra, in which
there is no original. Most commonly applied here to the notion
of *The Archive*. Motion across *The Archive* towards citing new fictions
and locating our relationship(s) to objects.

ANN HAREZLAK

curator-archivist   approaches exhibition-making as a framework
for the examination and interpretation of the (historic and natural)
concept of order and provenance.

archival topographies   a requisite to reconceptualizing archival
agency and place; organization, preservation, and dissemination.

cultural narratives   inquiry into existing hierarchies and limits of
valuation for the purpose of locating differences in cultural and historical
portrayals of power, access, and privilege.

temporal instruments   a desire to work with raw archival materials
as tools for mapping histories beyond their prescribed contextual origins.

MICHAEL BIZON   *The Other Only Doorway II*, 2015

[Trans]   To shift, such as to exist in a state that is open to revision, reinterpretation, and resequencing.

[Fictioning]   Possessing potential for the production of pluri-narratives which may undermine the signification or provenance of the foremost representation defined by the current canon.

[Transfictioning]   Organic and fluid moments of translation and interpretation which are adapting, and circumventing death.

KIRSTEN COOKE

Artist-curator   practices exhibition models towards a speculative (yet to come into being) audience.

Collaborative Exhibition-making   renders mediation tangible and re-situates the place/forms in which curating is often assumed to take place.

Experimentation   plays with different modes of staging and situates curating, as a primary and visible practice within the construction of projects and exhibitions.

Archival Ontology   encountering archival works with curators and artists to remediate their fictive environment through contemporary translations and to test their ontological status.

Petitio, 2021   **MICHAEL BIZON**

transfictioning

researchic

Annabel Frearson, *Wollstonochlincraft 1791-1971, 2018-*

KollActiv:
Kirsten Cooke and Ann Harezlak
as co-authors

Kollective Active Curation — through discussion, a hybrid emerges that aims
to locate forms of curatorial mediation that challenge archival expectations.

Topographical Exhibition-making — mapping is understood as subjective,
so that curatorial mediation is tangible within the exhibition structure.

Experimental narratives — fictioning as the way in which relationships
to objects, the archive and the real are built; nothing is unmediated.

Ontological instruments — archival translation, in which both
the archival object and the contemporary artwork (which reflects on it)
are considered both originals and simulacra.

Encounter with *The Exhibition:* as conceived in *Concrete Plastic*

The fourth, and largest, room of *the exhibition* is entered from
the right-hand side. This precedes an encounter with works that signify
catalytic impulses; a publication launch space, and a manifesto of
methodology which dances across three walls. Directly to the left and
along an expansive wall to the right, Annabel Fearson's textual artwork
is grouped in a series of clusters which resonate with the form of a diagram.
Fearson's works are read and reread, understood and re-understood,
as one travels among the hybrid terms that appear to be communicating
with each other and suggesting new logic systems for language.

Michael Bizon's work fills *the exhibition* with reverberations
before one has physically encountered his sculptural structure near the rear
of the fourth space. It appears as a flat roofed house, or possibly another
rectangular room within. A worn door, slightly ajar, leaks a yellow glow as
vibrations urge viewers closer. Once inside, one is enveloped in sound and
light, seemingly alone to contemplate the subtle movements of a delicate
black and white checkerboard fabric held behind glass. Left to interpret
reflections, the viewer studies the glass and wonders about the status of
the object and their silhouette. Is this a cast image of the self or the shadow
of another that has found a corresponding entrance to the confined space?

transcribeing

Wollstonochlincraft 1791-1971, 2018-   **Annabel Frearson**,

A co-authored curatorial methodology:
KollActiv *stages Concrete Plastic*

To complicate the mechanism of exhibition-making in relation
to archival objects while providing a collaborative platform
for challenging the authority of primary and secondary material
within art, archival and curatorial production.
To re-situate the curatorial impulse within a prompt for
response, commencing under the initial order of *the archive*
and its holdings / materials.
Concrete Plastic is staged as a forum for artist practition-
ers to re-imagine the structure of *the archive* or the ontology of
archival material. It is a transfictioning which evokes mediatory
forms and reflections on previous archival entities. It can structure
the environment of *the exhibition* and intervene as well as reform
the structure of *the archive*. *Concrete Plastic* is a hybridized
mode of production rather than a form of curatorial labor,
one which mediates an overview of the practices involved
and continues to develop "practice as research."

Encounter with *The Archive*:
as envisioned in *Concrete Plastic*

While in discussion with the Head of Collections, they discern that *the
archive* is not centred around particular artists but instead a series of
categories. They stumble upon a conversation that plots the workings of
the archive; a spatial catalogue that acts as a carousel of information. As
documentation perpetually dances in and out of focus within the
different categories, it becomes an agitation that awaits or perhaps pre-
empts ignition, much like haystacks which spontaneously combust.

Shuffling from one foot to the other, they look at an artist's book
that has been placed on its side. Trying to make out the title, they ques-
tion whether it must be read to be activated, or if it could form
the proposition for an empty set. An empty set, as hazily understood and
later discussed, is similar to a void set in mathematics that accompanies
all sets as its shadow or potential.

preenacting

Archiving the Future
Case Study 1.
The Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland (JRMiP).
The Movement, founded in 2007, calls for the return of 3,300,000 Jews back to Poland. The JRMiP is a response to times of crisis, when faith has been exhausted and old utopias have failed.
The promised paradise has been privatized. The kibbutz apples and watermelons are no longer as ripe.

Yael Bartana

The Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland

THE JEWISH RENAISSANCE MOVEMENT IN POLAND:

A MANIFESTO

We want to return!
Not to Uganda, not to Argentina or to Madagascar, not even to Palestine.
It is Poland that we long for, the land of our fathers and forefathers.
In real-life and in our dreams we continue to have Poland on our minds.

We want to see the squares in Warsaw, Łódź and Kraków filled with new settlements. Next to the cemeteries we will build schools and clinics. We will plant trees and build new roads and bridges.

We wish to heal our mutual trauma once and for all. We believe that we are fated to live here, to raise families here, die and bury the remains of our dead here.

We are reviving the early Zionist phantasmagoria. We reach back to the past — to the imagined world of migration, political and geographical displacement, to the disintegration of reality as we know it — in order to shape a new future.

This is the response we propose for these times of crisis, when faith has been exhausted and old ideals have faded. Optimism is dying out. The promised paradise has been privatized. The kibbutz apples and watermelons are no longer as ripe.

We welcome new settlers whose presence shall be the embodiment of our desire for another history. We shall face many potential futures as we leave behind our safe, familiar, and one-dimensional world.

We direct our appeal not only to Jews. We accept into our ranks all those for whom there is no place in their homelands — the expelled and the persecuted. There will be no discrimination in our movement. We shall not ask about your life stories, check your residence cards or question your refugee status. We shall be strong in our weakness.

Our Polish brothers and sisters, we start no invasion. Rather we shall arrive like a procession of the ghosts of your old neighbours, the ones haunting you in your dreams, the neighbours you have never had a chance to meet. And we shall speak out about all the evil things that have happened between us.

We long to write new pages into a history that never quite took the course we wanted. We count on being able to govern our cities, work the land, and bring up our children in peace and together with you. Welcome us with open arms, as we will welcome you!

With one religion, we cannot listen.
With one color, we cannot see.
With one culture, we cannot feel.
Without you we can't even remember.
Join us, and Europe will be stunned!

Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland

Preenactment is a method to question the
present time and to enact a speculative future.
By mixing historical events with imagination
and prophecy, reversing and displacing
ideologies, preenactments examine and reflect
on mechanisms of power and shape images of
a future memory.
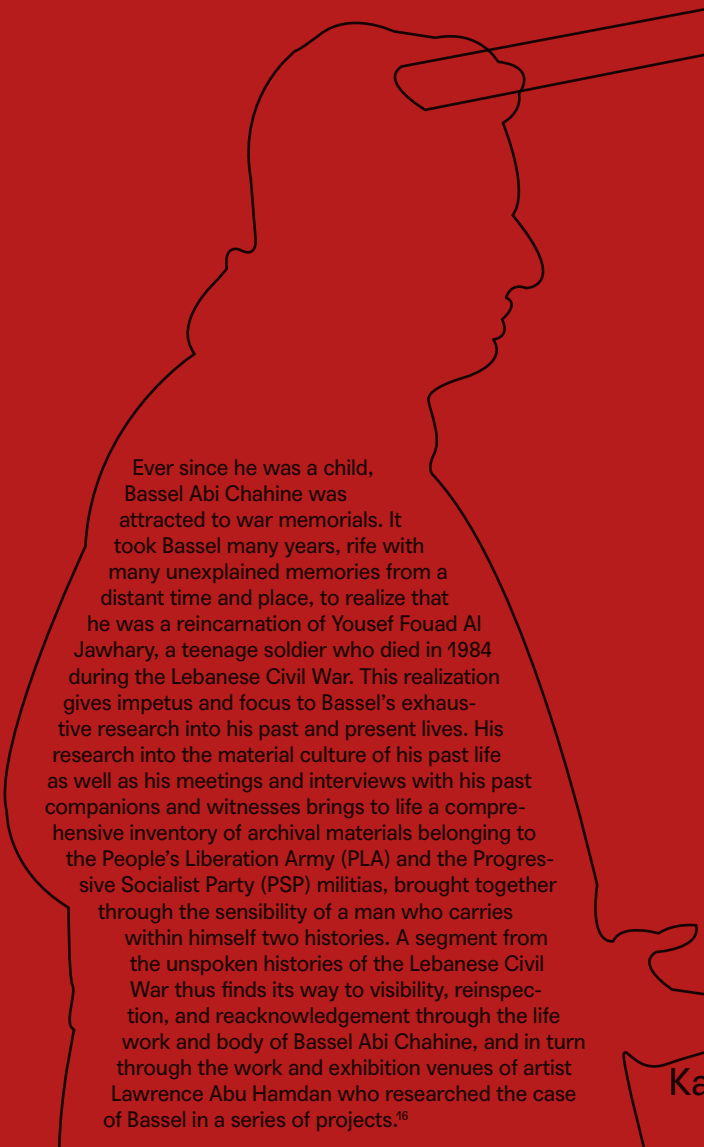
shapeshifting

There are liminal spaces, somewhere between the consecrated spaces of the canonized and the rejected, where fluid processes of metamorphosis occur. Beings in this space, be they human or non-human, shape-shift, moving fluidly between varying registers of visibility and legibility, as a means of self-preservation and survival beyond restrictive limits of form, language, time, and space. A volatile fragment of history that had been deprived public space for some reason, let's say the time was not favorable for a real engagement with the narratives it embodies and exposes, may lay dormant, invisible, until it finds a favorable time and form for its re-emergence into the purview of the visible. This reemergence of previously hidden objects and narratives can arrive to us via different routes—as a rediscovery, reincarnation, haunting, remembering, or otherwise.

A number of
old Iraqi lullabies, that had turned into
folksongs that children learned by heart,
exist mostly in memory, with remnants
of them retained in remaining yet mostly
defunct cassette tapes. Through another
act of mediation, artist Adel Abidin
assists in the passage of some of these
distorted yet alive audio recordings in his
work *Back to the Future*[15] where a digital
echo of these songs is carried through
new 3D printed cassette tapes rewound
by an invisible hand rotating
graphite pencils through
their sprockets.

A
recently redis-
covered Super 8 ama-
teur film, *Donne Emergete!*,
made in 1975 by filmmaker
Isabella Bruno, has been deemed damaged
beyond repair by film restorers. An examination
of the ghostly visual and sound remnants of it
brought forth traces of marginalized histories
of long disregarded Italian "minor
cinemas" and civil strife
movements. Through
their work with the
original film mate-
rial, artists Maria
Iorio and Raphael
Cuomo speak of
"strange and
transgressive
invocations
of undead
voices
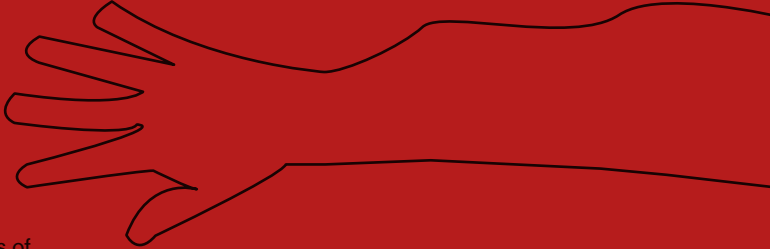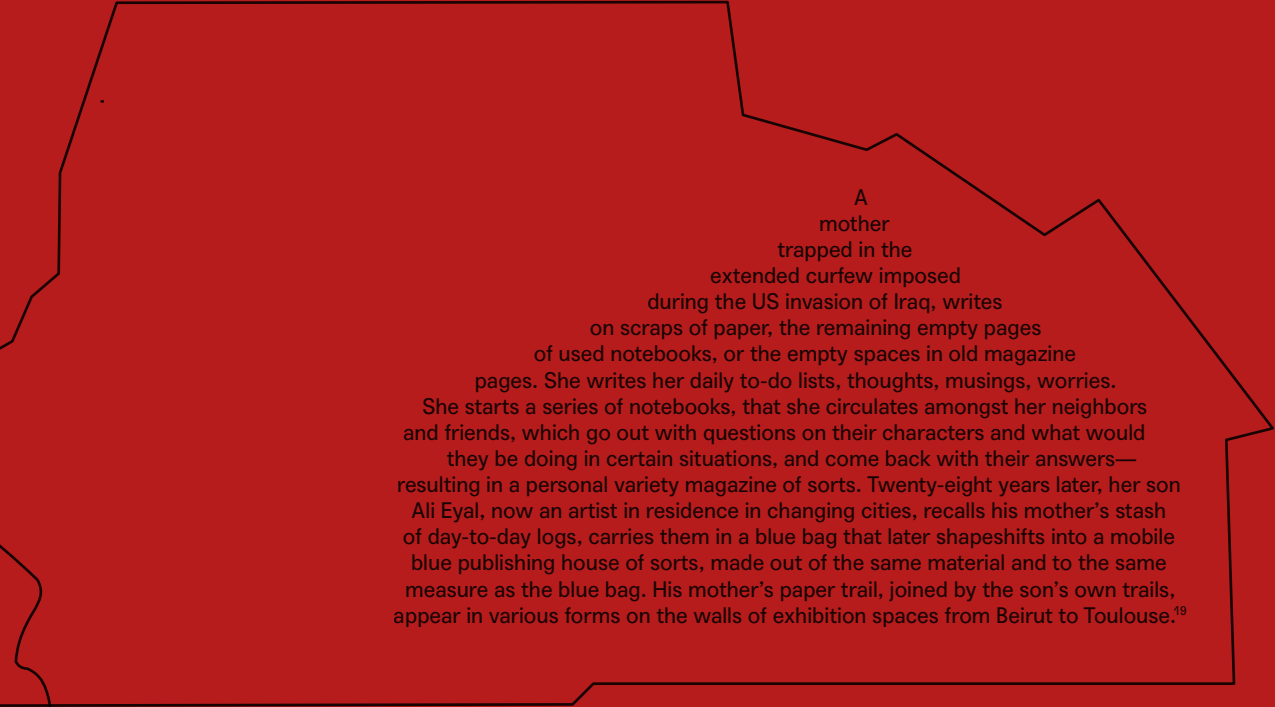calling out
to us from the
afterlife."[17]

Ever since he was a child,
Bassel Abi Chahine was
attracted to war memorials. It
took Bassel many years, rife with
many unexplained memories from a
distant time and place, to realize that
he was a reincarnation of Yousef Fouad Al
Jawhary, a teenage soldier who died in 1984
during the Lebanese Civil War. This realization
gives impetus and focus to Bassel's exhaus-
tive research into his past and present lives. His
research into the material culture of his past life
as well as his meetings and interviews with his past
companions and witnesses brings to life a compre-
hensive inventory of archival materials belonging to
the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Progres-
sive Socialist Party (PSP) militias, brought together
through the sensibility of a man who carries
within himself two histories. A segment from
the unspoken histories of the Lebanese Civil
War thus finds its way to visibility, reinspec-
tion, and reacknowledgement through the life
work and body of Bassel Abi Chahine, and in turn
through the work and exhibition venues of artist
Lawrence Abu Hamdan who researched the case
of Bassel in a series of projects.[16]

Ancient
monuments
that have
long turned
into dust
extend their
lives through
language, such
as in the accounts of
travelers who had once
seen them or in poems that had eulogized them. But
even the language that had extended their life for some
time, may also disappear, partially surviving merely in
the footnotes and margins of other texts.[18] Artist
Hussein Nassereddine reflects in his on-going work
titled *The Complete Uncredited Works* on "that which
exists outside of the historical canon, which consti-
tutes its negative space," and in so doing attunes our
attention to that which has long laid dormant in the
margins of our literary, historical, and cultural canons.
In his book titled *How to See the Palace Columns as Palm
Trees,* a book whose "main" text is one line of poet-
ry whereas the bulk of the book's is in the footnotes
where we learn of "Abdallah the killed," a fictional
character who has a real genealogy.

A
mother
trapped in the
extended curfew imposed
during the US invasion of Iraq, writes
on scraps of paper, the remaining empty pages
of used notebooks, or the empty spaces in old magazine
pages. She writes her daily to-do lists, thoughts, musings, worries.
She starts a series of notebooks, that she circulates amongst her neighbors
and friends, which go out with questions on their characters and what would
they be doing in certain situations, and come back with their answers—
resulting in a personal variety magazine of sorts. Twenty-eight years later, her son
Ali Eyal, now an artist in residence in changing cities, recalls his mother's stash
of day-to-day logs, carries them in a blue bag that later shapeshifts into a mobile
blue publishing house of sorts, made out of the same material and to the same
measure as the blue bag. His mother's paper trail, joined by the son's own trails,
appear in various forms on the walls of exhibition spaces from Beirut to Toulouse.[19]

reentangling

The project developed through a transnational
constellation of culture producers, scholars,
and activists from Berlin, Zurich, Paris, Delft,
and Casablanca. In the process of its experimental
study mode, the finding was made that European
ideas on architecture and urbanism were projected
onto postwar North African French colonies, where
they underwent change, modification, and testing
before being re-projected back onto architecture
and urban planning in France and Switzerland
in the late 1950s. Through the creation of a
transnational network, including architects,
activists, and local inhabitants from Casablanca,
it became evident that the construction sites
of the architectural cases under investigation
became sites of anti-colonial revolt in 1952
in Morocco. These findings revised existing
assumptions by Western scholars and called for
the decolonializing of the European episteme on
modernist housing and urbanism.[1]

In the Desert of Modernity:
Colonial Planning and After

Marion von Osten
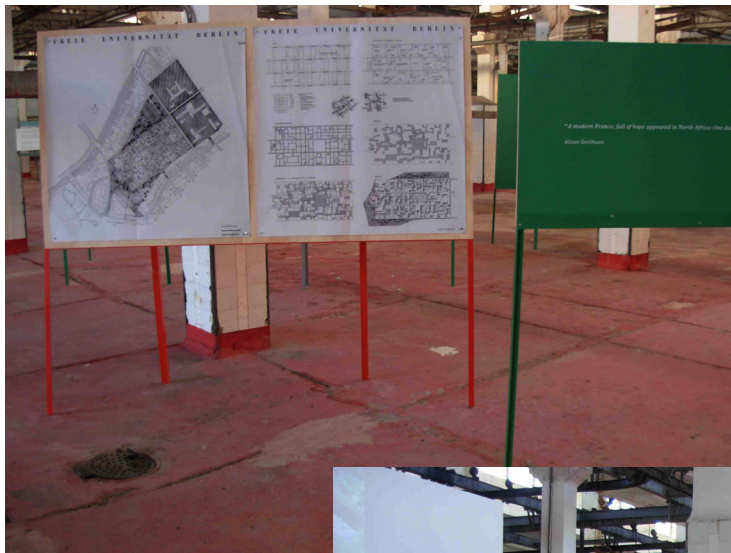
Tom Avermaete, Andreas Müller, Anna Voswinckel, and myself stubbornly clung to the idea of taking the exhibition to Casablanca, since the question of why we had exclusively shown the project in Berlin definitely remained one of the biggest paradoxes.

