

Open
Archief

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ARTISTIC REUSE OF ARCHIVES

Eline de Graaf, Michael Karabinos, Thijs van Leeuwen,
Cees Martens, Marius Schwarz (ed.)

International Institute of Social History,
Nieuwe Instituut and Sound & Vision.
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This book follows three editions of the programme Open Archief (2019-2022) and builds upon it in a new way. Open Archief is a multi-faceted collaborative project that explores the potentials of what can be inspired by making archive materials accessible to artists for creative reuse. It was initiated by two Dutch heritage institutions, Nieuwe Instituut and Sound & Vision, joined by the International Institute of Social History in its second edition (2020/21).

During these three editions, the project encouraged media artists to use and reuse 'open' archives by creating a reciprocal experiment between artists and archival institutions. 'Open' archives here literally means freely accessible digitised or digital archive collections, mostly in the public domain, ready for reuse. Figuratively, the name also very much refers to the institutes and their collections opening up for use, reuse and (re)interpretation. Through an artist-in-residency programme, an exhibition and several workshops ('Reuse Clinics') throughout the year, Open Archief brought together media artists, heritage institutions, collaborative research platform ARIAS and copyright organisation Pictoright, to discuss the importance of the creative reuse of heritage, and what is required to make this reuse work.

The residencies, with the exhibitions as their outcome, showed the broad scope of artistic engagement with archives and collections, and in some cases also with the communities behind them¹. The (many) attendants of the Reuse Clinics on copyright and ethics meanwhile made us aware of a widely shared need for knowledge sharing on archive reuse, especially between artists and the participating institutions.

After three editions following this format, the project team sought a way to showcase the outcomes of the various aspects of the programme in a more concrete way, while still staying true to the core of what Open Archief should be about. The idea was born to publish a bundle of essays. We appropriately reused the title (in Dutch, Open Archief) and partnered up with Stichting Archiefpublicaties and Pictoright. Archival scholar Michael Karabinos joined our team as an editor and, finally, long term Open Archief designer Marius Schwarz

¹ For example, with RE:ACTIVATE RADIO for Open Archief #2, Femke Dekker sought to 'reactivate' Dutch squatters radio archives from the 1980s by showing their continuing relevance in today's context, with both an exhibition and new radio broadcasts. Dekker sees radio as a 'tool' for activists and as a medium for community building, and wants to show the possibilities of radio to new generations of activists through her work. RE:ACTIVATE RADIO led, among other things, to a new work in collaboration with today's squatting scene in the project *The Right to the City xxx*.

came on board. The team then invited artists from their networks to contribute an essay on how they use and/or see the role of archives in their work. The result is this book of various essays that lies before you.

Our aim here is to paint a picture of archival reuse by artists and how they relate (themselves) to archives and archival institutions. In doing so, we firstly want to demonstrate to the archival community, and anyone else, that archive reuse is co-creation. The rest of this chapter will explore this notion. Secondly we intend to inspire readers to actively choose to work with archives: the essays in this publication provide many examples and avenues to explore. We hope you will enjoy them as much as we did. Finally this book is aimed at a wider audience interested in art and archives. We hope to offer insight into the dynamics at play between 'archive' and user.

CO-CREATION

Building off of the Open Archief programme we wanted to offer more insight into the work behind creative reuse of archival material. How do artists engage with the material? What ethical considerations are there when using archives for artistic practices? And how do we get from viewing an archive to the creation process? Within the essays we believe these questions are answered, but before reading these essays there are other questions we, as editors, have to ask ourselves. What do we mean by open archives? What even is an archive? And how does this reuse fit into the greater life of the archives?

Just looking at what the term 'archive' can mean, offers little clarity. An archive can be an institution--"I work at an archive"; "The Institute for Sound & Vision is an archive". An archive can be a building--"I am walking into the archive". It is a collection--"The International Institute of Social History holds the Karl Marx archive". And it is also the documents themselves--"I went digging through the archives". And, also, should it be archive, or archives? When we write about opening archives up, which type are we referring to? In truth, we see authors and artists in this book using all definitions of archive, including their own. This varying (open) definition of archive allows each participant in the book their own freedom to experience and work within an archive in their own manner, without the pressure of our own editor-imposed limits to any

sort of professional or academic understanding of an archive. Within the contributions in this publication you will see the varying definitions of archive used by the creators.

While the subject of the book is 'reuse' we would be wrong not to frame this act of reusing as a form of creation. Not only the creation of the final product of each author's work, but also a co-creation of the archives they work with and use. Traditionally the archive creator (*archiefvormer*) is the person or organisation whose materials the archive contains. This literal definition-like a formal definition of archive--is restrictive and overlooks the other hands that shape an archives' form. In asking the question "are records ever actual?" Australian archivist Sue McKemish states that a record is "always in the process of becoming."² The record, and the archive, are never at their finished form. What we are viewing in the pages of this book is the continuation of this "process of becoming", where the archives take new shapes, have new hands involved in their creation, but never reach a final state of completion.

We can look at those involved in co-creation of an archive as its stakeholders--the subject of records, the archivist, and the user. Each author in this book plays these different roles, sometimes simultaneously.

SUBJECT AS CREATOR

Following the one creator definition, the role of the subject, the *archived*, becomes secondary and loses importance. Given the powerful role of archives and information in colonisation and wartime, it is especially necessary to be aware of how those who are recorded add to an archives' creation. The record would not exist without their role in the process, and sometimes text in a record comes directly from the words of the person being archived. For instance, the *Relaas van Tula*.³ This document, held in the National Archives of the Netherlands as part of their archive of Curaçao, Bonaire and Aruba, 1707-1828 (1859), contains the only recorded words from Tula, the leader of a slave revolt on Curaçao in 1795. The inventory of the archive lists a litany of colonial offices under *archiefvormer*, while those voices contained in the archive, like Tula's, are not

² McKemish, Sue. "Are records ever actual." *The records continuum: Ian Maclean and Australian Archives first fifty years* (1994).

³ Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Curaçao, Oude Archieven tot 1828, nummer toegang 1.05.12.01, inventarisnummer 105.

mentioned. However, it is clear that the record would not be what it is without the words of Tula and he, as subject, is crucial to the archive's creation.

With the stories told by belit sağ (BS p33-48) we see how the version of events in an archive can differ from the versions remembered by the subjects. However, the women sağ interviews are integral to the archive of the labour dispute that is left behind. They are at the centre of the dispute, and there is no archive without their role, despite the records not coming from them directly and hiding their recollections.

Paula Kommos's research (PK p65-80) into the artist Eva Eisenlohr provides us with another example of the subject as creator. Nazi-era files on "degenerate" art and artists from the Freiburg municipal archives document the loss of some of Eisenlohr's work. These records, though meant to denigrate, delegitimise and oppress, are shown to be used today to highlight Eisenlohr's life and re-establish her within the canon of mid-century German art.

By including the words of members of the Input Party, a project that brings artists together to discuss the use of image archives in their work, Elki Boerdam (EB p161-176) reminds us that participants, those whose words are being recorded, are integral to the archival process. The images, stripped of context, are paired with the voices of the archived, together creating a record larger than one person.

ARCHIVIST AS CREATOR

A narrow definition of creator also further proliferates the idea of a neutral, hands-off, archivist. Instead, archivists are, and always have been, active participants in the creation of the archives they hold, making choices on what is included, how it is described, how easy it is to find and what is available online in digital form. One doesn't have to search long in an archive for instances of descriptions that prove one-sided, or highlight certain actions and individuals and obscure others. Further, an archival institution's collection only holds what it has selected to hold. South African archivist Verne Harris refers to this fragmented archive as the "archival sliver."⁴ What we see is only a fraction of what was.

⁴ Harris, Verne. "The archival sliver: power, memory, and archives in South Africa." *Archival science* 2 (2002): 63-86.

Jessica de Abreu (JdA p97-112), a founder of the Black Archives in Amsterdam, would be no stranger to the role of archivist, but in her chapter we see deeper how the archivist plays a role in creating and shaping the archive. Taking us through the archive left behind by her mother, Jessica shows the delicate interplay between archiving and making an archive-adding context, building a narrative, telling a story.

Pieter Paul Pothoven (PPP p145-160) literally takes us on the journey from action to document to archive, culminating in the donation of his built collection to the International Institute of Social History. Though Pothoven joined the process after the action took place—as all archivists do—his fingerprints are still everywhere. From forming the archive in the first place, to playing a role in determining what gets in the archive, where it is held, and what stipulations are implemented, in his role he is clearly a creator without having written the documents themselves.

In writing about queer history/archiving, Philipp Gufler (PG p17-32) tells the story of Albert Knoll, a founder of the Munich-based community archive Forum Queeres Archiv München. By exploring the foundation of an archive of previously marginalised stories, Gufler reminds us that Knoll is every bit the creator of the archive as those who wrote the individual records.

The Shock Forest Group (SFG p177-192) brings us out of the archive and into the woods, asking us how to archive a place, especially a place with a far-reaching and contentious history. Investigating a Dutch military proving ground turned artspace, they help us ponder how we can memorialise and archive landscapes altered by human activity.

USER AS CREATOR

Finally, we have the user as co-creator. Eric Ketelaar, former director of the National Archives of the Netherlands, writes, "Every interaction, intervention, interrogation, and interpretation by creator, user, and archivist is an activation of the record. The archive is an infinite activation of the record. Each activation leaves fingerprints which are attributes to the archive's infinite meaning."⁵ The idea behind this is that the archive is ever-chang-

⁵ Ketelaar, Eric. "Tacit narratives: the meanings of archives." *Archival science* 1 (2001): 137.

ing, there is no "final form" of an archive, even when sitting in a box on a shelf in a cold depot, the archive can always be created anew with the help of a new user. By bringing our own perspectives, our own biases and lived experiences to a record, we read it differently than the person at the next chair in an archive reading room would. We see something different in the text or images, in the context, in the words said and not said. We speak of it differently and we note different stories and narratives.

We can see in a project like Pablo Núñez Palma's (PNP p113-128) re-activation of the Polygoonjournaal archive from Sound & Vision how users co-create and shape an archive. Truly something new has been created in this project, but through his work with AI visualisations, he has also altered our own understanding of the archive and given us new insights into its content and form.

In her work, susan pui san lok (SPSL p49-64) takes an uncatalogued fragment of an under-used archive and creates it anew to build a soundscape that blurs the boundaries between the past and present and confronts contemporary and historical discourse. As a user of the archive she is also making it, shifting its meanings and how we view the records.

Gill Baldwin's work (GB p81-96) with the digital-born archive of the architectural firm MVRDV at the Nieuwe Instituut highlights the incompleteness of an archive. While trying to make sense of the fragmented remnants left behind, she adds context to our understanding of it, yet also leaves us with more questions regarding how to read this archive.

While researching through radio archives, Femke Dekker, Alice Wong and Simo Tse (FD-AW-ST p193-208/209-220) build their own archive of fragmented references-mimicking the soundscapes of flipping through radio stations, as well as the disjointed, decontextualised format of archives in general.

In his visual essay, Michiel Huijben (MH p129-144) shifts from archive user to builder of an archive of architecture and the architecture of an archive. In creating and questioning the archival architecture, Huijben also reminds us of the multiple definitions of archive. Is the structure of an archive its building plan, or how it is placed in folders; and do those two overlap as we make our way through archival research?

THE BOOK AS ARCHIVE

The (stereo)typical archive user is the historian, or the genealogist. When we add the artist to this list, co-creation becomes even more relevant, though perhaps not at first clearly. The chapters you are about to read are not just the creation of something new, a re-activation of an archive by how they are used. They are a complete reshaping of the archives encountered, archives that never have a final form. Once we have seen the results of this work we can never view the source material the same again. The authors have become creators of these archives, as much as those who held the pens or typed on typewriters or computers. They have shaped them and added to their contexts, added to how we can view and understand these documents.

This book, itself a form of archive, is a co-creation of us the editors as well as the participating authors and artists. It could also not be possible without those archived within the documents the authors describe and use. The very act of reading this book, too, makes you, the reader, part of this co-creating journey. Each of you, the users of the book, will read these re/co-creations differently, adding your own contexts and perspectives. Each of you enters the archive with your own eyes.

Eline de Graaf
 Michael Karabinos
 Thijs van Leeuwen
 Cees Martens
 Marius Schwarz



PHILIP GUFLER
On the Necessity for
Grasroots Historical Activism

FILE 1, PG, p16-32

BELIT SAG
Remembering Otherwise



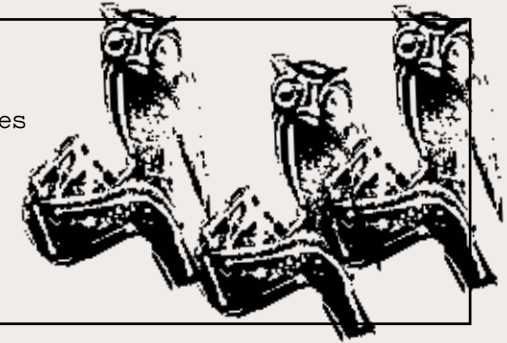
FILE 2, BS, p31-48

susan pui san lok
REWIND / REPLAY

2 Yeah not uh, in, in, in, um, sort of uh, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's, er, er, I, I, it's, it's, if you, you, so, as a, and so
the, the er, so, erm, and, erm, the er, the, the, the, the, erm
4 OK, er, I, I think, yeah, erm, I know, to er, there has be, there has to be, are, are, are, are, what, what, whatever, and,
and I, whatever, what, what, if not one of, of one of them, if not, if, I'm, I, I, OK, the, the, the, in, in, in, so, so, so, the um, the
the, from the, the, the, the, and by, by, by, by, OK, etc, etc
6 Yeah not uh, in, in, in, um, sort of uh, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's, er, er, I, I, it's, it's, if you, you, so, as a, and so
the, the er, so, erm, and, erm, the er, the, the, the, the, erm
8 OK, er, I, I think, yeah, erm, I know, to er, there has be, there has to be, are, are, are, are, what, what, whatever, and,
and I, whatever, what, what, if not one of, of one of them, if not, if, I'm, I, I, OK, the, the, the, in, in, in, so, so, so, the um, the
the, from the, the, the, the, and by, by, by, by, OK, etc, etc

FILE 3, SPSL, p49-64

PAULA KOMMOSS
Luftgeister -
On Activating Archives



FILE 4, PK, p65-80

GILL BALDWIN
To Build or Not to Build



FILE 5, GB, p81-96

JESSICA DE ABREU
Archiving the Superpowers of Black Sex Workers

Golden Lagune BARBARA and
The Intern. Girls zijn er ook.
Open v.a. 11 u. 020-6695947.

GOLDEN LAGOON. je gelooft
je ogen niet, dit mag je niet
missen. Nw. dames aanw.
Zat./zon. 14-02. 020-6695947.
Gewillige MEISJES voor Grieken

FILE 6, JdA, p97-112

PABLO NÚÑEZ PALMA
Reimagining
Polygoonjournaal
using Generative AI



FILE 7, PNP, p113-128

MICHIEL HUIJBEN
Architecture for
Archives

The archive
has an architecture too,

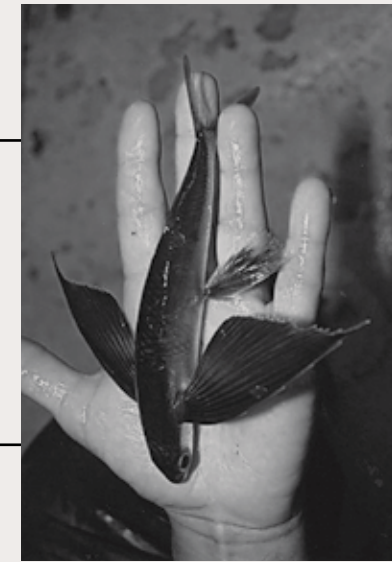
FILE 8, MH, p129-144

PIETER PAUL POTHOVEN
ARCHO4547, Evidence or Documentation?



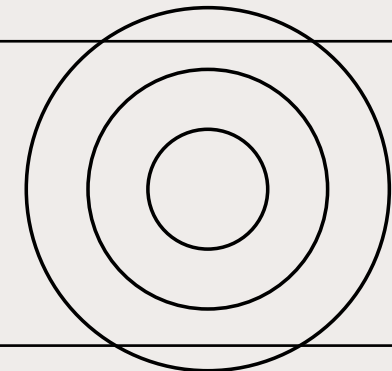
FILE 9, PPP, p145-160

ELKI BOERDAM
Input Party



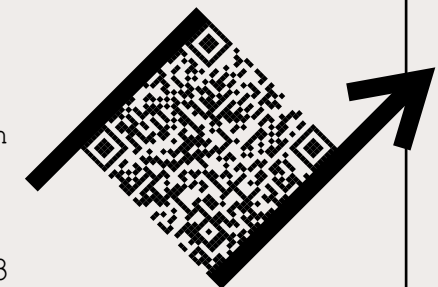
FILE 10, EB, p161-176

SHOCK FOREST GROUP
This Forest was Built
to be Bombed



FILE 11, SFG p177-192

ALICE WONG & SIMO TSE
FEMKE DEKKER
A Collaborative Manual
of Radio/Archive Research

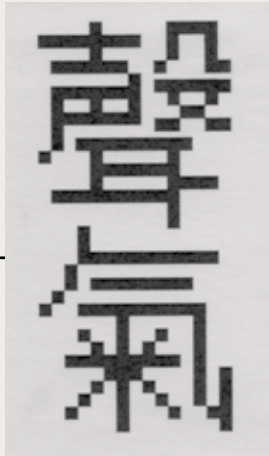


FILE 12, FD-AW-ST p193-208

FEMKE DEKKER
RE:ACTIVATE RADIO

ALICE WONG & SIMO TSE
VOICES AND BREATHS

FILE 13, FD-AW-ST p209-220



P H I L I P P G U F L E R

On the Necessity for Grasroots
Historical Activism

Albert Knoll: On the one hand, you have close friendships, and on the other hand, you have a responsibility for the reappraisal and the continuing commemoration. It's quite clear that when the far-right party AFD [Alternative for Germany] says it's time to stop remembering the crimes during the Nazi era, the neighbouring countries start to worry.

Philipp Gufler: Do you feel a certain responsibility to preserve the memories of the people you interview?

Albert Knoll: Yes, a responsibility, because I know very well that so much of queer history has been lost. Simply because no one wanted to hear it. Because nobody was willing to tell it. And it is a responsibility and a task for contemporary historiography activists to do that.¹



Philipp Gufler: When you explicitly say historiography, how does it change?

Albert Knoll: Of course, until the early 2000s, the queer persecution topic was not a topic at all in historiography, that is, even in Holocaust research. It just didn't exist and you had to actually conquer it first. When I went into archives, they were very difficult, to say it bluntly. People eyed me with suspicion, especially in the state archives.



Philipp Gufler: What feelings are preserved in the Forum?

Albert Knoll: Of course, the Forum tries to preserve these feelings. I'm convinced that we don't even get the chance to archive a lot of these feelings, because a lot of people, before they die, put important documents aside, destroy them, throw them away. Not only these feelings, but also expressions of their sexual life. [Estate Erich Haas] Now and then, however, you discover remnants of feelings, for example in the notebook between Erich and his life partner Klaus. They wrote a kind of diary in which, when nobody was home, they stated their love for each other, or they used it as a shopping list and lovingly called each other toad and toadlet. That's such an intimate glimpse into a gay partnership that went on for 40 years that says a lot, conveys a lot of love, a lot of trust that can develop in a partnership.



So that shows what state archives often collect, is not at all what researchers are looking for today. And historians just don't want to portray the history of power anymore, as in the thirties, but a social history. How does science actually look at this research that comes out of the marginalized group itself? And it is actually always seen as problematic within the research community. Is this contemporary witness testimony really reliable, or is it taken over one-to-one and assertions are made? These historical archives and institutions, which emerged from the movements were actually always viewed skeptically by the established science community for this reason.





Since 1999 there was the Forum Queeres Archiv, at that time still known as Forum Homosexualität und Geschichte, and of course we first started to build up an archive, to collect materials and information and then at some point we felt ready to do gay and lesbian city tours. I still come from a generation of students who studied in the 1980s and we have been only taught the history of the powerful, so to speak. It was not at all about oral history. And afterwards, through interviews with contemporary witnesses I conquered a different historical space, so to speak. And it gave me a very different, very new approach to history.

PHILIPP GUFLER: On the Necessity for Grassroots Historical Activism

Until recently queer history was rarely collected and archived by state institutions in Europe and North America. Often the only archival records prior to the 1960s that are held in public archives are those that document police persecution and social discrimination and show the exclusion of LGBTIQ+ people from society. In Germany, Paragraph 175 criminalised same-sex love between men since the founding of the German Empire in 1871. The law was not abolished in the Weimar Republic either, where the first more visible queer movement and meeting places for LGBTIQ+ people were possible. Paragraph 175 was tightened during the Nazi dictatorship and bars, magazines and organisations like Magnus Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexual Research, which could be considered as the first queer archive and museum in history, were banned and destroyed. Between 1933 to 1945 around 6,000 gay men and trans women were imprisoned in concentration camps where they were marked with a pink triangle. Most of them died. In West Germany, the paragraph continued to be applied after 1945 in the form tightened by the Nazis. It was no longer applied from 1969, but was only removed completely from law without replacement after reunification. A remembrance of the first queer movement before the Nazi regime in Germany was therefore only possible from the 1970s onwards, when various gay and lesbian activist communities were formed.

Self-organised LGBTIQ+ groups, autodidacts and historians such as Munich-based Albert Knoll have since made it their commitment to remember the crimes against humanity and the queer victims of the Nazi era. Since 1997 Knoll has worked at the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site and is the first historian to systematically research the biographies of the 800 or more gay and trans* prisoners in Dachau. He has published on topics relating to Dachau concentration camp and the LGBTIQ+ history in Munich, including

an anthology about the history of the Pink Triangle Memorial Stone in Dachau in 2015.

When the Concentration Camp Memorial Site in Dachau opened in 1965, 20 years after the liberation of the camp, Paragraph 175 still existed, so commemorating the queer prisoners was out of question. Some of the metal triangles on the memorial sculpture on the former roll-call square by Nandor Glid from 1968, which were supposed to be filled with pink tiles among others, therefore stayed empty. After Paragraph 175 was no longer applied a long-lasting fight against old prejudices, which were still alive among the survivors of the concentration camp and also among politicians, followed. From 1985 to 1995 gay groups demanded the Pink Triangle Memorial Stone in Dachau for the victims of queer prosecution, which is now on view at the Memorial Room in Dachau.²

Even before Albert Knoll worked in Dachau he started his research with a focus on self-initiated interviews with contemporary witnesses. When he studied History and German studies at Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich in the 1980s, oral history wasn't yet thought of in historical science. By recording eyewitness conversations with people about their daily lives and historical events, information from different perspectives which often cannot be found in written sources can be captured for future generations. This intergenerational method is particularly important for research into queer history and Albert Knoll's ongoing research, which is distinguished by not only focusing on the perspective of those in power.

In 2023 I realised a cinematic portrait of Albert Knoll's decades of work. For some time now I wanted to shoot a short film about Albert and ask him why he has dedicated a large part of his life to commemorating the crimes against humanity committed during the Nazi dictatorship

and what this archival work has done to him. A special focus is on his interviews with contemporary witnesses, as I am interested in how, as a conversational partner, one preserves their knowledge and experiences in a certain way after their death. After he has done so many witness interviews the last thirty-five years and was the one who asked the questions, I reversed the situation in the short film and interviewed him.

In 1999 Albert Knoll was a founding member of the grassroots organisation Forum Queeres Archiv München (FQAM) and has been on their board ever since. FQAM is part of a long line of queer archives created in Europe and North America since the 1960s. The supposedly oldest and largest queer archive is the ONE Archives in Los Angeles. They originated from the gay rights organisation ONE Inc., which began publishing *ONE Magazine*, the first widely published homosexual periodical in the USA, in 1953 and is today owned by the University of Southern California library.³ More archives have been established in North America and Western Europe since the 1970s with the rise of the Western LGBTIQ+ movement. In Germany, the first queer archives emerged in the 1980s: the lesbian archive Spinnboden in Berlin in 1980, the Centrum Schwule Geschichte in Cologne in 1984 and the Schwules Museum in Berlin in 1985. In Amsterdam Homodok was founded in 1978. Homodok merged with the Lesbian Archive Amsterdam and the Anna Blaman House in Leeuwarden to form the independent IHLIA in 2000 and is located at the central branch of the Amsterdam Public Library since 2007.⁴

Like many other community-based archives, the creation of the FQAM was an act of self-empowerment. It became a social meeting place that is not just about the safe preservation of documents. In 2013 I became an active member of the FQAM. From the start I was interested in the grass-

roots structure of the archive and how history and knowledge is collected differently in the organisation compared to state-run institutions. Even though the FQAM is supported by the cultural department of the city of Munich, which mainly covers the renting costs and three part-time positions, most of the archival work is done voluntarily by a diverse group of around 100 members who range in age from 26 to 85.⁵ Each volunteer member has their own aspirations and priorities and so the collective behind the FQAM also functions as a place for intergenerational exchange. It depends on people, groups and associations from LGBTIQ+ communities to donate thematically relevant materials to them. In return they integrate it into their archive and preserve it for future generations. Besides the archive Albert Knoll and other members of the FQAM organise queer city tours through Munich, providing a different perspective on the often invisible layers of urban culture of the past.

The founding history of the FQAM is closely linked to the beginnings of the AIDS crisis in Germany. From the very beginning, it has included the estates of artists and activists such as the writer Gustl Angstmann, who died of an AIDS-related illness in 1998. In 2013 I started my artistic research to learn more about the social and political repressions during the AIDS crisis in Germany in the 1980s and developed the video installation and accompanying artist book *Projection on the Crisis (Gauweilereien in Munich)* in 2014.⁶ Peter Gauweiler and the conservative CSU party answered the emergence of the AIDS epidemic with the most drastic and shocking proposals. The prevention of the disease was not at the forefront of their politics. Gauweiler stigmatised homosexuals, prostitutes and drug addicts as so-called risk groups and, as State Secretary to the Bavarian Minister of the Interior, sought the infamous 'catalogue of measures' that provided for compulsory tests and segregation.