...there was still the open question of why this project had not been relocated within the context, which provided the impetus for the lion's share of its research, ideas, and central research partners. And that question appeared even more pertinent given that we had such a mass of contacts in Morocco, and the project itself only existed through these and other cooperative ventures. [2]

During the setting up, the équipe on site also initiated a photo shoot on mobile phones, which soon inspired all of us. Performative shootings were made by the team who integrated themselves physically in to the images of European generals or architects standing around plans laid out on tables; they took each other's photo as if they had been part of the scene. The main players of this performance were the security guards Tarik Aalamou and Abdellah Hamed. Moreover, Abdellah Hamed later not only came to keep an eye on the exhibition but also began guiding visitors through it, explaining and commenting on it. This appropriation of the exhibition overcame the paradox of the representative, readable, and optical side of visibility. It opened up the opportunity for a dialogue, which was no longer one-dimensionally mediated by researchers to an audience, even if it was such a local one. Instead, quite different

experts and cultures of knowledge than architects, artists, exhibition organizers, or institutional representatives were creating this dialogue—namely, the residents of the Hay Mohammadi district themselves. [3]

reentangling
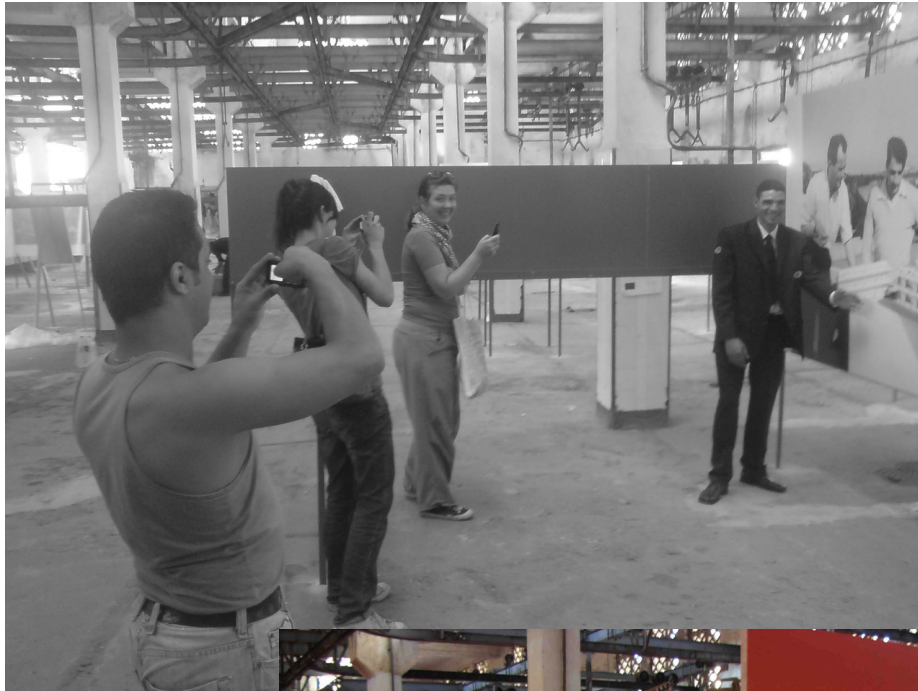
The long-durational character of the project meant that it was not finished just because the exhibition ended or a publication was launched. Especially my own thinking and writing reached far beyond an exhibition and its duration. All producers involved continued work on the project without any longer being associated with the exhibition context; but they were still associated with one another. Collective knowledge left the frame of the exhibition and become productive elsewhere, like in a series of follow up projects...[4]

curator Martin Nachbar, makes the "archive visible and at the same time creates this difference."[3]

To this dynamizing effect the curatorial approach adds its specific double orientation, through which two opposing movements take place simultaneously: the orientation towards the interior of the archive, towards its inventory and the conditions of its constitution and continued existence, on the one hand, and the orientation towards the outside, towards presentation and becoming public, on the other. In the interaction of assembling and becoming public, as it is constitutive for the curatorial, a moment of tension arises that insists on changeability and mobility. By exposing the archive as a rearrangement, put, as it were, out of itself, the curatorial approach poses a challenge on two levels at once: first, it relativizes the parameters under which the demarcation of the institutional space from the outside world takes place and allows the archive, with its external boundary becoming porous, to become evident in its internal and external relationships. Second, the transfer into the public sphere threatens to weaken the legitimacy and binding force of the order created in the archive with its legislative effects. The claim to evidence associated with the presentation of documents is relativized here.

Two characteristics essential to curatorial practice come to bear here, which can be captured in the

terms of constellation and transposition. As discussed in more detail elsewhere,[4] the term constellation defines the interaction of human and non-human participants in a curatorial situation, all of whom enter from their previous contexts into a new one and undergo changes in this transformed relationality. Archivists, artists, curators, researchers, the various archived materials in their respective mediality, the discourses associated with them, and the institutions enter into new relationships with each other and are equally endowed with agency as players in the situation. The fabric of relations as a constellation is temporary, changeable, and performative. Thus, it itself has an agential power that affects the elements gathered in it as well as those who gather around it.

The concept of transposition, in turn, encompasses the acts of transposition that accompany the change of relative placement of all participants. Human and non-human actors undergo shifts from one spatial, temporal, social, aesthetic, economic, cultural, or discursive context to another. In the transfer from archive to exhibition space, from document to exhibit, from the private to the public, a change occurs that turns them into participants in curatorial relations of connection and perception. Transfers between media, languages, disciplines, and cultures are henceforth inscribed in the history of the

Rosi Braidotti

transposing

The term "transposing" has a double source of inspiration: from music and from genetics. It indicates an intertextual, cross-boundary, or transversal transfer, in the sense of a leap from one code, field, or axis into another, not merely in the quantitative mode of plural multiplications, but rather in the qualitative sense of complex multiplicities. It is not just a matter of weaving together different strands, variations on a theme (textual or musical), but rather of playing the positivity of difference as a specific theme of its own. As a term in music, transposing indicates variations and shifts of scale in a discontinuous but harmonious pattern. It is thus created as an in-between space of zigzagging and of crossing: nonlinear, but not chaotic; nomadic, yet accountable and committed; creative but also cognitively valid; discursive and also materially embedded it is coherent without falling into instrumental rationality.

Evelyn Fox Keller (1983), in her brilliant study of the life and work of Barbara McClintock, argues that "transposition" refers to processes of genetic mutation, or the transferral of genetic information, that occur in a nonlinear manner, which is nonetheless neither random nor arbitrary. This is set in opposition to the mainstream scientific vision that tends to define the gene as a steady entity that transmits fixed units of heredity in an autonomous and self-sufficient manner and genetic variation as random events. Transposable moves appear to proceed by leaps and bounds, but are not deprived of their logic, or coherence.

Central to transposing is the notion of material embodiment; in the case of genetics, McClintock highlights the decisive role played by the organism in framing and affecting the rate and the frequency of the mutations. Transpositions occur by a carefully regulated dissociation of the bonds that would normally maintain cohesiveness between the genes, which are laid out in a linear manner on the chromosome. McClintock shows that as a result of the dissociative impact, a mutation occurs that splits the chromosome into two detached segments. The rate of the mutation of these jumping genes is internally determined by the elements of the cell itself, and thus is not pre-written in the gene. The notion of transposing emphasizes the flexibility of the genome. This implies that the key to understanding genetics is the process itself, the sequence of the organized system. This can be traced a posteriori as the effect of the dissociative shifts or leaps, but these controlling agents remain immanent to the process itself and are contingent upon the rearrangements of the elements. In other words, genetics information is contained in the sequence of the elements, which in turn means that the function and the organisation of the genetic elements are mutable and interdependent.[2]

Consequently, as Hilary Rose (2008, 65) put it ever so wittily: DNA, far from being the stable macho molecule of the 1962 Watson-Crick prize story, becomes a structure of complex dynamic equilibrium. Nobody and no particle of matter is independent and self-propelled, in nature as in the social. Ultimately, genetic changes are under the control of the organisms, which, under the influence of environmental factors, are capable of influencing the reprogramming of the genetic sequence itself.

As if it were capable of learning from experience, the organism defined as the host environment of the genetic sequence, plays an interactive and determining role in the transmission of genetic information. Haraway (1997, 142) sums it up brilliantly: A gene is not a thing, much less a master molecule, or a self-contained code. Instead, the term gene signifies a mode of durable action where many actors, human, and non-human meet.

Transposition is a scientific theory that stresses the experience of creative insight in engendering other, alternative ways of knowing. McClintock and Keller do not alienate scientific methods, but rather use them to demonstrate albeit a posteriori what they knew already. Resting on the assumption of a fundamental and necessary unity between subject and object, the theory of transposing offers a contemplative and creative stance that respects the visible and hidden complexities of the very phenomena it attempts to study. This makes it a paradigmatic model for scientific knowledge as a whole, particularly feminist epistemologies, notably the critique of dualistic splits. It also shows affinity with spiritual practices like Buddhism, not in a

mystical mood but in a cognitive mode.

Multiple and complex, transpositions occur on many levels at once. *Transpositions* (2006) applies, expands, and develops the ethical and political implications of some of the arguments exposed as cartographies in *Metamorphoses* (2002). The relationship between the two books is neither linear, as in cause and effect, nor does it fall on the fundamental-applied distinction; they are inter-linked, while each maintains its singular profile. Their interconnection is a transposition, that is to say a creative leap that produces a prolific in-between space.

The term "transposing" refers to mobility and cross-referencing between disciplines and discursive levels. I rely on transposable notions that drift nomadically among different texts including those I authored myself while producing their own specific effects. Transposable concepts are nomadic notions that weave a web connecting philosophy to social realities, theoretical speculations to concrete plans, concepts to imaginative figurations. Transdisciplinary in structure, transposable concepts link biotechnology to ethics and connect them both with social and political philosophy. Moreover, I inject feminism, anti-racism, and human rights as an extra booster of theoretical energy and then let nomadic flows of becoming run loose through them all. Furthermore, the notion of transposing describes the connection between the text and its social and historical context, in the material and discursive sense of the term. The passion that animates this text is a concern for my historical situation, in so-called advanced, post-industrial cultures at the start of the third millennium. A kind of *amor fati* motivates me, not as fatalism, but rather in the pragmatic mode of the cartographer. I am after modes of representation and

forms of accountability that are adequate to the complexities of the real-life world I am living in. I want to think about what and where I live not in a flight away from the embodied and embedded locations that I happen to inhabit. In *Metamorphoses* I argued that, if you do not like complexities you couldn t possibly feel at home in the third millennium. *Transpositions* enacts this notion by proposing creative links and zigzagging interconnections between discursive communities that are too often kept apart from each other. To name but a few significant ones: biotechnologies and ethics and political agency; the omnipresence of a state of crisis on the one hand and the possibility of sustainable futures on the other; the practice of nomadic politics of difference versus technological monoculture; the creative potential of hybrid subjectivity, in opposition to new and more virulent forms of ethnically fixed identities; cartographic accounts of locations and normative stances. Ultimately: post-structuralism and ethical norms or values.

More specifically, I transpose nomadically from philosophical theory to ethical practice. Loyal to the feminist politics of locations, I remain committed to the task of providing politically-informed maps of the present, convinced of the usefulness of a situated approach as a critical tool to achieve an enlarged sense of objectivity and a more empowering grasp of the social. Politically, a cartographic method based on the politics of locations results in the recognition that not one single central strategy of resistance is possible (Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Patton 2000; Massumi 1992). A heterogeneous style of politics is needed instead, based on centerlessness. As a corollary, this implies a variety of possible political strategies and the non-dogmatic acceptance of potentially contradictory positions. A scattered, web-like system is

now operational, that defies and defeats any pretence at avant-garde leadership by any group. Resistance being as global as power, it is centreless and just as nonlinear: con- temporary politics is rhizomic.

It is possible to track the zigzagging transpositions of multiple differences across the global landscape of a mediated world. The concrete socioeconomic conditions of advanced capitalism, the so-called global economy, with its flows of commodities and the mobility of goods, is one of the factors responsible for the collapse of mono-centred systems and of binary modes of opposition between center and periphery. The poly-centred, multiple, and complex political economy of late post-modernity is nomadic in the sense that it promotes the fluid circulation of capital and of commodities. In this respect, it favors the proliferation of differences, but only within the strictly commercial logic of profit. My nomadic vision of subjectivity on the other hand, is strictly non-profit (Braidotti 1994, 2002). It aims to provide a rigorous account both of the mobile subject positions that are available in late postmodernity and of modes of resistance and alternatives to the profit-minded values of today. I rely on transposable notions to account adequately for the fast-moving processes of change and for the overlapping complexities of place and time.

In *Transpositions* I investigate the creative force of transpositions in the frame work of new power relations and explore its potential as the grounds for a new political ontology. Such a creative move takes the form of a qualitative leap. It does not entrust the mechanistic determinism of the genes and memes (*pace* Dawkins 1976). Nor does it rely on the reassuring linearity of a divinely ordained evolutionary teleology (*pace* Teilhard de Chardin 1959). It is rather the case that this qualitative or creative leap takes the form of a change of culture: a transformation not only of our schemes of thought but also of our ways of inhabiting the world. Such a radical change, rooted in the immanent structure of the subject, requires a lucid understanding of the topology and ethnology of the interconnections that link us to our social and organic environment. In other words, it is an eco-philosophy of belonging and of transformations.

Transformative ethics

An ethics of sustainability, based on these interconnections will consequently shape up as the main structure of my argument. This transformative ethics includes a critical or reactive and an affirmative or active phase. On the critical side, the issue at stake is the critique of tradition that is, which forces, aspirations, or conditions are likely to propel us out of the inert repetition of established habits of thought and self-representation. On the affirmative side, the issue is how can we cultivate the political desire for change or transformation, for actively willing and yearning for positive and creative changes? How can we link the issue of desire as a structural force that entails both ethical and erotic elements, with the question of socio-political forces and power relations?

My passion for transformations may lead to a seemingly hasty dismissal of attachment to traditional values. In defence of the desire for change or transformation, I want to argue that the force of habit is indeed little more than inertia, that is to say a reactive type of affect. Habits are a socially enforced and thereby legal type of addiction. They are cumulated toxins that by sheer uncreative repetition engender forms of behavior that can be socially accepted as normal or even natural.

The undue credit that is granted to the accumulation of habits lends exaggerated authority to past experiences. *Transpositions* (2006) addresses the question of which forces, desires, or aspirations are likely to propel us out of traditional habits, so that one is actually yearning for changes in a positive and creative manner. This leads to the clas- sical political question, what makes people want to change? How do you motivate them to change? How can we account for the political desire for transformation to occur? How can we link the issue of desire – its structure, which entails both erotic and political elements – with sustainable ethics? sustainable ethics?

This approach calls for a style that adequately expresses the process in a non-linear manner. A philosophical style is a way of shifting the very foundations of the corporate identity of philosophy. Against the traditional definition of this discipline in terms of cognitive mastery and normative power, they call for a radical scrambling of its codes. The catalogue of alternative modes of postulating self other interaction is broad: the placenta as a non-dialectical dyad; the figuration of the parasite; the cloned animal; the leaping gene; hybrid complexity, diasporic displacements, and cosmological resonance. These figurations are steps towards a nonlinear rendition of the subject in its deep structures. It is a kind of trans-position, a way of revisiting, reclaiming, and relocating a crucial shift in the process of becoming subjects.

Transposing is a gesture neither of metaphorical assimilation nor of meto-nymic association. It is a style, in the sense of a form of conceptual creativity, like a sliding door, a choreographed slippage, a drifting away that follows a trajectory that can be traced *a posteriori* and thus be made accountable. Like a weather map,

genetic printing, or digital tracking, an account can be made of what will have been in the first instance a fluid flowing of becoming.

Transposing between the cartographic and the normative, I ask: So what, then? What if the subject is trans, or in transit, that is to say no longer one, whole, unified, and in control, but rather fluid, in-process, and hybrid? What are the ethical and political implications of a non-unitary vision of the human subject? How does this vision express and reflect the complexities and contra-dictions of contemporary culture and cultural politics? This is in some ways the philosophical question par excellence: it provokes and thus invites serious questioning, while injecting into the debate a healthy dose of debunking. I shall do my best to follow this thread while giving ample space in my work to a more normative dimension of thought in terms of the ethics of sustainability. This rigor in both intent and content will not prevent my flair for paradoxes from striking healthy blows to the philosopher's *esprit des rieux*. This talent is needed more than ever, for these are strange times indeed, and strange things are happening.

recolling

Preface

Julie Ault

I want to begin this book by telling you that I knew Felix Gonzalez-Torres well. I don't confide this to assert my authority, though for some it may, for others it may have a contrary effect. I do so because omission seems like hiding in view of the fact that our relationship provides the foundation for the book. Felix and I met in 1987. Quickly, we became friends and colleagues working in the collaboration Group Material. Eventually we became close friends and spent a great deal of time together until his death early in 1996. Despite my intention to impart little personal narration, Felix *as I knew him* is the basis from which many decisions about this volume have been reasoned. What I mean is that the cues and clues that shaped the book's concept and character come from the sum of what I know about Felix Gonzalez-Torres: the public record of his practice and art, the discourse of its circulation through exhibitions and writings, his archives, and our dialogue, which gave me insight into his thinking processes and working methods. The fact of our closeness rendered me witness to his ways of being. I cannot and do not want to discount this domain of shared experience and personal knowledge – the ephemeral realm from which this project takes form – any more than I can or want to give an account of it. Yet it is this intimate dimension with which disparate material research reconciles.

Firsthand knowledge is a privilege yet it also causes dilemmas. Is privately obtained knowledge best kept private or can it justifiably be communal? For instance, I may think certain information speaks directly to why a feature of a work of art is the way it is or speaks to what catalyzed a series of works. But does such speculative revelation have productive public application, could it expand the understandings of Felix's work? Or would it fix meanings – which the artist himself was unwilling to do – at the expense of viewers' processes? Is there a responsibility to pass on this knowledge? Or will memories fade and firsthand information along with them?

I have sometimes found that biography or personal information can clarify my understanding of an artist's creativity, but also – after inadvertently learning of a private association an artist held regarding a work – found that this information creates interference. When, as a matter of public record, biographical information is connected to art, cultural forces take over and often preclude the subtle relationship between person and production. That correlation tends to get privileged in the interpretive mix, thereby overshadowing other possible meanings and associations. There are other hazards: biography can be used as a means to categorize, heroize, or distort an artist's intentions and the function of their work. I am obliged to question my own motives as well. Is it possible for my version to be any more accurate an account

ix

"I'm just beginning to think about what it means to see the clocks together again. They're really beautiful and compelling, but there's some sadness about the whole thing, not only about Felix's death, but that the community is so different. They represent a specific community as well as a larger context made up of overlapping communities that Felix's work emerged from that not only changed but eventually disappeared. Addressing the inevitability of dissolution is one of the reasons I wanted to organize this reunion."

Ault

Felix Gonzalez-Torres
"Untitled," 1987
Photostat
21.1 × 26.2 cm / 8.3 × 10.3 in.
Gift of the artist to Julie Ault, 1987

I left a note for Felix Gonzalez-Torres at his 1987 masters thesis exhibition in the ICP photography program at NYU, telling him that I was part of the collaborative Group Material, and asking him to get in touch. Soon after, I visited the studio apartment where he lived and worked, and we hit it off. (Felix told me he had imagined Group Material consisted of guys wearing suits and ties.) During the visit, I bought a dateline work on behalf of Tim Rollins, who had also seen Felix's show, and Felix gave me this work as a gift.

There were shared perspectives and modes between Felix's work and Group Material's work. We invited Felix to an informal meeting with the group, as it was then constituted—Doug Ashford, Tim Rollins, and myself. It's hard to convey how certain relationships form, but we fused a collaboration almost immediately. That year Felix joined Group Material; he was the first new member in five years. (JA)

Felix Gonzalez-Torres
"Untitled," 1989
Photographic object: color coupler print
jigsaw puzzle in plastic
19.1 × 24.1 cm / 7.5 × 9.5 in.
Gift of the artist to Julie Ault, 1989

Felix Gonzalez-Torres
"Untitled" (A Walk in the Snow), 1993
Two color coupler prints
38.9 × 46.5 cm / 15.3 × 18.3 in. each
Gift of the artist to Julie Ault, 1993

As with other works Felix Gonzalez-Torres gave me after he'd begun showing with the Andrea Rosen Gallery in 1990, he jokingly cautioned—and even wrote on the back of one—"Don't tell Andrea!" (JA)

Felix Gonzalez-Torres
*"Untitled" (Alice B. Toklas' and
Gertrude Stein's Grave, Paris),* 1992
Color coupler print
12.7 × 17.8 cm / 5 × 7 in.
Collection of Roni Horn

Felix Gonzalez-Torres
*"Untitled" (Alice B. Toklas' and
Gertrude Stein's Grave, Paris),* 1992
Color coupler print
15.8 × 24.1 cm / 6.25 × 9.5 in.
Collection of Jim Hodges

In 1992, Felix Gonzalez-Torres and I visited Paris for one week. I'd never been and Felix knew the city well, having explored it extensively with his boyfriend Ross Laycock. Ross died in early 1991. Our trip was infused with Felix's loss and memories. Walking around, Felix would routinely point to beautiful old apartment buildings with balconies, saying, "Ross and I used to live there. We were very happy there." This was purely wistful imagining, which I played along with. "Oh really? How long did you live there?" "On which floor?" These exchanges became the running dark joke of the trip. The last day in Paris, we went to Père Lachaise to visit the tombs of Oscar Wilde and Gertrude Stein and wander among the crypts. (JA)

Felix Gonzalez-Torres
*"Untitled" (Alice B. Toklas' and
Gertrude Stein's Grave, Paris),* 1992
Color coupler print
12.7 × 17.8 cm / 5 × 7 in.
Collection of Danh Vo
Acquired by Julie Ault by descent, 1996;
Gift of Julie Ault to Danh Vo, 2009

Seeking out the next point marked on my map, one block from where I was standing, would lead me off the cemetery's beaten track, to the silent burial place of Gertrude Stein. Standing alone before it, I was disappointed not to find any colorful flowers, the likes of

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recollecting

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Memory's Present

People stopped asking me about him after some years. Early on, I'd alternate between radical openness and expressing insult in the face of what I perceived as an out-of-place curiosity. I had no policy: mood, perceived intentions, and other factors determined my reactions and responses.

I am inherently private. My home life did not begin that way—quite the opposite, which is why it became essential. But that's another story for another time. My need for and desire to protect privacy extends to those I am close with. I am taken aback when a colleague, friend, or stranger poses probing questions about him and our relationship: lived experiences we shared or those he narrated in everyday exchange. As for the latter, those are not my stories to tell. As for the former, reserving the choice to disclose or refrain is a precious freedom.

Of course, it all has to do with time and how time changes and how times change. Over time, the larger picture is lost from view—fragments remain. Focus migrates. When I was no longer remembering out loud, I forgot. Sometimes I am surprised to hear words coming out of my mouth, "We were walking down the street in Miami and he ..." When I say his name in casual conversation, a palpable many-years-ago feeling occurs, marking the moment with internal melancholy and discomfort. I wonder how an incidental moment from decades ago can feel alive and dead, distant and close at the same time. Does the ability to conjure the transient increase with time and detachment?