Philipp Gufler, Gespräch mit Albert Knoll, 2023

The effects of the invisibilisation of queer history through persecution and social exclusion right up to the present day are shown, for example, by the biography of the German painter Paul Hoecker (1854 - 1910). Despite his participation in exhibitions like the second to fourth Venice Biennale and the Chicago's World Fair in 1893 among many more, and his influence as the first modern professor at the Art Academy in Munich, his works and biography are almost forgotten today. A scandal surrounding one of his paintings forced him to resign from the professorship in 1898. Allegedly he painted a male sex worker, with whom he also maintained a private relationship, as the mother Mary. At FQAM, we formed a group in 2019 which researches his exchange with the homosexual emancipation movement around Magnus Hirschfeld and life in Italy after his dismissal from the Academy. By organising lectures and exhibitions and collection



Philipp Gufler, Projektion auf die Krise - Gauweilereien in München, 2021

materials about his art and life at FQAM we hope to contribute to the artist's reintegration into the cultural awareness and German's art history.⁷

I dedicated one of my quilts, an ongoing series of silkscreen prints on fabric in memory to artists, writers, magazines and lost queer spaces, to Paul Hoecker. Since 2013 the series has become some form of archive of my research on queer history and is an attempt to enable a different form of remembrance culture. Though some quilts extend more into my present and refer to people with whom I was in personal contact. My motivation from the beginning was to create some kind of fragile monuments to emphasise the ephemeral nature of history and identity. The quilts, in their fragility, transparencies and textile materiality, are intended to commemorate less in an iconic way, but to allow greater complexity and



Philipp Gufler, *Quilt #21 (Paul Hoecker)*, 2018
 Philipp Gufler, *Quilt #53 (Leopold Obermayer)* [with Albert Knoll], 2023. Courtesy BQ, Berlin

contradiction in the way we retell the biographies of the people and places lost. Most recently I collaborated with the historian Albert Knoll again to develop *Quilt #53 (Leopold Obermayer)*. The lawyer and wine merchant Leopold Obermayer (1892-1943) was persecuted by the Nazis because of his Jewish descent and his homosexuality, imprisoned in Dachau concentration camp in 1934 and murdered in Mauthausen.

The structure of the FQAM and further research in self-organised archives influences my screen prints on mirrors and fabrics, video installations, performances, artists' books and objects to this day. At the FQAM there are still no strictly separate areas for administration, storage and research. All functions are inter-linked and the viewing takes place directly and in constant exchange with the volunteers.⁸ When I began volunteering at the FQAM, the book *An Archive of Feelings* by Ann Cvetkovich became an important point of reference for me. In the seventh chapter of the book "In the Archive of Lesbian Feelings" she reflects on the upgrowth of community-based archives in the United States like the Lesbian Herstory Archive (LHA) in New York or the GLBT Historical Society San Francisco, which both started to archive queer history in private homes in the early 1980s.

In her text, Cvetkovich compares these grassroots archives to university and state-run institutions, like the New York Public Library (NYPL), which owns different estates in their *Gay and Lesbian Collections & AIDS/HIV Collections*. Among others she speaks to Maxine Wolfe, a former member of Act Up-New York and longtime volunteer of the LHA:

"She [Maxine Wolfe] claims that there is no safety for gay and lesbian materials in a publicly funded institution, in contrast to the dedicated mission of LHA, where no

one will suddenly decide to defund or de-accession lesbian and gay materials. Scoffing at the notion that the NYPL is a more secure location, Wolfe explained to me in her interview, 'Let me tell you about security - it means that when there is a fire, someone wants to save your papers. At LHA, there are twenty-five women who would put lives on the line to save the stuff.' She is a strong advocate of the independent and separatist stance of LHA, and her convictions serve as a reminder that recognition and inclusion by traditional institutions should not be the only model of success for gay and lesbian archives."⁹

Community-based archives do not have to follow the same strict and sometimes illogical conservation rules as state archives, so they can generate greater visibility and accessibility. Nevertheless, the dependence on state funding and private sponsorship remains. As many queer archives have grown in the last decades they can no longer be run solely by volunteers. The conflict between professionalism and independence is growing. As radical right-wing political parties are also gaining ground in Europe and USA, the advantages of autonomous structures in queer archives seem obvious. Like all community-based archives, queer archives stay as fragile as their community and depend on grassroots historical activism of the next generations.

There is still a need for community-based archives without state control that preserve queer history in independent structures. In 2017 the Collectif Archives LGBTQI+ was formed in Paris after an appeal by Act Up-Paris. Previously, parts of the Act Up-Paris estate held by the city archive were made inaccessible for further research for data protection reasons. As their pamphlet states, "memories are dying", therefore different

activists and gay organisations formed an alliance to support an independent queer archive in the French capital to collect the legacy of LGBTIQ+ lives in Paris through oral history interviews and other means. In 2019 the city of Paris offered support to Collectif Archives LGBTIQ+ on the condition that the preservation of its archives is ensured by public preservation institutions as defined by the French Heritage Code. The members of the Collectif refused to fulfil these standards. They argued that the conditions imposed in the rules would lead to a dispossession and make their archives more invisible. Currently they are relocating and are searching for funding.¹⁰

Autonomous archives do not claim the entirety of archival materials or the completeness of activist emancipation. There are also many gaps in queer archives, as they are dependent on donations and thus in some ways reflect the community and scene of their time. For instance, archival materials and historical research on queer life and culture in East Germany are still underrepresented in the archives that were founded in West Germany.¹¹ The text "One Inc. and Reed Erickson. The Uneasy Collaboration of Gay and Trans Activism, 1964-2003" by Aaron H. Devor and Nicholas Matte¹² tells the story of philanthropist and trans-health care pioneer Reed Erickson's conflict with One Inc. and shows how transgender people were often marginalised by early gay and lesbian organisations. Materials on trans, inter and non-binary history and culture are also underrepresented in the FQAM collection. As in the queer scene in general, great efforts are still needed to take into account aspects such as origin, class, ability and religion from an intersectional perspective in order to counteract multiple discrimination.

Based on my own experiences while researching and talking to other grassroots archivists throughout Europe and the USA

the last couple of years, I see the advantages but also difficulties community-based archives are facing. The friendships that have grown out of these inter-generational exchanges have strongly influenced my artistic practice and my reflection on the process of historiography. In 2021/22 the FQAM was invited by the Museum Haus der Kunst in Munich to show some of their materials in their exhibition series "Archives in Residency". For the closing event I developed the lecture performance *Cockatoo Archive* with artist colleague Johanna Gonschorek.¹³ The costumes I designed in reference to the artist Lil Picard incorporated various archival materials and event photos from the FQAM, so in a way our bodies carry the fragile history of queer communities and the archive. In the performance, I was able to take the personal encounters and friendships that have formed my involvement with the FQAM over the past 11 years to reflect about the personal structure in community-based archives. Self-organised archives are activist places where personal and artistic access to social history is made possible. The archive objects in community-based archives are not just file numbers, but are brought back to life by archivists and users of each generation.





Philipp Gufler, Kostüm Kakaduarchiv (IT), 2022. Courtesy BQ, Berlin

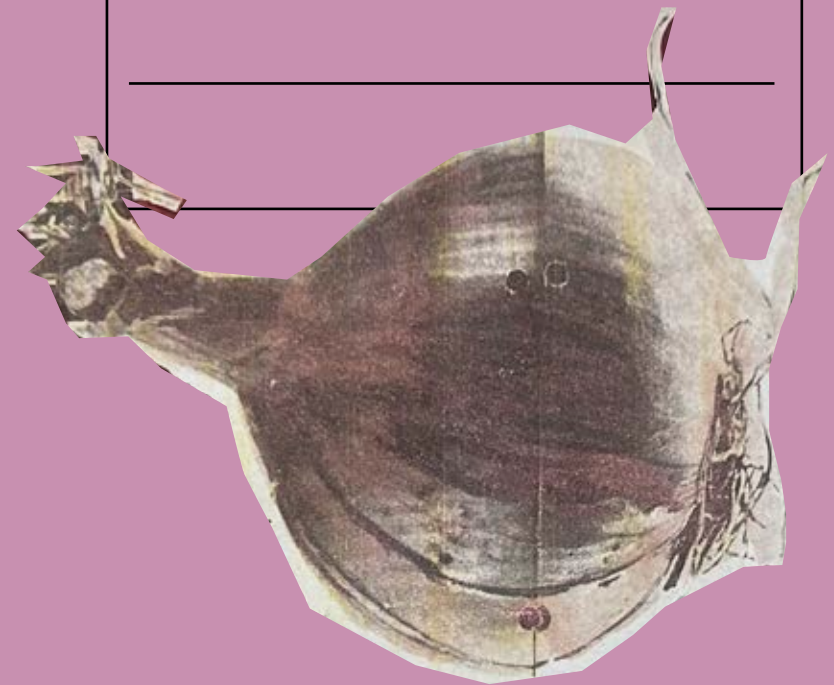
- 1 Gufler, Philipp: *Conversation with Albert Knoll*, 2023, Video: 25 min.
- 2 See also: Knoll, Albert (ed.) (2015): *Splitter 13: Der Rosa-Winkel-Gedenkstein. Die Erinnerung an die Homosexuellen im KZ Dachau*, Munich: Forum Queeres Archiv München, 117 pages.
- 3 One Archives at the USC Libraries: History, one.usc.edu/about/history (accessed March 4, 2024)
- 4 IHLIA LGBTI Heritage: *Van Schoenendoos tot Homosaurus*, ihlia.nl/van-schoenendoos-tot-homosaurus (accessed March 4, 2024)
- 5 *Forum Queeres Archiv München: About Us*, forum-muenchen.org/en/about-us (accessed March 4, 2024).
- 6 See also: Gufler, Philipp (2021): *Splitter 17. Projection on the Crisis. Gauweilereten in Munich*. Munich: Forum Queeres Archiv München and Hammann von Mier Verlag, second edition, 152 pages.
- 7 Gufler, Philipp; Grühne, Stefan; Maniu, Nicholas; Spachtholz, Christina: *Research group on Paul Hoecker* forummuenchen.org/en/research-group-on-paul-hoecker (accessed on March 5, 2024)
- 8 For an architectural analysis on queer spaces with reference to the FQAM, see also: Grühne, Stefan: *Queere Raumpraxis: Das Forum Queeres Archiv München als Gedächtnis- und Gefühlsspeicher*, in "kritische berichte", Volume 51, Number 02/2023, page 108-114.
- 9 Cvetkovich, Ann (2003): *An Archive of Feelings*, Durham: Duke University Press, p. 248-249.
- 10 Collecif Archives LGBTIQ+: *Historique*, archiveslgbtqi.fr/qui-sommes-nous/historique-du-collectif (accessed on April 2, 2024)
- 11 See also: Tammer, Tereasa (2023): *Warme Brüder im Kalten Krieg, Die DDR-Schwulenbewegung und das geteilte Deutschland in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 292 pages.
- 12 From "GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies", Durham: Duke University Press, Volume 10, Number 02/2004, page 179-209.
- 13 Gufler, Philipp and Gonschorek, Johanna: *Cockatoo Archive*, performance at Haus der Kunst on August, 4 2022: vimeo.com/751251443 (accessed on April 2, 2024)



[International memorial at the former roll-call square]
Albert Knoll: It is interesting that if you look closely you can observe that some of these metal angles are empty. Further colors were intended here by the artist who made these enamels but that then ultimately the committee of prisoners decided against it.

BELIT SAČ

Remembering Otherwise





Bondig 28-9-78

Türkiyeli göçmen işçi kadınların iş göçünün ilk yıllarında Hollanda'daki hayatları üzerine arşiv araştırmaları yaparken, 1978 yılında Veghel'de bir soğan fabrikasında ve Almelo'da bir tavuk fabrikasında işverenlerle işçi kadınlar arasında gerçekleşen iş anlaşmazlıklarıyla karşılaştım. Bu fabrikalarda çalışan işçi kadınlar kendilerine dayatılan uzun çalışma saatlerini, düşük ücretleri ve tatil haklarının olmaması gibi koşulları kabul etmediler.



While conducting research on the lives of migrant women workers from Turkey in the early period of labour migration to the Netherlands, I came across a labour dispute at an onion peeling factory in Veghel and a strike at a chicken factory in Almelo, both took place in 1978. The women working for these factories refused the imposed labour conditions, in which they had long working days, they were not paid enough, and they did not have holiday pay and holiday leave.

Veghel ve Almelo'daki direnen işçi kadınları görüntüleyen fotoğraf sanatçısı Bertien van Manen'in (1935-2024) değerli anısına ithafen.

To the loving memory of photographer Bertien van Manen (1935-2024) who photographed the struggle of women workers both in Veghel and Almelo.

Bonoiç

Veghel'deki işçi kadınlar Hollanda'da sendikayla örgütlenen ilk göçmen kadınlardı. FNV sendikasıyla birlikte işverenlerinden toplu iş sözleşmesi talep ettiler. Araştırmam ilerledikçe bu kadınlardan bazılarına ulaştım. 1978 yılında ya-



şadıkları iş anlaşmazlığına dair topladığım arşiv görüntülerine birlikte baktık. Ben araştırmam sayesinde bu iş anlaşmazlığıyla ilgili tarihlere ve verilere hakimken, onlar bu gerçekleri genellikle hatırlamıyorlardı. Şakaları,

kahkahaları, bazı kokuları, dokuları, bakışları hatırlıyorlardı ve sık sık o zamanlarla ilgili detikodu yapıyorlardı. Duyulara ve bedene dair anıları ortaya çıkarıyordu.



ilerleyen sayfa larda bu iki iş anlaşmazlığı'nın fotoğraflarından yapılmış kolajlar yer alıyor.

Benoit

The women of the Veghel labour dispute were the first migrant women who unionised in the Netherlands. Together with FNV labour union, they demanded a collective labour agreement. After several months of research, I got in touch with some of the women and looked at the archival



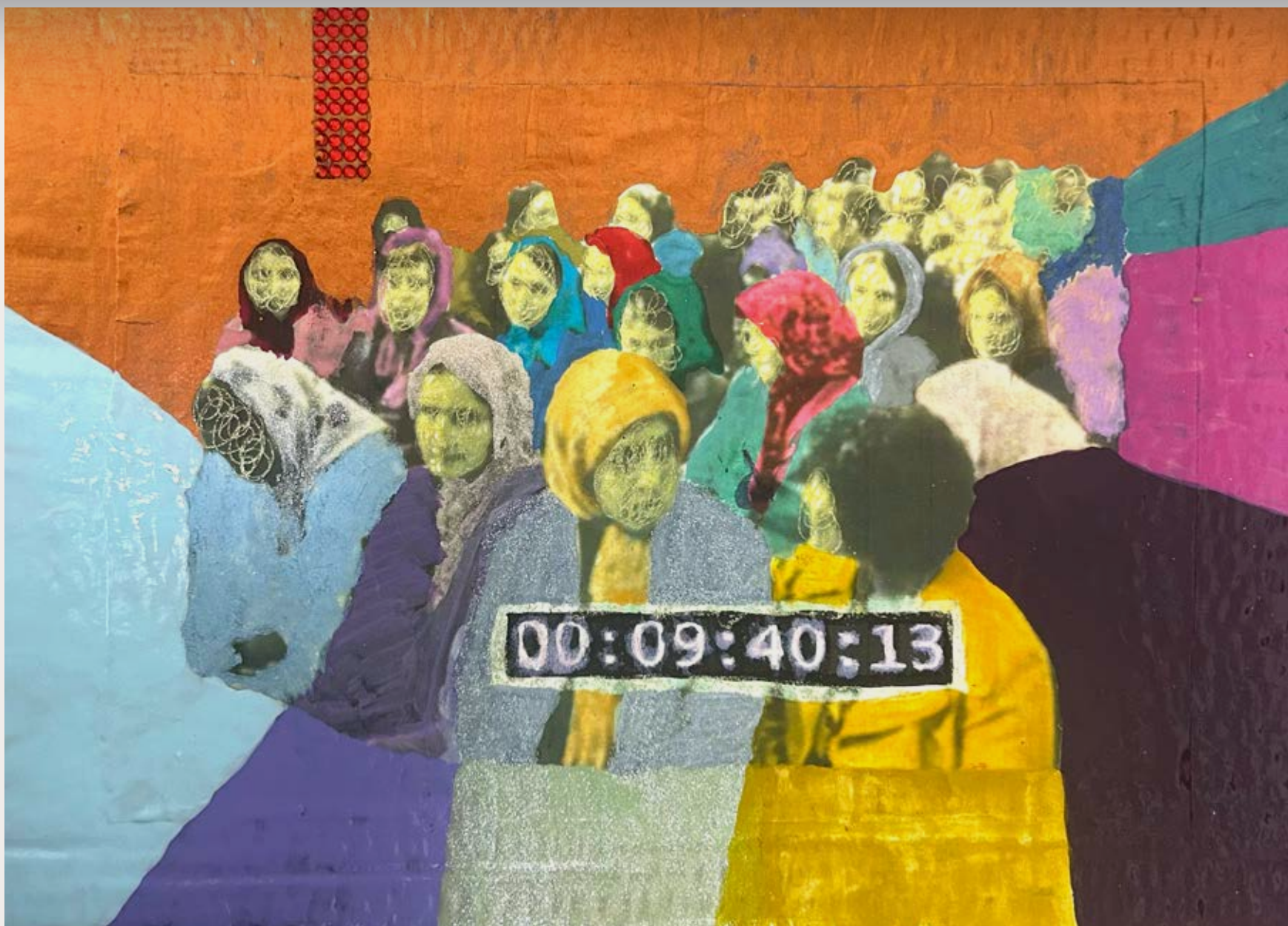
materials of the dispute together with them. I had all the facts about the dispute, while they often did not remember those facts. They remembered the jokes, the smells in the air, the laughter, textures and gazes, etc. The sensory and embodied knowledge that are not archived were emerging during the conversations. They often

gossiped about the times, and mis-remembered, de-remembered, un-remembered the historical facts. I listened.

The following pages include collages made from photos of these two labour disputes.



belit







s u s a n p u i s a n l o k

REWIND / REPLAY

Upon the removal of its funding from the City of Amsterdam in 2007, the archive of the Gate Foundation was donated to the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven. During its nearly twenty year history, the Gate Foundation evolved from an organisation showcasing "foreign" artists (from Indonesia, from India) to one exhibiting artists of colour and artists with migrant backgrounds based in or from the Netherlands. The archive sat uncatalogued in the basement of the museum for nearly a decade before susan pui san lok embarked on their first research/artistic project in the archive as part of the museum's Deviant Practice programme. In 2018 Jessica de Abreu and Michael Karabinos were asked to catalogue the archive and make the inventory available on the museum's website. Afterwards, susan would return to the archive, culminating in the sound installation/performance REWIND/REPLAY as part of the museum's 2022 exhibition "Rewinding Internationalism".

Players

ARCHIVE (ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE): Voices from the archive of the Gate Foundation (1988-2006) and a voice from the Van Abbemuseum (2022).
LIVE (SIX, SEVEN, EIGHT, NINE, TEN): Diverse voices in the present.

Places

Network Aalst, Belgium
Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands
Villa Arson, Nice, France

SETTING

Five music stands arranged in a rough circle, each holding a script/score, illuminated by spotlights. A mic is suspended above each stand. Beanbags lie within the circle. Speakers and projectors are ceiling mounted. Images distort across floor-standing projection screens, re-framing stills from a degraded video tape, and captions in triplicate translation. Looped video tape curtains hang throughout the space.

SCRIPT/SCORE

The script/score is composed from around 15 hours of uncatalogued analogue audio and video recordings from the Gate Foundation archive (1988-2006). Digitised, transcribed, edited and arranged across five tracks for site-specific installations and rearranged here for live performers/players, the script/score interweaves discursive excerpts from seminars and symposia from the 1990s, with the lyrics from twenty songs found on two unlabelled mixtapes spanning five decades, including one misidentified track. Voices from the archive and contemporary performers/players speak to, with, at, and over each other.

HOW TO PLAY

Choose a voice, listen, follow, speak, translate.
Choose a voice, listen, follow, speak, translate.
Choose a voice, listen, follow, speak, translate.
Choose a voice, listen, follow, speak, translate.
Choose a voice, listen, follow, speak, translate.

RUNNING TIME

c.50 mins

susan pui san lok: REWIND / REPLAY

In conversation with Michael Karabinos

MK: We had our first conversation about the Gate Foundation archive now almost seven years ago, in 2017, as you had just finished wrapping up your first work/research using the archive, which at that time sat uncatalogued in moving boxes in the basement of the Van Abbemuseum (VAM). By the time you began work on REWIND/REPLAY the paper archive had been catalogued, but something led you to the uncatalogued audio tapes. Was there something about an uncatalogued archive that drew you in more than working with the inventorized pieces? Was there a change in how you walked yourself through the archive in 2016/2017 versus your first moments of return for the REWIND/REPLAY project? How was it to return to an archive? Was it as you remembered, did your memories of it line up with what you saw the second time? I believe much of the work you had to do for REWIND/REPLAY was during the Covid pandemic which kept you away from always being able to physically return to the museum and the archive, how did that impact your experience in the archive?

SPSL: Uncatalogued materials are the things that get left out: the ill-fitting or un-fitting items / non-things / ephemera, that don't conform to the given schema, the terms and parameters, the priorities and values of the archive or collection at hand. The elements put aside because they are somehow uncatalogue-able, not apparently worth the effort or resource; the elements that remain unspoken, that amassed become an elephant in the room, or corridor or basement, where these boxes sat for a long time before I came to them, and before you and Jessica [de Abreu] inventorized much of the rest of the archive. So yes, I am drawn to that which sits outside, that somehow elides or confuses systems that seek to name and know, to place and order, according to often opaque values.

When I first 'walked' the archive in late 2016, it was remotely, online. There was no clear 'path' as such; some references to the Gate surfaced through searches into the Van Abbe library catalogue, and I came across a short interview

with Sebastian Lopez in Art Asia Pacific (AAP), in which he mentioned a number of 'Asian' artists. When I came to the physical archive, making several visits through 2017, I was very conscious of the question of how I might 'walk' through it, given its digital/analogue divisions, dispersals, containments - by which I mean, some of its contents (books, artists' ephemera) had been assimilated into the Van Abbe library collection and artists' files, while the Gate's institutional paper archive was held in 30-plus archive boxes, with another 20 or so boxes of the aforementioned uncatalogued 'stuff' (I seem to recall the number of boxes changed between my first and second visits).

So there was no obvious route or means to navigate the archive. Despite the neat, numbered row of grey archive boxes, the papers within were in disarray (the library staff shared anecdotally their recollection of the Gate's sudden closure and abrupt arrival at Van Abbe some ten years before). I opened up a few boxes arbitrarily, before deciding to proceed through the paper archive backwards (after all, why not?). I reflect on my 'walking' and changes in direction from visit to visit in my essay/video, 'Through the Gate/an(g) archivery' [Deviant Practice, 2018, e-publication], and the various barriers along the way (e.g. boxes being moved, my lack of Dutch language), as well as a growing sense of unease as I realised that I was sort of starting to 'stalk' an artist through the archive - Tiong Ang, whom I had met a year before at the Guangzhou Triennial/Asia Biennial. Tiong had been one of the artists name-checked by Lopez in the AAP piece; he had also been collected by VAM early on his career, though the work had hardly been shown since the mid-1990s. I eventually got in touch with Tiong to 'confess', walk together and talk through the material I had found, and to see the works in the collection store. 'Writing up' my research in the autumn of 2017, I could only 'process the process', as it were; so alongside the essay as a mapping of a semi-systematic and

semi-blind wandering, the short video is something like a confession or confrontation with my discomfort, locking onto the looking, the furtive feeling in the archive, activating an archival gazing back if you like, and somehow echoing themes of discomfort and violence around looking/seeing/not seeing in Tiong's own work. It was gratifying that my modest research intervention not only led to VAM's further investment in the Gate Foundation archive, but also resulted in Tiong's work re-emerging in the permanent collection displays.

It was odd to return to the archive in late 2018 (or was it early 2019?). We had corresponded sporadically over the year, swapping thoughts and questions as you and Jessica worked on the inventory, and you had sent me a photo in September, of the newly ordered archive. When I returned in person, I'm not sure what I was expecting, but the physical re-encounter was decidedly underwhelming - to be faced with the same row of 30-plus boxes, the papers within now painstakingly organised, their access and navigation facilitated by a Finding Aid... So yes, my memory of the archive as it was did line up, literally, with these boxes, which had now been moved from the library store to a small box room along the corridor with a strange hole in the wall. Interestingly, the Finding Aid confirmed that Tiong was the only artist to be found both in the Gate archive and the VAM collection. You had also flagged a document that made passing reference Sikay Tang, one of the other artists mentioned by Lopez in AAF article, but it sounds like there was little else in the archive to illuminate their practice or relationship to the Gate besides this. (I managed to connect briefly with Sikay over email in 2017, through Videotage, a Hong Kong artist-led organisation where she had set up a studio in the late 1990s. She went on to establish a career as an award-winning film and TV editor in the US. Sadly, Videotage shared the news last summer that she had passed away.)

Coming back after a year or more, no longer within the framework of the Deviant

Practice research programme but in response to an expanded, open-ended invitation to reconsider the Gate in the context of, and in relation to, the Van Abbe, I wondered how I might do this. The inventory offered a means to navigate the paper archive, but not from a distance; I could, perhaps, make another series of in-person visits, or find a research assistant, someone on the ground to mediate and approximate my searches on my behalf... At the same time, I couldn't help but notice the several small piles of tapes on the lower shelves, which had sat outside the frame of the photo you had sent me. And as before, I was drawn to their uncatalogued/uncatalogue-able-ness; I wondered what images and voices had been recorded and suspended within these labelled/unlabelled plastic cases and cardboard sleeves, on magnetic tapes of various dimensions for audio and video. And then, yes, Covid quickly determined the possible parameters of my return engagement, essentially making this near-impossible. So, my re-experience was necessarily remote, mediated and dependent on others for digitisation and translation.

MK: When (re)using this archive to create a new work, how focused were you on the archive itself, and what it could represent for users and also those whose voices are captured within it?

SPSL: You could say my focus was on the ambiguous grey spaces of the archive, between or beyond the grey boxes that hold the archive in black and white - ink on paper - an interrupted, disrupted institutional narrative. In my earlier research and selective forays through the papers, it seemed apparent that the intended audiences for the Gate were quite distinct under its founding director, Els van der Plas (1988 to 1998), and subsequent director, Sebastian Lopez (1998 to 2006). In my 2017 essay, I alluded to questions of care (and carelessness), responsibility, accountability, exchange and extraction, both

in terms of the Gate's shifting relationship to the artists it sought to represent, and to Van Abbe's relationship to the Gate. Now that the papers can be navigated more easily, 'users' could examine those questions and relations more closely. The archive also opens up opportunities to reconsider the endeavours and motivations of its directors, collaborators, artists, participants and contributors across local, national and transnational networks, including with the UK, over two decades of social, political and cultural change. One could revisit key moments in relatively recent Dutch history and its colonial legacies in the context of globalisation, through specific artistic and exhibition-making practices. Both the founding and eventual closure of the Gate may also be interesting to analyse in relation to the amenability or hostility of the cultural and funding landscape for certain small organisations at specific historical junctures.

The paper archive holds the voices of many artists in the form of letters and statements accompanying submissions of images and slides, responding to the Gate's occasional callouts to expand their library of 'non-Western' artists in the Netherlands, as well as copies of artists' talks and essays (e.g. by Rasheed Araeen). The scattered correspondence that I came across in the archive's un-inventorized state was one-sided and incomplete, so that's one kind of 'grey space', I suppose - of half-heard voices, in the half-correspondence; more subtly, there is also the unsaid, the unspoken, intimated between the words, between the lines, and in the work itself. And then there are the 'grey objects', the tapes in various formats whose labels are cursory, cryptic, illegible or lost, their contents unidentified, no longer known. I wanted to hear some of these captured yet silent voices, to hear what they had to say that was so urgent and important at that time that it needed to be publicly expressed and recorded; to listen again to the voices yet occluded within and from the Gate, still eluding and escaping the archive.

MK: As I mentioned, most of the Gate Foundation archive had been catalogued, but your project used a collection of audio tapes that had not been catalogued, and perhaps not listened to since they were created. These tapes, of artist talks, debates, lectures, exhibition openings, are perhaps the most "complete" records in the archive. While the archive has fliers for exhibitions, letters back and forth with speakers at various talks, they don't tell what was said, or how an event unfolded. From there you cut it up again, layering voices upon voices, to create the score. How much of a narrative were you hoping to hold on to in the score? How much should people actively read through, and how much should they "let go", allowing the sounds and words of the disjointed archive to flow over them?

SPSL: I appreciate the quote marks around the idea of 'completeness'. What is a 'record' if not always already a partial representation or account? Partial both in the sense of representing part of a story or experience, and in the sense of partiality - the 'record' (be it an image, a sound, a transcription) also represents a particular perspective, a selective framing, a series of choices and decisions over what to leave in or out, according to values that may not always be evident or transparent, even when a recording device is 'simply' turned on and left running... But I understand what you mean - these recordings promise insights into conversations and exchanges in specific moments in time, they can tell us what was said and give us a sense of how an event unfolded - the ambience and dynamics, the tone and tenor, the personalities and positionalities and ideologies and languages in tension. How do the words and ideas resonate now, some 30 years later? And what can't they tell us?

In terms of the process of constructing, collaging the script/score, which was realised and performed in two stages and iterations (at Netwerk Aalst then at Van Abbe), it's maybe worth underlining the subjective logic of my selections and

1	And maybe you didn't know that	And maybe you didn't know that	
3		And maybe you didn't know that	
5		We are sometimes speaking	two completely different languages
6			And maybe
7	I'm connected by, by the past	and I'm connected by the present.	African contemporary art, I still don't know how to accept that
9	And maybe you didn't know that		
2		I fear that seeing contemporary art of the third world countries through stereotypes and exoticism, a set identity,	
6	We are speaking different languages.		
7	you didn't know that		
8			There is definitely a contribution
2		deflects the situation of the bipolar thinking of the post-colonial era, which has followed along the lines of division	
8	to the, the art development in, in Africa, an inter African experience.		Somebody said it's in fact, yeah,
2	of the colonial period.		
4	Colonial time; in colonial time.	It's a historical fragment because it goes back to 1993.	You see here some, um, some toys.
8	exposing Africans to, to themselves.		The readymade, all the installations which we can see today.
10			
4	Here we are entering the temporary, the temporary.	What's happening here? I can see that this material has been highly unprocessed.	
8	If you can go to Africa and see everywhere,	you can find those installations.	We were talking about the idea of masterclass.
10			
4		This is the temporary, and the idea was to present very ordinary things.	
8	Well, not in the old-fashioned way, not in the ethno-centric way,	on the contrary - it would be a very pleasant and helpful experience	

translations, the ways in which these were mediated, and the fact that there are still a lot of materials that remain unidentified, undigitised and inaccessible in the archive. Working remotely, I had to rely on photographs of the audio and video tape labels to help me to discern out what might be on them - of course some were faded and others were missing altogether. I picked out anything that suggested a conversation might have taken place (a seminar, symposium, roundtable), and a few un-labelled tapes too. Inge Borsje and Ron Eijkman at Van Abbe helped me by photo-documenting and digitising the materials. I then reviewed and discussed a selection of materials with Nick Aikens [VAM Research Curator], to get a sense of their contents, and eventually listened (repeatedly) through and transcribed about 20 hours of material overall.

From incidental references in the transcripts, I pieced together some event details in terms of locations and speakers, though these were often unidentified. The lack of a chronological structure or clear context for each recording was initially confusing but also quite freeing - instead of seeking 'completeness', the very incoherence of the archive opened up possibilities for connecting conversations and narratives in other ways. By cutting up, cutting across and layering with care, I wanted to emphasise the already partial nature of the material but also to reframe and accentuate, to infer other contexts and invite connections, to bring into unexpected dialogue and relation disparate voices and moments and threads, into a complex weave. There is no overarching narrative but multiple voices in concert and conflict, countering and echoing; listen hard, and you can hear them all. The script/score is not a 'complete record' of the work, but seeks to make transparent, to some degree, the underlying structure and arrangement of words and voices in the work. You can read through and along, walk around and between voices, speak aloud and with, or let go - it's entirely up to you.

MK: Given my own archival background I can't help but view your work through the lens of archival research itself, as I see many parallels. Normally, archival research is fragmented. We view short descriptions written by archivists in an inventory, and that determines what documents we view. Once we start flipping through documents, we can begin to piece something together. I was struck by how your project took the reverse course. You began with unfiltered, unedited audio tapes, complete stories, material that would be summed up in one sentence in an inventory. In creating the script/score, you fragmented the stories; turned conversations into de-contextualized nothings. In some ways it mimics, yet reverses, the act of doing archival research.

SPSL: 'Archiving in reverse' in an interesting notion - moving 'backwards' from the objects and ephemera, from the miscellaneous deposited at the end or in the margins, the addenda and marginalia... I realise that 'moving backwards' has been a recurring tactic for me, to unsettle myself and my own habits, as well as others'; to counter the impulse towards forward progression; to question by looking again, in the rear view; to try to keep an eye on where one has been, on the winding path taken so far, and not lose sight of this... I also like the idea of 'reversing the archive', flipping its contents, not flippantly but playfully - inverting, diverting, transversing and re-versioning, attending to what one might hear or see differently. And I would say that in re-fragmenting the already fragmented stories, I am trying to turn the 'de-contextualized nothings' into re-contextualised 'somethings', exceeding the sum of their parts; surplus and excessive, spilling over and hinting at the possible, the potential in the act of piecing, and between the pieces.

MK: You begin the score with a series of interjections, "Yeah, um, if you, whatever, yeah, yeah, ok, yeah, yeah, and also,

yeah". Again, I see a correlation with archival research. In the beginning we stumble, we don't know where we're going, we make our way through an archive hoping we see something useful, but often, like a series of "um's", we hesitate, and we are unsure where we are heading. Similarly, later the score is interspersed with lyrics from classic pop songs, which I imagine made their way onto the tapes. Again, this reminds me of viewing an archive and finding the inconsequential, the unexpected, the irrelevant, and the background noise. How much of the nature of archival research was on your mind both when exploring the Gate archive, and creating the score?

I keep coming back to the point that so much of the work reminds me of the act of doing archival research itself, but I think the comparison is apt. Even towards the end of the score, the flow of seemingly complete sentences and thoughts is interrupted by a series of places, "Africa, African, there, Damascus, Syria, France, Paris and Nice, and Somalia, 1990s, Somalia, Comoro Island, Madagascar, in the north, Mozambique, in the West, Asia, Indian, Asian, Africa, Europe, British, French, in Mozambique, Mozambique, in Africa, Uganda, Botswana, Nairobi, southern, southern Africa, Italy, Canada, Great Britain, in Africa, Africa, east African, Tanzania, Kenya" and so on. Again, it reminds me of the way a supposedly structured archive can find itself devolving into a mess of words and thoughts with unknown connections. I'm not sure how much you were thinking of the act of doing archival research when making this work, but the fact you were continually drawn to this archive means you were aware of its archival nature and how to find your way through an archive.

SPSL: Yes, the expressions of hesitation and uncertainty can very much be read as a reflection on archival research, a way to cast doubt on the archive, on my own process and on the work itself. Cumulatively, the pauses invite a questioning of individual

and institutional thinking; perhaps, in their slightly comical effect, they might also puncture the seriousness and certainty of some of the speakers and sentiments expressed. Conversely, the repetition of place names emphasises persistent preoccupations with particular geographical and national territories, concepts and categories to, perhaps, obsessive effect.

I'm interested in how the 'inconsequential' and 'irrelevant' are determined as such; what and how something or someone might be relegated to the background instead of foreground. The lyrics from pop songs found their way into REWIND/REPLAY because there were two mixtapes amongst the digitised materials, with chronologically sequenced songs from the 1940s to the 1980s on them. Rather than discard these as 'background noise', I decided early on that I would treat this material as consequential and relevant. I listened, read, and rearranged the words into familiar yet strange conversational exchanges, untethered from their melodies, with the idea that they could be spoken/performed in playful 'rehearsals' - unrehearsed readings opening up simple lines to myriad interpretation through repetition and variation. I wanted to both defamiliarise and elevate these often sentimental expressions of love, longing and loss that might otherwise be dismissed as clichéd and 'popular', and I eventually wove these lines into the often dry fragments of artistic, curatorial and intellectual discourse that emerged through the other recordings - to entwine feeling with thought, thought with feeling.

MK: Moving instead to the Gate Foundation as an institution, when looking at the Gate Foundation archive in general two things stand out to me in its contents: one, the topics of conversation 30 years later are still overwhelmingly the same, and two, from the perspective of the Gate Foundation as an institution, especially in its early years, there is a strong naivete regarding those conversations, highlighting that from the Dutch institutional side of things this

- 2 At the same time, today, and then, and then, and then, Indonesian, Indonesia, contemporary, Indonesia, 1930, Indonesia, Indonesia, Indonesia, Indonesian, Indonesian, Indonesian, Spanish and Dutch, Amsterdam, Indonesia, China, Holland, France, 19th century, the last 30 years, last autumn, last winter, Ivory Coast, here, here, Beijing, Indonesian, time, New York, China, Holland, few years ago, New York, 15 years, '50s, in the '80s, erm, mid-'80s, '80s, China, Russian, China, Paris, 10 years, New York, Chinese, Chinese, Chinese, Chinese, Scotland, Canton, Heidelberg, Paris, Holland, Dutch, Italy, Chinese, Frankfurt, Chinese, Glasgow, Ohio, Chinese, Chinese, Chinese, Chinese, Chinese, Chinese, Beijing, New York, New York, Beijing, in the West, Beijing, New York, United Nation, 50 years, United Nation, United Nation, Stuttgart, nowadays, perhaps in the near future, now, now, Indonesian, now, now, er then, now and then, one day, Indonesia, Indonesia, China, Indonesia, Chinese, English, Chinese, Chinese, English, Chinese, Indonesian, Amsterdam, in the beginning, now, Indonesian, Holland, Chinese, Indonesian, Eastern, non-Western, today, Singapore, Singapore, Singapore, Chinese, English, British, Asia, Asia
- 4 The African, African, African, the African, Africa, Dutch, erm Holland, in Holland, Indians, in Mozambique, Mozambique, South Africa, 1993, African, European, 12 years, in Africa, New York, in 1982, 10 or 12 years, Africa, South Africa, 1995, Johannesburg, Jamaica, Senegal, Cuba, Australia, 1989, England, Zimbabwe, a year or two later, Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe, Jamaica, Africa, Jamaica, Africa, Africa, in Zimbabwe, in 1991, Chile, New York, South Africa, Botswana, '90, South Africa, South Africa, Africa, Mozambique, Mozambique, Dutch, Africa
- 6 Internet, global, global, global, local, local, local, every day, London, 11 years, local, local, last year, now, last year, the last year, in Holland, Cuba, in South Africa, South Africa, Chinese, Chinese, Chinese, China, Berlin, Beijing, Costa Rica, Benin, Africa, Bhutan, Himalayas, Costa Rican, from the Netherlands, Costa Rica, Bhutan, in Bhutan, Bhutan, Bhutan, now, now, the internet, now, Austrian, now in Holland, now, now, internet, internet, internet, internet, now
- 8 After, the local, the locals, the local, Africa's, Africa's, in Africa, Dutch, Belgian, then Europe, in Western world, in Africa, Africans, Japan, Mozambique, in Namibia, Mozambique, Bangladesh, in Mozambique, Africa, Europe, Mozambique, Brazil, Portugal, Mozambique in Mozambique, South African, Mozambique, Tanzania
- 10 Africa, African, there, Damascus, Syria, France, Paris and Nice, and Somalia, 1990s, Somalia, Comoro Island, Madagascar, in the north, Mozambique, in the West, Asia, Indian, Asian, Africa, Europe, British, French, in Mozambique, Mozambique, in Africa, Uganda, Botswana, Nairobi, southern, southern Africa, Italy, Canada, Great Britain, in Africa, Africa, east African, Tanzania, Kenya, somewhere, Swahili, Kenya, London, Madagascar, anglophone, francophone, local, Nairobi, east African, Europe, Kenya, Tanzania, Paris, Amsterdam, African, in America, American, American, Western, the future, Russia, Russia, my world, the street, global, West, western, Africa, Russian, Ethiopia, Ethiopia, Americans, Somalia, 5 years, in Somalia, Somalia, Angola, Western, Mozambique, South Africa, Africa, Netherlands, South Africa, South Africans, Suriname, in Africa, in Africa, in Africa, in Africa, African, Africa, Africa, African, African, Western Africa

1	Does it worry you to be alone?		
3	Does it worry you to be alone?	Does it worry you to be alone?	
5	Does it worry you to be alone?	Does it worry you to be alone?	Does it worry you to be alone?
7	Does it worry you to be alone?	Does it worry you to be alone?	Does it worry you to be alone?
9	Does it worry you to be alone?	Does it worry you to be alone?	Does it worry you to be alone?
3	If you need someone to count on,	someone you can rely on	someone you can rely on
5	If you need someone to count on,	someone you can rely on	someone you can rely on
7	If you need someone to count on,	If you need someone to count on,	If you need someone to count on,
9	If you need someone to count on,	If you need someone to count on,	If you need someone to count on,
1	If you need someone to count on,	someone you can rely on	The pains that are withheld for me, I realize and I can see
5	If you need someone to count on,	someone you can rely on	The pains that are withheld for me, I realize and I can see
7	If you need someone to count on,	someone you can rely on	The pains that are withheld for me, I realize and I can see
9	If you need someone to count on,	someone you can rely on	The pains that are withheld for me, I realize and I can see
1	The pains that are withheld for me,	I realize and I can see	The pains that are withheld for me, I realize and I can see
3	The pains that are withheld for me,	I realize and I can see	The pains that are withheld for me, I realize and I can see
9	The pains that are withheld for me,	I realize and I can see	The pains that are withheld for me, I realize and I can see
1	No, I won't be afraid,	Oh, I won't be afraid	No, I won't be afraid, Oh, I won't be afraid
3	No, I won't be afraid,	Oh, I won't be afraid	No, I won't be afraid, Oh, I won't be afraid
7	No, I won't be afraid,	Oh, I won't be afraid	No, I won't be afraid, Oh, I won't be afraid
9	No, I won't be afraid,	Oh, I won't be afraid	No, I won't be afraid, Oh, I won't be afraid
1	You gave me strength,	to stand alone again	You gave me strength, to stand alone again
3	You gave me strength,	to stand alone again	You gave me strength, to stand alone again
5	You gave me strength,	to stand alone again	You gave me strength, to stand alone again
7	You gave me strength,	to stand alone again	You gave me strength, to stand alone again
9	You gave me strength,	to stand alone again	You gave me strength, to stand alone again
4	I forget which year this was -	'90, I think. This is the locals coming in to see what's going on.	
7	to stand alone again		
8	Who defines what cultural identity is? Who's belonging to a group?	Whose experience are, are, are, are to what culture?	

is only the beginning of the conversation. I think this also comes across in the score.

I'm thinking, for instance, of the institutional view of what is African art, or what should Indonesian modern art look like, or what is Chinese art, and their initial ignorance of diasporic work, and later focus on it. In some ways the conversations have evolved, but when we look at what happened in the past few years at the former Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art in Manchester, the European institutional view is still in many ways where it was at the time of the Gate Foundation. How much of the content of the conversations did you hope to impart on viewers/readers?

SPSL: When Nick and I first started listening to the digitised recordings together, we were very much struck by the same thought - that we could have been listening to conversations recorded the previous day, week, or month, as opposed to 30 years ago. This was, and is, depressing, in terms of how little seems to have moved away from nationalist framings and essentialist notions of 'Dutch', 'African', 'Indonesian', 'Chinese' (or 'British') art. I may not have been in those specific rooms and conversations, but I certainly heard similar exchanges in the UK in the 1990s and the early 2000s, as an emerging artist in Leeds, London and Manchester - for example, at Tate, Aavaa (the African and Asian Visual Artists Archive), iniva (the institute of international visual arts), 198 Contemporary, and CfCCA (which was then known as the Chinese Arts Centre and is now esea - East and Southeast Asian - contemporary). There are references in the Gate to Aavaa, iniva and the Triangle Network, alluding to the interconnections and alliances of institutions, shared networks, and the movement and affinities of individuals between. Certain formulations and terminologies may have shifted - we are more likely to hear reference to 'Global North and South' relations than to 'First and 'Third World' orders - but hierarchies of power still exist. So what I wanted to

convey through my curating and choreographing of voices and views, was a sense of the prevailing questions, politics and positionings then, and to raise the question of their resonance now, despite the passing of decades.

The archive is never dead, only dormant, though it may be moved, removed, rehoused (like the Gate), dispersed (like Aavaa), or regenerated (like iniva)... And it's worth remembering that many of the archives' constituent artists (that make up and inhabit their files) are also living and active among archives' constituents - they are 'users' who continue to make, remake and unmake archives as part of their ongoing practices, far exceeding the traces found here (Sonia Boyce, Keith Piper, Vong Phaophanit, Evelyn Nicodemus among them). When I first talked about my research into the Gate at the Deviant Practice symposium at Van Abbemuseum in 2017), someone in the audience expressed surprise that Tiong Ang was in the audience, very much alive - I still wonder why they assumed otherwise.

MK: At performances in Aalst (BE) and Eindhoven (NL) you had participants read from the score, read the words used within the audio tapes. This re-staging of the archived material has a very "non-archival" feel to it, in that it isn't original records in the same way material in an archive is. But in another way I can see it as very archival, in the sense that in using archives we are attempting to re-stage or piece together the past, and here we have a literal re-staging of the past using the words directly from the archive.

SPSL: Staging, re-staging, piecing together, activating the archive by enacting and re-enacting, speaking out its silent, silenced words to hear, and voice again - to re-imagine the many ways in which they might be said, and heard - fluent and faltering, fervent and frustrated...

Acknowledging the process of piecing as very much mediated - as a non-Dutch speaker, I was only able to attend to

aspects of the archive material through others watching, listening, and translating contents for me - I wanted to embed this work of mediation and interpretation into the work. I asked Nychenda Fecunda [VAM Assistant Curator, and one of the few people of colour in the museum], to listen to these discussions and exchanges taking place in the 1990s, and to write some short summary transcripts, paying attention to the kind of language being used, and to how artists and art practices were being situated (often through the framework of 'First' and 'Third World' cultural exchange and 'development'). I then invited them to record these summaries, and you can hear Nychenda's voice in the work, speaking from a specific, subjective voice of and from the museum in the present - speaking with a specific voice to and from the museum in the present.

Ron Eijkman's engagement with and mediation of the archive(s) is acknowledged in another way. A frequent visitor to the Gate Foundation during its 18 years in Amsterdam, his long-term photographic and film documentation for Van Abbe makes his work doubly integral to the institutional archive. At Netwerk Aalst, the installation of REWIND/REPLAY featured unwound reels of blank magnetic audio tape. At Van Abbe, with Ron's donation of a box of used VHS cassettes, the heavier tape ribbons were looped and woven into semi-opaque curtains suspended across the galleries at Van Abbe, and later, Villa Arson, their recordings never to be viewed again.

I said before that the script/score is an 'incomplete record' - it pieces some of the archive together, but it is doesn't account for the video projections, the lighting score, the triple captions in English, Dutch and traditional Chinese script... These were partly generated by running all the recordings through auto-transcription software, and my interest in the errors littering these AI-generated texts - which speak to the gaps, limits and biases in the data on which the algorithm is trained, which at that time struggled with non-Western names or Englishes enunciated

with heavy accents. So I wanted to use captions to highlight the presumed dominant language of the audience, my own linguistic points of entry, and the limits of transcription and translation, both human and AI-generated.

A lot of the voices in the recordings remain unidentified. And I think that not knowing who the speakers are when listening invites a closer listening, a different kind of attention, that may stall assumptions as to who is speaking, who is listening, that then require decisions - which voices to attend to, to privilege and prioritise? What does it mean to recognise (or not) some of the names spoken or written, in the moment, or in hindsight? To realise, for example, that you were listening to Hou Hanru, or Jim Supangkat, or Evelyn Nicodemus?

The voices that I was gradually able to discern contextually or intertextually are acknowledged in the end credits of the work, along with the performers/players who remote-recorded the first version of the script/score, and participated in several live rehearsals at Netwerk Aalst. Pages from the second, extended version of the script/score are reproduced here, but do not include the performers/players who took part in a single live rehearsal of REWIND / REPLAY at Van Abbe - among them yourself, Nick Aikens, Yolande Zola Zoli van der Heide [VAM Curator], Scarlett Lösch [VAM Digital Archivist], and others, including artists Tiong Ang, Sonia Boyce and me. Then there were the incidental, fleeting performances at Villa Arson that I happened to catch - when audiences moving through the installation started running between the microphones and music stands, speaking spontaneously from the script/scores to and with the work, to and with each other.

So there will always be absences and omissions. The script/score is more than a partial record, it is an open invitation, setting the parameters for potential performance, for re-activation and re-interpretation, amplifying the voices we hear and mishear in the past and present, for future mis/translations.

2 Yeah not uh, in, in, um, sort of uh, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's, er, er, I, I, it's, it's, it's, if you, you, so, as a, and so
the, the er, so, erm, and, erm, the er, the, the, the, the, erm

4 Ok, er, I, I think, yeah, erm, I know, to er, there has be, there has be, there has to be, are, are, are, are, what, whatever, and,
and I, whatever, what, what, if not one of, of one of them, if not, if, I'm, I, I, OK, the, the, in, in, in, so, so, the um, the
the, from the, the, the, the, and by, by, by, by, OK, etc, etc

6 Yeah not uh, in, in, in, um, sort of uh, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's, er, er, I, I, it's, it's, it's, if you, you, so, as a, and so
the, the er, so, erm, and, erm, the er, the, the, the, the, erm

8 Ok, er, I, I think, yeah, erm, I know, to er, there has be, there has be, there has to be, are, are, are, are, what, whatever, and,
and I, whatever, what, what, if not one of, of one of them, if not, if, I'm, I, I, OK, the, the, in, in, in, so, so, the um, the
the, from the, the, the, the, and by, by, by, by, OK, etc, etc

1 How do I feel by the end of the day? _____

3 How do I feel _____ by the end of the day?

5 How do I feel _____ by the end of the day?

7 How do I feel _____ by the end of the day?

9 How do I feel by the end of the day? _____

1 _____ When you start to count, _____ When you start to count,

3 the ones you might ever doubt _____

5 When you start to count, the ones you might ever doubt _____

7 When you start to count, _____ the ones you might ever doubt

9 When you start to count, _____ the ones you might ever doubt

1 the ones you might ever doubt _____ That game of life is hard to play

5 _____ That game _____

7 _____ Of life is hard to play _____

9 _____ That game of life is hard to play _____

1 _____ I won't cry, I won't cry, no, I won't shed a tear

3 That game of life is hard to play _____

7 I won't cry, I won't cry, _____ no, I won't shed a tear

9 I won't cry, I won't cry, no, I won't shed a tear _____

3 I won't cry, I won't cry, no, I won't shed a tear _____

5 _____ I won't cry, I won't cry, no, I won't shed a tear

9 I cried a tear, you wiped it dry _____

1 I cried a tear, you wiped it dry _____

3 I cried a tear, _____ you wiped it dry _____

5 _____ I cried a tear, you wiped it dry _____

6 _____ Artists, collectors from all over the world

7 _____ I cried a tear, you wiped it dry _____





P A U L A K O M M O S S :

Luftgeister - On Activating Archives

PAULA KOMMOSS: Luftgeister - On Activating Archives

2021

During a stroll in Freiburg, I asked a passer-by for directions to the owl sculpture in the city garden. The woman looked at me surprised - she'd never heard about the sculpture - but set off with me to find it. As we stood in front of the owl, we started talking; I asked her if she'd ever heard of the owl's artist, Eva Eisenlohr. She hadn't. She also didn't know that Eisenlohr was the only female artist in Freiburg to be defamed as "degenerate" during the Nazi era, nor that her works had been removed from the Freiburg Municipal Collection and destroyed. In fact, Eisenlohr's art practice did not recover and was never part of the established art world's market and discourse.

Despite the lack of commissions, Eisenlohr stayed active after the war and left numerous artworks in Freiburg's public spaces, mostly self-commissioned and without state funding. In the 1950s she took to the streets with a wheelbarrow and set out to erect monuments all over Freiburg.

2022

When I became the artistic director of the second edition of the Biennale für Freiburg in 2022 I started to walk and read the streets more consciously, with the aim of uncovering new perspectives of the city through contemporary art. Next to the protest culture of the 1970s and 1980s, as well as contemporary takes on the street's underlying power structures, the story of Eva Eisenlohr and her work in public were one of the key narratives of the curatorial concept. After my initial encounter with her sculpture in the city garden, I knew I had to dig deeper. My research journey led me to the Freiburg city archives, the municipal collection and a stone workshop. An image began to form of a resilient woman who, despite all the contradictions of her life, was convinced of the value of her art.

RESEARCH PROTOCOL

WINTER 2021

During my initial research on art in public space in Freiburg, I stumbled across a footnote¹: in 1937, the watercolour *Luftgeister* (1930) and the wood relief *Bildnis Freiburgs* (1933) were confiscated from Freiburg's municipal collection and defamed as "degenerate". Both are listed as destroyed in the Nazi inventory. After I read this, I did a quick online search, but did not find much. This



Eule, Eva Eisenlohr, ca 1960. Stadtpark Freiburg



Wenn einer fällt, muss der andere nach vorne blicken, Eva Eisenlohr, 1919



Monument for Joseph von Auffenberg, Eva Eisenlohr, 1957

is why I made my way into the public space of the city to find out more. As I stood in front of Eva Eisenlohr's sculpture, I realised that it would take more than my curatorial skills to bring Eva Eisenlohr's defamed and forgotten work back into the present consciousness. I needed an artistic accomplice.