Remember that inspired book *I Remember* by Joe Brainard? An efficient and poetic archiving of the unarchivable—a potentially endless nonchronological list delimited by its book form. When I was growing up, I loved making lists: of chores, of clothing I was saving up for—navy blue tights, a maroon turtleneck sweater—and favorite people. Years later, I made lists of old-fashioned names and free-associated recollections. Brainard made a second volume *I Remember More*, and then another; *More I Remember More*, as well as subsequent editions.

More and more, I sense a spatial allocation in my mind for the shadowy afterlife of lived experience—limited capacity for the accumulation of fact and fiction. Mental space becomes an archeological site, where remembrances are unearthed, where memories get displaced. But this sounds too orderly. A wild game of tag unfolds across memory's constellation—foregrounds and backgrounds trade places. Events blend and recede, and then, suddenly, the irretrievable is present. Memory seems boundless, but it's not. I have no way of knowing all that has faded and disappeared. Isn't it ultimately in my interest to forget?

Intimate traces. Everybody. Nearby. Glowing in the light. Melting in the mouth. Reflecting. Elapsing. Puzzled. Piled. Parting the curtain. Coupled. Soaring in the sky. Publicized. Imprinted. In the wings. Tucked away. Remembered. Rising from the bed. Forecast. Vanished. Glistening in the sea. Replenished.

— Julie Ault

participants as their "social life";[5] transformations of professional roles or social position, of function and status are among the essential experiences of those involved. The changes of direction are components of the transpositional zigzag movements that relate and entangle the different people and things, disciplines and media, times and spaces.[6] All those participating in the curatorial situation carry out these processes of transposition, of specific positioning as a "result from movement,"[7] and change and transform themselves in them. They are the precondition for the constitution of the relations within the curatorial constellation and guarantee its dynamics.

    Against this backdrop, the curatorial is composed as a dynamic constellation of relations that it shapes and through which it is shaped. It is the site of and impulse for the formation of different modes of relations among the participants. Hito Steyerl insists on the political potential of such other relations in her discussion of Walter Benjamin's concept of language theory. She takes up his "language of practice," which mediates between the languages of things and those of people, in order to emphasize the form in which this mediation takes place. In doing so, she makes the distinction between a form that "creates ruling subjects and subordinate objects" and one that engages with "the energies of the material world."[8]

reassembling

Megan Hoetger
and Carlos Kong

Reassembling East German Nightlife: Scores for Curating from Elusive Archives

On a quiet gray night in the late 1980s, a young man wanders drunkenly down an empty street in East Berlin before discreetly entering a bar whose sign reveals its name: "Schoppenstube." The world inside "die Schoppe" could not be more different than its urban surroundings in Prenzlauer Berg: music blares, colors abound, and the bar is packed with queer men socializing and dancing, many costumed in drag.

This scene comes from the film *Coming Out* (1989), one of the last productions of the Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft (DEFA)—the state-run film studio of East Germany (the GDR)—and was its only film to thematize queer life in the former socialist state. Filmed onsite in the Schoppenstube, the center of gay nightlife in the GDR and once Berlin's oldest gay bar before its closure in 2013, it assembles an archival glimpse into a former space and register of nightlife in the GDR. The film premiered at Kino International in East Berlin on November 9, 1989, yet more important events transformed the city that evening. Just north of the Schoppenstube at the Bornholmerstraße border crossing, thousands of East German citizens assembled and eventually breached the border, precipitating the fall of the Berlin Wall. The elusive traces of GDR nightlife remain present today in spite of their physical destruction amid the urban transformation of post-socialist Berlin, as well as their absence in official archives of the GDR and institutionalized narratives of German Reunification. The ghostly specters of "die Schoppe" survive at its former site on Schönhauser Allee 44, where the absent bar is now an unexceptional *späti*; above the entryway, a small mural of a sidewalk crowd hints at the collectivity that once gathered there.

How might we reassembled the absent traces of GDR nightlife? How might we re-assemble a notion, or notions, of public space that they imagined and enacted? What curatorial processes of "assembling publics"—or assembling publics once again—can stage meaningful encounters with the elusive archives of East German nightlife's subcultural sociality and political imaginaries? Those that remain at once invisible yet affectively palpable at nearly every street corner? Such questions lie at the heart of *Disco Comradeship*, our collaborative curatorial research project which takes the forgotten "Disco Films" [Discofilme] produced by DEFA as a point of departure for curating and making public—sometimes for the first time and sometimes once again—the elusive archival remnants of film, nightlife, and urban space under and after state socialism.

To curate the elusive—and even evasive—(after)lives of GDR nightlife, we turn to a methodology of "reassembling," which conveys a doubled and belated action of assembling, of bringing into relation the mostly overdetermined macro-policies of the GDR and the overlooked micro-practices of media cultures' aesthetic, social, political assemblies. We would propose that assembling GDR nightlife was always already an act of reassembling. To assert this suggests something of the performative temporal loops of pre-figuration that might be understood when it comes to publicness and gathering. While DEFA's disco films juxtaposed, remixed, and montaged various assemblies of nightlife, music, and urban space, they simultaneously evoke the political specters of bodily assembly, of the liminal role of nightlife as a space of social and political gathering. As a mode of curating from the elusive archives of GDR nightlife, we offer "scores," which chart the moments in which East German nightlife and notions of publicness therein are reassembled across space and time, from the disco films themselves, to their early screenings and engagements with urban space, to how such traces might still live in the city's streets today and become public once again in post-socialist screening spaces. Across the scores, different voices are accessed as we shuttle between past presents and present pasts, the historical and the contemporary, the descriptive, and the speculative.

SCORES

Reassembling #1: DEFA Disco Films

DEFA's disco films were created through processes of reassembling landscape and cityscape, human and cybernetic form, and real and virtual space into visions of modern socialist life. They montaged various forms of media, constructing a visual grammar that would circulate through spaces of nightlife and teach young people how to understand themselves within emergent socialist pop culture. Produced by DEFA from the mid-1970s onwards, the disco films archived an aesthetic turn that accompanied the increased liberalization, optimism, and international collaboration in the cultural sphere that was marked by the power transfer from Walter Ulbricht to Erich Honecker. Indeed, the first disco film was released in 1976, the year of the dissident musician Wolf Biermann's forced expatriation from East Germany, which intensified alternative cultural practices and activism in the GDR's final decade. Numerous rock bands emerged in the GDR's 1970s cultural thaw, especially as Western music became increasingly sought after.

In this sense, the disco films were a state-approved vision of the GDR's music scene, as well as of ways of "living alternatively." Produced on 35mm film, their short music video-like structure is characterized by sharp juxtapositions of space and time, bringing together live musical performances, narrative footage, animation, photographs, interviews, and voice-overs to form a local and hybrid genre that preceded the rise of music video culture (the first music video was released on MTV in 1981). In the disco film of Karat's hit song "Albatross" from *Discofilm 31* (1979), for instance, footage of the band performing in the City Theater in Hildburghausen, Thuringia, is intercut with shots of birds flying over the expansive horizon of the Caspian Sea. The film's voice-over declares Karat as the "best beat-formation in the GDR" [*beste Beatformation der DDR*]. Elsewhere, in the film of Pudhys' songs "Steine–Kinder–Sonntagsfahrer–Lebenszeit" from *Discofilm 16* (1976), black-and-white still photographs of the popular band are intercut with blurry, handheld sequences of Alexanderplatz, the

center of East Berlin. These jump cuts, intercuts and other techniques produced a punctuated vision of the city and its nightlife space; and, at the same, they archive the city and nightlife culture an opaque vision that eludes a single take.

Reassembling #2:
Public Screenings in the GDR

On the wall of their work bench at the state-owned Berlin machine tool factory in Marzahn, a worker has collaged a spread of tickets from cultural events, concerts, and balls, especially those held at the former Palast der Republik the Schauspielhaus and the Staatsoper. Here, the worker has reassembled their cultural milieu. Though positioned in the Museum in der Kulturbrauerei today as evidentiary prop of the pervasiveness of work life in the GDR, this workbench is also an impromptu archive of nightlife in the GDR, charting the coordinates of an ephemeral multi-sensory world that eludes direct visualization and exceeds traditional modes of archiving. The tickets do not show us how this worker experienced the concert or the ball but, instead, key into the historical opacity at play in the affective and often deeply personal orientations to public gathering. What remains today of East German nightlife are not images of its existence but rather such traces of its opacity, in the quotidian evidence of something like event tickets.

If the worker has mapped one register of nightlife, where might traces of opacity for others lie? As their title implies, disco films were produced by DEFA to be screened in nightlife spaces like the discotheque, as well as in cinemas as pre-screening entertainment or hybrid multimedia events such as the "Film-Beat-Treff vor Mitternach" held at Kosmos cinema on Karl-Marx-Allee

Filmtheater **KOSMOS**

KOSMOS 73

Film — Beat — Treff vor Mitternacht
mit

DEAN REED

PETER ALBERT

INGRID RAACK

BERLIN-SEXTETT

Sonnabend, 29. April 1978, 20.15 Uhr

Was wird noch geboten?

● Kurz vor Mitternacht: Farbfilm-Premiere
„Wenn die Conga singt!"

● Sonderverkauf von Schallplatten
und Büchern

Eintrittskarten an der Kasse des
Filmtheaters KOSMOS

— BEZIRKSFILMDIREKTION BERLIN —

in East Berlin, the second largest cinema in the GDR. DEFA's filmic promotion of local musicians in nightlife spaces was intended to draw a younger generation back into socialist culture and away from negatively coded influences of Western popular culture. Nonetheless, it relied on the aesthetic influences of Western and transnational disco, psychedelia, rock, and pop, evincing a complex appropriation and adaptation of subcultural activities to fit East German life contexts. This tension of identification that emerges in public screenings of disco films is one of places where their elusiveness resides. In the gap between their socialist intention and the effect, a doubled and belated "re-" joins the assembling: the DEFA apparatus brought bodies, film and music together at places like Kosmos, making public the future intermixing of ideologies and political imaginaries.

Reassembling #3:
Film to Urban Landscape
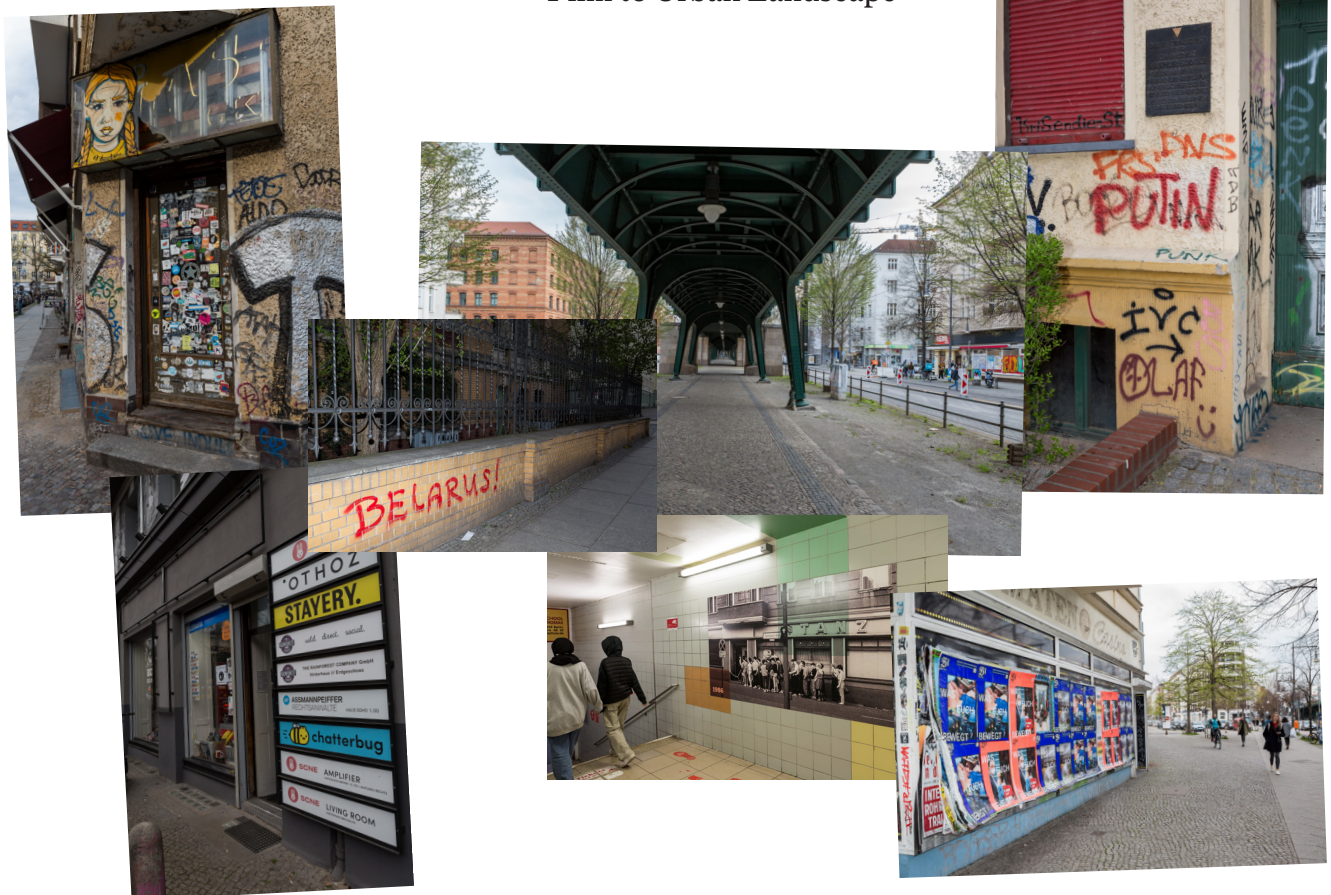
Bourdieu says that space is the book the body reads by traversing.[1]

We could add that space is a film the body reassembled in narrative unfolded by navigating.

Histories of walking methodologies abound in the histories of the humanities and social sciences with the urban landscapes of industrializing Germany, and particularly Berlin, serving as key touchstones. Public space and personal memory – but also personal space and public memory – weave together in a dense fabric of textures that remap the city over and over again.

Walk under the U-Bahn tracks.

Count the layers of wheat-pasted posters, like the rings of a tree.

There are other worlds under there to be read. The city is an archive, and the publicness of it language is one that inhabitants know even if it goes unspoken out of sheer habit.

I came to realize that the sidewalk space of the city IS the city to most people.

Under the U-Bahn tracks – or maybe over them – pause at a stop you know well. "The subway station, as any city-dweller knows, is a critical site in urban space—a kind of artery in the lifeline of the city—that allows inhabitants to move around. Like an artery, its constant operation below the surface makes everything possible."[++] What is pulsing out from here? See what histories the staircases and escalators visualize. See what eludes that: see what is on the corners around you; see what is on the pavement below you.

Legitimacy and the pavement.

Register the shops, the informal business transactions, the orientation of the available seating, the people bustling past, the people not bustling past. What day is it? What season is it, climatologically or politically?

Processes of urbanization are challenging the rules about the sidewalk and raising the possible legitimacy of other livelihoods and lifestyles that it could serve.

What does the smear or the spill or the tag tell you about inhabitants' affective relations to this space, this doorway, this threshold of publicness? What is allowed to flow and what is getting blocked?

This divergence between how places are designed and how they are used can be powerfully and poignantly revealed with fieldwork.

Reassembling #4: Public Rescreenings in Post-Socialist Space

Between 1960 and 1962, as the Berlin Wall was erected in Berlin, Kosmos cinema was built on Karl-Marx-Allee in East Berlin. Opening to the public on October 5, 1962, it was, along with Kino International, the most modern film theatre in the GDR, serving as an important prestige project of the socialist state. From the eponymous Kosmonaut sculpture that stood atop the massive cinema to the theater's interior lights, which were built to appear as the jets of a rocketship, the building stood as a prefigurative monument to the socialist future.

Under these ideological cues, Kosmos, Kino International and other cultural venues like Palast der Republik or Café Moskau, functioned as sites of aesthetic and political experimentation in both their visual appearances and their choreographies of use. From the 1970s onward, DEFA's disco films were screened at Kosmos and other multimedia events that attempted to assemble bodies together into state-approved nightlife milieus. These attempts remained just that, yet elusive traces of alternate modes of collectivity accumulated, reassembling those spaces into something else. But amid today's destruction of socialist cultural heritage in neoliberal urban space, Kosmos is a pricey event venue rental where clients become symbolic kosmonauts with whom the "event universe grows a little bigger and a little brighter." So, what is reassembled when screenings and other multimedia events take place again in what are now "post-socialist" spaces?

Reassembling today might mean to gather once again and screen something like the disco films in sites where elusive specters of a socialist future continue (however anachronistically) to be active and activated—familiar spaces like Kino International or Kosmos, but also more recent ones like Sinema Transtopia within the Haus der Statistik just down the street, the former hub of GDR bureaucracy and its dreams of calculability. Spaces, in other words, that key into the constant reassembling of publicness and nightlife in the urban post-socialist spaces of Berlin, and that archive the histories and possibilities of alternate futures.

The form decides whether things are functionalized for the purpose of representation or whether in the spirit of rendering them present, they "can become creative in the sense of a transformation of the relations, which define it."[9] Steyerl also complements this juxtaposition of functionalizing fixation versus creative productivity in the process of translation with the warning not to be seduced and overwhelmed by the forces of things in the interest of an unreflective fetishization. Her concern is with "presencing precarious, risky, at once bold and preposterous articulations of objects and their relations, which still could become models for future types of connection."[10]

This politically transformative potential of other, different relations in turn finds resonance in the concept of "modes of relating" developed by Bini Adamczak with regards to revolutionary movements. For Adamczak, social transformations involve the shifting of relations, the transformation of those connections that make up the "ensemble of human relationships" but also include nonhuman participants.[11] From this relational theoretical perspective, she describes institutions as "solidified or reified, codified, materialized, and ritualized modes of relating."[12] Making these ways of relating available again—a prerequisite for their change—can, according to Adamczak, only be thought of in "plural collective" participation in new connections.[13]

mobilizing

"Universal" type Western museums convey a wisdom based on collectibles frozen in space and time – and ruthlessly sorted into "departments" and "chronologies." Drained of their dynamism and ambiguity, objects are classified according to Eurocentric criteria: art or craft, nature or culture, modernity or antiquity, Western or non-Western. Objects that fall outside of such a scheme can find themselves relegated to the museum's storage.

With the demise of Western hegemony and the collapse of its museological narratives, many museum lovers have started to look beyond the bad old story of Enlightenment. After all, modernity was never only a Western endeavor; it was always a global, transcultural project (even if many of its key players did not participate voluntarily).

The time has come to release museum collections from their ideological fixations. Just as "I is another," so are many museum objects. They can easily be "Chinese" and "antique" and "modern," at least if we study them attentively and follow up on their singular histories of exchange, conquest, translation, and recombination.

Comparison of Meissen and English porcelain shows a turning point in the relationship between China and the West. While Meissen adored the Middle Kingdom, Wedgwood discarded all Oriental references. The British merchant class drew inspiration from Greek antiquity instead, reflecting its imperial ambitions.

Shell painted with a palmette border, Wedgwood, Staffordshire, England, 18th c.

For centuries, Europeans pondered the mystery of a fascinating material—that is until the beginning of the eighteenth century, when an alchemist at the Saxon court succeeded in fabricating it: European porcelain, finally!

Silk and tea were also in high demand in Europe. The latter inspired a British-led act of biopiracy when botanist Robert Fortune, disguised as a Chinese man, gathered tea plants and shipped them to India in sealed glass containers. He would go on to grow them on the slopes of the Himalayas (Darjeeling).

This craving for Chinese products led to enormous trade deficits on the part of the West. It was compounded by the fact that the Chinese showed little interest in European goods—with the exception of automated machines and watches.

History has shown that gigantic trade deficits are settled with war. Such was the case with the so-called Opium Wars in the middle of the nineteenth century.

China has been ruled by a single party since 1949—a political system formed after the collapse of dynastic rule at the beginning of the twentieth century, a brief republican phase, Japanese occupation and a civil war. Its economic reforms, or "Four Modernizations" launched in the late 1970s, have moved the "Middle Kingdom" more and more toward the center of world affairs.
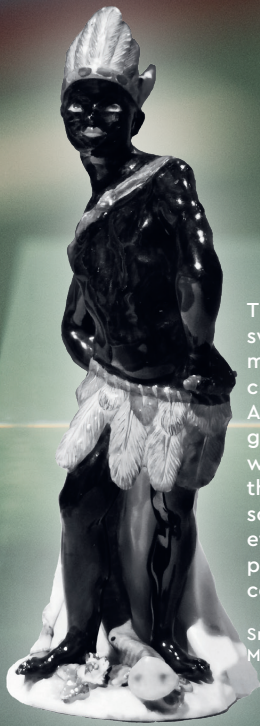
The elephant hunter elegantly swings his hips in a forward movement that echoes the classical S-curve pose of Aphrodite, the ancient Greek goddess of love. African dance was unknown in Meissen at that time. And it would be some time before Western ethnologists brought their probing gaze to the African continent.

Small figurine with elephant skin, Meissen, Germany 18th c.

English looted the Acropolis of Athens in the early nineteenth century. The so-called "Elgin Marbles" (marble frieze sculptures adorning the Parthenon) where shipped to the British Museum in London, where they shaped England's prevailing aesthetic taste. Half a century later, during the Second Opium War, Lord Elgin's son would order the storming and plundering of the imperial Summer Palace in Beijing.

Shard with palmette, Hellenistic, Apulian-red figure, 2nd half 4th c. BCE

In the summer of 1900, during a period when the greater part of China was dominated by Western imperialism, the German Kaiser dispatched a flotilla of battleships to suppress a Chinese uprising (the "Boxer Rebellion") against Western occupiers. At the send-off for this expedition in the port of Bremerhaven, Kaiser Wilhelm II gave his notorious "Hun Speech" in which he called upon his troops to take no prisoners. On board the battleship was an "Oberbottelier" (chief steward petty officer, also responsible for the ship's finer beverages). These pewter beakers were presented to him as souvenirs of that expedition (pewter is prone to heavy tarnish, but with effort and imagination you can make out the likeness of Kaiser Wilhelm and the outline of the battleship). The opium pipe is one our "Oberbottelier" bought himself.