SPRING 2022

While I was reading about female artists during this era, I came across the work of Maximiliane Baumgartner, who examines the untold stories of women during the mid 20th century integral to her practice. During my first visit to Maximiliane Baumgartner's studio in Düsseldorf, I noticed numerous Dibond panels leaning against the wall. The outlines of figures were delineated in light strokes against the shiny material. On closer inspection I make out historical clothing, fragments from photographs or scenes of two women's rights activists in Munich I learn. These works were part of her solo-show at Kunstverein München in 2021. Once I told Maximiliane Baumgartner about Eva Eisenlohr, her ears pricked up. Soon after she visits me and together we go on a long walk to discover more of Eisenlohr's sculptures in public space and head for the city archives. There I show her the file "Withdrawal of works of 'degenerate' art from public museums"² gathering the orderly decrees and correspondence between the various responsible authorities of the National Socialist power apparatus and the Freiburg municipal collection.

SUMMER 2022

Looking for more information online, I come across a text by the local historian Otto Hofmann which offers more information about Eisenlohr's work and ambitions. To find out more, I write him a letter. Soon after I receive a phone call and we set up a meeting together with Maximiliane Baumgartner.

In recent years, Hofmann, a former chemist, has increasingly championed overlooked women in art and cultural history. A couple of weeks later I find an invitation in my inbox to a reading of the work of Adèle Schopenhauer (1797-1849) held deep in the Black Forest. The sister of the infamous philosopher was a writer and published regularly under a pseudonym. During the reading of her allegories, I learn about the wit of the author but also get to know Renate Hofmann, the reader, and Otto's wife. After many handshakes and a coffee in the clock-making village of Furtwangen, I invite the couple to come to Freiburg. And to my surprise, they are more than happy to join in on our mission.



With the Wheelbarrow, performative WALK, Maximiliane Baumgartner, February 18, 2023

WINTER 2022

Maximiliane Baumgartner and I keep in constant exchange, and I invite her to commence the public programme of the biennale with an activation of Eisenlohr's work. Immediately we are drawn to one moment that speaks volumes of Eisenlohr's work: In 1957 she sets off eastward from her studio. Eisenlohr walks almost three kilometres, just over half an hour. In her hands, a wheelbarrow loaded with her sculpture - a memorial stone for Joseph von Auffenberg. For his 100th birthday, Eisenlohr wants to install a monument to the poet and playwright at the site of his grave. The artist's mission was one she assigned herself. Nothing and no one could stop her. Her sculpture stands there to this day.

SPRING 2023

In the performative action *With the Wheelbarrow*, Maximiliane and I, together with a large group of invited public, commemorated the work of Eva Eisenlohr by activating the path from her studio to von Auffenberg's grave. A closer look at Eisenlohr's works in various public places provides insights into her working methods. A focus is placed on artistic work in the space between commission and self-commissioning as a self-empowering gesture, which also informs Maximiliane Baumgartner's practice. Otto Hofmann expanded the intervention with a reading of Joseph von Auffenbergs texts, while Renate Hofmann closed the session with a text commemorating Eisenlohr next to her owl.

Through this performative walk the impact of Eva Eisenlohr and her routes through the city became graspable. Many of the citizens, artists and creative workers encountered these sculptures for the first time. Maximiliane Baumgartner's performance allowed for detailed information on where her workshop was situated and how she might have operated, and allowed for a vivid exchange amongst the participants, such as Otto Hofmann talking with a curator from the city collection. Eisenlohr's self-determined work, the historical facts, the sculptures in public space, the pushing of the wheelbarrow and the activation of urban space all provided a basis for the content-related examination of the Freiburg artist's life.

At the same time, I started a conversation with the son of one of Eisenlohr's collaborators, who invites me to view some original works. In his stone workshop, I discovered a plentitude of sketches and drawings including anatomical studies of humans and images of animals. Charcoal sketches of owls spreading their wings grab my attention. Undated, they probably date back to her beginnings as



Selfportrait, Eva Eisenlohr, 1910



Freunde, Eva Eisenlohr, 1956



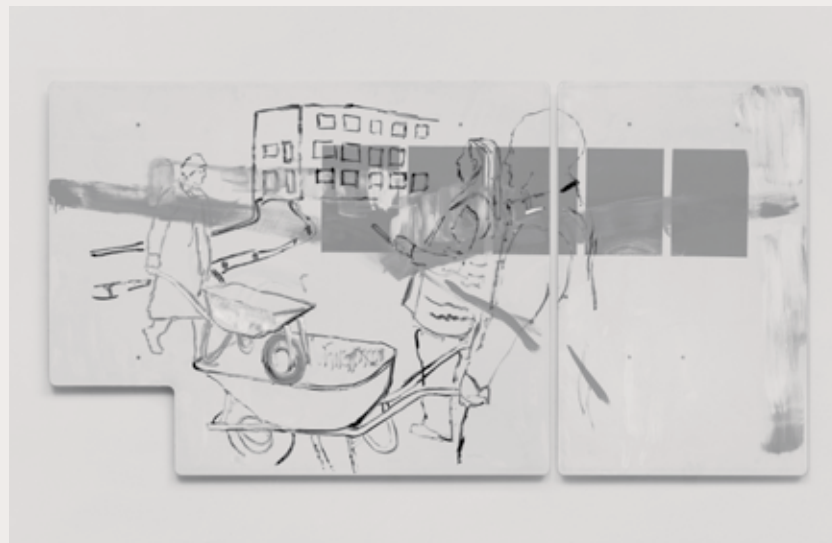
Owl studies, Eva Eisenlohr, date unknown

an artist: from 1908 to 1909, when she studied at Malerinnenschule Karlsruhe, a women's painting school. From 1910 to 1913 the artist studied with Prof. Julius Exter in Munich, followed by a one-year stay in Rome. At the end of the 1920s, Eisenlohr returned to Freiburg, where she then worked for a sculptor's studio. In the following years, she worked as an independent sculptor and artist. During this time, she also made a series of self-portraits. In pencil and oil on canvas she pierces the viewer's eye with confidence. Soon after this meeting, I reach out again to propose to include a selection of these works in the group show at the Freiburger Kunstverein and am met with excitement.

SUMMER 2023

In June and July the exhibition of the biennial brought together over fifty artists across twelve locations, including the Freiburger Kunstverein. Here, the exhibition set off with a self-portrait of Eva Eisenlohr, works on paper, ranging from charcoal drawing to the carved woodprint *Freunde* (1956), and an oil on canvas portrait. Her large charcoal studies show her close observation of the animal and point to the public sculpture of her owl in the Stadtgarten. The owl sculpture sits in the Stadtgarten, perched on a stone pedestal, enclosing a drawing compass in its left claw. This is an important tool for sculptors—using the three-circle method, models can be enlarged or reduced as desired. Eva Eisenlohr's thoughts on physical locomotion are also manifested in her experiments attempting to develop aerodynamic wings for bicycles. As further evidence of her creative involvement with means of transportation, Eisenlohr patented the invention of a teardrop-shaped car with a double tail. Additionally Eisenlohr taught as an art educator.

Next to Eisenlohr's work, Maximiliane Baumgartner displayed her newly conceived work, a so-called action space titled *From a point in the past, paint a point in the present*. It consisted of a Wall Newspaper (1/3), consisting of selected documents from the file "Withdrawal of works of 'degenerate' art from public museums"³ from the Freiburg City Archive and a commentary written by Thorsten Schneider to visualise Nazi history and its continuities. In a large-scale painting installation (2/3) in the pavilion in Freiburg's Stadtgarten, Maximiliane brought together numerous Dibond panels with paintings. The shape of Eva Eisenlohr's curved sculpture of a woman emerges in orange outlines. The image detail of the two connected women repeats itself, leaving the view increasingly unobstructed until the *Figura serpentinata* (1919) from the



From a point in the past, paint a point in the present.
Maximiliane Baumgartner, 2023

main cemetery can be fully grasped. At the same time, Maximiliane Baumgartner painted herself in dark red strokes pushing the wheelbarrow through the urban space of Freiburg back in spring. A third level is formed by grey A4 papers that run through the entire painting installation. This is the Nazi file on Eisenlohr's works defamed as 'degenerate' and confiscated in 1937.

The action vehicle (3/3), *Many vampires are birds* (2019), which was installed opposite the wall newspaper, was another element of the action space, and became a communal stage for action. An enlarged reproduction of the woodcut *Freunde* (1956) by Eva Eisenlohr offered an introduction to an artistic performative approach and questioning of her work. In a leaflet workshop, leaflets are created in collaboration with children and young people in Freiburg's Stadtgarten. In this way, the work of Eva Eisenlohr was also made accessible to a young generation of the city.

OUTLOOK

Prior to and during the exhibition of the Biennale the public came together in performative actions or collective listenings to gain new perspectives on hidden parts of history of the city and their potential futures, gaps in the historiography of the city were closed, enriching the local creative scene. The inclusion of the sculptures of Eva Eisenlohr in public space, the collaborative cross-generational approach, and the aspiration to make them part of the current narrative created a "social space"⁴ that continues to have an impact today. By inviting Maximiliane Baumgartner to jointly research Eva Eisenlohr's work, different timelines, public places and the boundaries of art emerged to point out hegemonic gaps in canonical narratives and contribute to the creation of counter-images. Investigating a so-called lost generation of women artists during the 20th century is key to Maximiliane Baumgartner practice. Her score for the performative action *With the wheelbarrow* became part of her own online footnotes⁵.

Original documents from the city archive were incorporated by Baumgartner at the exhibition at the Kunstverein, making them accessible to a wider public. Next to the content-related insights through the display of original works by Eva Eisenlohr, a practical encounter with the work was made possible via the leaflet workshop. The urban space of Freiburg and the actions inscribed in it from different timelines were activated, bringing a local historian and



Action vehicle Many vampires are birds during the leaflet workshops in Stadtgarten, Maximiliane Baumgartner, 2023



Gudrun Leser during the Listening Session: Schmelzer Wohnen - The Music of Freiburg's Squatters, Stadtgarten, 2023.

Freiburg's community of artists and cultural workers together. Thus, Eva Eisenlohr's actions came to the fore and were made part of a history that has continued without the story of the Freiburg artist.

FALL 2023

Just after the biennale was wrapped up, the story of Eva Eisenlohr continued: during a painting residency in Nürnberg, Maximiliane Baumgartner met the former band singer Gudrun Leser from Freiburg, one of the key figures of the squatting movement. Gudrun Leser, now a bookseller, was once part of this scene. In our long and lively conversation, I become aware of the scope for music to bear witness to the energy of the movement at that time. At the Schwarzwaldhof many concerts were held, and numerous bands formed, including Gudrun Leser's "Soldiers of Fortune". I thought that it would be worthwhile to revisit songs together and gather the people involved. This is how the Listening Sessions came about, where we listened to these songs together and considered the impact of the music and lyrics and to reminisce about different social structures. On the opening weekend of the exhibition long-lost collaborators came together in the Stadtgarten, sharing their knowledge and reviving the spirit of another time.

Gudrun introduces Maximiliane to an artist friend originally from Freiburg now living in the south of Bavaria. The conversation soon leads to her participation in the biennial and the name Eva Eisenlohr is dropped. Surprisingly, he met Eva Eisenlohr as a young painter in the mid-1970s. Just one year later she died, and he was handed a big part of Eisenlohr's oeuvre.

SPRING 2024

At the beginning of 2024 Maximiliane and I set off to Bavaria for a studio visit. Much to our surprise we encounter a vast amount of aquarelle landscapes by Eisenlohr in a great variety of shapes and colours. Amongst them also some wood cuts, which look similar to other works dated back to the 1910s and 1920s. One of them unites three angles with lights surrounding them. Is this an equivalent to the so-called *Luftgeister* that was destroyed by the Nazis in 1937?

We picked a good moment for our visit, as the artist was moving studios. For the next four hours we continue to review the remaining material, proposals for a monument in Emmendingen, self-portraits and many sketches and prints. It brings forward a dwelling question, of an actual home for Eva Eisenlohr's works. Where will these paintings end up?



Maximiliane Baumgartner and Paula Kommos visiting an archive with forgotten works of Eva Eisenlohr, 2024

Image credits: p68/70/72/76 Séverine Kpoti, p76/80 Maximiliane Baumgartner, p78 Paula Kommos

On our way back, Maximiliane shares the news that she is invited for a solo-show at Kunstverein Nürnberg in the summer of 2024. Next to a newly conceived body of work Eva Eisenlohr's works will be part of it, alongside the works by Maximiliane for the Biennale für Freiburg 2. A couple of days later, I find a note in my inbox. I am invited to write a contribution for the accompanying exhibition catalogue. And so, the story of Eva Eisenlohr continues and is making its way back into the current discourse. The rich archive that she left behind now awaits engagement from people discovering her work anew.



128 Friends of the
Leaflet



Prints made by children during the Leaflet workshops, 2023

GILL BALDWIN

To Build or Not to Build

An exploration into born digital files of
the architectural firm MVRDV

Before I begin, there needs to be some explanation of what is to follow:

First, I work as a "digital research specialist" at Nieuwe Instituut. I am one of the few people who has access to the collection of born digital archives. The term born digital means files that are digital in origin: think about websites, videos, or CAD drawings. I create exhibitions and workshops as a way to encourage more students, archivists and curators to use born digital files in their work. Many years ago I studied architecture and worked in a large firm, so I'm familiar with what is usually found within an architectural archive.

The following is an exploration into the born digital files of one unbuilt project by the architectural firm MVRDV. Archived as TP 382 New(er) Orleans, the project is a proposal to redesign a public elementary school in New Orleans that was badly flooded by Hurricane Katrina.

The proposal was never built but developed for an exhibition called Newer Orleans held at the Netherlands Architecture Instituut in cooperation with the Tulane School of Architecture and the American Magazine ArtForum. The exhibition was held from January 20th, 2006, through March 12th, 2006.

I chose project TP 382 New(er) Orleans because of a folder called correspondence. In my experience most projects have folders called "post-in" and "post-out" to keep track of what was being sent between external collaborators, but a folder called correspondence is unusual.

The following is seven days of email correspondence between two architectural firms, the Dutch firm MVRDV and the American firm Huff + Gooden Architects. They date from Dec 6th through to Dec 15th, 2005 and are paired with (to the best of my abilities) the attachments and documents photos found in the corresponding archive folders. These pairing are done imperfectly as I tried to piece together the process of events, to give the reader a sense of what it's like to try and understand the process of exploring a born digital archive by (ironically), laying it all out on paper.

From MVRDV, the correspondence is sent from founder Winy Maas, senior project leader Marc Joubert, and project leaders Marin Kulas and Joanna Gasparski. From Huff + Gooden Architects we have correspondence from Mario Gooden, founder, and Ray Huff, partner.

Secondary characters include: Stig Anton Nielson, who was a trainee at MVRDV for 6 months, and Scott Hanback, superintendent of MSD Wabash County Indiana.

From: Marc [redacted] mvrdv.nl
Sent: dinsdag 6 december 2005 17:04
To: [redacted] huffgooden.com
Cc: Marin [redacted] Joanna Gasparski
Subject: Re: mvrdv

Mario

how is work progressing?

I was wondering if you could send us the b/w images of the neighbourhood you showed me in NY. They were very nice and could be a positive start to the exhibit.

regards
Marc



GB TO BUILD OR NOT TO BUILD

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GB These photos were found in folder with other site photos:



From: Marin [redacted]@mrvdv.nl
 Sent: woensdag 7 december 2005 19:44
 To: 'Marc [redacted]'; [redacted]@huffgooden.com'
 Cc: 'Joanna [redacted]'; [redacted]'
 Subject: RE: mrvdv

Dear Mario,

As you will read in Winy's upcoming email we want to start up a dialogue as part of our design process for the school in New Orleans.

We are planning to show this dialogue in the exhibition as part of the design process to show the different issues that have been taken in to account.

We will send you some model/typologies pictures where different issues have been taken in to account and we are making a list with different words that are related to some of the issues that play a role in New Orleans.

I hope this will be a good starting point to get the dialogue going.

Kind regards Marin

GB Photographs of typologies found in typologies folder, these are 3 out of many there were more than we could include on this page:



GB TO BUILD OR NOT TO BUILD

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GB This text is featured heavily in the exhibition!

From: Marin [redacted]@mrvdv.nl
 Sent: woensdag 7 december 2005 19:52
 To: [redacted]@huffgooden.com'
 Cc: [redacted]@mrvdv.nl'; 'Joanna [redacted]'; 'Marc [redacted]'; [redacted]@mrvdv.nl'
 Subject: Starting up the dialoque

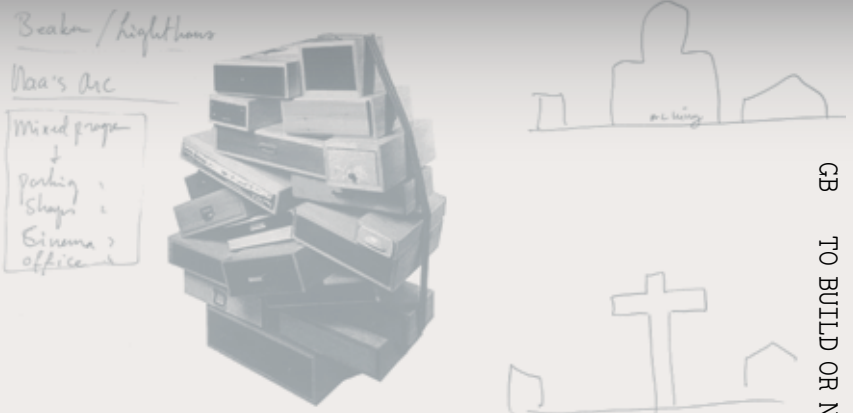
dear mario
 how is it going?
 we started with asking ourselves questions. due to the vulnerability of the quest it can be regarded as very aggressive what we are doing. it can look as if we are vultures circling above a target.....

if this enterprise needs to be iconic, what icon does it deserve?

it is such a serious issue that needs to be answered. but is seriousness the only way to pursue a trajectory?
 should we allow a certain humor that relativates the tragedy, that makes it maybe more live able again.

if it is iconic can it become an alert for this area? can it become be the centre of the area that inspires, gives hope and activates the surroundings?
 what requirements are needed for such a role?
 how can it be the centre? how can it form an heaven in the harsh circumstances?
 does it need extra (public) program to make it attractive during the day and at night as well?
 is this new building an attempt to give the area an alternative both in social ways as in security measurements?
 can it be the safest area thinkable?
 is this celebrating a serious attempt to calm down the environment from further harassments?
 how vulnerable can this new public school be in such an almost criminal unfriendly environment? Can it maybe with its new transparency reduce the harshness and calm the eagerness?
 can it be as well a literal haven in times of future floods? can the school be lifted or float?
 or should it be a more public domain for these escapes? shouldn't we then build a new hill with the school?
 can we then turn it into a visual emblem that counterbalances the Dome at the other side of the highway.....

we illustrated these questions....
 please comment.
 winy



GB This list is taken verbatim from a word document found. I believe it is the list of words that were referred to in the previous day's email:

- | | |
|--|--|
| exasperation, sadness, shock and exhaustion | lower-class |
| The "bowl effect" | Mixed-Use & Diversity |
| Uninhabitable | Public space |
| "plagued by welfare dependency" | Densities |
| most of them black | human spirit |
| substantial black middle class, and indeed a black affluent class | sustaining life |
| black elite | chaos |
| isolated neighbourhoods | basic survival |
| violence / drugs | damage control |
| assuring personal safety | human tragedy |
| because it has no real private economy to speak of besides the drudgery of tourism | PNAC (Project For a New American Century) |
| neighbourhood | The critical issues are city management, economic development, education, housing, public safety and transportation |
| new urbanism | "The [public schools] system has been largely neglected by the community... One central issue is the tendency of the [school] board to micromanage school system operations, despite its own commitment to being a policy-making rather than a managing type of board |
| icon | No-go-area |
| shooting | growing lawlessness |
| crime | violence and "looting" |
| community | "Shoot to kill looters" |
| Marten Luther King | war zone |
| dream of the 60's | "context" for the "new reality" |
| decline of the 70's | censoring dissident interviews |
| tourism | Europeans, Africans, Asians and Latin Americans |
| geography | At its presentation to Mayor Ray Nagin's Bring New Orleans Back Commission, the ULI team suggested detailed progress benchmarks for three consecutive planning stages -- the recovery stage through August 2006, the rebuilding stage until 2010, and the growth stage to be completed by 2018, on the city's 300th anniversary. |
| no windows | |
| fence | |
| defence | |
| quality of life | |
| crime rate | |
| unemployment | |
| upper-class | |

GB TO BUILD OR NOT TO BUILD

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From: [redacted]@huffgooden.com
 Date: December 8, 2005 12:51:14 PM GMT+01:00
 To: [redacted]@mvrdiv.nl, [redacted]@mvrdiv.nl, [redacted]@mvrdiv.nl, [redacted]@mvrdiv.nl, [redacted]@mvrdiv.nl
 Cc: [redacted]@huffgooden.com, [redacted]@huffgooden.com, [redacted]@huffgooden.com
 Subject: Re: Starting up dialogue

Winy,

We are beginning to materialize our research and to follow the lines for the intervention to act as a kind of urban infrastructure that is situated not only within a physical place but also within a cultural landscape. Hence we are looking beyond the boundaries of the specific site to consider this particular neighborhood as the site. The area is defined by the expressway to the north, the highway to the west, a major boulevard (Martin Luther King Blvd) to the south, and another boulevard (Simon Bolivar) to the east.

The aerial photo of the flooding which included our site was a very telling photo in the condition of isolation that the neighborhood exists within is readily apparent. The question is how does one intervene in such a context in order to affect change? Given the condition of isolation, should the intervention also exist within that isolation thereby perhaps reinforcing the cultural structure of poverty that was there? Or should the intervention anticipate a more subversive way of occupying this condition ... a manner that may look beyond itself?

The irony of the site at the moment is that it is empty.

There is no one there.

There is no crime; there is no poverty;

there is nothing except the infrastructure that contributed to the past situation that may or may not return when people return.

And there are the memories of the place.

Our assumption, however, is that people will return and that the people who lived in this area will want to return. But it may be a slightly different mix of people. And the people who lived there who want to return to this neighborhood will return with expectations of life different and better than what they left.

I was speaking with Prof. Lionel McIntyre (who is from New Orleans and a professor at Columbia) on yesterday and he describe Central City (this general area) as the heart of New Orleans. Lionel grew up in Central City. He stated that the area was mostly made up of rental housing rather than people who owned their houses (before Katrina). However, in the 1950's and 1960's the area was populated predominantly by the families of black longshoremen who owned their houses and this was the area of the black middle class. Later, in the 1970's the housing became rental housing as middle class blacks moved elsewhere. He lamented the already underway (before Katrina) beginning demolition of Guste Housing Projects to the east of our site and said that this public housing had in fact been successful. It is his hope that people will return to this area.

We will begin sending you images tonight as well as a clearer concept statement that we have been working on and then we will be able to articulate more thoughtfully on the questions and images you sent.

Best,

Mario

GB Photo of sketches found in incoming post folder with corresponding dates to this email:



GB TO BUILD OR NOT TO BUILD

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GB This seems to be the initial concept statement referred to in the above email:

Rough Draft

NODI

New Orleans Design Initiative
 Guste Elementary School

Concepts & Text

Recovering Cultural Landscape

The Cultural Landscape uses geographic concepts to emphasize where people and human activities are located, why they are located in particular locations, and what significance these observed arrangements represent. That significance reveals relationships of power defined by parameters of technology, race, class, gender and sexuality. That these set of relations can be understood as space is to theorize that space is "heterogeneous" and that "we live inside a set of relations that delineate sites, which are irreducible to one another, and absolutely not superimposable on one another... one might attempt to describe these different sites by looking for the set of relations by which a given site can be defined."

The flooding in New Orleans resulting from Hurricane Katrina and the failure of the levees not only damaged physical structures and displaced citizens to near and far-flung locations around the country but also it displaced the cultural landscape that the defined life in the city... its, patterns, rhythms, flows, and ways of "being" that makes New Orleans a particular place. In addition, that cultural landscape is (was) defined by relationships race, class, and power stewed together and flavored by music, food, architecture, Creole culture, voodoo, celebration, and decadence.

The flooding revealed that situated in this stew are (were) levels of poverty and subsistent existence rarely exposed in such a visceral manner as to immediately call into question structures of power and the relationships between the haves and the have-nots. The site for the Guste Elementary school exists within this revealed condition.



The natural topography of the site informs the cultural geography of the situation of the school. Located in Central City (called the heart of New Orleans) the site is approximate to the deepest part of the bowl that describes the section thru the city. The existing infrastructure of highways and streets that surrounds the site reveals a condition of isolation that also informs the cultural geography of the situation that existed. That poverty and subsistent living existed here can be clearly understood. Statement re: Levels of education, automobile ownerships, etc.

Urban Design Strategy

Architecture = Urbansim

Architecture as Infrastructure that "bridges" situations and conditions

GB This seems to be a photograph of sketches and word mapping on a chalkboard:



GB I could not find the source to this quote, image found in the same folder listed on previous page:

"This whole thing is a classic paradox. Borges would love it. Without the crime and corruption and problems, the city lacks the character that makes it great, but in order to fix the current problems, these traits will hinder progress and success. In order to remove those issues, the city then lacks the character. With such a strong and unique issue this takes on, it almost is unavoidable in any project there. For example, they want to build a city-wide wireless network, but 60% of the population before Katrina was illiterate? And maybe 95% didn't even have or use a computer? This is to attract new people in there, but if they do come, then the city will be very different. Of course, it is going to be different regardless, because even without these issues, a lot of people aren't returning. They already got better jobs in Houston and Atlanta. Then you have to wonder who the audience is, the new population, and that's up in the air now. They'll always be that edge, I hope."

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-----Original Message-----

From: [redacted]@huffgooden.com ([redacted]@huffgooden.com)
Sent: vrijdag 9 december 2005 14:28
To: [redacted]@mrvdv.nl; [redacted]@mrvdv.nl; [redacted]@mrvdv.nl; [redacted]@mrvdv.nl; [redacted]@mrvdv.nl
Subject: Continuing Dialogue

Winy,

Attached is a file containing our beginning research, initial sketches, and very schematic interventions in the site. We will follow with some model studies later today and can hopefully chat online for a little today or this weekend.