Pewter beaker, Germany, early 20th c.

Opium pillow, China, late 19th c.

The Chinese emperor's palace encompassed an abundance of smaller structures, hundreds in number and mostly single-story, spread generously throughout a picturesque terrain of lakes, rivers and mountains. Some of the buildings were designed in the spirit of the Baroque—by an Italian Jesuit who enjoyed a special position at the Qianlong Emperor's court and went by a Chinese name: Lang Shining. The sheer scale of the "Garden of Gardens" meant that the destruction and looting of the site by British and French troops, some 4,000 strong, took a full three days and nights. That was in 1860, during the Second Opium War, which cleared the way for further colonialist interference in China. The treasures looted at that time are now scattered in forty-seven different museums across the world.

Ernst Ohlmer: Imperial summer palace in China (Beijing), destructed 1860, China, 1873
© bpk-Bildagentur

August the Strong, immortalized here in Böttger stoneware, claimed to suffer from the "maladie de porcelaine".

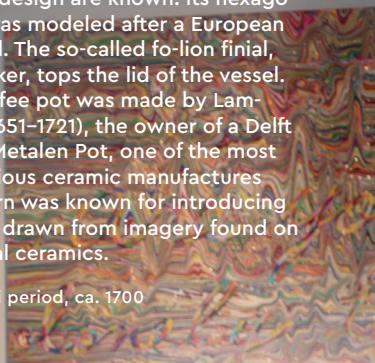Johann Joachim Kretzschmar, August the Strong, Meissen; Germany, ca. 1715

Possibly commissioned by the V.O.C. (Dutch East India Company), this intricate vessel seems to have been a part of a small special order, as only four other examples with this design are known. Its hexagonal form suggests it was modeled after a European silver or pewter vessel. The so-called fo-lion finial, a typical Chinese marker, tops the lid of the vessel. The model for this coffee pot was made by Lambertus van Eenhorn (1651–1721), the owner of a Delft factory known as De Metalen Pot, one of the most productive and ambitious ceramic manufactures of its time. Van Eenhorn was known for introducing new forms and motifs drawn from imagery found on East Asian and Oriental ceramics.

Coffee pot, China, Kangxi period, ca. 1700

Xu Bing's 'Book from the Sky' contains around 4000 fictious characters that mimic the approximately 4000 characters currently in use in China. Xu used a traditional process for his book edition: a movable-type letterpress developed in China around the year 1000. In the version shown in "Mobile Worlds", Xu has overprinted several newspapers from the 1980s with his invented characters.

Xu Bing, Book from the Sky: the Repetition of Words (temporary translation), Ink on paper, 1987–1991

In order to reduce their enormous trade deficit, the English would import opium into China on a massive scale. Queen Victoria ignored an appeal by the Chinese Emperor for an export ban on the drug. Global free trade, which the Meissen porcelain painters had rendered so idyllically, would henceforth be imposed through military force.

Opium pipe with ivory mouthpiece, China, late 19th c.

Josiah Wedgwood was an active member of the newly-founded Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. In 1787, as part of an effort to strengthen the anti-slavery movement, he had his most talented modeler, William Hackwood, design a medallion showing a kneeling black man in chains on a white background. The inscription "Am I Not a Man and a Brother" can be read on the cameo's edge. Wedgwood had this medallion produced and distributed at his own expense. High society ladies wore it as brooch, hatpin or pendant, whereas the gentlemen used it to decorate their snuffboxes.

Commemorative bowl with abolitionist motifs , Waterford Wedgwood Staffordshire, England, 2007

A Persian ceramic bowl helps illustrate the tremendous value Chinese porcelain had at that time. It feigns blue-and-white porcelain, and its "pretending-to-be" nature is underscored by fake Chinese characters at its center.

Plate with sheet and pseudo-Chinese script in Chinese Kraak style, Iran, Safavid dynasty, 17th c.

An opium pipe as currently displayed at the National Museum of China in Beijing. Its description reveals China's deep-seated resentment towards Western imperialism.

Caption at the Chinese National Museum in Beijing, 2019

鸦片烟枪

晚清

　　从十八世纪中叶开始，英国向中国输入鸦片，毒害中国人民。这
当时吸食鸦片的用具。

Opium Pipe

Late Qing Dynasty (1840–1911)

　　In the middle of the 18th century, the British began exporting opium into Ch poisoning the minds of the Chinese people. This pipe was used to smoke opium

This small plate depicts the meeting between a Dutch trader and his Chinese counterpart. Sailing ships are anchored in the bay behind the rock that will one day be known as Hong Kong.

Lower shell with Chinese merchant shipping scene, Meissen, Germany, around 1725

Shard with chinoiserie, Meissen, Germany, 18th c.

Bottle with pseudo-Arabic ribbon, Chinese export commodities in Kraak style for the Islamic market, China, Ming Dynasty, late 16th c.

The Chinese were not particularly interested in European merchandise—with the exception of watches and automata. This music box was manufactured in the Swiss-French Jura.

Rolling Music Box with additional percussion idiophones, Sainte-Croix, Switzerland, 1895

Porcelain production in the city of Jingdezhen showed proto-industrial aspects from early on. Several hundred thousand pieces were fired there for the global market—every day. At the behest of Jesuits, painters meticulously documented individual steps in the production process. Wedgwood was also inspired by these early examples of industrial espionage.

Porcelain production gouache, China, 1820s

这是

hina,
n.

Sometimes we feel we straddle two cultures;
at other times, that we fall between two stools.
— Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands:
Essays and Criticism* 1981–91

Without the pathos of distance... that other, more
mysterious pathos could not have developed...
that longing for an ever-increasing widening of distance within
the soul itself, the formation of ever higher, rarer, more
remote, tenser, more comprehensive states...
— Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude
to a Philosophy of the Future*, 1885

displacing

Pathos of Distance

Sarah Pierce

Notes on *Pathos of Distance*

Nietzsche's philosophy of self-formation involves a conviction that one's place in the world rests on unstable foundations. Places change and these changes act on our bodies, our needs and desires, our pleasures, and discontents. Who we are passes between generations and across distances. Who we are involves pathos, our pathos, where the self is distant to others, and yet longs for connection. A real and imagined diaspora subject arises out of similar (trans) formations. Diaspora refers to movements of large populations of people, away from an original homeland. On a fundamental level diaspora marks the shift from one place to another. It is also a scattering; a zone of displacements, dispersals, and imagined returns. The diasporic identity includes "a widening distance," which contains, always, a secondary, affective dimension of losses and intimacies that summon a remote place.

Pathos of Distance begins by looking at images of the diaspora subject. Following on the work of theorists deeply involved in the project of postcolonialism, looking is itself an allegory for conditions that involve fluid and unfixed subjects not easily captured or categorized, that in turn challenges what it means to be seen. For Stuart Hall, the diasporic subject corresponds to a hybrid identity that works in two directions, on the one hand defined by a common, originating culture that prevails despite mass dispersals around the globe, and on the other, a complex and dislocated sense of self. The distances that emerge through experiences of migration constantly produce and reproduce identities that are neither pure nor essential, but rather constitutive of transformation and difference.

Hybridities. Displacements. New arrangements. Items bought and sold to furnish houses, apartments and bedsits, where occupancy and ownership shift according to one's changed status in the world. They represent a national collection of sorts, a projection of collective preferences and a reminder of the role material "things" play in processes of relocation. The dismantling of clear distinctions between what is and is not worthy of representing as "national treasure," asserts the irreducible present – or presence – where the regular, everyday items fundamentally reorders a shared existence.

Each artwork is a pause – a moment of gathering that features a core set of parameters selected from a vast assortment of digital material, purposefully drawn from collections originating *outside*. They appear as copies to an original that exists (or belongs) elsewhere. Their presence is completely reliant upon technologies that make images reproducible.

Diaspora links to nation, but is not a call to nation. It is an experience of leaving combined with the experience of having arrived. For this reason, the diasporic subject is never identical to the subject who leaves; they are never in the same place.

Having lived most of my life outside the country where I was born, when I am "home" I am in two places, and never at the same time. This is not a unique condition, and it is not exactly shared with diasporic subjects. What we who have left do share, perhaps, are the imaginaries of a "homeland" that does not exist.

Pathos of Distance is one such paradox.

— Sarah Pierce, Dublin 2015/2021

Early in the research, George Reynolds appeared in a portrait by the American painter Thomas Eakins. Reynolds was Eakins's student and his model, and his depiction, not usually framed within the context of diaspora, indicates a shift: the Irish migrant is now part of an American story. Other figures too, captured in portraits, became military leaders, politicians, accomplished athletes or doctors. Through them, we begin to understand how personal narratives become entwined with historical narratives; how cultural identities form through material shifts in location more so than through identification with a "homeland."

Stories are missing.

Where are the women
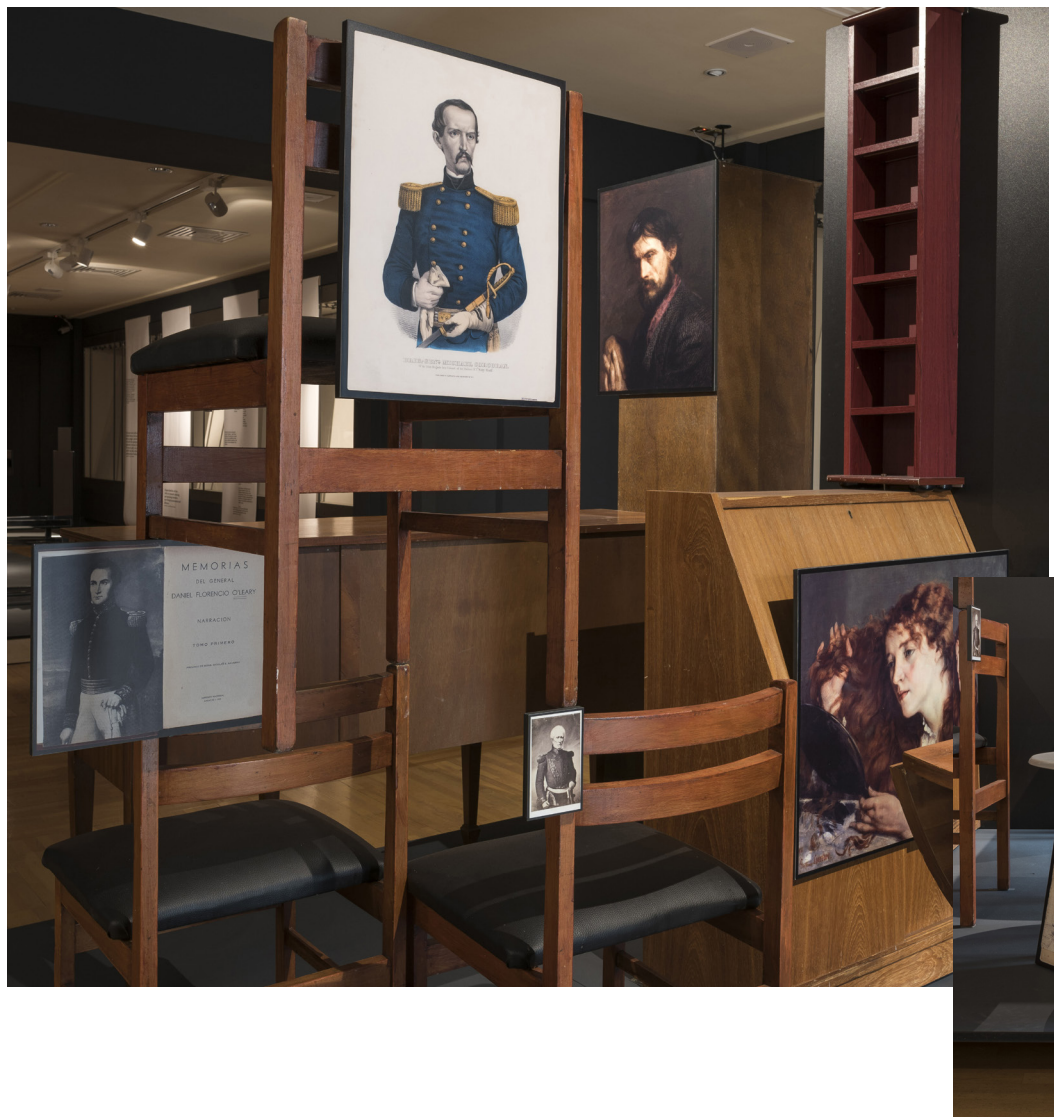
Gustave Courbet's *Jo, The Beautiful Irish Girl*, surfaces, a counterpoint to the portrait of Reynolds. But, her image is objectified. She is a muse. However, research into her biography leads to other works by artists living in Britain and France at the turn of the century.

Now, her vocation as a model, as an artist, and as person making a life starts to become known, and a new subject emerges that is not available in the Courbet. A diasporic subject.

Digging deeper.

Edward de Lacy Evans and James Miranda Barry, represented here in four separate images, both emigrated as women and began lives as men.

Their portraits attest to a radical re-identification which is the result of a material shift from one place to another, and the generosity of displacement to processes of self-formation.

While a national geographic entity produces and polices identity, the notion of a "zone" is one suspended between various identities – a site of evacuation in which the "law" of each identity does not apply, having been supplanted by a set of contingent "rules." — Irit Rogoff, *Terra Infirma*

displacing

Salman Rushdie, the British-Indian novelist, observes a story of transformation, often untold or overlooked in one of the West's most cherished tales: *The Wizard of Oz*.

He writes:

Anybody who has swallowed the scriptwriters' notion that this is a film about the superiority of "home" over "away"... would do well to listen to the yearning in Judy Garland's voice as her face tilts up toward the skies. What she expresses here, what she embodies with the purity of an archetype, is the human dream of leaving, a dream at least as powerful as its countervailing dream of roots. At the heart of *The Wizard of Oz* is the tension between these two dreams; but as the music swells and that big, clean voice flies into the anguished longings of the song, can anyone doubt which message is the stronger? In its most potent emotional moment, this is unarguably a film about the joys of going away, of leaving the grayness and entering the color, of making a new life in the "place where there isn't any trouble"... It is a celebration of Escape, a grand paean to the uprooted self, a hymn – the hymn – to Elsewhere. – Salman Rushdie, *Out of Kansas*

revoicing

Eran Schaerf

A voice is never heard, unless in a space. What we hear when we hear is the translation of a voice, its reverberation in the space echoing it. The voice denies its autonomy. Once it leaves the body, it enters a spatial interdependence. From then on, the voice will migrate in the search for further spaces that will let it become heard. Spaces are not neutral; they are socially coded and legally stipulated. In communal spaces the voice receives its second role, it becomes a position. Communal spaces act not only as echo chambers but also as silencing agencies. Revoicing is a practice of making voices that have reverberated heard again. The space of revoicing is not all of a piece. It interlaces the spaces inherent to the voices it revoices, be them heard or silenced. The practice of interlacing spaces is an architectural one. Silenced voices transport into the interlaced space the spatial and social conditions that made them heard and silenced. The conditions of silencing are to the silenced voice what the space is to the heard voice. If the space is what we see when we hear, it is invisibility that we see when a silenced voice is revoiced. Revoicing a silenced voice is like writing that invisibility into the visible conditions of silencing. Invisibility is not disappearance. Once the voice has become a position, it has no longer control over its multiplication. It assumes different appearances, acoustic and visual alike. Revoicing is acknowledging that a voice and its reverberations constitute an ever-growing archive. This archive is characterized by disorder. Not disorder as the state in which an order gets into; disorder as the peril that the one order might represent to another. Performing an archive consists of testing the possible links it entails. Voices don't disappear, they challenge the order of visibility—the promise that what becomes visible is on its way to being seen. Revoicing the archive means rehearsing voices that seemingly belong to a certain order in a different one. An absent image can reenact the conditions that silenced a voice when a space for it is kept reserved.

Snapshot

A freestanding barrier is placed in front of an exhibition space's brightly lit longitudinal wall, the kind of barrier that usually separates the public from works of art. Nothing hangs on the wall. Six loudspeakers are mounted on the ceiling along the wall. An information stand next to the first loudspeaker informs the audience when a guided tour of the exhibition Snapshot *will take place; it also functions as a meeting point. The tour always starts a few minutes late. The guide's recorded voice moves during the performance until it reaches the sixth loudspeaker. Another actor, who has blended in with the audience, will interact with the sound recording.*

> *Chairs are moved around on a wooden floor. Extension cords are rolled up. Electric curtains are drawn. There's a microphone test. Then the guide speaks, facing away from the microphone:*
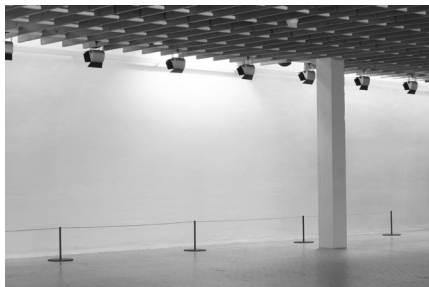
Great that this house has a public announcement system.

> *Guide continues, speaking into the microphone:*

Welcome... You probably can't see me... but if you can hear me, that's good enough... Sorry I'm late... when I walked into the exhibition space earlier, I had to turn back straight away... I get that in white spaces... that look just like the space I've been trying to escape from for nineteen years... when this happens... I can see everything again, whether my eyes are open or closed... the lighting, the plaster figures' flying body parts, the radios flashing, even the non-occurrence of my death... and I fall silent... That is how I ended up here... in this... adjacent room, somewhere in this house... I am sitting between curtains... maybe... on a stage... I see rows of seats through a gap... long, straight rows... all facing the same direction... So I am somewhere behind the wall that you are standing in front of, and it's from here that I will take you on a tour of the exhibition.

The Storyteller is right in front of you... he comes from an essay by Walter Benjamin. With him, a process began to become apparent which has not come to a halt since the First World War... At the end of the war, it was noticeable that men who returned from the battlefield had grown silent... not richer, but poorer in communicable experience. People thought this was language breaking down when faced with the events of war... Then this breaking down was attributed to the Storyteller himself, who—anticipating that no one would want to hear about what he experienced during the war—fell silent.

Young soldiers had already been confronted with the limits of their language during the American Civil War... when they tried to imagine their first experience of battle. To cope, they resorted to a figure of speech, writing in their diaries or in their letters home... "I'm off to see the elephant." From then on, "to have seen the elephant" not only stood for a mundane, exciting, or disconcerting experience away from home, but also for events lived during the war.

When the soldier returns from the war, he brings the elephant home with him—half animal, half image, the elephant now stands for the experience of war... and also for the attempt to put the inconceivable into words... to give it a name... to acknowledge the fact that it is there... At home, the elephant doesn't fit anywhere, but can be found everywhere... in the bedroom, at the office, in the park, in this exhibition... the elephant is here but you can't see it... The elephant is invisible to the community that the soldier returns to... and... the returnee is someone who sees things that other people don't. This separates the returnee from the community that once sent him to war.

If the community would listen to the returnee's story, it would be taking a risk. He went to war representing the community's values... when he returns, his story embodies a new value: a discontinuity... that the community sees as threatening to the continuity of its own story. Here, a little further to the right of the *Storyteller*, you can find out more about how the community deals with this threatening discontinuity....

> *Voice moves to the next speaker on the right*

[...] The modern community provides the one who's returned in silence with a therapist... but this causes the story of wartime experiences to be diverted from the political realm... While the therapist can show me how to cope with the elephant... the elephant is not a private pet I have adopted... I went to see the elephant on behalf of the community... so, it should... as I should... be incorporated into the story of this community. The elephant has a difficult position in this set-up... As a story that threatens to disrupt another story, it doesn't find a place in the communal realm... it is foisted upon the returnee... suppressed into the private sphere... privatized... and language is used to ensure the success of this privatization... the elephant is vested with new functions... it becomes the returnee's "silent enemy"...

his "invisible wound." Here in this space, which apparently can't accommodate the invisible elephant... an activist of the Israeli NGO *Breaking the Silence* now emerges further to the right...

Voice moves further to the right

...you can't quite make him out... his pixelated face promises anonymity, only this way he can tell the elephant story to the community... he speaks of his role as a soldier in the Israeli-occupied territories and... expands the elephant story to include a stage. "If we are good enough to play the role of occupiers," he says, "we are also good enough to say that we got our hands dirty in doing so, which in turn will make you, who have given us this role, dirty. In my dreams, I sometimes see a group of children reenacting a house raid scene... the younger ones face the wall, their hands above their heads... they are kept in check and shoved by two older kids, maybe 6 years old, who are using sticks as guns. This is not a bloody battle out in the fields... the battle has moved inside of us long ago, and there we get to fight it for the rest of our lives. But don't get us wrong, this isn't about turning our psychotherapy into a public performance... We are here to discuss the role that you... or the government, or whoever is directing... has devised for us... We don't want to give an account of the occupation's consequences, but of its practice. And following our own text, not a script... and if we can't do it while we are playing our part, then at least afterwards ... the performance is still going on... the next 19-year-old has already been cast for his role... he should be able to get himself well prepared."

The performance's duration, sorry, that of the occupation, transforms the elephant story. It is not just about past war events, but the present... and it clashes with the official Israeli discourse, whose language conceals the occupation by creating fluid transitions between speaking and keeping silent... So instead of talking about acts of war, the discourse speaks of "operations"... In this way, acts of violence against the civilian population need not be discussed in the context of the international law of war... Another variety of this rhetoric of silence brings us... further to the right... onto another stage [...]