Mario

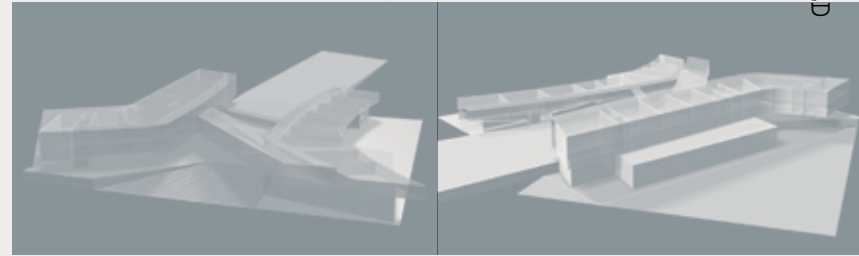
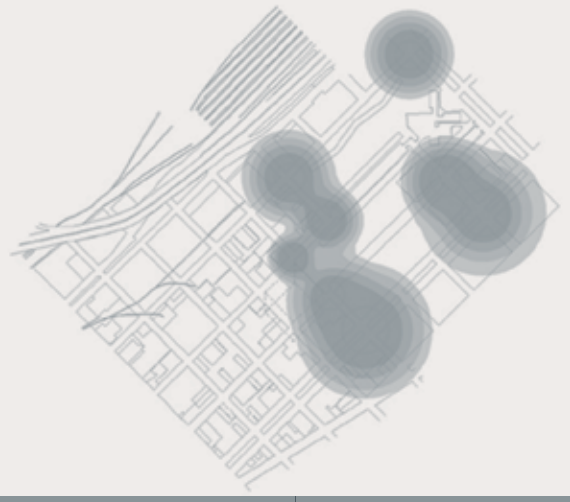
From: Marin [redacted] [mailto:[redacted]@mrvdv.nl]
Sent: vrijdag 9 december 2005 16:49
To: [redacted]@huffgooden.com; [redacted]@mrvdv.nl; [redacted]@mrvdv.nl; [redacted]@mrvdv.nl; [redacted]@mrvdv.nl
Subject: RE: Continuing Dialogue

Hallo Mario,

We have looked at your sketches/research and together with the text you wrote earlier it becomes clear that you are looking at it from a bigger scale. We'll be working this weekend so your suggestion to keep a line open and discuss the proposals is o.k.

Till this weekend then.

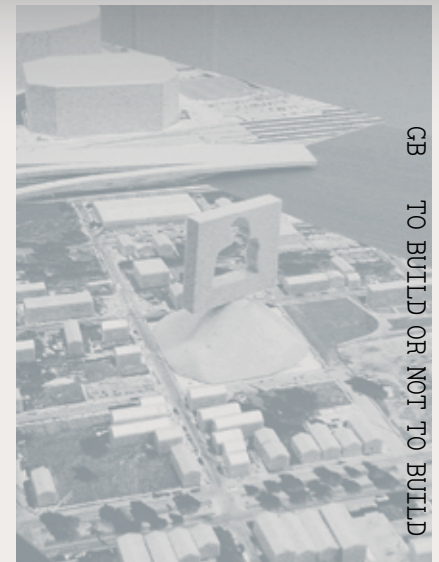
Marin



GB TO BUILD OR NOT TO BUILD

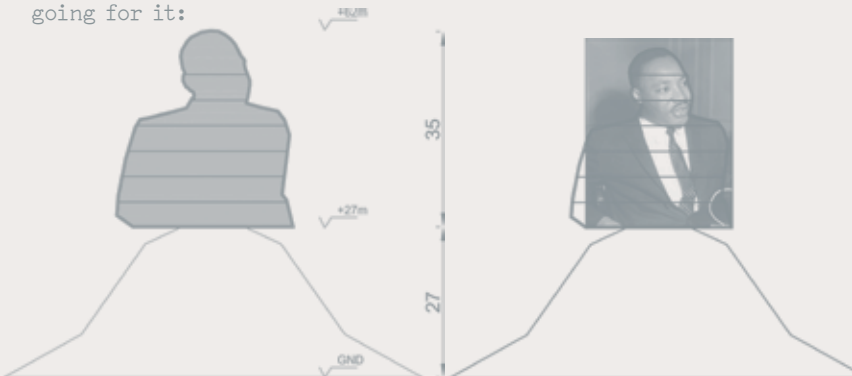
Date: Mon, 12 Dec 2005 16:53:09 +0100
From: Joanna [redacted] [mailto:[redacted]@mrvdv.nl]
To: [redacted]@huffgooden.com CC: marc Joubert [redacted]@mrvdv.nl, [redacted]@mrvdv.nl, winy Maas [redacted]@mrvdv.nl, Marin [redacted]@mrvdv.nl

Hi Mario, Here's an update on where we're heading at the moment. We now stopped some directions. We like more and more the hill with the school on top and the lifted school. We also see opportunities for the Martin Luther King school. Is it possible that you could give us more input on what "figures" could be inspirational at this site, if it is not Martin Luther King..? Winy



GB TO BUILD OR NOT TO BUILD

GB It is not clear how literal MVRDV wanted to take this design with Martin Luther King as inspiration but it seems they were going for it:



M. L. King
: see a deer ?



From: Mario [redacted] <[redacted]@huffgooden.com>
Date: December 12, 2005 6:52:04 PM GMT+01:00
To: Joanna [redacted] <[redacted]@mvrdrv.nl>
Cc: marc [redacted] <[redacted]@mvrdrv.nl>, [redacted] <[redacted]@mvrdrv.nl>, Marin [redacted] <[redacted]@mvrdrv.nl>
Subject: Re: [redacted]
Reply-To: [redacted]@huffgooden.com

Winy,

Here are some thoughts:

They could think about NO's musical traditions and the principals that played a role in that. But it might be a question of relevance for current and future generations. **Is MLK a choice that resonant with young people today?**

Ray Huff. AIA
Huff+Gooden Architects
[redacted]
Charleston, SC 29401.1441
[redacted]
T
F

Joanna [redacted] wrote:

Hi Mario,

We had a look at the material you sent us. It would be good if you could describe to us what exactly it is that you are working on.

What is it that we see? What does the building symbolize?

Why do you make a 'tail'?

Why does your building split? [GB Refer to images on page 56/57](#)

Regards,
Winy

On 12/12/05 4:27 PM, "Mario [redacted] <[redacted]@huffgooden.com>" wrote:

Winy,

The sketch model is a much too static at the moment and not yet there .
The thing which looks like a tail isn't really a tail to the building but a landscape that extends from the building into the existing housing and new housing that we will propose at the east side of the site and where they have already demolished a bit of the 1960's housing. The landscape from the east will ramp up to the a "porch between the school and step back down on the west side of the school to continue across the street and make a connection to the other side of the neighborhood. We think the housing should be similar to the school in terms of redefining neighborhood and relationships between things. The megaron bloks in "Last Import - 2.jpg" were only place holders.

The intention is for the intervention to be more about making connections to various conditions rather than be resolved as a static objects. The in-between landscape can be a public space during after school hours as well as on weekends. During the school ours it can be closed and used as a play area for the children.

The parti for the school consists of the public programs (i.e. community center, band room, cafetorium, P. E.) at the ground level. The classroom will hover above at the second and third levels in the warped bars at the north and south. The classroom bars are connected by a transparent library that bridges the public space between the two bars. The "Last Import -4.jpg" image is closest to the intention as of yesterday. However, not yet developed is what will occur on the east side of Magnolia street which we are working on now.

Regards,

Mario

From: Winy [redacted] <[redacted]@mvrdrv.nl>
Date: December 12, 2005 11:04:21 PM GMT+01:00
To: Joanna [redacted] <[redacted]@mvrdrv.nl>, Marc [redacted] <[redacted]@mvrdrv.nl>
Subject: FW: Questions

----- Forwarded Message

From: Winy [redacted] <[redacted]@mvrdrv.nl>
Date: Mon, 12 Dec 2005 23:03:59 +0100
To: [redacted] <[redacted]@huffgooden.com>
Subject: Re: Questions

Hi mario

Your explanation is more clear.

Still the building follows the rethoric of an airport. Is that on purpose?

W

[GB](#) The following emails were sent three days later

From: Stig Nielsen [mailto:[redacted]@mvrdrv.nl]
Sent: donderdag 15 december 2005 18:47
To: 'C [redacted]@msdwc.k12.in.us'
Subject: FW: Courtney S` Drawing

Regarding: Authorization to use "Hungry Hill" drawing made by Courtney S.

Dear Mr. Hanback

My name is Stig Anton Nielsen. I'm an employee at MVRDV –architects in Rotterdam Netherlands.

We are currently working on an exhibition for the NAI (Dutch architecture Institute). The project contains three sites in New Orleans and we are doing one of the sight-designs together with a US office called Huff and Gooden. See NAI-link <http://www.nai.nl/>

Our project contains a design for an elementary school that has been flooded during the Katrina hurricane. One of our final proposals is to build a school on a hill for obvious reasons (Hungry Hill). We have been searching the internet for reference pictures and came upon a drawing, probably made by one of the students from MSD of Wabash County. **The drawing is really explaining what our project is about and the fact that it has been made by a child makes it even stronger.**

We would really like to use the drawing as part of our exhibition and we would even like to use it as a press picture for the announcement of the exhibition. The exhibition will probably also be displayed in New Orleans and New York. Therefore we need (written) permission to use the 'Hungry hill' image.

The internet page where we found the drawing: www.msdwc.k12.in.us/quest/reservoir/hungry.htm
(The page was designed by Patrick , art by Courtney)

Thanks for your cooperation, if you would like we can keep you updated on the project and the exhibition.

Kind regards
Stig Anton Nielsen

From: Scott [redacted] [mailto:[redacted]@msdwc.k12.in.us]
Sent: donderdag 15 december 2005 21:09
To: [redacted]@mrvdv.nl
Subject: Courtney S' Drawing

Stig,
Your exhibition sounds interesting. I was waiting for your email so I am glad you were able to contact my secretary.
You have permission to use the Hungry Hill drawing. Courtney Strange is now a junior (11th grade) at Northfield High School. We have contacted Courtney and she said it was fine to use her artwork.

Thank you for your offer and I would indeed appreciate being updated on the project and the exhibition.

The drawing is a product of the QUEST Program here in MSD of Wabash County. Classes are designed for gifted and talented students and they participate in enrichment type projects as a supplement to their regular classroom work. The teacher of the QUEST Program was ecstatic to hear that someone (you) found their work on the internet. What an exciting honor. Thank you for accessing our website. It sincerely is a privilege to accommodate your request and I look forward to hearing more about your project and exhibition at the appropriate times. It truly is amazing how the internet can make global connections.

This email may serve as official permission, however, if you would like written permission on our school corporation letterhead I could provide that as well if you email me your contact information. Or I could draft a document on letterhead and email that to you. Let me know what works for you.

Scott D. Hanback, Ph.D.
Superintendent
MSD of Wabash County
[redacted]
Wabash, IN 46992

GB Courtney's drawing:



GB TO BUILD OR NOT TO BUILD

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From: Marc [redacted] <[redacted]@mrvdv.nl>
Date: December 15, 2005 1:46:24 PM GMT+01:00
To: Joanna [redacted] <[redacted]@mrvdv.nl>
Subject: Fwd: progress

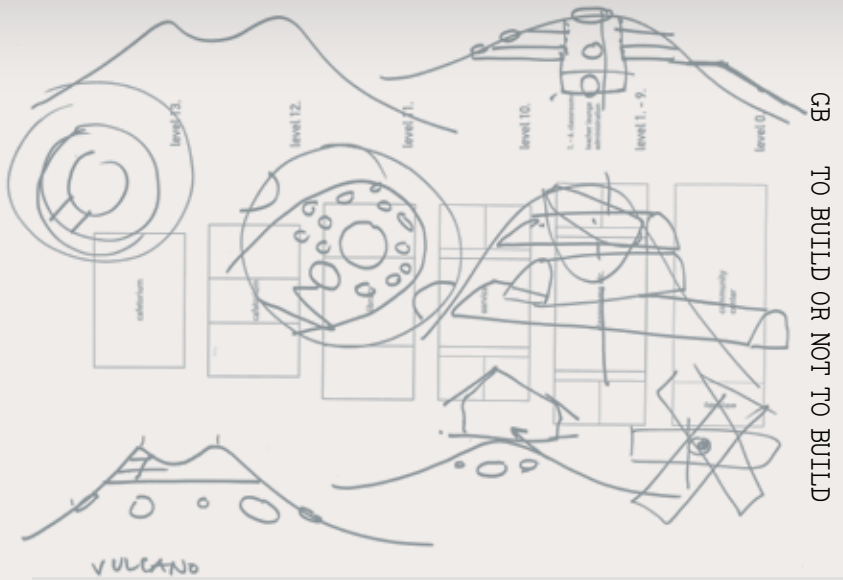
Begin forwarded message:

From: Joanna [redacted] <[redacted]@mrvdv.nl>
Date: 15 December 2005 00:25:50 GMT+01:00
To: [redacted]@huffgooden.com
Cc: marc [redacted] <[redacted]@mrvdv.nl>, [redacted]@mrvdv.nl, winy [redacted] <[redacted]@mrvdv.nl>, Marin [redacted] <[redacted]@mrvdv.nl>
Subject: progress

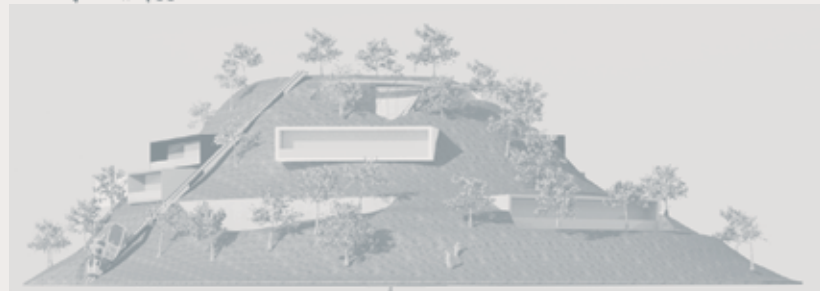
Hi Mario,
A brief update on how the project is evolving.
We're now working exclusively with the hill - one option with the school on top of the hill and one with the school inside the hill. The image shows the first mentioned. We'll follow up tomorrow.
Any comments are welcome.

Regards,
Joanna

GB Process sketches and final design renderings:



GB TO BUILD OR NOT TO BUILD



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My first reading of the correspondence led me to believe that MVRDV doubted whether or not they should participate in the project at all. I assumed they were referring to doubting how sensitive they could be to the socio-economic conditions surrounding the site as a famous international architectural firm. The idea of doubt I find really interesting. In my job, we usually see the design process, but the political, ethical, or moral conditions surrounding the project can be obscured or under documented. Upon revisiting the files I began to wonder whether MVRDV did doubt the morality of the project, or the ethics of using a child's drawing as their promotional image. Or what if what was really in doubt was how TP382 New(er) Orleans would be perceived by the public?

This is not to condemn MVRDV for being morally reprehensible, this project is a sign of its times, an era when we wanted to believe the architect could turn everything around. Remember that this exhibition took place within 8 years following the completion of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao in 1997, the iconic building by Frank Gehry that is credited with revitalizing an entire city. This project becomes more interesting to revisit 17 years later, with the recent news that Brad Pitt's now defunct charity Make it Right settled a 20.5 million dollar lawsuit to repair degrading homes built by starchitects for low income people. MVRDV also has a proposal for one of these homes, however it was never built.

I enjoy born digital archives because you can get a better sense of the whole picture; you are not viewing files in a vacuum. You can click on links, and Google things to cross reference what you find. It gives you a certain type of intimacy with the files that feels very unique. Of course this one email correspondence doesn't form the whole story, but that is what an archive is. It is a human attempt to create a complete collection of an incomplete process. We are left to draw our own conclusions based on the material that has been left behind; boundaries between fiction, fact and bias inevitably get blurred.

J E S S I C A d e A B R E U

Archiving the Superpowers
of Black Sex Workers

Black women / sex work / colonialism /
Bijlmer / gentrification / motherhood

The Best Open-Sex-Salon

The Golden Lagoon

Haarlemmermeerstraat 150 hs

020-6695947

Geeft recht op gratis entree en een drankje. Gives right to free entry and one drink.

Barbara

The Golden Lagoon

massage saloon (erotisch)

openingsdagen	ma	t/m	vr	10.00	t/m	24.00	uur
	za			14.00	t/m	2.00	uur
	zo			14.00	t/m	24.00	uur

Haarlemmermeerstraat 150 hs, 1058 KJ Amsterdam
Telefoon 020-6695947
(voor alle informatie)
Internet: <http://www.rising-sun.com/NL/Amo/Clubs/GoldenLagoon/g.html>



ZOMAAR EEN VROUW

Ergens in Amsterdam is er een vrouw,

gekomen uit het verre Suriname

zomaar een vrouw,

gescheiden van haar familie en vrienden uit dat verre, warme land

maar voor mij is zij niet zo maar een vrouw

voor mij is zij mijn beschermengel, mijn steun, mijn toeverlaat

alleen zij kan mijn tranen drogen,

alleen aan die vrouw uit dat , voor mij vreemde land, kan ik alles zeggen

JESSICA DE ABREU: Archiving the Superpowers of Black Sex Workers

Losing a parent is something you can never prepare for. I lost my mom in the summer of 2023 at the age of 75, two years after I interviewed her for my artwork, 'The New Plantation', which I made for Open Archief¹. The work dealt with her experience during the squatting movement in the Bijlmer - Amsterdam Southeast - in the 1970s and 80s. The squatting movement was an exciting time for her; I still remember her laughing as her memories were for the most part focused on the great times: they cooked, they danced, they shared, they squatted. If she could not dance at the revolution, she didn't want to be part of it.²

With my dad she squatted in the Bijlmer, a neighbourhood in Amsterdam also known as the Black neighbourhood of the city. The Bijlmer was a place for Surinamese people to reclaim their rights of residence while they were largely discriminated against throughout the Netherlands. My mom was part of one of the earlier generations of squatters. The Bijlmer squatting movement is now seen as one of the first expressions of Black activism in the Netherlands³. But my mom never saw herself as an activist, rather saw herself as a person who made use of her civil rights.

The Bijlmer plays a significant part in her story, as she lived there until the end of her life. If we look at the Bijlmer through the eyes of my mother, it is more than a multicultural neighbourhood. It's a history of resistance; it was a home for many (forced) alternative ways of living. Like many Black Surinamese womxn in the Bijlmer, my mom was more than a migrant, she was more than a squatter; like many Black mothers there is often an unknown history that is ready to be uncovered. Our (grand)mothers are living archives who have been silenced for centuries. In our Surinamese culture, it's known that 'mama is heilig', our (grand)mothers are saints, they are our protectors and we always will honour their lives. Their hardships uncover their strength, their superpowers. With tears in my eyes, I am writing this piece to secure their place in our history and memories, and respect our Black mothers' efforts to raise us, prepare us as children for a troublesome, toxic and patriarchal racist, classist society. I write to honour their choices and sacrifices, because the hardship of motherhood is often overlooked. In order to survive, my mom also became a sex worker to run her business, and from what I understood she helped other Black sex workers to perform their work.

¹ openarchief.com/blog/the-mundane-as-a-form-of-resistance

² Emmy Goldman

³ volkskrant.nl/kijkverder/2017/gliphoeve

Within the context of me working on honouring, grieving and memorialising my mother I need to allow feelings and emotions to take up more space than my rationality and ability for intellectualization. I must write less from the head and more from the heart to understand the meaning of identity and motherhood for womxn like my mom and how the Bijlmer played an essential role in the choices they made. In media and literature I miss a lot of narratives around Black sex workers, their choices and histories. And seldom did I read stories of the children of sex workers in general. Much of these narratives are probably overlooked or have been kept in secrecy because of shame or fear. It is time for me to build a new relationship with my mother knowing her role as a sex worker; and while you are reading this, you become a witness. You are now part of this journey, too.

I can write that *this essay is about the politics of social and spatial segregation and how the colonial legacy in the Bijlmer was inextricably linked to her choice to become a sex worker, but also how she built the resilience to exploit and entertain a classist, racist and colonial system that was meant to overpower and keep colonised communities in their subordinated place.* But the truth is - I miss my mom. And part of that intellectual stuff is true. However, for the most part I want to take you into my own personal journey of grief and honour as we go through her archives to understand the deeper meaning of why I interviewed her for 'The New Plantation' in the first place.

BLACK SEX WORKERS ARE SUPERHEROES

Before anything else, my mom is my hero. When she passed away, her property became her archive now that it will be all permanently moved out of her old house. It was time to clear out her belongings, and of course it was, and still is, very hard for me to throw them away. Seeing all her items brings back memories, and also the painful realisation that I won't be able to make more memories with her. My mom was also a hoarder, which I believe was due to her traumatic experience of poverty in Suriname. At the time of its independence, Suriname was the largest colony of the Dutch colonial empire. It became economically poor, so the Dutch could become financially rich. But the colonial exploitation of my mother's people, country and its natural resources, is something her genera-

tion never learned in school, nor did I learn much about it even at university in the Netherlands. As a hoarder, she kept everything just in case a rainy day would come. With each object I would wonder if she wanted me to put it in the trash, or what it would mean for her. In the process of grieving, you realise you might need some time before throwing stuff away. Despite it strongly contradicting my ambition for a minimalist lifestyle, I decided to put her belongings in various boxes and throw them away when I noticed I no longer care about it anymore.

In such a process, you realise what is most important to you and I decided to keep her business administration and materials that identified an unknown story that I was willing to tell the world when I was ready for it. I remembered that I asked her multiple times, do you want me to tell your story about your escort business and as a sex worker? And without a doubt, she said yes. She did not hesitate. There was much my mom could be ashamed about, but being a sex worker was definitely not one of them. As a consequence of her strong belief that sex work = work, I feel blessed to have never felt deeply ashamed about my mom's sex work, or sexuality in general. I did sometimes feel embarrassed to speak about my mom's work and understood that it was eventually nobody's business until now. Although I felt the stigmas about prostitution, my mom was a very open person which made me never internalize the idea that sex work as dirty work. To me, her life shares important notions about the experience of sex work for Black womxn in the Netherlands. Sex work was a choice, but it was primarily about survival. She embodied survival, like many Black mothers in our lives.

Black sex workers are superheroes, and their secret weapon is the understanding of how a political power play on their bodies can be turned into their own gain. For Black sex workers, sex work is more than reclaiming and appropriating the female body and advocating for sexual freedom. For Black sex workers, it is also an economic escape route to (economically) benefit from a body that has been exploited for centuries. Many Black womxn, like my mother, have tried since childhood to escape the poverty once created by colonialism. My mom did not succeed in finishing school, but she succeeded in travelling to the metropole. Like many migrants, they came to understand that colonialism is actually everywhere if you are not white. There is no escape from racism and its economic oppression; it is a global problem. Our parents fled to Europe;

among Surinamese people they would say *"Holland is the paradise"*; only to find out that in a postcolonial world Black people are still kept hostage in their place: in poverty and marginalisation. What I realised about my mom, and other Black womxn who worked with her, is that the superpower of Black sex workers is to reappropriate the system to reclaim their own economic gain. Instead of being exploited or fetishized by white m*n/people, they would demand their worth: in this case, their money and therefore their socioeconomic status which could mean they could raise their family and send their kids to school. There are a couple of things that I learned from my mom since I was a young teenager about sex work:

- Never call a prostitute a whore. A whore is that person who will sleep with your husband for free. Prostitution is a job.
- Mxn commonly exploit womxn emotionally, sexually, physically and financially. Why would I spread my legs for free? I can use their money.
- Prostitution has been legal in the Netherlands since 2000. Sex workers pay taxes. That makes the Tax Authorities the biggest pimp in the country.

There is probably much more I learned from her, but this is what stuck with me all my life. Until this day, I can't figure out if it all was toxic or not. Like I already mentioned, to join the field of sex work had nothing to do with sexual liberation for my mom, but a trauma-based decision to take care of herself and her youngest child, me. My mother would also not encourage me to enter the sex industry; it was a sacrifice which she hoped she could save me from. It shows the privilege of sex work, if it is your choice. Privilege is about having a choice and taking these choices for granted. I understood my mom's sacrifice when I once took a walk at the Red Light District in Amsterdam, and came across a poster at a window to protest against the erasure of the area. It said, in Dutch, "My job makes sure my children are able to go to school and university". I felt that. It was this poster that made me feel less alone. In the Netherlands, there is this saying: "being born a dime and never being able to become a quarter". My mother's aim was to prove society wrong; if she wasn't able to finish school, then her children should, and we did. There are many other children who, like myself, are able to dream our dreams because of the sacrifices our parents

ZONDER CONDOOM
WORDT ER NIET,
GEWIPT OF GEPIJPT.
VOOR DE SEX
EN NA DE SEX
VERPLICHT DOUCHEN
KIJKEN KOST GELD
EN UIT DE KLEDING GAAN
IS DAN VERPLICHT

made. We carry these sacrifices in silence, in fear, often with shame. For us as their children, sex workers are our superheroes and that should not be forgotten; they saved us from the cruelty of being at the bottom of the social ladder.

THE BIJLMER

And now you probably want to know, what did my mother actually do that is so particular? I interviewed her for 'The New Plantation' because I knew that sex work is not the most celebrated field in our society, as it's looked down upon, disrespected, and stigmatized. Sex work is often associated with being 'dirty', 'unclean', 'uneducated', 'dangerous', 'being a whore' and more. And as a family of sex workers, we often are not proud to share what comes with this world, but fortunately times change and the struggle for 'sex work = work' has become more acceptable. So, how would I share this part of my mother's story with the world when it is still taboo for many people?

For me, the Bijlmer is an interesting area and great starting point to unfold this story, and understand how various systems of oppressions intersect. My mother is definitely one of the first squatters that understood how a racist society functions. She was also the eldest resident of her flat, Gravestein, which was one of the first flats to be squatted in the 1970s when it was still known as Glijphoeve. Through letters, documents and photos I was able to identify how my mother and father migrated, squatted and lived in different places in the Bijlmer.

My mom was in love with the Bijlmer until the end of her life. When it was announced a couple years ago that her flat Gravestein would be 'renovated', a code word for gentrification as all residents (read: all old squatters, and mostly Black citizens) had to be relocated and leave their house with a small financial compensation of 4-5,000 Euro, she refused the offer and would still refuse to leave the place that was sacred to her. It was her safe haven in times when society was not safe. I grew up in a 5-bedroom apartment in Bijlmer, which was squatted by my parents. In 2023 she paid 740 Euro, which means in past years she paid even less. In the context of the recent developments of gentrification in Amsterdam, we know the new residents will pay double or triple the amount that she paid for the house. Anyways, to keep it short: gentrification is just

another cousin of colonisation which never benefits those who live at the bottom of the societal ladder. And since she migrated to the Netherlands she was quite aware how race and class interact, so making a living was always based on access and opportunity.

After 'The New Plantation', my aim was to interview her more and elaborate the hidden stories Black motherhood/parenthood holds: the complexities of oppression, trauma-based decisions and various tactics of survival. Black motherhood/parenthood serves as a great foundation to understand how systematic racism manifests within homes, and how resistance slowly moves into the public domain in various ways, through struggle or trying to make the best out of it.

THE GOLDEN LAGOON: BARBARA AND FRIENDS

Before I delve into her archival material, I need to say that my mom never made it a secret that she owned a prostitution business in the 1990s/2000s. It was named 'The Golden Lagoon' and she called herself Barbara. I knew, my family knew, my school knew. There should be video material of her business from the SBS6 show 'Sex voor de Buch' which I am still looking for. From what I remember you would also see me as a little girl when Boudewijn Buch interviewed her at home. The Golden Lagoon was what she called an open sex salon: a massage salon, where people and couples were able to explore their (sexual) pleasures and intimacies. There was a bar, a sauna, a private room and she also sold lingerie. From what I remember from my childhood, all the womxn were Black, Indigenous, and womxn of colour and her friends, who I called my aunts. In Surinamese culture, calling someone an aunt or uncle outside the bloodline shows a level of trust, community and family-building. And, of course, for some of them, I knew their children as playmates. In my mom's archives I also found pictures of their children which shows again that I was not alone. I wonder if they think their parents were superheroes, too?

According to her archive, she ran the business between the late 1990s and early 2000s in Amsterdam South, which is a total opposite area in comparison to the Bijlmer. South is generally known as a more upper class area. When I Google her business I cannot find any results. It's only her archives, my memories and stories of family and friends that know about its existence. I come across plenty of photos, leaflets, newspaper advertisements, business cards, dis-

Golden Lagune BARBARA and
The Intern. Girls zijn er ook.
Open v.a. 11 u. 020-6695947.

rom
gevr
FAN
zээр

GOLDEN LAGOON, je gelooft
je ogen niet, dit mag je niet
missen. Nw. dames aanw.
Zat./zon. 14-02. 020-6695947.

Gewillige MEISJES voor Griekse

020-6279700. 8
ing niet vereist. 31
BLONDE ESTER van 25 jaar 31
komt naar u toe op escort. 31
Tel. 020 - 6912749. 31

Genieten dat doe je bij
BARBARA en nw. j. sexy
vriendinnen. Kom gezellig
langs, maak kennis met ver-
schillende dames voor uw
sexplezier, open sex is onze
specialiteit. Drankjes vrij.
Haarlemmermeerstr. 150 hs,
A'dam bij Hoofddorppl. Open
wo-vr 13-24, za-zo 14-02.

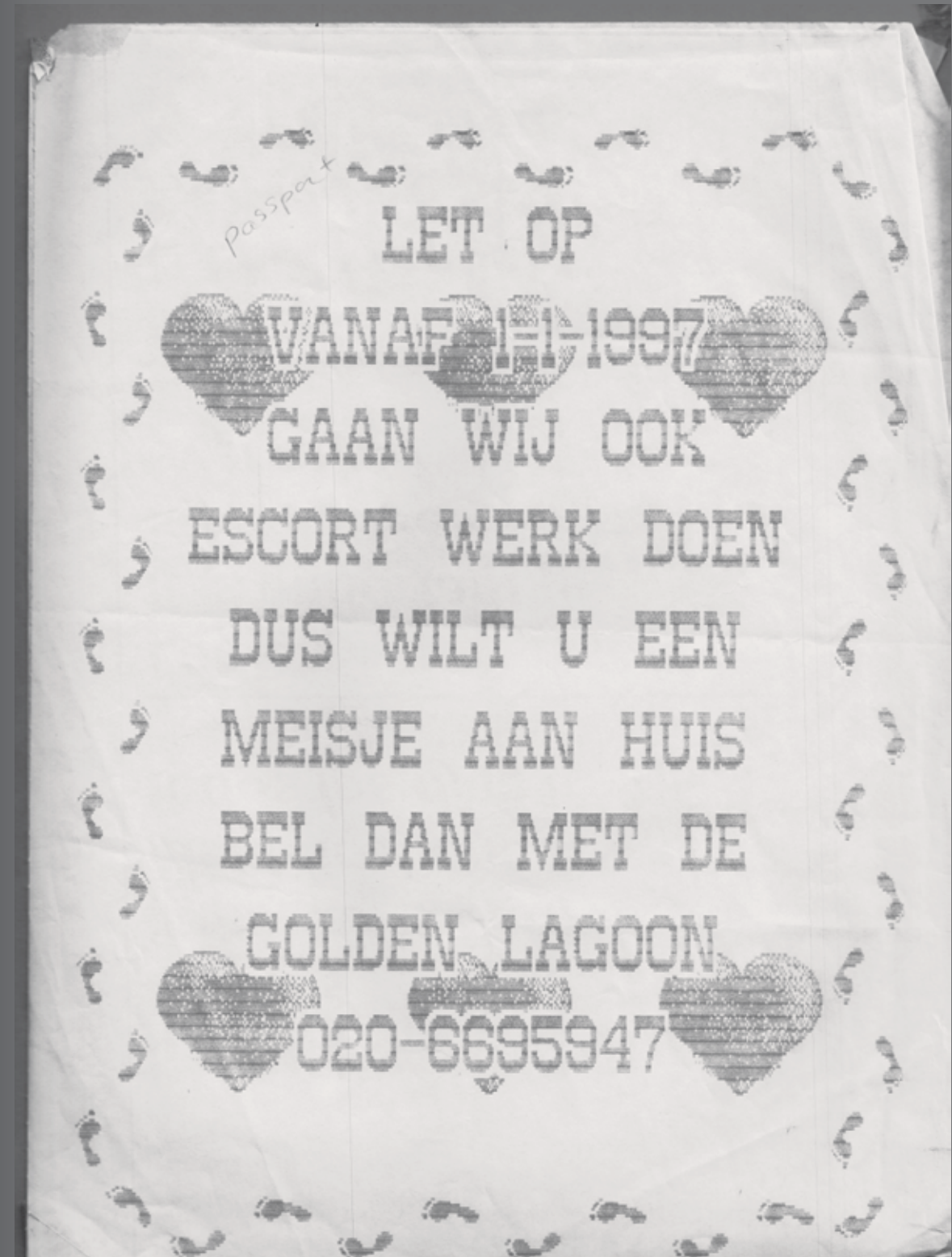
JELISA'S
ESCORT SERVICE

*** GOLDEN LAGOON ***
Barbara's vrienden +
vriendinnen wensen u een
kanjer v. een 1999 toe! U
bent van harte welkom.
Open sex-uniek. za./zo. v.a.
14 u. ma. t/m vr. v.a. 11 u.
020-6695947.

counts cards, bar menus, notes, pens and envelopes with logos, her financial and business administration, letter communication with other sex workers, clients and her admirers. There are also music cassettes, CD's, erotic VHS tapes and videos of the business. In the photos I was able to identify the many people who played a role in my childhood, including my dad who ran the bar. In some of these photos I see myself as a young child, smiling with my mom at The Golden Lagoon. Sex work was a trauma-based decision for my mom, but how I know her and understand her archive, she also enjoyed the field of sex work. She saw it as a form of care, she said once. I already made the decision that this archive must be anonymized, but I can say with confidence that it sure looks like they had a great time. It releases a bit of the sadness when grieving: they enjoyed the work, they loved their field, my mom looks great as ever, and I especially remember that the women who worked with my mom felt so lucky to have guidance from my mom, a Black womxn who owned her own business in that industry. When I had to announce that she was no longer among us in a physical state, many of her old sex worker colleagues and friends immediately started to cry. One of them closed her hands and prayed. I remember that she also always kissed my mother's hands at The Golden Lagoon. For them, my mom served also as a protector so they could do their work in safety and peace.

Perhaps the Golden Lagoon served as a safe space? I wanted to know. As I delved further into the material, I never really got to understand why it had to be closed, but bits of her archive offer answers to that question. According to her youngest sister, my mom was so generous that if some womxn didn't have any clients that night, she would still hand them over some money. I also remember a huge lawsuit between her and the landlord who raised the price of the building, making her unable to pay the rent. My mom left behind the papers of the lawsuit and in them I found a new narrative: that the building was set on fire. A newspaper article and photos confirm this. But I also wondered, what were her motives to open up this business and what would it reveal about herself? What were her experiences and stories beside everything I already know? What were her further inspirations, ambitions and dreams for her business? How did she make sense of having plenty of Black sex workers in her company? And how did they deal with the stigma and earn a living within this business? How did they give meaning to sex work? And how did she make it possible to develop an environment that made me less ashamed and think differently about sex work?

As you can see, opening her archive unfolds many more questions and narratives, asks for understanding and invites me to explore a hidden history of a Black womxn who's a sex worker and owned a prostitution business in Amsterdam in the 1990s/2000s. The more I write about her, the more I understand the complexity of Black womxn histories: she was one of the first squatters in the Bijlmer, she was a sex worker, a businesswoman, a caretaker and much more. After writing this piece, I understand her superpower was to transform sex work into a safe place for herself and other Black womxn. Whether it was the squatting movement or the field of sex work in the Netherlands, she tried to make a home in spaces which were not always seen as a safe spaces for (Black) people. I have always felt truly loved, and with her I lost a loved one: my mom is my superhero. And if you have a great relationship with your parents, I hope you start to perceive your mom like that too: because motherhood and its sacrifices are systematically undervalued. In the face of societal and personal challenges, my mom showed levels of resilience and strength, for Black mothers carry the burden to nurture and protect their children while also navigating structural racial inequality, often by themselves.



26.9.99.

Bestemd voor ieder dat hier
Rooft: M.N. Beb, HEKMAN.
Willen. Jullie A.u.B. HEL GIFT-
hucht dat jullie hier verspr-
yden. Elders achterlaten.
In Reken dringend op je mede-
werking. AANANDERS. Jullie
Begrypen my wel.

BARBARA. z

PABLO NÚÑEZ PALMA

Reimagining Polygoonjournaal
using Generative AI

Recently, a novel technique for creating photo-realistic images has grown in popularity across the Internet. This method involves the generation of visuals using machine learning models guided by the user's descriptive text, or "prompts". Intending to gain a deeper conceptual grasp of the way this innovative approach might reshape our current understanding of photography and its intrinsic connection to history, I used the generative model Stable Diffusion in combination with stills from the Dutch newsreel collection *Polygoonjournaal* to create an experimental artwork titled "Typologies of Delusion". This heuristic research opens a thoughtful yet open-ended inquiry: What can generative AI reveal about an archive's aesthetic?

PABLO NÚÑEZ PALMA: Reimagining Polygoonjournaal using Generative AI



Typologies of Delusion, in two large-size vertical touch screens (65 inches) at the Institute of Sound & Vision during RemixFes on October 5, 2023 [Fig.0]

"Typologies of Delusion" (ToD) is an ongoing series of synthetic (AI-generated) images informed by Dutch media heritage with the aid of Stable Diffusion, a popular open-source image-generation programme first released in 2022. Using a technique known as Low-Rank Adaptation, or LoRA (Rombach et al., 2021), where a curated collection of images is used to fine-tune the pre-trained model, the works consist of hundreds of synthetic photorealistic pictures presented in the form of visual grids, or typologies, displayed on a browsable web interface, inviting users to explore and compare the newly reimagined collection. This text will reference the initial two studies of this series, fine-tuned with a selection of still images from *Polygoonjournaal* - better known as Polygoon (van Nieuwenhoven, 2007), an emblematic collection of Dutch newsreels that spans from the 1920s to the late 1980s. The works were exhibited on October 5, 2023, in two large-size vertical touch screens at the Institute of Sound & Vision during RemixFest, a yearly event dedicated to the artistic appropriation and reuse of cultural heritage. Their titles are "Typologies 01: Faces" and "Typologies 02: Film Stills" (Núñez Palma, 2023) - referred to in this text as ToD01 and ToD02, respectively.

Like many historical newsreels, especially from the post-WWII period, Polygoon articulates a narrative of Dutch society sustained primarily by technological and economic progress. Examples include reels about auction markets for the import and export of food commodities (such as vegetables, fruits and livestock), the emergence of new technologies like flip-disc displays for street advertisements, or a day in the life of a flagwoman working at rural railroad crossings (with a focus on female emancipation). Overall, the consistent and idiosyncratic aesthetic of the Polygoon collection and its ethos of portraying progress through a technological narrative resonated with my intentions of remixing a visually coherent archive

using emerging technologies (generative AI) to pursue aesthetic innovation.

ASSUMPTIONS

At its core, ToD is an initial inquiry into the affordances of generative AI applied to the visual study and aesthetic reuse of visual heritage. Considering the indexical nature of the AI system in use, where machines interpret images as numbers in a network of distributional relations and semantic proximities (Weatherby, 2022), I was interested in observing how this tool could depict an archive's visual essence or, at the very least, detect aesthetical patterns. Informed by Emanuele Arielli's notion of "artificial platonism" (Arielli, 2024), which analogises current methods of training generative models to the act of stepping out of Plato's cave and accessing the world of pure ideas, I wondered whether AI could afford the visualisation of conceptual values in an archive. What would -for example- a pre-trained model informed by an aesthetically coherent collection - like Polygoon- generate if prompted to make images of concepts such as optimism, fear, or modernity?

In this sense, ToD01 (Faces) and ToD02 (Film Stills) are part of the same generative exploration of Polygoon but with a different focus. The first emphasises translating concepts into images, seeking to reveal the model's raw capacity to imagine full-fledged portraits guided by minimal prompts. In contrast, ToD02 focuses on the archive's reuse, mixing its distinctive visual style with film plots and examining the method's potential to be implemented as a visualisation tool in artistic productions, especially film.

As previously stated, the images in both series were created using Stable Diffusion, version XL 0.9 (SDXL), as a base (pre-trained) model. This was combined with five Low-Rank Adaptation models (LoRAs), each trained on a curated set of one hundred stills from separate decades

of Polygon, from the 1940s to the 1980s. The selection process for these images prioritised the collection's diversity of styles and subjects. These LoRAs act on the base model, infusing the distinctive style and characteristics of the collection into the resulting pictures.

The title "Typologies of Delusion" highlights the two main creative elements of this heuristic research: the use of visual typologies, a centuries-old method of visualising concepts, and the aid of generative AI models to explore the film collection from a non-human perspective (often perceived as hallucinatory), through spawned imagery (Hertzmann, 2020).

VISUAL TYPOLOGIES

Visual typology is a visualisation method that facilitates the study of a concept through its multiple physical manifestations. It operates by combining distinct imagery representing one theme or style in a way that can be useful for the optical discovery of aesthetical patterns, which can be used as feedback to gain deeper insight into the concept in study. Historical examples of this practice come from diverse disciplines, like Carl Linnaeus' botanic illustration (Charmantier, 2011) used for species classification; August Sander's photo portraits of people in the Weimar Republic (Steinbock, 2011), an early form of visual anthropology; or Hilla and Bernd Becher's conceptual approach to photography (Polte, 2017), which in the framework of fine-arts explores the relationship between architectural designs and their landscape. Taking these as references, using visual typologies in ToD provides viewers with a heuristic method to approach aesthetical concepts that underlie the Polygon collection, as calculated by AI software.

The first typology, Faces, comprises 6475 synthetic portraits generated through the systematic use of three-word prompts. The structure of these prompts was designed to

allow the AI model maximal latitude for creating original and distinctive content. The initial word serves as an adjective or modifier, the second is as a noun or role, and the third is a decade, represented numerically. These parameters are the minimum the model requires to translate abstract concepts and emotions into images.

[fig.1] offers a graphical representation of this methodology, where adjectives were arranged on the x-axis, nouns on the y-axis, and decades on the z-axis (corresponding to a different plane).

The second typology, Film Stills, applies the same generative model to render a more elaborate task. It combines decades, displayed on the x-axis, with a list of dramatic situations often revisited in Western cinema and used as narrative motifs. These plotlines, as I call them, are placed on the y-axis.

Each combination of decade and plotline was submitted to OpenAI's GPT-3.5 Large Language Model to generate an optimised prompt. Subsequently, the paraphrased prompts were paired with their corresponding LoRAs based on the referenced decade. For instance, if the prompt referred to the 1940s, the model employed was SDXL fine-tuned with the Polygonjournal's 1940s LoRA [fig.2]. At the time of writing, this type of prompt paraphrasing (using LLMs to optimise prompts) has been incorporated into the workflow of many popular image generators, such as Dalle (Lai, 2013) and Gemini Ultra (Wan, 2024). In the case of SDXL, this operation needs to be programmed manually.

A final note on the methodology for producing ToD02 is the use of a consistent generative seed across all images in the series. In Stable Diffusion, a seed is a numerical starting point that dictates the pseudo-randomness in the image generation process, thereby determining the unique characteristics of the resulting image. By keeping the seed constant, I intended to ensure the uniformity of image composition, facilitating a coherent and comparable visual analysis of the synthesised images.



TYPOLOGIES 01: FACES [fig.1]

1 MATRIX

X
Y
Z

X

X = terrified

Y = athlete

Z = 1980s

2 PROMPT

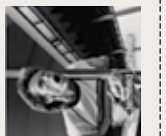
Xn+Yn+Zn

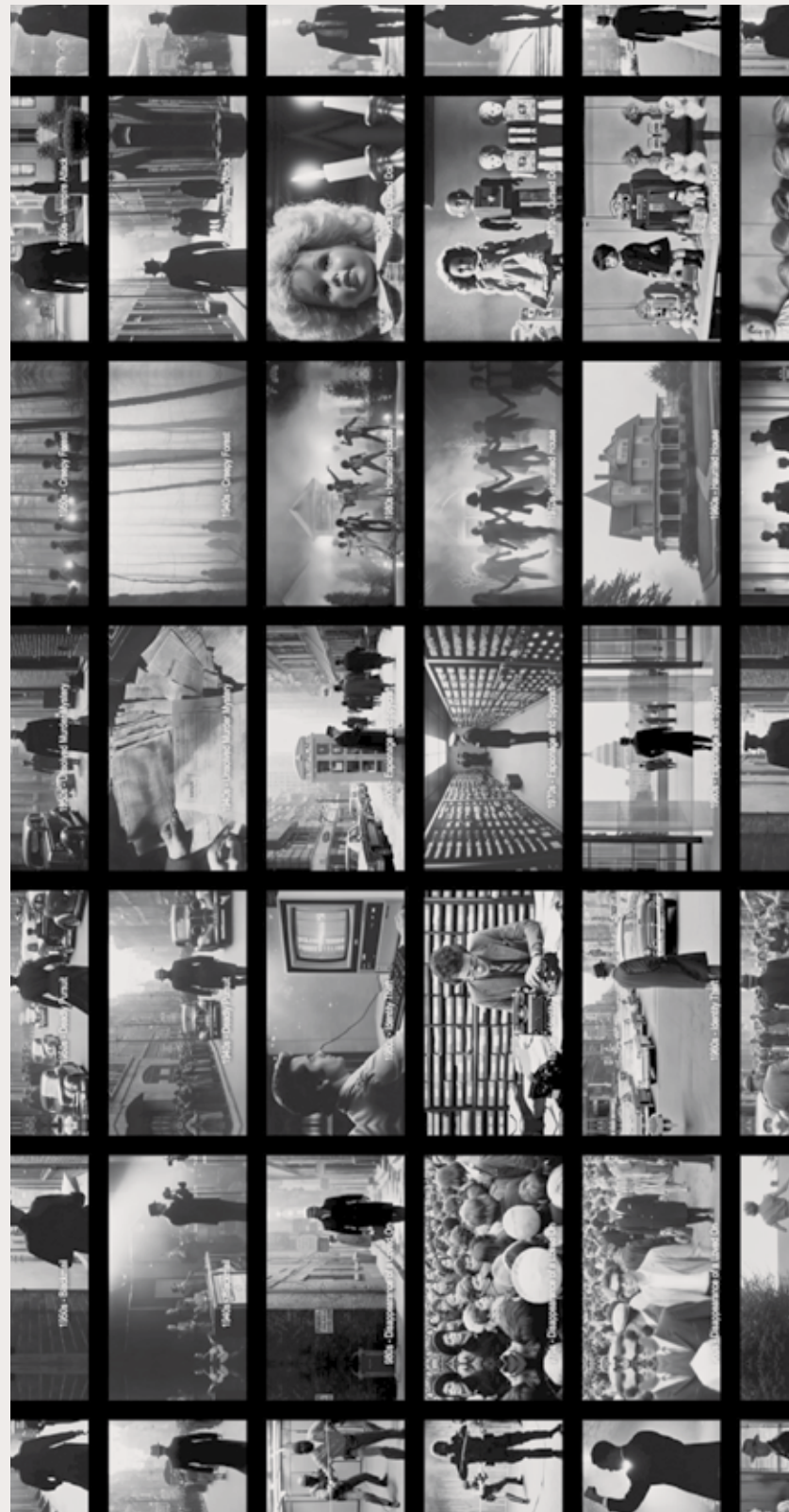
terrified+

athlete+

athlete

3 OUTPUT





TYPOLOGIES 01: FILM STILLS [fig.2]
Unlike the previous typology, this piece only consists of one scrollable screen.



Depiction of "violence" in ToD01 [fig.3]

OBSERVATIONS

Given ToD's experimental nature and seeing it as a first approach to exploring an archive through the lens of generative AI, it is difficult and rather undesirable to carry on a close reading deprived of subjectivity. With this in mind, the following analysis of ToD01 and ToD02 consists of five observations drawn from selective close readings of their parts. Next to offering a deeper understanding of the Polygon collection, these observations will help evaluate the affordances of using this or similar approaches in future projects.

1ST OBSERVATION: PAWNING STYLE, NOT CONTENT
At first glance, scrolling through the vast grid of images in ToD01 gives the impression that they belong to one large, coherent thread. In most cases, the texture, colour scheme, and style of the images are similar. However, upon closer inspection, it quickly becomes noticeable that many depict odd scenes, scenes that would only sometimes be conceived as an extension of the Polygon collection.

From the many examples I could cite, one that caught my attention is the depiction of 1980s violence, particularly the chef, waiter and waitress triad [fig.3]. There, we see a cook who seems to be holding back strong feelings while concocting a mysterious sauce in a bowl next to blood-looking splats. Next, we find a waiter caught mid-motion, as if hurling a dagger with a single arm, his face painted in blood-like red as if taking part in some obscure ritual. Finally, there is the waitress, staring feisty and defying. Her lips, garishly painted in red, reflect a state of carelessness, perhaps obsession, which elicits an unbalanced state of mind. Underneath the film texture and style, which, although generic, seem historically accurate, the scenes present characters and situations that resemble an 80's horror film rather than a Polygon newsreel. What

do these images say about the archive, and what do they reveal about the method employed to explore it? Unlike remixing, it is difficult to trace back the exact origins of a synthetic image. In remixing, the creative act lies in finding the right pictures and overseeing the sampling process. This makes identifying the influences between an original and its remixed version possible. However, this is different with generative AI, where images are not mixed but rather translated into numbers and compressed into a single mathematical space, better known as latent space, which can spawn an infinite array of synthetic imagery.

As proposed by artist duo Herdorn-Dryhurst (Herndon, 2022), spawning is an act of exploration into the latent space of an AI model, using prompts and data to transfer a style or translate specific aspects of a body of work. ToD01 seems to do this by infusing colours and textures into the new images, which are coherent with the collection's photographic style. However, my intentions with this project were different. I wanted to use generative AI not only to replicate a style, but to interrogate the contents of polygon. Essentially, asking the model to represent concepts and situations it did not know about. In this sense, the results obtained are both surprising and, at the same time, expected. The AI accomplished its part, only to find I may have asked the wrong questions. If I ask a human to do this same task, to create an entirely new situation based on images that make few to no references to it, that human would have no other choice than to use her imagination based on previous knowledge and life experiences, to create scenes using the main thing that could be reused from the images I provided: their style.

This leads to the second observation. Where do the AI's previous knowledge and "life experiences" come from? And wouldn't the style of the images also be part of that source?



Depiction of a "grandfather" in ToD01 [fig.4]

2ND OBSERVATION: THE LORA FALLACY

A workflow suitable for generating AI imagery informed by a specific set of images, in this case, the Polygon collection, consists essentially of two stages: one of training (deep learning) and the other of denoising, or generating, also known as diffusion.

In a nutshell, the training process consists of using Machine Learning (ML) algorithms and other models to process a dataset and create a latent space where words and images are indexed via numerical relations. This latent space is then used to generate pictures, starting from a canvas of random noise. Through a series of cycles, known as steps, the trained model gradually removes noise, sculpting the data in a way that leads to an image that fulfils the prompt.

ToD01 and ToD02 followed this procedure, but not from scratch. SDXL 0.9, a robust model containing all the essential commands to represent reality, was used as a base model. Additionally, smaller models were used to include the Polygon collection in the workflow. As described in a previous section, this technique is known as Low-rank adaptation, or LoRA. [fig.5] illustrates an early experiment in the implementation of this training process. The images in the top row were used to train the LoRA. Rows two, three and four are snapshots of the creation process of three images. The image in row two was prompted with the phrase "a man", row three with "a woman" and row four with "a car". The pictures reveal the diffusion process from left to right, moving from noise to the final output.

Since the sample used for training this test case was very small, there is a direct resemblance between the final images and the sample on top. For example, the images of the man and the woman have a shop filled with folders and plastic balls as a background, similar to those in the top images. The same happens with the car, which intriguingly ended up as a

two-dimensional illustration of a car instead of a photorealistic image. This apparent bug can be explained by noticing its likeness to the sign on the top row that reads "I love standards". The close similitude is because this is the only image of a car used in the training set.

Adding LoRA's (Low-Rank Adaptation models) to the base model seemed like a sensible approach for this exploratory experiment. Constructing a base model from scratch requires a series of training steps that demand substantial computing resources and expertise in multiple disciplines just to yield primary results. Besides this reasoning, the LoRA method is common practice within the Stable Diffusion community and frequently produces satisfactory outcomes. Tying back to the previous observation, the way the LoRA method operates explains the origin of the



Early experiments with Low-rank adaptation. The images in the top row were used to train the LoRA. Row two was prompted with the phrase "a man", row three with "a woman", and row four with "a car". [fig.5]



Depiction of "angryness" in ToD01 from 1940s (top row) till the 1980s (bottom row) [fig.6]



Depiction of "overexcitement" in ToD01. From 1940s (top row) till the 1980s (bottom row) [fig.7]



Depiction of a "police officer" in ToD01 [fig.8]

AI's prior knowledge and "life experiences": the base model is the source from which it draws connections to imagine situations not available in the Polygon dataset. And, as demonstrated in the test [fig.5], since the spawned images consistently followed the stylistic references from the Polygon dataset, it appeared that this method could help unveil aesthetic patterns from the collection. Unfortunately, this assumption proved not entirely correct when implemented in a larger body of work.

While some sections of the visual typologies generated coherent sets of images that could pass as genuine reimaginings of the Polygon archive, such as the various representations of a 1980s grandfather shown in [fig.4], other sections revealed distortions at the very core of the training method. A noteworthy example is the depiction of police officers across decades. As illustrated in [fig.8], a sample of police officers from the 1940s to 1980s shows uniforms remarkably similar to those of the United States rather than the Dutch police. While this could be seen as an oversight in training - there was only one policeman in the Polygon set - it points to a more profound issue: the latent space that emerges from the encounter between the base and the LoRA model is fuzzy. Although the LoRA method undoubtedly guides the outcomes towards a particular "Polygon" style, it is impossible to establish the exact degree of its influence.