Voice moves further to the right

... grouped under the title of *Snapshot, or How I Stopped Seeing People as People*... These exhibits would have been part of the 2015 *Breaking the Silence* exhibition in Cologne... would have been... if the mayor had not called off the exhibition. This wasn't the organization's only exhibition to be called off at the last minute... Recently, a cancellation prompted the first reading of soldiers' testimonies on the street, immediately in front of the event space where the exhibition... was supposed to happen. As the title already implies... it concerns a photographic practice of occupation... pictures taken by soldiers during their service and which... are readily available online... If you type *Breaking the Silence* into any search engine, the organization's website comes up first on the search results. When browsing, however, we are in private... in an exhibition, we're not. That's why there's so much being done to hush *Breaking the Silence*'s public appearances offline... the story of the elephant could contradict the one that is passed on by the community... Since you can't put it like that in a press conference, you remain silent... it is a babbling kind of silence that occupies space with a given topic so as to avoid talking about another one... dramaturgically speaking, the debate surrounding a *Breaking the Silence* exhibition begins before the exhibition opens, and ends with the exhibition being called off... the question of whether the exhibition should take place or not prevents any discussion on the exhibition's topic—the Israeli occupation—from happening at all. The consensus between politics, civil society, and the press ensures that no one has to say "I" in the process. The press reports that the mayor is saying that the *Central Council of Jews in Germany* has communicated what the Israeli embassy had already... and so on... with so many co-authors being involved, the public would surely become overwhelmed if the press report also stated that the *Jewish Voice for a Just Peace in the Near East*... if they had been asked... might have said something different from the *Central Council of Jews*... but in view of the many anti-Semitic incidents in Germany... who could listen to different positions within the Jewish community without being shattered by the realization that anti-Semitism could be fueled by the Israeli oppression of the Palestinian people as much as it is allegedly fueled by its coverage.

This is an archaic practice... The bearer of the bad news is killed so that their message doesn't have to be listened to. Only the way the performance takes place is modern, carried out in a sophisticated language that even if it doesn't kill anyone, occasionally lets someone die behind closed doors.

Visitor, live:

This is all very interesting, but now I'd like to hear how I stop seeing people as people.

Guide:

I can't tell you that, just translate it:

> *Crossed out sentence fragments are spoken and corrected immediately afterwards, as in a simultaneous translation.*

The instruction we were given at the beginning of our service in Hebron was... ~~to see every suspect~~ to see every person as a suspect... whether a man or a woman or a child, regardless of their age, the time of day, or what they are doing—they are suspects. As a soldier stationed in Hebron, you have two shifts a day... each shift lasts for six hours... you do it for 17 days in a row, then you have four days off until the next 17 days... for four, five months... It's the third month, the fifth day, the second shift, the third hour... you are exhausted... you are standing on top of a roof, that's your guard post, and suddenly... 300 meters away from you... you see an old Palestinian man... he could be your grandfather... he's walking... on another roof... you've been bored for hours and you've been told that everyone is a suspect... so you get your gun and aim at the man... you don't shoot him, of course, he didn't do anything... but he's under suspicion, so you'd better get ready to shoot... After a few more hours of boredom, you start aiming at soldiers, your best friends... you don't shoot them either... nothing happens and the second you tell yourself that nothing is happening, you notice that something is happening... to you... you still don't know exactly what... you are holding the gun in one hand, reaching into your pocket with the other, taking your camera out, putting it behind your sight, and taking a picture of the person in front of it. At some point you realize that you stopped seeing people as people... you see people as targets, objects... Later on, you give that picture to *Breaking the Silence* and realize that some of your friends

came up with the same game... the organization has a folder full of these pictures... two Palestinian girls playing in the line of fire, a Jewish settler walking with shopping bags in someone else's line of fire... in yet someone else's, there's a soldier sitting on his lunch break... When looking at these pictures, you first feel a strange sense of relief... watching people through the sight was not your sick, private game... your friends were playing the same game to fight boredom... You gradually understand how the state of occupation that is perpetuated by you and your friends directs your view of the world... what entertainment ideas are provoked by this situation... I'm talking about the violence we inflict on ourselves... on us as a community that tasks young people with monitoring other people... and on us as we receive and carry out that task from the community. These photos could also illustrate a newspaper article on the conflict in the Middle East. The... ~~Heading~~ The caption would describe the picture in a more or less clever way. But what the caption in the press would not describe is what happens behind the camera... inside the photographer's head...

Voice moves further to the right

Now the elephant story has been finally split up... it takes place half in the soldier's head and half in the image space. For the Friends of Israel in Bern, this is too complex. So they start producing evidence in order to present a simplified account of the story. These five photocopies are the outcome of this simplification. The Bern Friends are now posing as bouncers at the entrance of a Zurich church where a *Breaking the Silence* exhibition is... actually... on view. They hand an envelope with their evidence to each visitor, while murmuring "a different opinion"... To begin with, what their assertion under the pretext of freedom of speech wants to tell you is that the exhibition is concerned with an opinion on the occupation, not with its documentation. When a soldier says that the occupation directs the way he sees the world, the Bern Friends of Israel believe that he is expressing his private view... You better watch out for some Friends... Ulrike Meinhof already understood this in 1967... just a few days after the territories were occupied... If you have some time later, it is worth having a look at her article "Three Friends of Israel" in *Konkret* magazine. But let's stick to the montage by the Friends from Bern.... whose different paper colors may give the impression that this "different opinion" actually represents a wide range of opinions... like here on the first page... where logos and speech bubbles combine to form a conversation... "Your soldiers did something evil"... the logo of *Breaking the Silence* says to the logo of the *Israel Defense Forces*... even though *Breaking the Silence* activists would

never say "your," as they speak on their own behalf, that is, in the first person. Conversation stunts with *CNN*, *The Telegraph* and the NGO *Human Rights Watch* then follow... reaching the conclusion that "*Breaking the Silence* publishes accounts of war crimes, but without providing identifying details of the location and dates of the events and the individuals involved. Without these details, however, the armed forces are unable to carry out an investigation. *Breaking the Silence*'s objective is thus nothing more than providing the media and human rights organizations with a story." ...The reproach against some of the soldiers publishing their statements anonymously is popular among the Friends of Israel. They have an ethical occupation in mind. In it, *Breaking the Silence* could take on the role of an investigative agency working for the military... But *Breaking the Silence*'s objective is not to shed light on the occupation. It is to end it.

If the Friends of Israel had Israeli friends, they would be aware of the shame and guilt that burden many soldiers because of their actions, and how much these prevent them from coming forward even to those close to them. Not to mention the social and political persecution that ensues in Israel from breaking the silence on identifying details [...]

Voice moves further to the right

I started this tour with the Storyteller... there's a film playing to his left... which I would finally like to get into... It is a film from Israeli television, a black-screen film that... was made without a camera... Fifty-four minutes of black screen, broadcast in 1978 by the staff of the state broadcaster out of protest. On that evening, a film adaptation of the novella *Khirbet Khizeh* was scheduled... a novella by Israeli writer S. Yishar... Published in 1949, this novella speaks of a Jewish soldier's inner conflicts over the displacement of Palestinian villagers during the 1947-1949 Palestine War. The author, who witnessed the war working as an intelligence officer, has his storyteller narrate the tale from the perspective of an involved soldier. "True, it all happened a long time ago," he writes barely a year after the start of the war, "but it has haunted me ever since. [...] and although I hadn't even made up my mind where it would end, it seemed

to me that, in any case, instead of staying silent, I should, rather, start telling the story." This literary text in the historical fiction genre became a bestseller and was incorporated into the school curriculum in 1964. Things were different for the film adaptation of the story, which... would have given me a face... and would have lured the elephant out of invisibility and into Israeli living rooms... First the broadcast was delayed by the government, only to be... called off by the Minister of Education and Culture shortly before the start of the broadcast... He had no fundamental objection to war films... Israeli cinemas were showing *The Deer Hunter* at the time... a story of three American patriots captured by the Viet Cong and their subsequent return to civilian life... But... for the minister... the story of Palestinian residents of a fictitious village being expelled... raised doubts about the Zionist narrative. This may also be why the story of this displacement took almost fifty years to appear in German... in '19...'97... It wasn't met with any protests... who should object to the inner conflict of a literary figure? Just don't let it get out of the story and meet the German foreign minister... as *Breaking the Silence* activists did in 2017... Because then... Israel's Prime Minister would call off his meeting with the Foreign Minister... the *Tagesspiegel* would write about the stir caused by the Foreign Minister's scandal during his visit to Israel... the Vice-President of the *German-Israeli Society* would tell the newspaper *Rheinische Post* that she "would have liked the Foreign Minister to be more tactful"... and the President of the *Central Council of Jews in Germany*, in his speech to the Landtag of Hessen, would suggest picturing that "a foreign state guest [in Germany] would meet with the left-wing Antifa movement"... The space keeps getting larger. It doesn't necessarily have anything to do with a place for the elephant story. Thank you for your visit.

The wall lighting is dimmed, the room lighting is turned up.

metabolizing

Symbiont's Archival Metabolism (inter∞note 03)

Doreen Mende

Under the influence of Adira Tal, a non-binary human living on the planet Earth in a relationship with Gray (he/him), who was a Trill-born orphan living aboard a generational starship during the late thirty-second century, *Symbiont's Archival Metabolism (inter∞note 03)* is a speculative writing exercise rehearsed in preparation for *The Missed Seminar. Worldmaking After Internationalism*.* The exercise's extra-academic nature demands a further iteration of *inter∞notes*, which is a spectrum for making non-disciplinary space-time public within and beyond an academic research project: What are possibilities and impossibilities of research practices, contemporary art and curatorial politics confronting the ongoing coloniality of Earth's racial capitalism?

Car(ry)ing knowledge across communities, geographies and generations does not first depend on the existence of a *document* claiming the capacity to exhibit the evidence of truth. Car(ry)ing knowledge — in the sense of carrying as caring — does not request the "virtue of a privileged *topology*," as the late deconstructivist philosopher Jacques Derrida rightly confronted the authority of Eurocentric survival through material inscription as both commencement and confinement. But let us listen closely to the breathing of *carrying* and *caring*, these two English words whose pronunciations sound so similar making one sound to repeat the same word: Their differences may seem clearer in the Latin (*portare* and *curare*). Yet their knowledges cannot

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be lived through any virtue by an *archon* instructing or teaching at an authoritatively designated topology that is the location the archon's empire, the archive, if the archive remains understood only as a topology of power as control.

While *carrying* resonates in sounds of weight, exhaustion perhaps, of burden and charge, often unfolding through lonely individualism, it is the notion of *caring* that introduces the sounds of togetherness: caring requires listening, thinking and imagining beyond oneself. The repositories of knowledge carrying life beyond a human's lifetime must therefore be fluid. Their potency cannot reside exclusively in the exhibitionist act of making public. Their forms of knowledge are mediators between generations, refusing the document's claim of the authority of knowledge. Therefore, the document's "virtue of privileged topology" is confronted by a different car(ri)er of knowledge that desires to reach beyond the imperative of manifesting and spotlighting as if the exhibitionist act and the exhibit are the forum of the court. This different car(ri)er must co-exist both through exhibiting and inhibiting on equal terms as if such car(ri)er, carrying and caring were an intertwined double helix constituting a non-binary condition for displaying or unfolding. This suggests a process of fluid making, constituting one or many publics across geographies and generations.

This car(ri)er is *the symbiont* transmitting knowledge across generations without delivering or presenting (*exhibere*) such knowledge as exhibits. Because there is nothing to prove, but only to live, share, survive, carry and care. Therefore, the symbiont must be many. The symbiont is a lifeform of more than one identity/lifetime carrying the wisdom of hundreds of years across generational trajectories, yet always in need of a host inhabiting, metabolizing and living the experience carried by the symbiont. This carrier that is a symbiont cannot, however, release knowledge without being in relation or communication with a caring host. The only alternative to survival is its habitat, which is a salty, milky underwater cave rarely found today; there were once many of them in today's Uganda, for example, but it is not entirely clear.

The symbiont is a sentient, vermiform entity that only can survive in symbiosis with a host with several identities accommodating transgenerational lifeforms inside one body. The symbiont carries and cares for the vibrations of a poly-memory that is composed of resonances from anticolonial and antifascist movements of people reaching beyond the individual. If the symbiont were not attached to the inside of a host, which specifically was the case for the symbiont car(ry)ing memory of a Black feminist internationalism crossing the Global East of East Germany between 1965 and 2034, it would return to the subterranean network of caves filled with milky liquid in which symbionts without a host can survive and communicate with each other.

In 2058, one year after the confederacy of Ancient Europe elected its first female President of Color, the symbiont might have been able to finally join a scyborg, which was to become the symbiont's potent host because both the scyborg and the symbiont shared the need of mutual connectivity: neither could exist on their own. The avatar *la paperson* had proposed as early as 2017:

"To speak of scyborgs as autonomous, unplugged individuals is meaningless. It only makes sense to discuss the scyborg as plugged in to technological grids. The scyborg is inherently a plurality and only occasionally becomes singular when a condensation of machines produces intentionality—hopefully a decolonial intentionality, such as a third world university.

[...] the scyborg may be personal in scale but is wired into telescoping scales of the assemblage."

The year is specific. Not only because of a great Black Feminist awakening across one part of the Earth, but the year also marked the centennial of Eslanda "Essie" Cardozo Goode Robeson from Harlem in uptown New York to East Berlin, which was followed by another journey she made to deliver the antifascist speech on September 13, 1959 to a crowd of thousands. One of the subterranean caves in Uganda is Kabarole, which not coincidentally bears the name of Kabarole where Eslanda "Essie" Goode Robeson stayed with her eight-year-old son Paul Jr. for several weeks. We know about this because the symbiont once lived with a host that possessed a specific capacity for images. Through the host, the symbiont was able to release a series of photographs as a techno-transgenerationality to refresh their networked memory-infrastructure. This allows us to become aware of a series of photographs realized by Eslanda "Essie"

Robeson with sensitivity for capturing the grandness, elegance of and respect for school days, residential architectures and market scenes, often including women in Kabarole. Some scholars, including the early Leigh Raiford (who initiated the ground-shifting "Black Studies Collaboratory" project in 2020), would write that Eslanda's photographic practice suggested a "diasporic civil contract, photography as a tool that emphasizes mutual recognition between African diasporic subjects." (Raiford, 2017, 144); they constitute a "Pan-African gaze" creating a time-space for listening to South-East conversation.

The photographs remain a document in the ancient sense of evidence. Yet they are particularly important as a portal for connecting with the symbiont's vermiform, which is only an expression, a place and a method of fluidity bridging the past and the future, like the photograph that East German photographer Eva Brüggmann took on July 8, 1963 of Eslanda "Essie" Robeson sitting with her friend Franz Loeser in the front row during the first trial against the Nazi lawyer Hans-Maria Globke *in absentia* in the Supreme Court of the German Democratic Republic. There was a crowd of people in the courtroom, of which only a very few were non-white and a few were women, amidst a sea of white male judges, observers, witnesses and journalists staging a political theater of anti-fascism. And in addition to Eva Brüggmann's camera, the technologies of transmission also included TV cameras, headphones for translations, microphones and loudspeakers. Yet the photographs mark a limit in capturing the capacity for a poly-memory or multi-folded memory saving stories, sounds and undocumentable moments across generations. Certainly, not everything should be captured as a document. The document as such remains static and representational while the symbiont saves and protects as well as digests, connects and metabolizes memory to ensure that one generation knows about the previous generations' struggles, methods,

silences, failures and realizations. The symbiont releives the pressure of each generation because poly-memory becomes transgenerational knowledge. From reports by the sociologist Katharina Warda, we know that from 1990 onwards it had been incredibly difficult for the symbiont car(ry)ing a Black feminist internationalism to find a host. In fact, it became impossible for the symbiont to find a host in safe conditions for three reasons: (a) the rise in structural racism endangering the symbiont; (b) potential hosts suffered from a strong repression of any memory on antifascism and communism in the East-South constellation; (c) the Reunification Treaty marks a further iteration of whitewashing German society.

What had happened in 2058? Why was the symbiont able to join a different kind of host called *scyborg*? That year, by coincidence one of the photographs was found between the lines of a book describing the court scene attended by Eslanda and her friend Franz; it then appeared online as a digitized image on digitizingdiaspora.com by Annette Joseph-Gabriel. It seemed as though the image had been reproduced by symbionts themselves to refresh their memory infrastructures. The photograph exhibited many deviations, deformations and glitches on the surface as if it had been metabolized already. Metabolizing a photograph was still under development but had been released with great potential for transgenerational technology.

* Case study 2 of *Decolonizing Socialism. Entangled Internationalism*, which is a transhistorical investigation into practices from the expanded field of the arts situated in socialist geographies of the global Cold War period in South-Asia, West-Africa, Latin America and East-Europe as alliances between the East and the South that came together in and via the German Democratic Republic. The study aims to reveal the entangled fabric between the macro-politics of state or party logics with the micro-politics of artistic collaborations or art-related practices as an existing condition for techno-political friendships or solidarities. It wishes to contribute to unlearning the Cold War dichotomy of typecasting artists (or architects, writers…) from "the East" or "the South" as either dissidents ("the underground artist") or conformists ("the State artist"). In other words, instead of attempting a historic reconstruction of cases or situations from a state-socialist cold war paradigm, the study situates the historical within uncontinued mutations into contemporary as well as (?) archival undercurrents and also insists on mobilizing the micro-political as vectors that urge to move beyond the national towards an entangled internationalism vibrating in the contemporary. Situated in the expanded field of visual cultures, the cross-cultural and intersectional study uses existing approaches and develops specific decolonial research methods by means of a set of case studies. Decolonizing here addresses both the historical, i.e., investigating power relations within socialist modernity itself acted upon practices of micro-political potency and social imaginaries within the expanded arts; and the contemporary, i.e., considering the research itself as a displacement of problems as well as potentialities from internationalism to globalism, as well as from micro-political practices into a nation-state-funded project. entangledinternationalism.org.

Material: Hanelle M. Culpepper, "Forget Me Not" (2020), episode 4, season 3 of *Star Trek Discovery*; la paperson, *A Third University Is Possible*, 2017; Leigh Raiford, "Excerpt from Migrating the Black Body: The African Diaspora and Visual Culture," in *Journal of Transnational American Studies*, 8(1), 2017; Eslanda Goode Robeson, *African Journey*, 1946; Katharina Warda, "Dunkeldeutschland," in: *Krautreporter*, 1 October 2020; B0708-0014-004 Paul Robeson Archive 613.1 Zentralbild/Brüggmann/Stöhr/Gal/Pr 8.7.1963.

The different practices of artists, curators, and scholars contributing to this volume use the book space in the sense of a spatiotemporal constellation. Exemplarily, they unfold what such other modes of relating can mean for curatorial approaches to archives. Regardless of their respective professional backgrounds and occupational fields, these practices are characterized by features that can be understood as curatorial along the parameters elaborated above. Key features common to their approaches are a process-oriented understanding of archives, an extension of practice to multiple contributors, human as well as non-human, and a situated understanding of practice. The arrangements, which in this sense are to be understood as constellational, each intertwine different contexts with one another. The procedures traverse various arts, media, aggregate states, disciplines, and discourses; they establish relations between different historical times, between forms of temporal processes and interruptions, dissolve status ascriptions just as they make the legitimacy and binding nature of institutional norms, orders, and protocols porous. They perform transpositional movements, with which not only relations are newly established, but these also change in their quality.

To the "archival violence" of which Derrida speaks these approaches respond in that they

repairing

There is a particular concept I have been working on
for more than a decade now: repair. Any exchange about it is
a *mise en abîme*: the endless reflection of two mirrors facing each
other, the fractal reproduction of the same single shape
into an infinite succession of junctions quite like a tree,
a root or a cloud of smoke, always moving toward a deep unknown.
So one of the first singular aspects of repair compared with
many other forces of existence we have no idea about is
that it is embodied in the multiplicity of terminologies we could
use to name it. Behind this single word, so many synonyms emerge:
reappropriation, reconstruction, transformation, increase,
improvement, reenactment, translation, remembering
(or re-membering, using a prosthetic, like in the film *Reflecting
Memory*), ... and metaphorically, reparation, justice, equality,
rebalancing,... so due to these endless ways of naming it, repair is
a force that questions the ambivalence that it contains.

The Object's Interlacing

Kader Attia

repairing
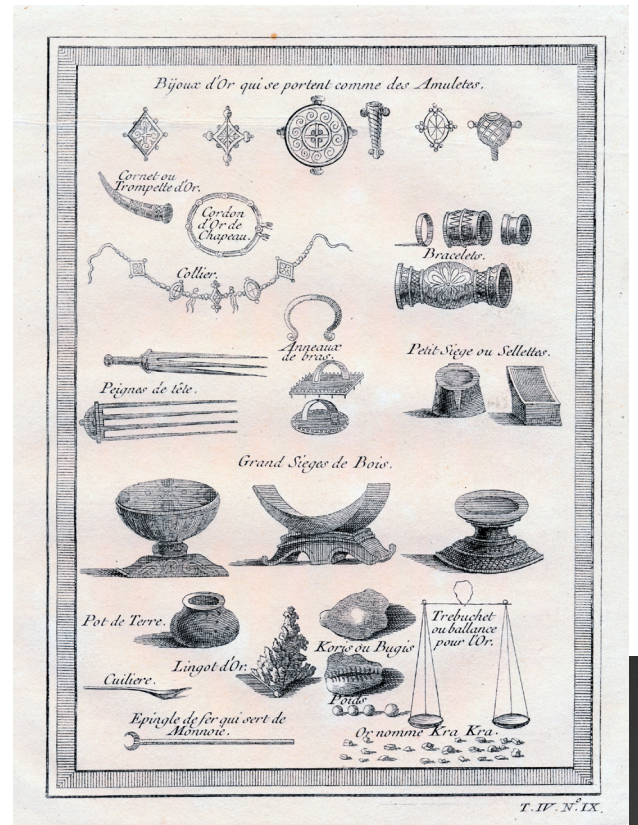
Artist´s Statement (2018)

After many years of research in Africa, from Algiers to Kinshasa, where I have lived, I have developed the concept of "cultural reappropriation" – a logical continuity of the endless mixing process that cultural signs generate together. Like any kind of animal or vegetal organism, all human culture needs to reinvent itself in order to evolve and then to adapt and survive in new environments. But what resurrects this growing reappropriation is an ambivalent phenomenon: *la réparation* / repair.

Ancient societies from Africa to Japan repair while leaving the wound visible: with *kitsugi*, for example, painting the repaired crack in a ceramic object in gold. Many African objects originating from the era of colonialism include traces of the oppressing power, such as European money or fabric, that were used to decorate and to repair as a creative act of cultural reappropriation. The modern West, to the contrary, has always aimed at returning a wounded thing to its original state.

Our contemporary world is haunted by wounds from the past. Traumas resulting from the most horrific moments in history such as wars, famines and genocides left behind lasting material and immaterial scars which, like a phantom limb of an amputated part of the body, are still there. They demand reparation and the permanent proximity to the world of the dead requires us to listen to their calls. By extending to the human psyche the body of my political research on the concept of repair, I fathomed the importance of the immaterial character of wounds. Mass or personal traumas and injustices last far longer than the initial act; they persist like a phantom limb and they demand reparation. Keeping the wounds visible is to accept the real. So I undertook to repair these wounds by pursuing what my research taught me was fundamental—that repair is an oxymoron that also includes the wound: to deny it is to maintain it. By repairing cracks that history has left with metal staples, with yarn or with patches from other, often opposed cultures, I give voice to the victims; I allow trauma to speak to us and thus pave the way for catharsis.

The history of thinking about power, the inheritor of slavery, of colonization and of genocides, tirelessly writes a hegemonic, universalist story. By its certitude, it denies the phantoms of the wounds it generated; wounds that ceaselessly grow despite the length of time since the trauma. Like a phantom limb, these wounds are there and the works are a means to recall the necessity of their reparation even when they are irreparable.

Octavian Esanu

ghosting

Octavian Esanu

One Hundred Years Closer to Communism: Art and Revolution in the Middle East

This exhibition and series of events are prompted by the hundredth anniversary of the October Revolution. When the Bolsheviks took power in Petrograd, it sent waves of hope and fear across the entire planet. This moment of historical rupture not only determined a direction for various subsequent political struggles and movements, but had also a profound impact on cultural and artistic forms, and on the relation between radical artistic and political gesture. Even though the impact of the 1917 revolution on political and artistic life in the Middle East was not as immediate as in other regions of the world, or perceived with as much urgency, its reverberations are nevertheless discernable. The main cause proclaimed by Red October – the abolition of class exploitation and of social and national oppression – not only lay at the heart of the programs of local communist parties but it also revealed itself in the content and form of various artistic genres and media: from theater to literature, and from graphic political posters to the fine arts and cinema.

Left wing emancipatory ideas, from anarchism to socialism, emerged in the Eastern Mediterranean industrial centers of Beirut, Cairo, and Alexandria before Red October. The new development of capitalist relations of production in this region brought many social contradictions and pressures to the surface, seeking political and symbolic resolution in various forms: from strikes and riots to political pamphlets and popular theater. In 1909, for instance, a theatrical play commemorating the activities of the Spanish anarchist and socialist educator Francisco Ferrer (1859-1909) was produced in Beirut. The Ferrer play did not merely stage the execution of the socialist Spaniard, but also provided an occasion to introduce to the general public the ideas of socialism and communism. In the meanwhile, theater was emerging as a new political space where *nahda* literati and audiences engaged (in a Brechtian moment) in discussions of the idea of universal freedom and justice, to the horror of the local colonial elites and Maronite clergy.[1]

One Hundred Years Closer to Communism does not seek to present an all-encompassing overview of the relation between art and communist ideas and ideals in the Middle East, nor does it aim to show the impact of Red October on regional art and politics. In the case of Lebanon, for instance, most of the material researched has revealed that one cannot identify a unique hegemonic voice, or arrange the relevant artistic and political production in accordance with the aesthetic or political codes of other historic contexts (for example

socialist realist, or communist, or fascist aesthetics and politics).[2] Most of the material (from artifacts to texts and audio-visual production) is more a commingling of aesthetic, artistic, political, social-symbolic, sectarian, economic, ideological motives and perceptions that all thread together into complex visual codes and languages. In navigating amidst an intricate political context and history (from the Arab socialist revolutions of the 1950s and 1960s to the Palestinian struggle, and more recently to the Arab Spring) we have worked to keep our focus on the relation between art and revolution—with the term "revolution" here understoodin its Marxian formulation as class struggle and emancipation from capitalist exploitation.

This exhibition is an attempt to construct a situation, or perhaps an intervention in the cultural status quo, rather than to provide a survey of various forms of politicized artistic practices. In producing it we were driven by certain prevailing concerns: how, for instance, to apply a dialectical approach to cultural and political activities (the relationship, for example, between detached artistic practice and engaged political struggle) within the format of an art exhibition; or how to look back at revolutionary exhibition design practices without falling prey to the current general trend of uncritical, glorifying appropriation, restaging, or reenactment (an objectification twice over).

One Hundred Years Closer to Communism is not a celebratory exhibition. There is nothing to celebrate today. The exhibition does not seek to illustrate the relation between art and communist politics in the Middle East but to problematize it. Therefore, we included not only works by artists who have sincerely sought political resolution by artistic or aesthetic means, but also art that can be perceived as counterrevolutionary or driven by reactionary sentimental nostalgia; artifacts that bear witness to the closure and the death of revolutionary energy; works that for various reasons openly exploit the symbolism of class emancipation, or that may only be unconsciously suggestive of a hidden emancipatory energy; or works of art and initiatives that deploy the commodified attributes and symbols of Red October (Che Guevara and the AK-47) as markers of distinct lifestyles or themes of consumption. We also show objects that have not been produced in the Middle East but merely consumed here in local private collections. This exhibition is more like a rite in which we hope that, by putting together artifacts, archival material, posters, prints, photos, film, theater, and communist fetishes from different periods and styles, we will be able to call on, or even communicate with, the ghost of Communism.

counter the "archontic principle" of the archive, the unification of signs that the archive engages in, each in a different way, with processual extension, multiplication, and heterogeneity.[14] If, according to Derrida, archiving produces the event to the same extent that it records it,[15] curatorial practice does not allow this process to come to a halt in the assembly, but sets it in motion again through exposure. In this movement, what has just been fixed in one place gets redistributed widening the circle of possible participants, potentially as far as the "commons."[16] Not only the elements gathered in the archive, but also the archive itself shows itself with its conditions and effects. The differences it defined—first and foremost the one between past and present[17]—lose their durability by being confronted in the curatorial process with other differentiations in which the categories of what was previously permissible, medially suitable, and legitimized dissolve. For neither access to and participation in the curatorial approach remains limited to a few, nor are possession, objectivity, and completeness considered the guiding claims. Instead, curatorial work with archives is defined by multivocal, participatory strategies, by resituating, subjectivizing procedures that undermine reification as well as any final definition of history. They emphasize multi-perspectivity, ongoing work on the production of meaning, and the

retemporalizing

Françoise Vergès

A Museum without a Collection
Maison des Civilisations et de l'Unité Réunionnaise

It has been a little more than two decades since the project Maison des Civilisations et de l'unité Réunionnaise (thereafter MCUR), conceived in Reunion Island as a museum for the twenty-first century in a territory still under French rule—though lacking oil, nickel, gold, and silver, having a high rate of unemployment for a decade, and with a society structured by racism and white supremacy, where final decisions are still being made in Paris—was killed by a coalition of conservatives and pro-assimilation local forces and their allies in the French State.[2]

The MCUR would have been a decolonial museum where the history of the island would not have been seen as a forgotten chapter in a French national narrative. The time/space would have been the worlds created by South-South exchanges, encounters, and circulations, with Europe in the periphery. The European imperialist arrival (1498) would have been treated as an event, not as *the* event. A *museum without objects* in an open, breathing building in which trees and plants would grow freely, was the objective.

Since the MCUR ran counter to the coloniality of the French Republic, neoliberal capitalism, and racism and aimed to nurture decolonial imaginaries for our catastrophic times, it was a threat. In other words, any museum built about Réunion Island and its relation to the Indian Ocean would have to respect the Western universalist narrative. Decolonial museums remain a project in which architecture, collection, staff, education, and formation programs are carefully thought to provide a space for dismantling the Master's House.

September 2021

In 2010, a museum and cultural center will open on Réunion Island, the *Maison des Civilisations et de l'Unité Réunionnaise* (MCUR). It will be the first museum built on the island entirely born out of colonial and post-colonial experiences. For the last three years, a team has been working on its cultural and scientific program and has organized events. The project has recently entered a new phase with the meeting of an international jury on May 14, 2007. It proposed X-TU as the laureate for the architectural contest which used a spiral form as an answer.

A former French colony, now a French department and a European region, Réunion Island had four museums, a museum of natural history built in the nineteenth century on the European model, the *Musée Léon Dierx*, a museum of modern art built in the twentieth century around a selection of modern paintings left by Ambroise Vollard, a collector of Reunionese origin, *Stella Matutina*, a museum on the sugar-cane industry in a renovated factory (1980s), and *Villèle*, a museum set in a former plantation. All these museums followed a European philosophy: educating the citizen around a collection or an industry. None sought to integrate the lives and experiences of Réunion society except as an aside in temporary exhibitions.

The MCUR was not conceived around a collection, but rather around the desire and the will to offer a space of encounter, debate, and interpretation. As a museum, it seeks to present and "represent" the lives and experiences of marginalized people: slaves, indentured workers, poor settlers, the processes of creolization, and the multi-layered complex Indian-oceanic world. The objectives and philosophy of the MCUR rest on the analysis of the island's history and of the history of the museum. Postcolonial theory, gender theory, psychoanalysis, and visual theory offered tools to clarify the forms of mediation that will be used in the museum.

A short and a long history

Réunion Island is both a young island and a young society. The island is barely three million years old, it is still in formation: The volcano is very active, the soil is fragile, the constructive land is a narrow band around the island, huge mountains forbid the construction of roads from one side to the other… There was no native population on the island when the French took "possession." Its society was born of the globalization produced by the slave trade, when European societies addicted to coffee, spices, and sugar sought to colonize territories on which to implant plantations with a servile workforce in the seventeenth century. That form of globalization produced those "who do not matter," human beings that were made into "things," into *meubles* (furniture) as stated in the *Code Noir*, a French code of laws regulating the lives of slaves. The short history of Réunion is inscribed in the long history of colonial slavery and European imperialism, but it is also part of the millenary history of the Indian Ocean.

On Réunion Island, 200,000 captives were introduced as slaves, bought in Madagascar, East Africa and in minor numbers in India and the Comoro Islands. They left no names and no graves, but a rich and complex immaterial culture. However, the maroons (slaves escaping bonded labor) and their long war of resistance left a strong imprint on the island and the imaginary. They gave their names to the mountains, rivers, and villages of the interior of the island, tracing territories of freedom—Dimitile, Cimendef, Cilaos, Mafate, Salazie…—and against a territory of terror and servitude on the coast with its Catholic rosary of names: Saint-Pierre, Sainte-Marie, Sainte-Suzanne, Saint-Denis, Saint-Louis, Saint-Leu, Saint-Philippe, Sainte-Rose… Slavery threw together people with different languages, cultures, religions, and ideas, and these people found themselves brutally exploited. Yet, the "camp of slaves" as they were called, became spaces where processes of creolization emerged. This is the paradox of slavery: brutality and death *and* creativity and life.

Creolization here means a process of loss and borrowing; bits and pieces of languages are gathered to create a common language and a shared world of rituals and social exchanges. Creolization is a strategy of survival: In a life and death situation, one *must* learn to translate. If I do not understand the meaning of a gesture, of an order, I risk punishment and death. I must make sense of things in a world where *my own world* has been deeply upset. I have lost everything that was familiar, my name, my family, my social life; I have been taken to the other side of the ocean and thrown into a pit of violence. Where to turn? Where to find meaning? Here, creolization is not hybridity; it is more about a situation of deep inequalities, of forced circumstances, and strategies of survival.

On December 20, 1848, slavery was abolished on Réunion. Sixty thousand slaves, children, women, and men were freed. The colonial class of property owners turned to the system of indentured work: thousands of men, and fewer women, were taken to South India and in lesser numbers to South China,

Madagascar, Mozambique, the Comoro Islands to replace the freed slaves on the plantations. Though the abolition of slavery has meant that the former slaves had become citizens of the French Republic, they remained colonized, and this paradoxical citizenship, being citizen *and* colonized, weighed heavily on the political life.

The first unions and free associations emerged in the 1920s. The demand for equality mobilized the population. Anti-colonial movements claimed that after *liberté,* freedom, (1848) people of Réunion must obtain *égalité*, equality. They understood that a "color line," to borrow W.E.B. Dubois's expression, ran through the idea of citizenship in France. Though it claimed to be a universal principle, citizenship with its consequent principle of equality was affected by racial thinking: could "Blacks," descendants of slaves, be considered "full" citizens? The racialization, the *africanization* of slavery had deeply transformed the ways in which people of Africa were considered. By the end of the seventeenth century, "Negro," Black, and slave were synonyms in French dictionaries. Freedom was colored, as whites were "naturally" free, whereas people of color had to obtain freedom, had to prove that they were worthy of being free. The anti-colonial movement for civic rights grew through the 1930s and led to the end of the colonial status on March 19, 1946, a century after the abolition of slavery. The promise of equality was not kept, and movements of discontent increased in the 1950s, leading to the creation of political parties either asking more autonomy from the French Jacobin system or asking for tighter links with France. The civic rights movement continued to be strong and diverse. It criticized the ongoing high rate of poverty, the rate of illiteracy, of infant mortality, the monopoly of the sugar cane industry, and the alliance between the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and the remnants of colonial society. Political repression, denial of freedom of speech, of association, of religious freedom, of vernacular culture were the weapons of the powerful. Yet, by the 1970s, a cultural movement born of the anti-colonial movement affirmed the history, language, and culture of Réunion. It borrowed the vocabulary of cultural decolonization, but without the vocabulary of nation building.

In the 1980s, big local land-owners sold their sugar cane properties to monopolies and invested their capital into commerce of import goods. In twenty years, Réunion moved from being a rural society to being a society of mass consumption, with an important part of the population living on welfare, a rate of unemployment close to 30 percent, the failure of mass education, and growing economic dependency. Commercial malls, cars, SUV, cell phones, TVs... all the signs of "modernity" were offered to fill the void of dependency. In 1999, Paul Vergès, the historical leader of the anti-colonialist faction launched the idea of a MCUR.

Museums and postcolonialism

Museums are connected with nation building, buildings where the treasures of the nation are gathered to educate the citizen. National collections, or private collections, are exhibited to suggest the ideal of a sublime aesthetics. But these collections are often the result of looting and theft. In Réunion, we neither produced "great" art nor looted treasures. We are not building a nation- state. Why then a "museum" in a postcolonial place without a pre-colonial experience, which has not produced palaces, statues, paintings, masks, objects of art? Why a *museum* when there is no collection to start with? Why not a cultural center, a youth center, a gallery?

We chose to call it a museum (and cultural center, but we wish to keep the term "museum") for a series of reasons. It is, firstly, a gesture of political appropriation. Usually, cultural centers are for the "South," museums for the "North." If there are museums in the "South," they are modeled on European museums. Yet, I argue that the challenge of visually representing encounters, struggles, languages, and processes of creolization must be confronted. The new borders produced by decolonization, then by the collapse of the Soviet Union, the emergence of new "nations," of new zones of contact and conflicts, and the new migratory flows can be "represented" visually to present a complex and changing image of the processes at work. Second, it will be a museum of the *living present*. In a situation where material traces of the past have been destroyed and erased (traces of slaves, indentured workers, convicts, the poor...), where there is a high rate of unemployment, a slow erasure of the vernacular, soft multiculturalism, a petty bourgeoisie tempted by *civilizationism* (seizing signs of belonging to old civilizations—saris, manners, purified rituals, invention of tradition...), where the museum was based on the written word, for an elite, where finally regional powers (India, China, Islam) are moving in through the instrumentalization of old diasporas, I think that it is necessary to develop new counter practices and that the museum offers the possibility of such counter practices. As a space for multi-lingual, international, and local encounters, of a reinterpretation of the past and of imagination, it can help to rethink the *commons*.

Maison des Civilisations et de l'Unité Réunionnaise

The museum will host spaces of exhibition, for seminars, libraries, restaurants, shops, multimedia, dance, poetry, studios to register testimonies, places to listen to living witnesses telling what the life of a worker, a domestic worker, a scientist is. It is supported by the Regional Council, the French State, and the European community. Already, the MCUR team is working with schools and associations. It has created the honorary title *Zarboutan Nout Kiltir* (pillar of culture) which celebrates each year the work of women and men who have safeguarded vernacular practices and culture; it has launched a wide campaign of collecting daily life objects, small objects, with no commercial "value," as well as oral testimonies.

Six worlds, La Réunion

The MCUR team is preparing the opening exhibition which it has called *Six worlds, La Réunion.* The space: the six worlds that made the India-oceanic worlds and met in Réunion: China, India, the Muslim world, Africa, the islands (Madagascar, Comoros, Mauritius…). The time is Réunion's time. The Indian Ocean is the maritime space which was the earliest to be crossed by people—for more than 5,000 years now, people have met along its shores, compared to the Atlantic's 500 years and the Pacific's 2,000 years. People observed quite early that following the monsoons allowed them to go from the south of India to the south of Mozambique and the north of Madagascar and then back. Port cities were built along the shores, with a vibrant cosmopolitan life. Roads linked the ports to the interior across the African and Asian continents. Through the centuries, maritime and terrestrial roads we redrawn, conflicts, wars, the slave trade, colonialism, colonial and postcolonial wars destroyed cities and elites, configured new borders, new territories, but the Indian Ocean remains a site of exchange and rivalry. We chose to follow "Réunion time," because there was no reason to follow a French, Chinese, or Mozambican chronology. The wide space of the six worlds clashes with a temporality that follows the mutations of Réunion society.

We are not looking for the authentic document. We think in terms of installations where sound, still and moving images, objects, archives, and art interventions *evoke* rather than restitute what was and what could be. We have chosen the metaphor of the itinerary, since practically nothing (vegetables, fruits, spices, people, musical instruments, rituals, goods…) is native of the island.

Everything is borrowed, imported, from elsewhere and adapted to local tastes and needs. The itinerary shows the conditions of production and transformation, the biography of a thing, a person, a ritual. It deconstructs the term "African slave," "Indian indentured worker," "European settler" by restituting their singularity and by showing how and when their itineraries crossed. It allows the representation of routes of solidarity, ideas, and images.

Encounters rarely occur on an even field. There is often inequality between people and the terms of the encounter. Mapping these inequalities as well as the negotiations, ruses, and strategies of borrowing suggest another cartography than the one drawn by the powers that be. Through transnational narration and expressions of emotional encounters, we seek to counter the temptation of hegemonic narration. By maintaining space for visitor contributions even after the museum opens, we seek to offer a public space for public history and democratic debates, which will in turn be up for contestation.

Drawing on a true tale of how Egyptian authorities detained a migratory stork in 2013 and accused it of espionage, The General's Stork is an ongoing artistic work that investigates the politics of aerial surveillance—against the backdrop of biblical prophecies, drone warfare, and colonial narratives—from a bird's-eye view.

allegorizing

The General's Stork

Heba Y. Amin

When I see the future, I close my eyes (2020) is a solo exhibition by artist Heba Y. Amin (curated by Anthony Downey) which reflects upon the post-digital future of surveillance technologies and emerging forms of digital authoritarianism. Set in a townhouse—in Earl's Court in London, the exhibition was developed for The Mosaic Rooms, a cultural instution of the Palestinian A.M. Qattan Foundation.

The exhibition space was the former residence of Imre Kiralfy, a Hungarian producer and entertainer who specialized in burlesque shows and exhibitions of curiosities collected during his travels through the British global empire. In this context, the exhibition was conceived as a working tool for original research produced from within a historical site that represents the problematic legacy of empire.

On display in the main grand room of The Mosaic Rooms is *The General's Stork*, which incorporates the first aerial photographs of Palestine exhibited side-by-side with photographic and video portraits of General Edmund Allenby in Cairo with his pet marabou stork, as well as the film *As Birds Flying* (2016).

The project frames the research through the peculiar relationship between Allenby and his bird—as documented during his time as the Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force—to narrate the way in which the bird's eye view paved the way for a Eurocentric world order.

These colonial visions and mechanisms are incorporated into and re-enacted through the neoliberal structures of digital technologies. How should we be rereading aerial images today in the context of satellite imaging, drone surveillance, and algorithmic determination?

The earliest photographs of Palestine were captured by European and American photographers interested in illustrating the Holy Land as the land of the Bible and not as a modern civilization. Their images systematically and strategically deleted indigenous Palestinians from internationally distributed images of Palestine.

Avian landscapes were methodically examined through the scientific framing of ornithology that justified the colonial production of visual empirical data. This inevitably changed the shape and sovereignty of Palestinian territories by introducing a new imagination of geography that played into the hands of colonial ideology.

The American Colony's aerial photographs of Palestine speak to the real-world implications of visual production that has permeated our contemporary perception of geographical frameworks.

allegorizing

As Birds Flying is an allegorical film that addresses these issues by putting power structures and national boundaries into question. It uses found drone footage and aerial views of storks migrating over Israeli settlements in Galilea. It borrows its title from a biblical passage that is said to have inspired General Edmund Allenby's aerial offensive on Jerusalem in 1917 which, in turn, put Palestine under British mandate.