3RD OBSERVATION: GESTURAL EXAGGERATIONS
 Leaving behind the ambition of accuracy in reusing Polygon as a source of synthetic imagery and instead embracing these typologies as a means to study the affordances of a triologue between the base model (SDXL), the trained models (Polygon LoRAs) and the prompts, it is worthwhile to dive into some of the most noticeable and idiosyncratic outputs. Beginning from the more photorealistic

cases to later addressing the more delusional, a noteworthy tendency to start with is the exacerbation of facial and bodily expressions in ToD01.

[fig.6] and [fig.7] present samples of images generated using the modifiers "angry" and "overexcited," respectively. Both examples reveal the predominance and exaggeration of specific facial expressions. While this could be interpreted as excessive or clichéd, it is crucial to use this case to reflect on and justify the value of these exaggerations. Is the AI not, after all, providing precisely what has been requested?

More subtle representations of human emotions invariably depend on context, and the more nuanced the case, the greater the potential for dissonance between the context and the image. In a film, overexcitement can be portrayed through a man being slapped in the face by his lover because she missed him so much. In the photographic portrait of a political agitator, anger can be conveyed through the absence of facial expression, a sign of defiance and readiness to fight back, which is more threatening and revealing than a wrinkled face.

Unlike artistic expressions, the AI's straightforward depiction of these intense emotions reinforces an unimaginative yet iconic representation of the world, which should be seen as a positive attribute. On a conceptual level, overexcitement is more closely associated with states such as vertigo or euphoria rather than calmness. Similarly, anger is typically linked to unattractive, hostile facial expressions. Whether the base model or the LoRA generates these gestures, the representations of the emotions in question are beyond reproach.

Gestural exaggerations, however, have a limit. Beyond that limit, exaggeration turns into aberration. To a great extent, the threshold that separates one from the other is subjective, as it is defined by the image's beholder. While the topic



of visual aberrations will be addressed further in this text, [fig.9] presents four images from ToD01 that invite the viewer to reflect on these limits.

4TH OBSERVATION: NARRATIVE PROVOCATIONS

Unlike the images generated in ToD01, those in ToD02 exhibit a more complex composition. They were created by combining decades with plot-driven dramatic situations, and these combinations were then fed into GPT 3.5 to generate prompts optimised for producing high-quality results in Stable Diffusion.

Consequently, the first noticeable aspect is the abundance of details and the more polished style of the images. They resemble scenes from a film or graphic novel. However, this has come at the expense of the absence of a Polygon style. Uniforms, landscapes, and characters all reveal a significant influence from the base model, SDXL, while the remnants of the Polygon model are difficult to discern. It is challenging to determine whether the Polygon LoRAs have influenced elements such as the style of dress or film texture, as these features can be generic to an era in the film industry, which the base model has likely already incorporated.

In contrast to ToD01, this typology does not quickly succumb to clichés, and when it does, they manifest in thought-provoking ways. Regardless of the intentionality behind the generations, which is difficult to interpret and I largely attribute to chance, the scenes elicit a significant degree of surprise while remaining reasonably faithful to the prompt. This makes them thought-provoking and valuable for inspiring unique stories in the mind of a storyteller.

Consider the examples in [fig.10]. Even scenes that might be considered stereotypical possess depth and uniqueness when examined alongside their original prompt. For instance, the image of a passionate kiss in the rain from the 1970s depicts a

couple kissing in a large parking area, with the man in civilian clothing and the woman in a military uniform. This raises questions about the scene's context - could this be a farewell? Moreover, portraying a female soldier in the 1970s adds a unique perspective to the story.

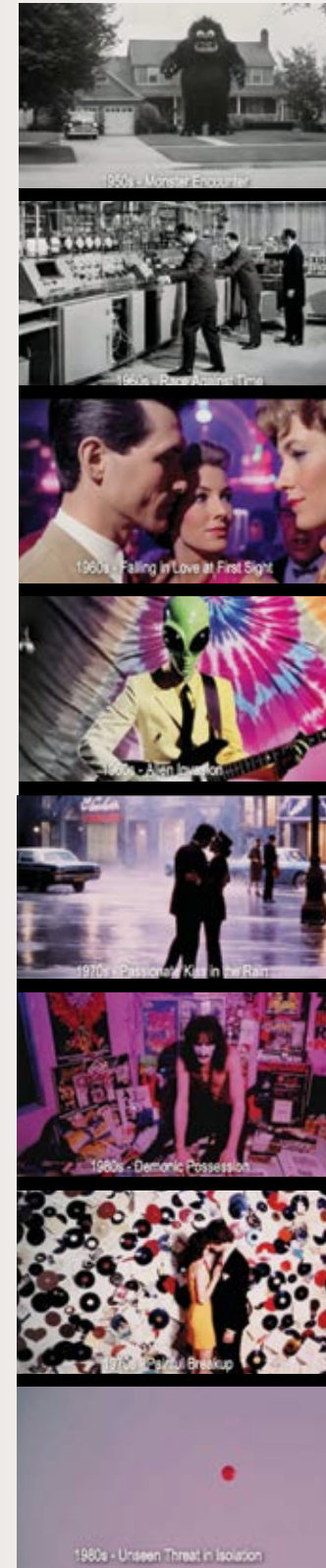
A similar composition of a couple kissing can be observed in the picture of a painful breakup from the 1970s. However, this scene has an entirely different look and feel. The youthfulness of the characters and the woman's grasp on the man suggest carnal passion. The white background, adorned with an expressionist display of music records, evokes a highly subjective and chaotic state of mind. The wall resembles a messy floor, yet the characters are standing, defying the laws of physics. This break from reality relates to the subjective and emotional theme of the image - a painful breakup. The image provides plenty of material and loose ends for imagining possible stories.

As a final example (although [fig.10] presents additional images, which I leave for readers to interpret), the image of an unseen threat in isolation from the 1980s is particularly striking. It features a red sphere floating in the sky, a cryptic and bold yet original depiction of something that may resemble a UFO. The scene's minimalism and mystery evoke Kubrick's "2001: A Space Odyssey" (1968), in which a perfectly geometrical object appears on the face of pre-human Earth.

In conclusion, while the images generated in ToD02 may not faithfully represent the Polygon archive, they demonstrate a promising use of generative AI for enabling creative processes, particularly in the early stages of brainstorming.

5TH OBSERVATION: VISUAL INDETERMINACIES AND PATTERN ABERRATIONS

A final observation about the ToD series concerns the notions of indeterminacies and pattern aberrations. These concepts refer to what one might consider an



Stills from ToD02 [fig.10]



Visual indeterminacy in ToD02 [fig.11]

atypical interpretation of a prompt, not as an error but as aesthetic catalysts (Arielli, 2024). In this sense, aberrations and indeterminacies open up the possibility of connecting generated images with artistic expressions.

The notion of visual indeterminacy, first coined by Robert Pepperell (2006), describes imagery that initially appears coherent and realistic but, upon closer examination, defies realistic spatial interpretation. Often, the initial appearance of an image invites the viewer to investigate further, only to discover that what was first assumed to be realistic actually lacks logical consistency. Throughout art history, visual indeterminacy has been inherent to many forms of artistic expression, from cave paintings to modern art movements such as Cubism, where abstract shapes establish uncanny insinuations of real-life situations, leaving enough space for viewers to trigger their imagination.

Aaron Hertzmann writes more specifically about visual indeterminacy in the context of AI (2020), particularly when referring to Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs), an AI generative method that predates diffusion models like Stable Diffusion. In the process of synthesising data for the creation of new photorealistic images, explains Hertzmann, there is a considerable chance that the AI model almost succeeds. It is that "almost" that can leave the image in the space of symbolic dissonance, which Hertzmann describes as the "uncanny ridge," where the image is in a limbo of becoming meaningful but doesn't fully cross the threshold. This leaves the viewer in a state of confusion, which forces the mind to make uninformed speculations, thereby inducing an artistic kind of experience.

From ToD02, one compelling example is the 1970s image of "Self Destruction due to Guilt" [fig.11]. In this image, we find a man swallowed in flames in front of a crowd. It is unclear whether he is



affected by the burning, but he carries a broken guitar. While he plays with one hand, he pushes the headstock out of the fire with the other. The crowd seems to stare at this act with solemnity and admiration as if it were a heroic act reminiscent of the self-immolation of Buddhist monks in 1960s Vietnam.

Visual indeterminacies are complemented by the notion of pattern aberrations (Arielli, 2024), which refers to a less subtle form of association between objects. Pattern aberrations involve scenes that more bluntly insinuate symbolic associations rather than the more subtle vagueness of visual indeterminacies. In the context of art history, if visual indeterminacies are related to Cubism, pattern aberrations would be connected to the free associativeness of symbols in Surrealism.

ToD01 offers many examples of both visual indeterminacies and pattern aberrations. [fig.12] shows a sampling of images that initially appear realistic but reveal imprecision upon nearer inspection. A case of pattern aberration would be the "Honourable Cat," which has the flag of the United States of America imprinted on its chest. This rather amusing image invites the viewer to contemplate the meaning of honour. Is honour synonymous with patriotism? Raising this question may encourage the viewer to reflect on an even deeper issue: the values and biases held by the generative AI model.

Another extreme case of data aberration is the image of an "Overexcited Business Man." Instead of depicting a human figure, the image reveals what appears to be a bar graph with considerable fluctuations. This could be interpreted as the inner state of a businessman who finds himself emotionally overwhelmed. Next to this image, a headless "Modern Business Man" with a shiny metallic neck evokes a certain minimalism, a slickness devoid of a mind. Would these depictions have been

different if businessman were used as a single word instead of combining business and man? I don't think so, as these models tend to prioritise tokens (small units of meaning- like fragments of a word) over word spaces. Still, as with many other situations discovered after beholding the results of these visual typologies, the question remains open.

Visual indeterminacy within ToD01 can be found in the representation of the "Sensual Engineer," who sits in front of his computer wearing a shiny red leather muzzle. The scene, assuming it is meant to be sensual, elicits bizarre fetishist practices at the workspace. This incongruous juxtaposition of elements creates an ambiguous situation, inviting multiple interpretations and mixed emotional reactions.

The last two photographs further demonstrate the concept of visual indeterminacy within ToD01. While the AI model clearly grasps that a photographer is someone who operates a camera, the exact nature of this relationship is portrayed ambiguously. In the case of the "Negative Photographer," we see a man staring at the back of an open plate camera, inside which another camera points back at him. Similarly, in the image of the "Joyful Photographer," the photographer appears to have no legs but instead has a tripod extending from the hips downward. These visual indeterminacies, along with the pattern aberrations discussed earlier, contribute to the unique and thought-provoking nature of the images generated by the AI model, showcasing the potential for generative AI to create content that challenges our perceptions and sparks imaginative interpretation.

CLOSING REMARKS

The concept behind ToD came from a simple thought: If AI can generate images, could it help us explore hidden aspects of an audiovisual archive like Polygoon Journaal? While this might seem like a basic question, exploring such ideas can sometimes lead to interesting and unexpected insights.

Through the design and production of ToD01 and ToD02, a crucial lesson has been learned: AI-generated images are the result of a dialogue between a workflow and a guiding entity or artist. Understanding AI's workings is insufficient to produce meaningful results, at least for now. This realisation stresses the notion that image generation is, at its core, an artistic practice. Just as an art restorer must make creative decisions informed by extensive training and profound historical knowledge, reimagining an archive using AI requires craftsmanship and a clear vision of what is to be preserved.

The decision to work with the Polygoon Journaal Archive was deliberate and noteworthy. This historical dataset offered an opportunity to explore the intersection of AI technology and cultural memory. By applying AI to this archive, I aimed to uncover new perspectives on our shared past and reveal patterns that might be overlooked through traditional archival methods. While this particular experiment didn't yield the expected results, it doesn't invalidate the methodology of using visual typologies to examine alternative applications of generative AI in archive actualisation. The process provided valuable insights into generative AI's affordances and highlighted the importance of experimentation, playfulness, and practice in mastering this new tool.

Moving forward, it is crucial to approach AI's potential in audiovisual archives with artistic sensibility and scientific curiosity. Moreover, this project underscores AI's potential as a novel tool for historical inquiry and archival exploration, opening up new avenues for understanding and interpreting our cultural heritage.

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M I C H I E L H U I J B E N

Architecture for Archives

MICHIEL HUIJBEN:
Architecture for Archives

**The structure of something
is sometimes called its 'architecture'.**

**We say that the city has an architecture,
and books, and trees, and databases,
and apparently even loneliness
and love can have an architecture —**

**a distinct structure that makes them
part of a general category as well as unique
in their own right.**



**The archive
has an architecture too,**

**but it's also housed in one, so the
two are often confused.**

The archive building is not as interested in uniqueness as the archive itself: its singularity is mostly expressed in what is contained, not in the container.

From the outside, there's not a hint of what goes on inside the building.

A functionalist mass of concrete and steel, with very few windows, it's seemingly unmoved by the changing world around it.





This is intentional: the past is what forms the archive, so it must show itself to be above the present,

above the moment's frenzied news cycles, or its swaying political currents, lest it threaten its own existence.



The mid-20th century archivist Georg Winter suggested that

an archive building should be placed near the centre of public life,

so that it doesn't forget about the public and the public doesn't forget it.



And yet the archive building shows hardly any concern for the outside world,

despite being of that world, and absorbing it like a sponge with a very specific interest.



The world enters the archive in the form of historical documents.

To be among these primary sources excites us because,

like the archive, we also obsess over the origins of things.

The word 'archive' shares its root,
arche: 'the first principle',
with the word 'architecture',

and both really do have a pleasing
unity to them,

yet as we enter and our search begins,
both break down
into little fragments.

So we cling to chronology,
geography, or even the alphabet,

but the archival search lacks the
archive's rationality.

The search is erratic,
full of expectations, at times almost
possessed

*(the world is so very full of details,
isn't it?)*

and frustrating,
because the only way to get to things
is via their descriptions,

and those words don't always
overlap with the objects themselves.



**This difference is part of what motivates
the archive:**

it might be the result of a single account,

**but it needs the constant revision
of that account to keep itself alive.**



Perhaps this is why the archive building
doesn't draw much attention to itself,

doesn't claim the archive to be too
remarkable or special,

but quietly invites the world to enter
and claim its importance on its behalf.

PIETER PAUL POTHOVEN

ARCHO4547, Evidence or Documentation?

Archiving the Revolutionary
Anti-Racist Action



Het Parool

Terug in de tijd: de aanslag van de RaRa op de Makro in Duivendrecht

voed bij de Makro in Amsterdam in 2001, aangevraagd door RaRa. Foto: Peter Paul Dothoven - de Telegraaf

De radicale actiegroep RaRa pleegde afgelopen jaar een aanslag op de Makro in Duivendrecht. Dit artikel schiet er op de aanslag van RaRa op de Makro in Duivendrecht.

Terug in de tijd: de aanslag van RaRa op de Makro in Duivendrecht, Tahrim Ramdjan, Het Parool, September 20, 2020



'Ik wil het mysterie rondom RARA in stand houden'

Pieter Paul Dothoven in 1985 pleegde de aanslag op de Makro in Duivendrecht. Pieter Paul Dothoven pleegde de aanslag op de Makro in Duivendrecht. Dit artikel schiet er op de aanslag van RaRa op de Makro in Duivendrecht.

'Ik wil het mysterie rondom RARA in stand houden', Blanca Stigter, NRC, October 14, 2020

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De Telegraaf

Per ex. maandag t/m vrijdag / 1,00 — zaterdag / 1,50

No. 31.181 Met jaargang Hoofddirectie: H. L. de Haas - J. Langeweg 28 pagina's dinsdag 12 april 1989



Vandaag in De Telegraaf "KLAGENDE HARRY" GERIDDER Zes agenten in Oss geschorst Hartbewaking kind taak ouders

Vliegtuigkapers schieten voor volle tank 2e gijzelaar dood

Politie overrompelt harde kern politieke terreurgroep Shell claimt schade RaRa bij daders

RaRa bij daders

Ajax voor straf zonder publiek



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Het ontzette schisma van het tweede kabinet

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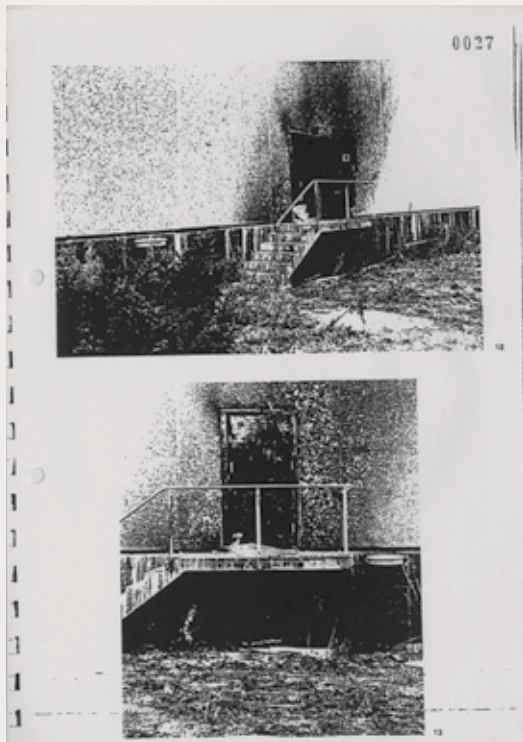
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Advertisement for DOET U UW ZAKEN. DOEN WIJ HET GELD.

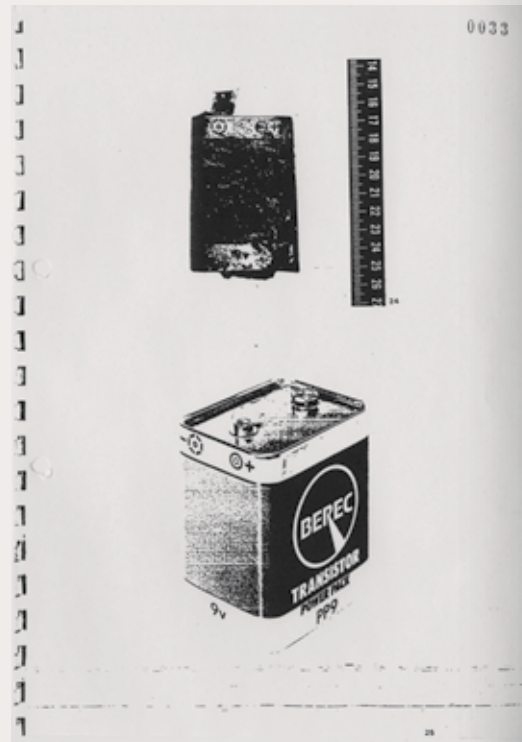
Advertisement for JA, een abonnement nu met gratis 12x De Telegraaf

PIETER PAUL POTHOVEN: ARCHO4547, Evidence or Documentation?

Archiving the Revolutionary Anti-Racist Action



Page 26 from police report
(L.C.T. PV nr. 2800, zakendossier 1 t/m 6)



Page 33 from police report
(L.C.T. PV nr. 2800, zakendossier 1 t/m 6)

On April 11, 1988, police raided nine squats in Amsterdam and arrested eight individuals suspected of involvement with RARA⁰ - the Revolutionary Anti-Racist Action - an activist collective that conducted attacks between 1985 and 1988 on companies trading with apartheid-era South Africa, such as Shell and Makro.

"Tonight we have attacked a part of the Dutch business empire in South Africa. You can't effect change by endless sessions in parliament. You have to fight for change by attacking all those economic, political and military institutions here - in the heart of imperialism - that facilitate the oppression here and elsewhere. Therein lies the communality of our struggle, our only perspective and our unconditional solidarity with the militants in South Africa.

SUPPORT THE REVOLUTION IN SOUTH AFRICA AND CREATE THE FRONT IN EUROPE"¹

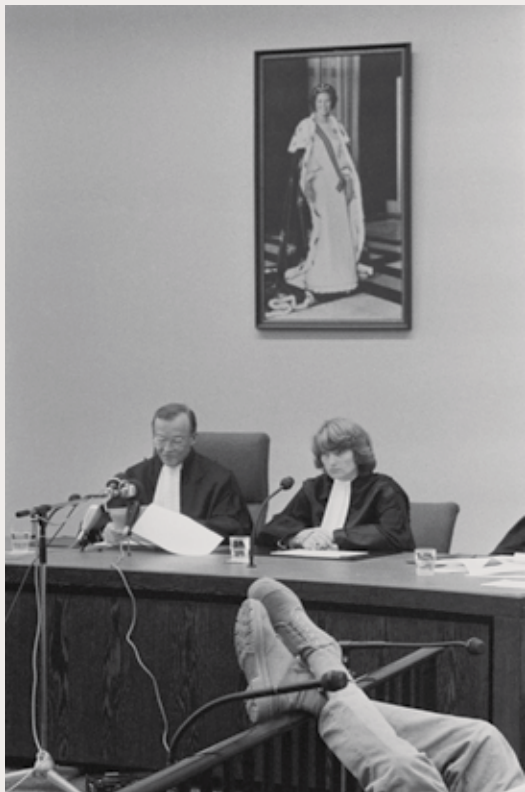
After four attacks on Makro warehouses - causing 150 million guilders in damages with no injuries - insurance no longer wanted to cover Makro, the government declined to provide guarantees, and SHV, the parent company of Makro owned by the wealthy Fentener van Vlissingen family, was forced to withdraw from South Africa. An unexpected success in the fight against apartheid.

The day after the house raids, police spokesperson Klaas Wilting declared the arrests a success because the elusive RARA had been "unmasked". Indeed, before the suspects were aware of their impending arrest, press photographers were already poised to capture them. Two detainees appeared on the front page of De Telegraaf the very same day, hands cuffed and eyes obscured by a black bar. Yet all suspects remained silent and during the following weeks seven out of

eight were released due to lack of evidence. Only suspect R had traces linked to him. Based on his fingerprint on a timing device and paint splinters on tape matching missing paint on a door he presumably used as his worktable, the court sentenced R to five years in prison. On January 10, 1989, R appealed against the state's decision. According to the defense, the evidence found during the raid on the squat where R lived was obtained illegally. The examining magistrate was present for only thirteen minutes, not the total duration of five hours and fifty minutes, as required by law. Nor was he search supervised, as legally stipulated. The judge agreed and reduced R's sentence to 11 months. After deducting time served, he was released immediately.

Despite Wilting's rather premature claim, RARA remained anonymous as a collective.² Only R became visible, because he was the only RARA suspect on trial and published letters and interviews while in prison. For many R became the face of RARA. Throughout the years, he spoke sporadically with the press but remained cautious. In the 2010 television program *Andere Tijden: De explosieve idealen van RARA*, twenty-five years after the first Makro attack, R still revealed nothing that could serve as evidence. Consequently, the Public Prosecutor decided not to reopen the case following the television program.³

R was the first person I spoke to. As preparation, I read PDFs of police and intelligence reports, and found a group of people who consistently outsmarted the Public Prosecutor, police and secret services. Occasionally, I caught glimpses of the activists themselves, such as R, who wrote that prison life reminded him of his youth in a children's home⁴, or another suspect who remained silent during yet another interrogation, smiled, hummed and "acted as if she had com-



RARA suspect R in court during the verdict on August 24, 1988. Photograph courtesy of Bert Verhoeff

have been lost due to neglect, active policies or lack of access or interest, and now is the time - while those involved are still alive - to document the history from the perspective of and in solidarity with RARA. R agreed to schedule a follow-up interview. A few weeks later, I was ready with a recording device. R revealed little, was defensive, saw me as yet another person trying to gather information that could endanger him or others: *This feels like an interrogation!*⁸ The practice of a revolutionary accustomed to holding his tongue - every question is a potential trigger - clashed with my initial curiosity and impatience. To reveal or remain elusive? How could I depict the history of RARA while the activists themselves remain anonymous?

Still, R also felt the urge to document the history of RARA. One or two interviews? Not enough. This process required ongoing dialogue and collaboration without knowing exactly where it would lead. I approached the International Institute of Social History (IISH). In the first version of the contract for ARCH04547 the IISH declared: "... to preserve the archive in good condition"⁹ - I hadn't collected anything yet. R and I continued to meet. We laid the foundation for a collaboration that lasted years until R suddenly passed away in 2021.

In 2018, I created *facade suspended*, an installation that contextualises RARA within the ongoing legacy of Dutch imperial history. I took apart five 17th and 18th-century chests from the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and used the wood and brass to reconstruct the façade of the squat where R lived and where the raid occurred in 1988. R visited the exhibition: *Nobody understands that!*¹⁰ Even though he wasn't convinced (to put it mildly) of the work, it gave him confidence that I hadn't immediately gone public with the few things that had never been made public before. R introduced

pletely shut herself off from the outside world"[5]. These vulnerable fragments touched me. Who are these people? What is their story?

Why RARA? During my initial meeting with R, I responded that due to my grandfather, a paramilitary resistance fighter in World War II, I had always been interested in resistance, but I was done with that story and the rather patriarchal, nationalist and time-bound way resistance is perceived; at RARA, it is not about heroic (individuals) but an anonymous collective where women, men, queers, Black and white all play a role⁶; I want to bring this history to the forefront now that a new generation unfamiliar with RARA is rising up against climate crises, racism, exploitation, oppression and exclusion based on gender and sexual orientation⁷; so many histories of socialist resistance

-1-

BASISTEKST PLEITNOTA

Laatste woord, begin van een nieuwe zin.

Ten aanzien van de kriminologische feiten is al genoeg gezegd, ik heb daar niets aan toe te voegen.

Wat wil ik inderdaad op de achtergronden, die voor de REVOLUTIEWAARME ANTI-RASSISITISS AXIE en voor het komende NO-PASARAN aanleiding zullen zijn geweest om de diverse aanslagen, zoals die in de dagvaarding staan, te plegen.

Bij het toelichten van deze achtergronden, en het geven van mijn interpretatie daarvan, zal duidelijk worden dat de verwachting is, dat er met dit proces geen eind gekomen is aan een tijdperk. In tegendeel. Ik zal zeker niet de laatste politieke gevangene zijn. Het verzet neemt toe, kijk maar naar het stijgend aantal aktes tegen de S.M.E.L. Allemaal overwerk voor van de kerk en zijn LCI-cowboys.

De iedere dag groeit de noodzaak en de belangrijkste ontwikkeling van de laatste tijd is, dat steeds meer mensen ook de mogelijkheid tot verzet als een perspectief zien.

Dat is één van de verdiensten van de RARA, ze hebben ons laten zien dat verzet mogelijk is. Die verdiensten van de RARA laten tegelijkertijd het fiasco van de staat zien. De grootschalige actie van de 11e april, had als belangrijkste doel mensen af te spaareren, ze in hun schulp terug te duwen. De elfde april heeft juist voor een verlevendiging van het discussieproces gezorgd. In het discussieproces is vele male interessanter dan het proces hier, maar nu ik er toch een kan er net zo goed wat over zeggen.

Het zal duidelijk zijn dat ik een sympathisant ben van de strijd van de RARA en de kommando's als NO-PASARAN en die de aanslagen als noodzakelijk revolutionair geweld, iets waarvan de legitimiteit voor mij buiten twiffel is.