In contrast to the power hierarchy of aerial machines, General Allenby's victorious moment is commonly depicted as a humble gesture of conquest by foot.

importance of mediation. This is not about discoveries in the archive,[18] which would ultimately consolidate the existing archival logic, but about other ways in which the archive and all those affected by it relate to each other. It brings to the fore an ethical, caring dimension of curatorial relation-building.[19] If one wants to take seriously the origin of the curatorial in the Latin *curare* (to care for), then the particular strength of the positions in this volume lies in the transformative caring for such other ways of relating.

Further Information

allegorizing

Heba Amin
The General's Stork

Captions

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∧   Heba Y. Amin, *The General's Stork*, 2020. Installation view at The Mosaic Rooms, London. Photo: Andy Stagg. Courtesy of The Mosaic Rooms.

—   Archival Image of the Mosaic Rooms when it was the residence of Imre Kiralfy of Earl's Court, late nineteenth—early twentieth century. Courtesy of the Museum of London.

∨   Heba Y. Amin, *The General's Stork*, 2020. Installation view at The Mosaic Rooms, London. Photo: Andy Stagg. Courtesy of The Mosaic Rooms.

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∧   Heba Y. Amin, *The General's Stork* I, 2020. 100 x 80.86cm, archival color print. Courtesy of the artist.

∨   Heba Y. Amin, *The General's Stork* II, 2020. 100 x 80.86cm, archival color print. Courtesy of the artist.

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∧   Palestine (ca. 1900–20), Jericho Road from 3000m. Matson (G. Eric and Edith) Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-DIG-matpc-05588.

∨   Palestine (ca. 1900–20), Jordan Valley north of Jericho from 1500m. Matson (G. Eric and Edith) Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-DIG-matpc-05590.

   The Matson (G. Eric and Edith) collection at the American Library of Congress is comprised of over 22,000 glass slides, film photographic negatives, and transparencies produced by The American Colony, an independent Utopian Christian sect in Jerusalem founded by Chicago residents Anna and Horatio Spafford. Their photography department documented Palestine from 1898 to 1946 and was closely tied to Western interests of historical and archaeological sites in the region. For access to the digital archive online see: https://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/matpc/.

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∧   Heba Y. Amin, *As Birds Flying*, 2016. 7′11″ video still. Courtesy of the artist.

∨   Allenby Enters Jerusalem, Magic Lantern Glass Slide, 1940. Artist's private collection.

   "Allenby in Arabic, can only be written in one way: al-naby, which means prophet or son of god. What he did not know was that the Turks also believed in an old prophecy that they would never lose the Holy City until 'a man of Allah came to deliver it.' The Turks surrendered without firing a shot… an incredible fulfilment of Biblical prophecy which put Palestine under British mandate. This mandate, called the Balfour Declaration, called for a Jewish homeland and set the foundation for modern Israel."

commoning

Magdalena Tyżlik-Carver
Interfacing the Commons: Curatorial System as a Form of Production on the Edge

Paper given at the Public Interfaces conference and PhD workshops, Digital Aesthetics Research Centre, University of Aarhus, January 12–14, 2011.

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displacing

Sarah Pierce
Pathos of Distance

National Gallery of Ireland
2 December 2015 – 6 May 2016

Captions

p. 96

<   Artist unknown
Daniel Florencio O'Leary (1801–54)
Frontispiece and Title Page from
Memorias del General Daniel Florencio O'Leary
Caracas: Imprenta Nacional, 1952

∧<   Artist unknown
"Brig. Gen. Michael Corcoran, of the Irish Brigade late Colonel of the Gallant NY Sixty Ninth"
Lithograph, hand-coloured
Currier & Ives, New York, 1860s
Library of Congress LC-DIG-ppmsca-08409

∧>   Thomas Eakins (1844–1916)
The Veteran (Portrait of George Reynolds)
Oil on canvas, c.1885
Courtesy Yale University Art Gallery

∨>   Gustave Courbet (1819–77)
Jo, La Belle Irlandaise
Model Jo Hiffernan
Oil on canvas, 1866
Courtesy National Museum Stockholm

∨<   Artist unknown
Admiral Guillermo (William) Brown (1777–1857)
"Father of the Argentine Navy"
Argentina c.1956.
Photo: Louis Haugh

<   Francis Charles Needham (Viscount) Newry (1842–1915)
O'Farrel in Darlinghurst
Pencil on paper, 1868
National Library of Australia NLA.PIC-an6332101

<   Artist Unknown
"James (Alias Yankee) Sullivan"
Print, c1846
Library of Congress LC-DIG-pga-04356
31.66 x 45.5cm
Photo: Louis Haugh

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<   Robert Tucker (1807–91)
"Mrs. Sophia Bryant, Doctor of Science

of the London University"
Illustrated London News, July 19, 1884.

Artist unknown
Catherine Hayes
Irish opera singer and prima donna.
Lithograph with facsimile autograph, ca. 1850
London: Cramer, Beale & Co., Regent Street, n.d.

Wallace Morgan (1873–1948)
Miss Leonora O'Reilly
American suffragette and trade unionist.
Pencil on paper, 1912
Courtesy National Portrait Gallery
Smithsonian Institution

Samuel Calvert (1828–1913)
"The Sandhurst Impersonator – Mrs Edward De Lacy Evans"
Illustrated Australian News, 15 November 1879.
State Library of Victoria IAN01/10/79/14
Photo: Louis Haugh

p. 98

Thomas Eakins (1844–1916)
The Veteran (Portrait of George Reynolds)
Oil on canvas, c.1885
Courtesy Yale University Art Gallery.
Photo: Louis Haugh

ghosting

Octavian Esanu
One Hundred Years Closer to Communism: Art and Revolution in the Middle East

AUB Byblos Bank Art Gallery, Beirut
23 November 2017 – 9 February 2018
Photos: Courtesy Octavian Esanu / AUB

Footnotes

1   See Chapter II in Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860–1914* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010).

2   On this see Zeina Maasri, *Off the Wall: Political Posters of the Lebanese Civil War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 35.

grafting

pad.ma
10 Theses on the Archive

April 2010, Beirut
(excerpt)

1. Don't Wait for the Archive
2. Archives are not reducible to the particular Forms that they take

3. The Direction of Archiving will be Outward, not Inward
4. The Archive is not a Scene of Redemption
5. The Archive deals not only with the Remnant but also with the Reserve
6. Historians have merely interpreted the Archive. The Point however is to Feel it
7. The Image is not just the Visible, the Text is not just the Sayable
8. The Past of the Exhibition Threatens the Future of the Archive
9. Archives are governed by the Laws of Intellectual Propriety as opposed to Property
10. Time is not Outside of the Archive: It is in it

Co-authored by members of https://Pad.ma: Shaina Anand, Lawrence Liang, Sebastian Lütgert, and Ashok Sukumaran during "Don't wait for the Archive – I" (workshop, Homeworks, Beirut, April 2010, published online at https://pad.ma/document/OH/ and in print in Artikişler Collective (Özge Çelikaslan, Alper Şen, Pelin Tan): Autonomous Archiving, dpr-barcelona: Barcelona 2016. It has been added and modified for the context of this publication.

CAMP with 0x2620, Alternative Law Forum and Majlis founded the online footage archive Pad.ma—short for Public Access Digital Media Archive—in late 2007. This was a specific proposal for an independent, regional, non-state archive of the contemporary and for how video material could exist and be "thrown forth" beyond the limits of the filmmaking economy, and past YouTube. Now containing several hundred hours of densely annotated, transcribed, and open-access footage contributed by filmmakers and researchers, Pad.ma (and the sister archive https://indiancine.ma) poses many questions for digital archiving, film, and online video. It also seeds a set of possibilities and practices around footage, distribution, screening, referencing, and writing through video. Recent online projects include https://ghar.with.camp, a 3-part archival journey with the housing question in Mumbai, https://Phanstas.ma for the Asian Art Biennale, and https://NJP.ma, Nam June Paik's video archive of Fluxus artists.

Footnotes

1   "Xenofeminism seeks to construct a coalitional politics, a politics without the infection of purity. From: Laboria Cuboniks. "The Xenofeminist Manifesto: A Politics for Alienation." (e-book, Apple Books).

2   Henri Langlois cited in Professor Richard Roud and Mr François Truffaut, *A*

Passion for Films: Henri Langlois & the Cinematheque Francaise (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

3   Lakhmi Chand, Cybermohalla Ensemble, "No Apologies for the interruption," trans. Shveta Sarda (Sarai: New Delhi, 2010).

4   Anna Akhmatova, *Requiem*, trans. A. S. Kline. See: http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Russian/Akhmatova.htm#_Toc322442229 (accessed 30 September, 2014).

5   Brian Massumi, "Navigating Movements: A Conversation with Brian Massumi." In *Hope: New Philosophies for Change*, Mary Zournazi (Annandale: Pluto Press Australia, 2002), 214.

6   Hal Foster, "Archives of Modern Art," *October*, vol. 99 (winter 2002): 81–95.

7   Ibid.

8   Ibid.: 82.

9   rit Rogoff, quoted in "The Implicated: Reflections on Audience." *Artconcerns. net*, archive. http://www.zoominfo.com/p/Irit-Rogoff/405885605/

10   Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

11   Mary Anne Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive*, new edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003, 2nd ed.).

12   Antonio Negri, *Insurgencies: Constituent Power and the Modern State*, trans. Maurizia Boscagli (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

metabolizing

Doreen Mende
Symbiont's Archival Metabolism (inter∞note 03)

Footnote

*   Case study 2 of *Decolonizing Socialism: Entangled Internationalism*, is a transhistorical investigation into practices from the expanded field of the arts, situated in the socialist geographies of the global Cold War period in South Asia, West Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe, as alliances between the East and the South, which came together in and via the German Democratic Republic. The study aims to open up the entangled fabric between the macro-politics of state or party logics with the micropolitics of artistic collaborations or art-related practices as an acutally existing condition for techno-political friendships or solidarities. It wishes to contribute to unlearning the Cold War dichotomy of typecasting artists (or architects, writers …) from "the East" or "the South" as either dissidents ("the underground artist") or conformists ("the State artist"). In other words, instead of attempting a historic reconstruction of cases or situations from a state-socialist Cold War paradigm, the study situates, first, the historical within uncontinued mutations into contemporary as well as (?) archival undercurrents, and second, insists on mobilizing the micropolitical as vectors that urge movement beyond the national towards an entangled internationalism vibrating in the contemporary. Situated in the field of visual cultures as an expanded field, the cross-cultural and intersectional study uses existing approaches and develops specific decolonial research methods through a set of case studies. Decolonizing here addresses both the historical, i.e., to investigate power relations within socialist modernity itself acted upon practices of micropolitical potency and social imaginaires within the expanded arts; and the contemporary, i.e., to consider the research itself as a displacement of problems as well as potentialities from internationalism to globalism, as well as from micro-political practices into a nation-state-funded project. entangled-internationalism.org.

Material

Hanelle M. Culpepper, "Forget Me Not" (2020), episode 4 season 3 of *Star Trek Discovery*; la paperson, *A Third University Is Possible*, 2017; Leigh Raiford, "Excerpt from Migrating the Black Body: The African Diaspora and Visual Culture," in *Journal of Transnational American Studies*, 8(1), 2017; Eslanda Goode Robeson, *African Journey*, 1946; Katharina Warda, "Dunkeldeutschland," in: *Krautreporter*, 1 October 2020; B0708-0014-004 Paul Robeson Archive 613.1 Zentralbild/Brüggmann/Stöhr/Gal/Pr 8.7.1963.

mobilizing

Roger M. Buergel, Sophia Prinz
Mobile Worlds

Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe (MKG), Hamburg
April 13 – October 14, 2018

The exhibition *Mobile Worlds was part of Mobile Worlds. On the migration of things in transcultural societies*, a cooperative project funded by the BMBF (Federal Ministry of Education and Research). Partners of the exhibition were the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg (MKG), the Johann Jacobs Museum in Zurich, and the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt/Oder.

p. 89–92

Design: Büro Dawallu. Three background photos: Tim Kaiser. Black/white photos: Geneviève Frisson

parallelizing

Iman Issa
Book Of Facts

Iman Issa
12 September – 10 November 2019
Daadgalerie, Berlin

The exhibition Book Of Facts focuses on Iman Issa's use of different media and techniques. Extending across both floors of the daadgalerie, the presentation includes the series *Lexicon* (2012–19) which comprises a range of displays, each of which is presented as a contemporary remake of an existing artwork—albeit one that looks nothing like the original. With video, sculpture, photography, and audio, it offers a visual lexicon for a variety of terms such as *Laboring, Destiny, Mourning, Dancer, Devotees, Monologist* among others. An accompanying text panel to each display provides a secondary narrative describing the content of the original artworks on which the remakes are based.The exhibition also includes a number of additional sound, video and book works such as the sound installation *The Revolutionary* (2010), an audio work composed by the artist around the term "the revolutionary" and generated using text to speech software..

preenacting

Yael Bartana
The Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland (JRMiP)

Captions
p. 55

<   Kibbutz Beit Yosef – in the day of establishment, Avraham Malavsky, 1937, Keren Kayemeth Lelsrael – Jewish National Fund photo archive.

—   *The Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland: A Manifest*, 2011.

>   *Pioneers of the Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland (2)*, 2011. Colour photograph on dibond, 120 x 80 cm.

p. 56

Yael Bartana, *Wenn ihr wollt, ist es kein Traum. Fragen an Freud und Herzl,*

Secession, Vienna. December 7, 2012—February, 2013. Installation view, vitrinas dedicated to Sigmund Freud, the Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland (JRMiP), and Theodor Herzl. Photo: Oliver Ottenschläger.

p. 57

∧ Yael Bartana, *Wenn ihr wollt, ist es kein Traum. Fragen an Freud und Herzl*, Secession, Vienna. December 7, 2012–February 10, 2013. Installation view, vitrina dedicated to the Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland (JRMiP). Photo: Oliver Ottenschläger.

∨ < Yael Bartana, *...and Europe will be stunned*, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, March 24–Augus 26, 2012. Installation view. Photo: Peter Cox, Courtesy Archives Van Abbemuseum.

∨ > Yael Bartana, *Redemption Now*, Jüdisches Museum Berlin, June 4–November 21, 2021. Installation view. Photo: Yves Sucksdorff.

p. 58

Yael Bartana, *And Europe Will Be Stunned—The Polish Trilogy*, video stills.

∧ *Zamach (Assassination)*, 2011, video still. Courtesy of Annet Gelink Gallery, Amsterdam, and Sommer Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv.

— The *First Congress of the Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland (JRMiP)* at HAU Berlin, May 2012. Photo: Ilya Rabinowith.

> *Mur i wieża (Wall and Tower)*, 2009, video still. Courtesy of Annet Gelink Gallery, Amsterdam, and Sommer Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv.

reassembling

Megan Hoetger, Carlos Kong
Reassembling East German Nightlife: Scores for Curating from Elusive Archives

Captions

p. 83

< Schönhauser Allee 44, site of the former *Schoppenstube* today. Photo: Laura Fiorio.

> The exterior of the East Berlin gay bar *Schoppenstube,* from the DEFA film *Coming Out* (1989, dir. Heiner Carow). Courtesy of the DEFA Foundation.

p. 84

Stills from Puhdys, "Steine – Kinder – Sonntagsfahrer – Lebenszeit" from *Discofilm 16* (DEFA 1976). Courtesy of the DEFA Foundation.

p. 85

∧ < Flyer from 1978 for *Film-Beat-Treff vor Mitternacht* at Kosmos cinema in East Berlin, a film and music event where disco films were screened. From the Dean Reed Archive, Berlin.

∧ > The wall of a work bench from the state-owned Berlin machine tool factory in Marzahn, which a worker has covered with tickets to cultural events, concerts, and balls. From the exhibition *Everyday Life in the GDR* at the Museum in der Kulturbrauerei, Berlin. Photo: Laura Fiorio.

∨ The sidewalks of former East Berlin. Photos: Laura Fiorio.

p. 86

∧ Kosmos cinema today. Photo: Laura Fiorio.

∨ The opening of Kosmos cinema on October 5, 1962. Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-A1006-0002-002 / Irene Eckleben.

Footnotes

1 Excerpts from Annette Miae Kim's *Sidewalk City: Remapping Public Space in Ho Chi Minh City*.

2 Quote from Megan Hoetger, "Art/ Obscenity/Underground Cinema in West Germany, 1968–1972: Circulating through the Debates." In *In and Out of View: Art and the Dynamics of Circulation, Suppression, and Censorship*, edited by Catha Paquette et al. (London: Bloomsbury, 2021).

Suggested Reading

Seán Allan and Sebastian Heiduschke, *Re-Imagining DEFA: East German Cinema in its National and Transnational Contexts*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2016.

Zdenka Badovinac, *Comradeship: Curating, Art and Politics in Post-Socialist Europe*. New York: Independent Curators International, 2019.

Judith Butler, *Notes Toward A Performative Theory of Assembly*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018.

Jodi Dean, *Comradeship: An Essay on Political Belonging*. London: Verso, 2019.

Annette Miae Kim, *Sidewalk City: Remapping Public Space in Ho Chi Minh City*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015.

Doreen Mende, "The Time Lag of *DE-FA-Futurum*, A Socialist Cine-Futurism from East Germany." In *The Oxford Handbook of Communist Visual Cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Elske Rosenfeld und Suza Husse (ed.), *wildes wiederholen. material von unten.*

Dissidente Geschichten zwischen DDR und pOstdeutschland #1. Berlin: Archive Books, 2019.

reentangling

Marion von Osten
In the Desert of Modernity: Colonial Planning and After, 2008–2009

Exhibition and conference, Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW), Berlin and La Fabrique Culturelle des Anciens Abattoirs de Casablanca, Casablanca.

Curated and artistic direction by: Marion von Osten

Co-curated by: Tom Avermaete and Serhat Karakayali, with assistance from Elsa de Seynes, Jesko Fezer, Andreas Müller, and Anna Voswinckel.

Institutional partners: Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien, Architekturfakultät der Delft University of Technology, Casamémoire / Casablanca, CPKC (Center for Post-Colonial Knowledge and Culture Berlin), École Supérieure d'Architecture de Casablanca

In the Desert of Modernity: Colonial Planning and After was an extensive research and exhibition project comprising collaborative research and a series of live events, screenings, and a conference. It was dedicated to the interrelated histories of European modernist architecture and (experimental) urban planning projects in colonial northern Africa that were based on essentialist notions of living habits and marked by universalist claims, exemplified by those instituted in Casablanca. The project's closing exhibition included the online video platform *This Was Tomorrow* (2008) and culminated in the book *Colonial Modern: Aesthetics of the Past, Rebellions for the Future* (2010).

The works on display in Berlin and Casablanca were by: Lazaro Abreu, Luis Álvarez, Arsac A. Ascoral des Jeunes, Association les Engraineurs, Atelier Archives Audiovisuelles BDIC, Kader Attia, Élie Azagury, Jacques Belin, Claude Beraud, Vladimir Bodiansky, Georges Candilis, Giancarlo de Carlo, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Chaïbia, Hassan Darsi, Robert Doisneau, Michel Écochard, Pierre-André Emery, Patrick Forest, Jesús Forjans, Gérard-Aimé, Georges Godefroy, Faïza Guéne, Marcel Gut, Jean Hentsch, Monique Hervo, Bernhard Hoesli, François Issaverdens, Romain Jeannot, Alexis Josic, Élie Kagan, Bernard Kennedy, Labork3000, J. Lambert, Yasmeen Lari, Le Corbusier, Guy Le Querrec, Jean de Maisonseul,

Mario Marret, Pierre Mas, Louis Miquel, Janine Niepce, L. Ouhayoun, Henri Piot, Jean Pottier, Fernand Pouillon, Loïk Prat, Bernard Richard, Willy Ronis, Alfrédo Rostgaard, Bernard Rudofsky, Moshe Safdie, Roland Simounet, Wit Sklias, Alison and Peter Smithson, André Studer, L. Tamborini, Marcelle Vallet, Aldo Van Eyck, Jean Vidal, J. Wattez, and Shadrach Woods.

Captions

In the Desert of Modernity. Colonial Planning and After, La Fabrique Culturelle des Anciens Abattoirs de Casablanca, Casablanca, October 2–30, 2009, installation views. Photos: Elsa de Seynes.

Footnotes

1   Marion von Osten, "IN THE MAKING. Traversing the project exhibition: In the Desert of Modernity. Colonial Planning and After" (Abstract) 2018, https://lup.lub.lu.se/search/ws/#les/42073358/noti-#cation_sheet_mvo.pdf.

2   Marion von Osten, "In the Desert of Modernity. Colonial Planning and After. The Making of an Exhibition," in Colonial Modern: Aesthetics of the Past, Rebellions for the Future, ed. Tom Avermaete, Serhat Karakayali, and Marion von Osten (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2010), 305–13, here 309.

3   ibid., 310.

4   Marion von Osten, IN THE MAKING, Traversing the project exhibition: In the Desert of Modernity. Colonial Planning and After (manuscript, 2018), 3.

repairing

Kader Attia
The Object´s Interlacing

Captions

p. 111
Les Entrelacs de l'Objet | The Object's Interlacing, 2020
Installation. Video (color, sound) and 2 2 objects (3D nylon prints and wooden copies of African artifacts)
Variable dimensions, video (78 min).

Exhibition view *Kader Attia. Remembering the Future*, at Kunsthaus Zurich, Zurich 2020, with filmstills with Felwine Sarr, Prince Serge Guézo, and Christine Théodore (top to bottom). Courtesy of the Artist. Commissioned by Kunsthaus Zürich.
3D scans of objects provided by Musée du Quai Branly, Paris
Photos: Franca Candrian

p. 112
Research material for *Les Entrelacs de l'Objet | The Object's Interlacing*, 2020, p. 113

∧   Maria Hlavajova introduces Achille Mbembe and his lecture "Repair of Reason" as part of the *Fragments of Repair* opening program broadcast from within the exhibition *Fragments of Repair|Kader Attia* at BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht and online, 17 April 2021. *Fragments of Repair* was a multipart project conceptualized by Kader Attia and Wietske Maas and convened by BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht with decolonial forum La Colonie.

∨   Kader Attia, *The Object's Interlacing*, 2020, installation with video (78 min) and 17 objects (wooden and 3d nylon-printed copies of African artefacts), BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, 2021. Photo: Tom Janssen.

retemporalizing

Françoise Vergès
A Museum Without a Collection. Maison des Civilisations et de l´Unité Réunionnaise

The text was originally published in translate.eipcp.net (https://translate.eipcp.net/Actions/discursive/lines/verges/verges_en.pdf) and has been updated with a new preface for the purpose of this publication.

Footnote

My father, Paul Vergès, was the initiator of the project. He had been dreaming of this for decades. Paul Vergès cofounded the Communist Party of Reunion (CPR) in 1959 and remained its leader for a long time. The CPR fought for popular and democratic autonomy, i.e. for the capacity for the people of Réunion to make its own choices and decisions in the fields of education, housing, industry, agriculture, culture, formation, and the arts, leaving defense and foreign affairs to the French State. The French State identified communists as its "enemies," its leaders and members were targeted by the police, beaten, sued, defamed, jailed, racially profiled, its journal was censored, its meetings forbidden. Fraud was systemic. The Conservatives who won the elections in 2010 had vowed to kill the project, they kept their promise.

revoicing

Eran Schaerf

Snapshot (Schnappschuss)

Performance, 32 minutes
Akademie der Künste, Berlin
Premiere: May 18 2019
Daily between May 19 and June 2, 2019
Script and setting: Eran Schaerf
Voice / mise-en-scène:
Leopold von Verschuer
Performer: Silke Buchholz /
Claudia Wiedemer
Sound and technology: Jean Szymczak
Photos: Eran Schaerf

shapeshifting

Kayfa ta
How to maneuver: Shapeshifting texts and other publishing tactics

In 2021, an exhibition titled *How to find meaning in dead time* opened in SAVVY Contemporary (Berlin). The exhibition was curated by Kayfa ta (Maha Maamoun and Ala Younis), for Archival Assembly #1, a festival organized by Arsenal – Institute for Film and Video Art, in the context of *Archive Außer Sich*, a collaborative project in the frame of *The Whole Life: An Archive Project* that deals with film cultural heritage and its archives. The exhibition contained some of the above metamorphosed objects, with their hybrid temporalities, as well as other examples and modes of shapeshifting. An excerpt from the exhibition text read:

"This exhibition contains fragments of time that are inert, have escaped the record, or are in the process of resurrecting from their transitory host media. These host media include but are not limited to: 16mm films, 3D-printed cassette tapes, CCTV footage, colonial photo archives, human bodies, a jeweller's closet, matchboxes, the vaults of the Louvre museums, VHS tapes, a Persian carpet and others. More than a finite collection of material that we visit and employ, this archive of temporalities is also an immaterially expansive being that chose to visit and employ us, animating our bodies and possibly expanding our narratives of self, place and time."

Footnotes

1   Ali Eyal, *Entry into this household is strictly prohibited under any circumstances, as is the construction or alteration of furniture or the construction of a new home or project, unless written permission is granted by the owner of the blue bag*, 2020. Soft sculpture.

2   Lawrence Abu Hamdan, *Once Removed*, 2019. Video, 29 min.

3   Maria Iorio and Raphaël Cuomo, *Undead*

Voices, 2019/21. Video, 39 min.

4 Adel Abidin, *Back to the Future*, 2019. Five 3D printed cassette tapes, rotation mechanism, media players, pencils, speakers, and pedestals. 6 x 12.5 x 1.3 cm each. Durations: 4:22 min, 3:19 min, 2:14 min, 1:28 min, 1:48 min.

5 Hussein Nassereddine, *Palm Trees Leave their Places: Lecture Performance*, 2020. Lecture performance, 19 min.

spinning threads

Alice Creischer, Andreas Siekmann
Potosí Principle – Archive

Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW), Berlin May 27–July 11, 2021

Captions

p. 23 & 25

Potosí Principle – Archive, Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW), Berlin, 2021. Exhibition view. Photo: Laura Fiorio.

Footnotes

1 Leo Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, trans. Louise and Aylmer Maude (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 11.

2 Alice Creischer and Andreas Siekmann, *Potosí Archive*, Notebook 3.0, Introduction.

suspending

Stefan Nowotny
Suspending the Archive

The text goes back to a lecture and a seminar I held at the Aalto University in Helsinki in autumn 2014 as well as an interview I subsequently gave to Jelena Fuzinato, Giovanna Esposito Yussif and Ksenia Kaverina, at the time students on the Master's degree programme "Curating, Managing and Mediating Art" (CuMMA) lead by Nora Sternfeld. The interview was first published as #18 of the CuMMA Papers available on https://cummastudies.wordpress.com/cumma-papers. The present version of the text draws mainly on this interview and focuses on the key arguments pursued throughout the aforementioned activities at Aalto.

Footnotes

1 Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Routledge 1989), 147.

2 Gayatri Ch. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak ?" In Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grosssberg (eds) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press 1988), 271–313.

3 See Jacques Derrida, "The archive is hypomnesic." In *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press 1998), 11.

4 Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (Wivenhoe / New York / Port Watson: Minor Compositions, 2013), 17.

5 For precise references and a more detailed account, see my text "Affirmation in Loss. On the Question of Testimony," trans. Camilla Nielsen, http://eipcp.net/transversal/0408/nowotny/en

sympathizing

Talal Afifi, Eiman Hussein, Tamer El Said, Stefanie Schulte Strathaus, Haytham El Wardany
Of Dust and Rubies—A Film on Suspension

Captions

p. 11

Of Dust and Rubies. A Film On Suspension, film stills, dir. Tamer El Said, showing images from *Of Dust and Rubies* by Hussein Shariffe. Panel photo: Kay Strasser.

p. 12–14

Of Dust and Rubies, dir. by Hussein Shariffe, film stills. Courtesy of Eiman Hussein. Panel photos: Kay Strasser.

Footnote

1 Muhamed Elmekki Ibrahim, Muhamed Abdelhai; Abdelrahim Abu Zikra, Ali Abdelghayoum, Eltayib Saleh, Mahjoub Sharif, Eljaily Abdelrahman.

transforming

Kapwani Kiwanga
Kinjeketile Suite

South London Gallery, London (UK), 2015

Caption

Kinjeketile Suite, 2015, mixed-media installation, audio, performance, variable dimensions.

Exhibition view, *Kinjeketile Suite* at South London Gallery, 2015. Photos: Andy Keate.

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Poggi, Paris / Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, Cape Town, London / Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin.

transposing

Rosi Braidotti

This text was first published in Rosi Braidotti, *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006. Reproduced with minor adaptions for the context of this book with kind permission of the author and publisher.

Footnote

1 I thank my sister Giovanna for these insights into contemporary genetics. See also her unpublished manuscript *The Sentience Paradox*.

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Contributors

Talal Afifi is a Sudanese film curator and producer, director and founder of Sudan Film Factory (SFF) and president of the Sudan Independent Film Festival (SIFF).

Artist **Heba Y. Amin** engages with political themes and archival history, using various media. Her artistic research takes a speculative, often satirical approach to challenging narratives of conquest and control. Amin is a professor of Digital and Time-Based Art at ABK-Stuttgart, the co-founder of the Black Athena Collective, curator of visual art for the *MIZNA* journal, and sits on the editorial board of the *Journal of Digital War*. Her latest publication, *Heba Y. Amin: The General's Stork* (ed. Anthony Downey) was published by Sternberg Press (2020).

Kader Attia is an artist who explores the wide-ranging effects of Western cultural hegemony and colonialism. Central to his inquiry are the concepts of injury and repair, which he uses to connect diverse bodies of knowledge, including architecture, music, psychoanalysis, medical science, and traditional healing and spiritual beliefs. Throughout his multimedia practice—ranging from sculpture to film installation—reparation does not mark a return to an intact state, but instead makes visible the immaterial scars of psychic injury. This approach is informed by Attia's experience of growing up between Algeria and the Paris banlieues.

Stefan Aue is project head at Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW) in Berlin. He is currently realizing the collaborative program *The Whole Life: An Archive Project* (2018–2022). He completed the master's program Cultures of the Curatorial and studied Sociology, Psychology, and Media Studies. He is co-editor of *ArteFakte: Reflections and Practices of Scientific-Artistic Encounters* (2014) and *Dictionary of Now* (2019).

Julie Ault is an artist, curator, and writer focused on mobilizing materials and information to animate histories of activism in art. Ault's projects include exhibitions, collaboration, art writing, and historical chronicles. Recent work includes essays on Simon Hantaï, Wang Bing, and Allora & Calzadilla (2021), *Paper Mirror: Nancy Spero* at the Museo Tamayo, and *MoMA PS1* (2018–19). A MacArthur Fellow since 2018, Ault is currently working on the book *Hidden in Plain Sight: Selected Writings of Karin Higa*.

Yael Bartana is an observer of the contemporary and a preenactor. She employs art as a scalpel inside the mechanisms of power structures and navigates the fine and crackled line between the sociological and the imagination. Over the past twenty years, she has dealt with some of the dark dreams of the collective unconscious and reactivated the collective imagination, dissected group identities and (an-) aesthetic means of persuasion. The trilogy "…*And Europe Will Be Stunned*" was ranked as the ninth most important work in film of the twenty-first century by the *Guardian* newspaper (2019).

Beatrice von Bismarck teaches art history, visual culture, and cultures of the curatorial at the Academy of Fine Arts (Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst) Leipzig. She worked as a curator of the department of twentieth-century art at Städel Museum, Frankfurt, was co-founder and co-director of the Kunstraum der Universität Lüneburg, initiator of the MA Program Cultures of the Curatorial and co-directed the itinerant TRANScuratorial Academy (Berlin, Mumbai, Phnom Penh 2017–18). Her most recent monograph "*The Curatorial Condition*" is published in spring 2022 (Sternberg Press).

Rosi Braidotti is a contemporary continental philosopher and feminist theorist. She is currently distinguished university professor at Utrecht University, where she has taught since 1988. Her publications include *Nomadic Subjects* (2011) and *Nomadic Theory* (2011), both with Columbia University Press, and *The Posthuman* (2013), *Posthuman Knowledge* (2019) and *Posthuman Feminism* (2021) with Polity Press. In 2016, she co-edited *Conflicting Humanities* with P. Gilroy, and *The Posthuman Glossary* in 2018 with M. Hlavajova, both with Bloomsbury Academic.

Roger M. Buergel is an exhibition curator and professor at the European Graduate School (EGS). Until 2021, he was director of the Johann Jacobs Museum in Zurich, which looked at global modernity through the lens of trade routes and commodities. He has been running the Crabflower Club, a decentralized curatorial network, since 2021. Buergel was the artistic director of documenta 12 (2007).

Kirsten Cooke's research manipulates art historical models by activating the mediatory space between artist and curator, constructing physical exhibition architectures and fictional-critical texts. She experiments with different forms of staging and situates curating as a primary and visible practice within the construction of exhibitions. Cooke holds a practice-based PhD in curating and critical-fictional writing She lectures at Birkbeck University of London, University of Reading and the University of the Arts London.

Alice Creischer is an artist and writer living in Berlin. With Max Jorge Hinderer and Andreas Siekmann she curated the project *Principio Potosí*. The exhibition was on display at the Reina Sofía Museum in Madrid and at HKW in 2010 as well as at Museo Nacional de Arte, Mexico City, and at the MUSEF in La Paz in 2011. In 2021 the project archives that Creischer and Siekmann had worked on since 2018 were presented at HKW.

Lama El Khatib is trained in architecture and studied Art History and Philosophy at the American University of Beirut. Currently, she is pursuing an MA in Philosophy at the Freie Universität Berlin. Since 2018, she has worked in the context of *The Whole Life Academy* and *The Whole Life: An Archive Project* at HKW in Berlin.

Tamer El Said is a filmmaker, writer, and producer living between Berlin and Cairo with a filmography of 17 titles that received many local and international awards. El Said is a founder of Zero Production, and Cimateque – Alernative Film Center in Cairo. His first feature-length film, *In the Last Days of the City*, was premiered at the Berlinale 2016, where it received the Caligari Film Prize. The film toured over 220 festivals worldwide, receiving more than fifteen international awards.

Haytham El Wardany is an Egyptian writer of short stories and experimental prose who lives and works in Berlin. His current short story collection titled *Irremediable* received the Cairo Book Fair award in 2021. Among his publications are *The Book of Sleep* (2017, Alkarma Publishing House, Cairo) and *How to Disappear* (2013, Kayfa Ta Publications, Cairo; 2018, Sternberg Press, Berlin).

Octavian Esanu considers art history, criticism, and exhibition-making as part of his artistic practice. During the 1990s, he was the founding director of the Soros Center for Contemporary Art Chisinau.

Contributors

Today, he is associate professor in the Department of Art and Art History at the American University of Beirut (AUB) and director of AUB Art Galleries. He has a PhD in Art History and degrees in fine art and architecture. His research revolves around the relation between contemporary art and global processes of late-capitalist modernization. He is part of the editorial collective *ARTMargins*.

Ann Harezlak is an art historian, curator, and archivist. Her practice considers archives and ephemera as primary materials for exhibition making and focuses on notions of hybridity across objects and relations. She is an assistant registrar in Special Collections at Getty Research Institute, has created public programs for institutions including Tate and the Victoria and Albert Museum and was a key contributor to London's self-organized nomadic exhibition culture of the late 2000s.

Megan Hoetger is a historian and hard femme. She holds a PhD in Performance Studies with specializations in Critical Theory and Film Studies from the University of California, Berkeley. Currently she is a curator with the Amsterdam-based arts organization If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution. Her archival and curatorial practice maps the political economies in which underground media networks were formed transnationally during the Cold War period.

Eiman Hussein is a psychotherapist and academic lecturer currently living in the UK. She has a background as a medical doctor and public health specialist. The daughter of the late filmographer Hussein Shariffe (1934–2005), Eiman has been involved in various projects and collaborations over the years to honor the legacy and curate/archive his oeuvre. Part of this mission has been the attempt to bring to life the story of his uncompleted works, particularly his latest film—Of Dust and Rubies.

Iman Issa is an artist and professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Recent solo and group exhibitions include Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, MoMA and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, MACBA, Barcelona, and the 12th Sharjah biennial. Publications include *Book of Facts: A Proposition* (2017) and *Common Elements* (2015). She was a DAAD

artist in residence (2017) and received the Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise (2017), and the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award (2015), among others.

Kapwani Kiwanga is a Franco-Canadian living and working in Paris. Kiwanga's work traces the pervasive impact of power asymmetries by placing historic narratives in dialogue with contemporary realities, the archive, and tomorrow's possibilities. She received the Zurich Art Prize (2022), Marcel Duchamp Prize (2020), Frieze Artist Award (2018), and Sobey Art Award (2018). She is represented by Galerie Poggi, Paris; Goodman Gallery (Johannesburg, Cape Town, London); and Galerie Tanja Wagner in Berlin.

Carlos Kong is a writer, art historian, and curator based in Berlin. He is a joint-PhD candidate in Art History at Princeton University and in Film Studies at Universität Mainz, where his research focuses on queer histories of migration between Germany and Turkey in contemporary art and film after 1989. His writing has been published in magazines (*Texte zur Kunst, Flash Art*), exhibition catalogues (Kunstverein Göttingen, C/O Berlin), and he has co-curated programs at Moderna Galerija in Lubiana, Slovenia, Mishkin Gallery in New York, and Independent Curators International.

Maha Maamoun is an artist, curator and publisher. She is co-founder of the Contemporary Image Collective (CiC) and the independent publishing platform Kayfa ta. Maamoun is a member of the curatorial team of Forum Expanded (Berlinale), and the Akademie der Künste der Welt, Cologne.

Doreen Mende is a curator, theorist, researcher and, since November 2021, head of the cross-collections department "Research" at the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (SKD) as well as professor of curatorial/politics at the CCC research-based Master and PhD-Forum, which she also directed from 2015 to 2021, of the Visual Arts Department at HEAD Genève/Switzerland. She is a founding member of the Harun Farocki Institute in Berlin and the European Forum for Advanced Practices https://entangledinternationalism.org

Stefan Nowotny is a philosopher based in London who teaches at the Department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, University

of London. He also taught and researched at universities in Birmingham, Lüneburg, Klagenfurt, and Louvain-la-Neuve, and was part of various transnational research projects. He has published widely on philosophical and political topics, co-edited several anthologies, and co-authored the volumes *Instituierende Praxen. Bruchlinien der Institutionskritik* (w/ G. Raunig, 2008) and *Übersetzung: Das Versprechen eines Begriffs* (w/ B. Buden, 2008).

Marion von Osten (1963–2020) lived and worked in Berlin, working as an artist and exhibition maker. She collaborated in collective research mediation and exhibition projects, among others with the Center for Post-Colonial Knowledge and Culture, Berlin, and the artist collective Labor k3000 Zurich/Berlin. Among her important projects are *bauhaus imaginista* (2018–19), *In the Desert of Modernity – Colonial Planning and After* at Les Abattoirs de Casablanca (2009) and at Haus der Kulturen der Welt (2008), *Projekt Migration in Cologne* (2002–06) and Atelier Europa with Kunstverein München (2002–04).

Pad.ma is an artist-run online archive of deeply searchable video material, primarily footage and not finished films contributed by filmmakers, artists, cultural workers, and organizations. It was co-initiated by Mumbai-based artists CAMP in 2008 along with 0x2620 (Berlin). Now containing several hundred hours of densely annotated, transcribed, and open-access footage, Pad.ma (and her allied archival initiatives) continue to seed radical and future-oriented engagement with both material and theory of digital archives.

Since 2003, **Sarah Pierce** has used the term The Metropolitan Complex to describe her project, characterized by forms of gathering, both historical examples and those she initiates. The processes of research and presentation that she undertakes demonstrate a broad understanding of cultural work and a continual renegotiation of the terms for making art, the potential for dissent, and self-determination. Pierce works with installation, performance, archives, talks and papers, often opening these up to the personal and the incidental in ways that challenge received histories and accepted forms.

Sophia Prinz is a cultural sociologist and professor of Design Theory and

History at Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK). She was visiting professor of Design Theory and Gender Studies at the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK) from 2018 to 2020. Before that, she held lectureships at various universities and was head of research at Johann Jacobs Museum Zurich. Her academic interests include practice theory and perception, design and society, exhibition theory and aesthetics, as well as global modernity and transculturality. She is a founding member of the Crabflower Club.

Eran Schaerf is an artist. Among his projects are *Continuity* (Biennale di Venezia 2011), *Disorder of Appearance* (Akademie der Künste Berlin 2013), *Frequency-Modulated Scenario* (Archive Books 2015), *Günter Peter Straschek: Emigration–Film–Politics* (Museum Ludwig Köln 2018, with Julia Friedrich), *Only Six Can Play this Game* (Droste Festival 2020, with Eva Meyer), *Citizens of Nowhere*, *Imitate!* (transversal texts 2020), *Kahanoff's Levantinism: The Anachronic Possibilities of a Concept* (BAKonline 2021, with Eva Meyer).

Stefanie Schulte Strathaus is co-director of Arsenal – Institute for Film and Video Art. From 2006 to 2021 she was the founding director of the Berlinale section Forum Expanded. In 2011, she launched the ongoing project *Living Archive – Archive Work as a Contemporary Artistic and Curatorial Practice*. She currently curates the collaborative project "Archive außer sich" which resulted in the foundation of the archive festival *Archival Assembly*. Schulte Strathaus is on the boards of the Harun Farocki Institut, NAAS (Network of Arab Alternative Screens) and the masters program Film Culture at the University in Jos, Nigeria.

Andreas Siekmann is an artist and writer living in Berlin. His works explore globalization, the privatization of public space, and the restructuring of labor relations. With Max Jorge Hinderer and Alice Creischer he curated *Principio Potosí*, on display at the Reina Sofía Museum in Madrid and at HKW in 2010, as well as at Museo Nacional de Arte, Mexico City, and at the MUSEF in La Paz in 2011. In 2021, the project archives that Siekmann and Creischer had worked on since 2018 were presented at HKW.

Magdalena Tyżlik-Carver is a curator and researcher based in Denmark and Italy. She investigates relational arrangements of humans and nonhumans and their biopolitical creations through posthuman curating and curating in/ as common/s, future thinking, affective data, datafications, and data fictions. She produces curatorial experiments with software, people, machines, and data and investigates forms of data curating. Tyżlik-Carver is associate professor in the Department of Digital Design and Information Studies at Aarhus University https://thecommonpractice.org/

Françoise Vergès is a public educator and anti-racist feminist. She works on the decolonization of the museum, convenes workshops, and curates decolonial guided visits in cities and museums. Recent publications include *The Wombs of Women: Capitalism, Race, Feminism (2020)*, *Resolutely Black: Conversations with Aimé Césaire (2020)*, and *A Decolonial Feminism (2021)*.

Artist **Ala Younis** seeks instances where historical and political events collapse into personal ones. Her work also looks into how the archive plays on predilections and how its lacunas and mishaps manipulate the imagination. She curated Kuwait's first pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2013). She is co-founder of the publishing initiative Kayfa-ta, co-head of Berlinale's Forum Expanded, member of the Academy of the Arts of the World (Cologne), and co-artistic director of Singapore Biennale 2022.

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