Geen zinnig mens kan twifelen aan die legitimiteit. Wat is nou een billig brandje vergeleken met het vergoten bloed in de zwarte townships? Niemand kan zeggen dat de fenteners van Vlissingen niet gevraagd zijn te vertrekken. Niemand kan oorkonden dat het s.n.o. al jaren om een effectieve boycot roept, d.a. aan de nederlandse staat. Zij lieten hun respectievelijke belangen boven het recht op zelfbeschikking van volkeren gaan. Niet de rechtsoorde is geschokt, maar de politieke, economische en militaire belangen van het westen. In dit konkrete geval de s.h.v. en frits kortnaals alles.

Ik heb dan ook hartelijk gelachen en met mij vele anderen, bij het zien van de betuulende smoeien van fentener van vlissingen en frits kortnaals alles, toen ze van de branden vernamen en zij op hun beurt moora en brand schreeuwden vanwege het beestachtige karakter van de daders van deze terreur. Die 150 miljoen is maar een schijntje vergeleken bij wat het imperialistische westen uit de drie continenten zuigt. Ik zie het dan ook als een uitstaande rekening, waarvan een klein gedeelte gepresenteerd is.

De bevrijdingsstrijd in zuid-afrika is voor onze generatie, wat de strijd in vietnam voor de generatie van '68 was. Een kapitalistiek. Een strijd waarin de morele verantwoordigheid en woede, ongezet worden tot een politiek bewustzijn. Schande is een revolutionair gevoel en omgezet tot randelen een niet te stuiten proces.

Zuid-afrika is een brandpunt van tegenstellingen. De blanke superioriteitswaanzin tegenover zwart bewustzijn. Het imperialistische bondgenootschap van rassistie en kolonialisme met het kapitalisme. Het is een oorlog van noord tegen zuid en zonder de imperialistische steun van het westen zou het blanke

Scan of pleading notes of R. August 10, 1988. Donated by journalist Katrien de Klein.



Photograph of heater used by RARA to dispose of clothes after actions, courtesy of RARA activist. Part of *observatie contra observatie*, In the Presence of Absence, 2020, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

is the script and a photo taken by an activist with a burning wood stove.

"I take off my clothes.
Sweater.
T-shirt.
Pants.
Underpants.
Socks.

Everything. I throw everything in the fire. ... And here I am. Naked. Staring at the flames."¹³

A coat rack found on the street with a jacket, a pack of smokes on a chair, a dirty carpet, a used coffee mug, crushed cigarette butts. The photo depicts the living space of an activist, but also conceals: the mirror is turned away from the activist who took the photo, and the stove was used not only for heating but also for burning evidence, such as

the clothes used in the attack on Makro in Duivendrecht. In my view, the image embodies the paradoxical relationship between meticulously destroying traces - necessary for the functioning of RARA as an anonymous collective - and my attempt to document and recount this history.

"The donor declares that after donation he will have no sound recordings and only anonymized transcripts of the interviews with the persons involved with RARA in his possession."¹⁴ Before the exhibition at the Stedelijk, R and the others insisted that my house and computer had to be "clean". All actions by RARA are statute barred. The chance that "they" would come to visit is almost nil. Nevertheless, recordings of our conversations and transcripts with names should not be lying around. Just the thought that I



Illegal FM-radiotransmitter with antenna built by a person involved in RARA. Part of *Observatie contra observatie*, In the Presence of Absence, 2020, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

might accidentally leave a hard drive somewhere and something could be done with the information, which could seriously embarrass the people I have spoken to, still makes me feel uncomfortable. I am relieved that ARCH04547 is the only place where all the information I have gathered is stored in its entirety.

At every step of the process of creating and presenting the work at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, people from RARA were closely involved. The interviews, the concept of a composite character, writing the script, building the illegal FM transmitter, and every time there was media attention, we discussed strategy: engaging in substantive discussions with Het Parool, NRC, OVT on Radio 1, not talking to the right-wing and conservative Elsevier Weekblad: *nothing interesting will come out of it*, according to one of



Installation detail with radio. Part of *observatie contra observatie*, In the Presence of Absence, 2020, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

the RARA-activists.¹⁵ Yet EW published an article: "Stedelijk Museum provides space to 'useful idiot' from terrorist group RaRa". Besides nonsensical speculation, EW did have a point: "One of the most striking contributions is an (audio) artwork by Amsterdam artist Pieter Paul Pothoven. The artist himself speaks of an 'investigation', but it is more than that. It is a thinly veiled attempt at rehabilitating the notorious terrorist group RaRa as contemporary 'resistance fighters' (...)"¹⁶

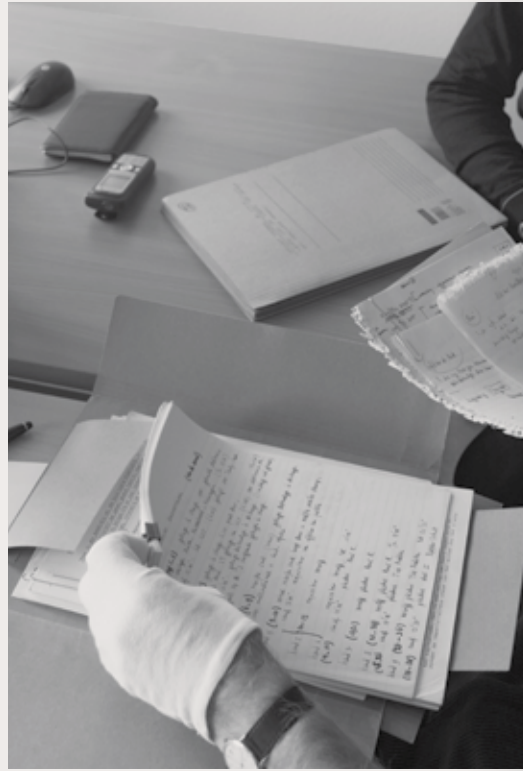
RARA visited the Stedelijk. Not only the people I collaborated with, but also others who had previously seen no benefit in the project came to see it. They read the articles, listened to the radio and saw the video of far-right MP Martin Bosma (PVV) who, during a committee meeting of the Dutch Parliament, in a



PPP showing photograph of heater at the International Institute of Social History, September 21, 2022

disjointed rant referred to the work as an example of why no more money should go to the cultural sector because: "It only glorifies terrorists."¹⁷ It surprised me when one of the activists, to whom I was introduced after the exhibition, said that maybe I knew more than anyone about RARA. This was partly because I had spoken to several people and not everyone saw each other anymore or only sporadically; but more importantly because for a long time information within RARA was shared on a need-to-know basis only. A strange contradiction: I, as an outsider, may have a better overview than those who have been in the midst of it for years.

The work at the Stedelijk did not only result from the interviews, but was also an essential link in the bonds I built with people from RARA, a catalyst that



PPP showing notepads of Katrien De Klein, the journalist who reported during the court case against R, the only RARA-suspect on trial, at IISH, September 21, 2022

influenced the nature of the conversations and thus also the makeup of ARCH04547. The interviews became sometimes informal, sometimes *on the record*, or with one or more activists at a time; over the years, interviews turned into conversations and looked nothing like the initial "interrogation" with R. My drive, or better: impatience to find out as much as possible gave way to a slow pace of working. After the exhibition, previously undiscussed themes were addressed, such as the question of violence: how far does the struggle for change go?

"We especially don't want victims who are innocent, but where is the line? Do we only focus on goods - material damage - or on people, too? How far are we willing to go in the fight for change? ... Brigade Rosse, the ETA, the RAF. Look how they do it in

Germany: first the warehouses, then the businessmen and politicians. Why don't we take that step?"¹⁸

Based on the latest conversations - most of which took place in my living room - I made the short film *Kosto. Grootschermer. Dertig Minuten*. (2023, 23min) about the attack on the home of Aad Kosto, who, as Secretary of State for Justice, was responsible for increasingly inhumane asylum and immigration policies. In the early morning of November 13, 1991, RARA placed an explosive device against the rear wall of the house in Grootschermer, a small village in North Holland. After a telephone warning, to which the title of the film refers, Kosto left his house. He returned the next morning. In front of the camera, he picked up his still living pet cat, Auguste, from the ground and walked around with it. This iconic image - disastrous for RARA's public image - circulated in all media. I wrote a script from the perspective of several activists involved in RARA. Through listening, writing, learning the script by heart and working with my own voice, I try to come as close as possible to the personal beliefs, considerations and doubts that led to this action. For the time being, this film is the last work I made about RARA. It has been quiet for a while, but if new on-the-record conversations take place, I will add them to ARCH04547. "As long as the archive remains closed, the donor retains the right to consult, modify and add pieces to the archive."¹⁹

Access to ARCH04547 is restricted until September 17, 2060, seventy-five years after the first RARA attack on Makro in Duivendrecht. Thereafter "IISH is allowed to make the archive available to third parties via usual channels including but not limited to reading rooms and a website."²⁰ Access is now restricted but not closed: "Third parties can access the archive after written permission from the donor who will consult with the persons

interviewed in question."²¹ Once the IISH receives a request, I will contact the people from RARA. After consultation, we will make a decision and I will notify the IISH who, in turn, will contact the person wanting to consult the archive. There is also a possibility to grant access to part of the archive, such as the transcripts of one or more conversations; the yellow visitor card with which someone visited R in prison; or scans of a voluminous police report on which a RARA activist wrote with a blue marker *NOTHING*.²² If I were to pass away before September 17, 2060, a notary will inform the IISH. The archive will then remain closed until 2060.

After the death of all the activists involved, RARA will be brought out of anonymity. Not based on evidence gathered by police and investigative services, but by documenting this history to which the activists have contributed on their own terms and which will be made available at a self-chosen time and place.

"But it hasn't gotten that far yet
Bring it on.
RA-RA.
Come and find us."²³



Inara Limon (conservator Amsterdam Museum) holding takeaway poster with image of the damaged house of State Secretary of Justice Aad Kosto in Grootchermer, November 13, 1991. Part of *Kosto. Grootchermer. Dertig minuten.. Amsterdam Refresh #2, War & Conflict, 2023*, Amsterdam Museum. Black and white photograph courtesy of John Schaffier.

0 RARA is derived from *ra-ra* which means "guess ..." (who we are) in Dutch.
 1 RARA claim letter, attack on Makro Duivendrecht, September 17, 1985
 2 RARA continued after the arrests and shifted its focus from apartheid in South Africa to Dutch asylum and immigration policy. Between 1990 and 1993, RARA carried out attacks on offices of the Dutch military police (Marechaussee), ministries, and the residence of Aad Kosto, State Secretary of Justice under the Lubbers-Kok government.
 3 *Roemersma staat nog achter Makro-branden*, Trouw, November 19, 2010
 4 *Letter from René, De Zwarte*, November 25, 1988, included in Dutch Secret Service (BVD) report released in 2010
 5 "deed voorkomen of zij zich geheel van de buitenwereld had afgesloten", from: L.C.T.-rapport, proces verbaal nr.: 2800 A t/m H. Donated by RARA-activist and included in ARCH04547, IISH. These records can also be found in part at: Noord-Hollands Archief, special court files, access no.: 94, inventory no.: 719
 6 I deduced this from a letter from the *Vereniging van Sociële Advokatuur Nederland* (VSAN) to Minister of Justice Korthals Altes (April 21, 1988). Vice-chairman A.H.J. van den Biesen complains about the racist, sexist, and homophobic statements of the police during the interrogations of RARA suspects. Source: Noord-Hollands Archief.
 7 Intersectional thinking was essential in RARA's ideology: "Dat het uiteindelijk gaat om een wereld zonder onderdrukking, uitbuiting en vergiftiging, zonder racisme en seksisme is geen pathetische geloofsbelijdenis, maar de kern van het socialisme zoals wij ons dat voorstellen" - 'Ultimately, it is about a world without oppression, exploitation, and pollution, without racism and sexism, not a pathetic creed, but the core of socialism as we envision it.' From: RARA claim letter, attacks on Marechaussee offices in Oldenzaal and Arnhem, March 19, 1990
 8 *Het lijkt wel een verhoor!*
 9 "het archief in goede staat te bewaren", contract ARCH04547
 10 *Lekker vaag, dat snapt toch niemand.*
 11 Algemene Nederlandse Diamantbewerkers Bond (ANDB) and Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging (FNV).
 12 p.1, script *observatie contra observatie*, Pieter Paul Pothoven in collaboration with RARA activists, 2020, translation: Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei
 13 *ibid*, p.6
 14 "De schenker verklaart dat hij na schenking geen enkele geluidsoptname en alleen nog geanonimiseerde transcripten van de interviews met de personen die betrokken waren bij RARA in zijn bezit zal hebben.", contract ARCH04547
 15 *Komt niets interessants uit.*
 16 *Stedelijk Museum biedt ruimte aan 'nuttige idioot' van terreurclub RaRa*, Gertjan Schoonhoven, Elsevier Weekblad (online), October 15, 2020
 17 "Daar worden toch alleen maar terroristen mee verheerlijkt.", Committee meeting Tweede Kamer (House of Representatives) about budget for the cultural sector, November 23, 2020.
 18 p.3, script *Kosto. Grootchermer. Dertig minuten.*, Pieter Paul Pothoven in collaboration with activists from RARA, 2023, translation: Dutton Hauhart
 19 "Zolang het archief gesloten is behoudt de schenker het recht om het archief te raadplegen, te wijzigen en stukken toe te voegen", contract ARCH04547
 20 "Is het de Stichting IISG toegestaan het archief aan derden ter beschikking te stellen via gebruikelijke kanalen waaronder inbegrepen maar niet beperkt tot leeszaal en een website", contract ARCH04547
 In the first contract I signed, September 17, 2035 was the date on which IISH would release ARCH04547. However, the people from RARA whom I met after I signed the first contract stipulated a new date: September 17, 2060.
 21 "Derden kunnen toegang krijgen tot het archief na schriftelijke toestemming van de schenker die

22 daarvoor met de geïnterviewden in kwestie zal overleggen.", contract ARCH04547
 23 NIETS
 p.8, *observatie contra observatie*



On the morning of November 13, 1991, State Secretary of Justice Aad Kosto lifted the cat August from the ground and walked around with it right after the politician returned to his severely damaged house. Hours before, RARA bombed his place in their fight against increasingly inhumane asylum legislation. Image of NOS Eight o'clock news, part of *Kosto. Grootschermer. Dertig minuten.*, *Amsterdam Refresh #2, War & Conflict*, 2023, Amsterdam Museum

ELKI BOERDAM

Input Party

SEARCHING FOR MY ARCHIVE I DISCOVERED THAT I DIDNT COLLECT IMAGES

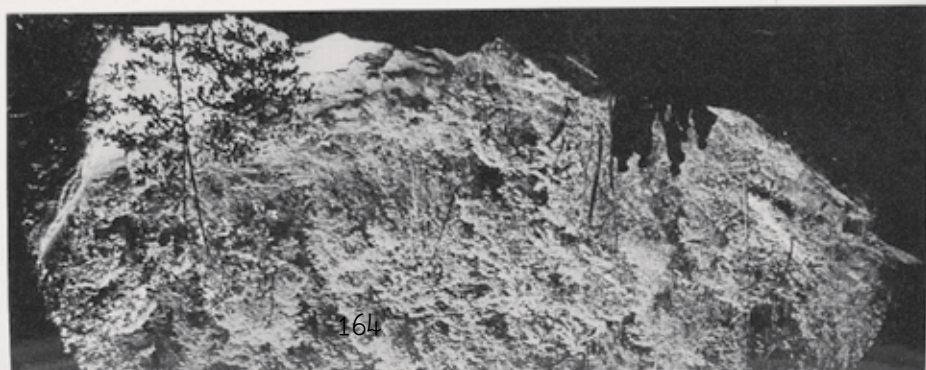
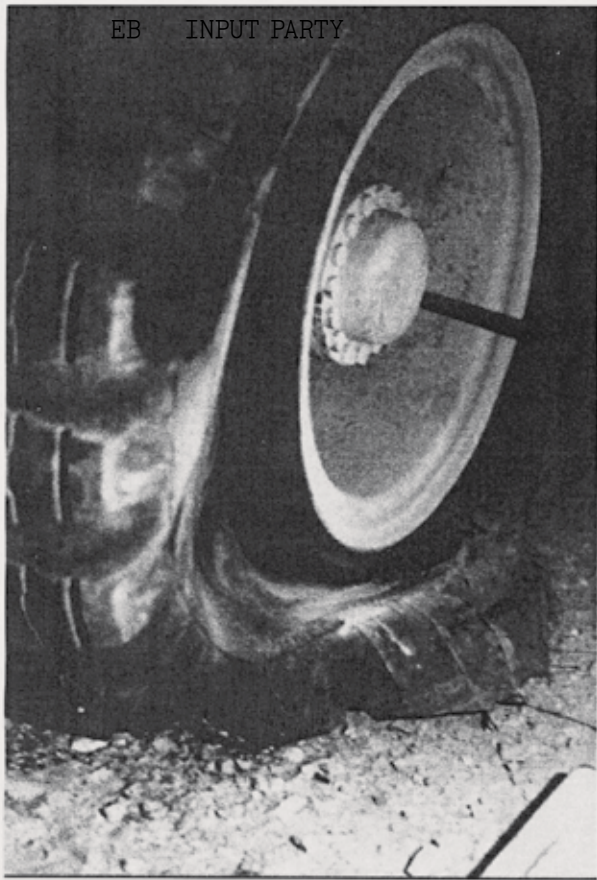
AT ALL. - DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE SAME - LOOKING AT THE IMAGES TO ACTIVATE A PROCESS



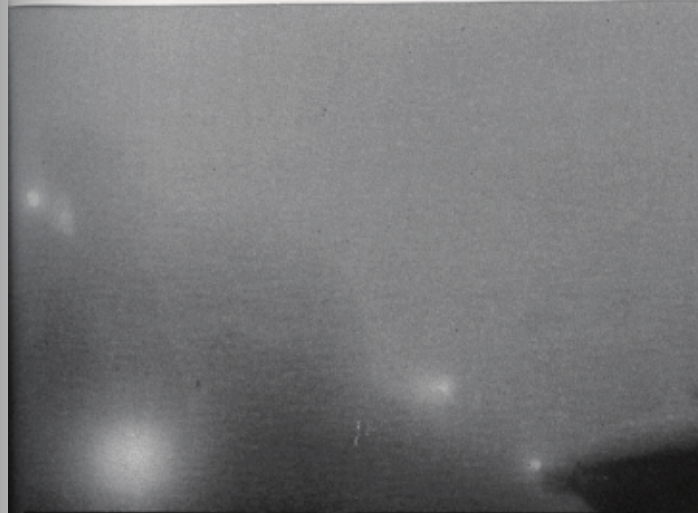
IMAGE WALL. - THOSE THAT ARE ON THE BORDER BETWEEN REALITY & FICTION.

- LAYER ON LAYER ON LAYER ON LAYER. THE PASTER OF MY 163

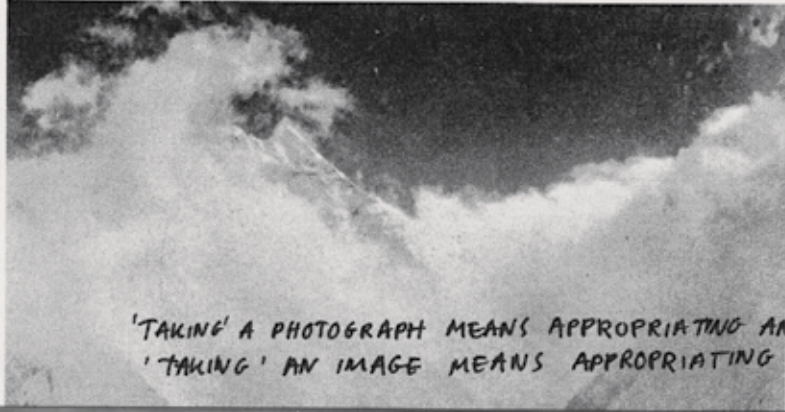
The images used in the collages are from the archive of the Input Party, a project (together with Rachel Sellem), that researches referential image archives of artists and the collection of images as an important part of the creative process. During organised gatherings, artists share images with each other which spark a conversation about current research, visual language, references, image harvesting, access to sources and the importance of existing images during the creative process. The texts in the collages are quotes from participating artists during these conversations. The Input Party also collaborates with institutional archives to connect artists with unknown archival material, and to provide the institutions with insight into how artists approach, dissect and use their archives.



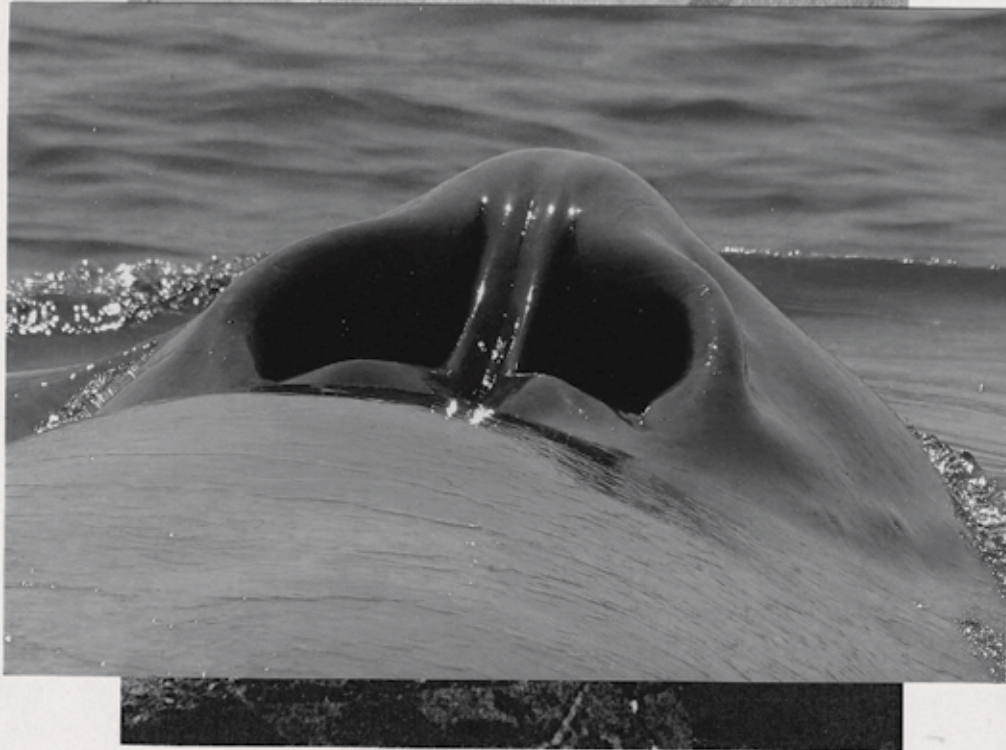
THE WORK SPROUTS IN THE COLLECTING.



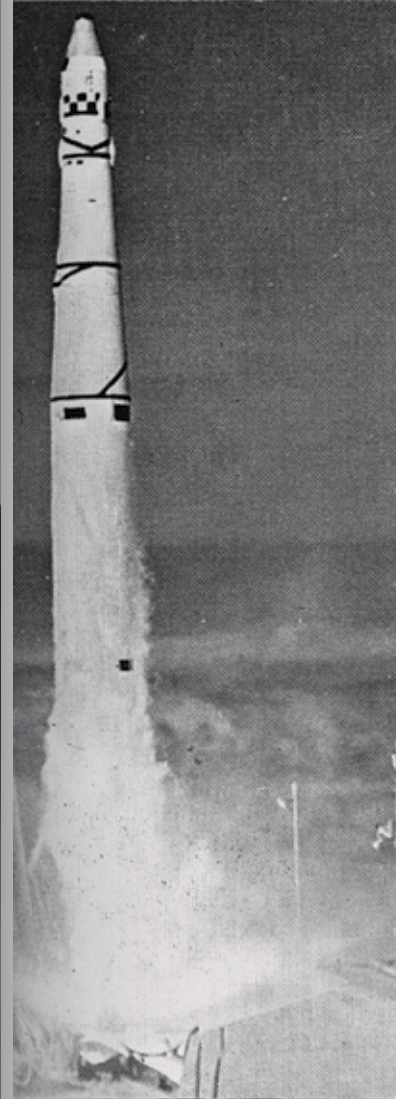
MY STREAM OF THOUGHT IS BUILD UPON IMAGES FROM MY ARCHIVE.



'TAKING' A PHOTOGRAPH MEANS APPROPRIATING AN IMAGE.
'TAKING' AN IMAGE MEANS APPROPRIATING A PHOTOGRAPH.



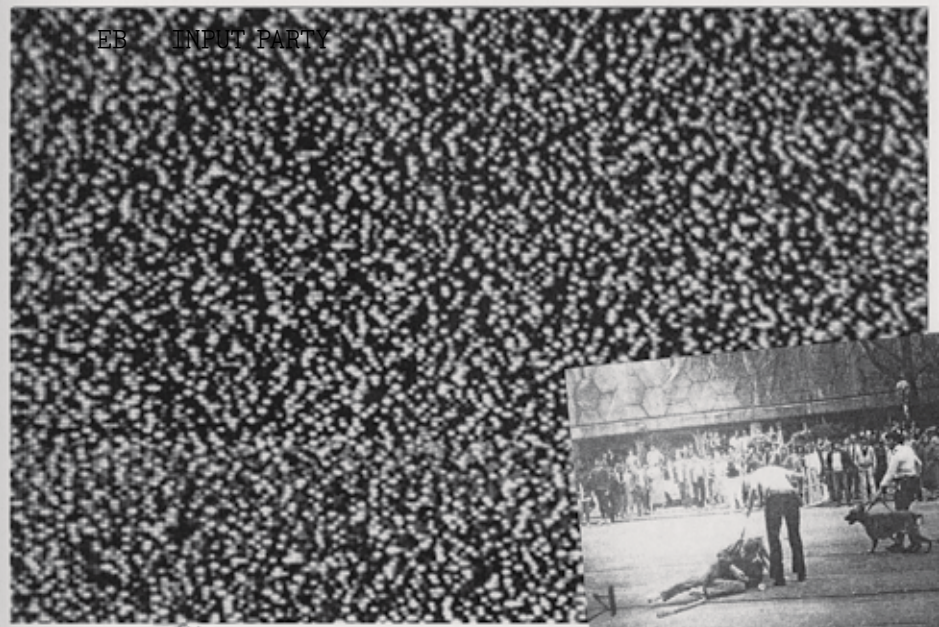
IT IS LIKE A BLIZZARD OF IMAGES
AND ONLY WHEN THE WIND ENDS I CAN SEE
WHERE THEY HAVE LANDED.



THROUGH THE CHAOS OF MY ARCHIVE,
I TRUST MY INTUITION



IN THE CHAOS I FIND COMPLETE FREEDOM



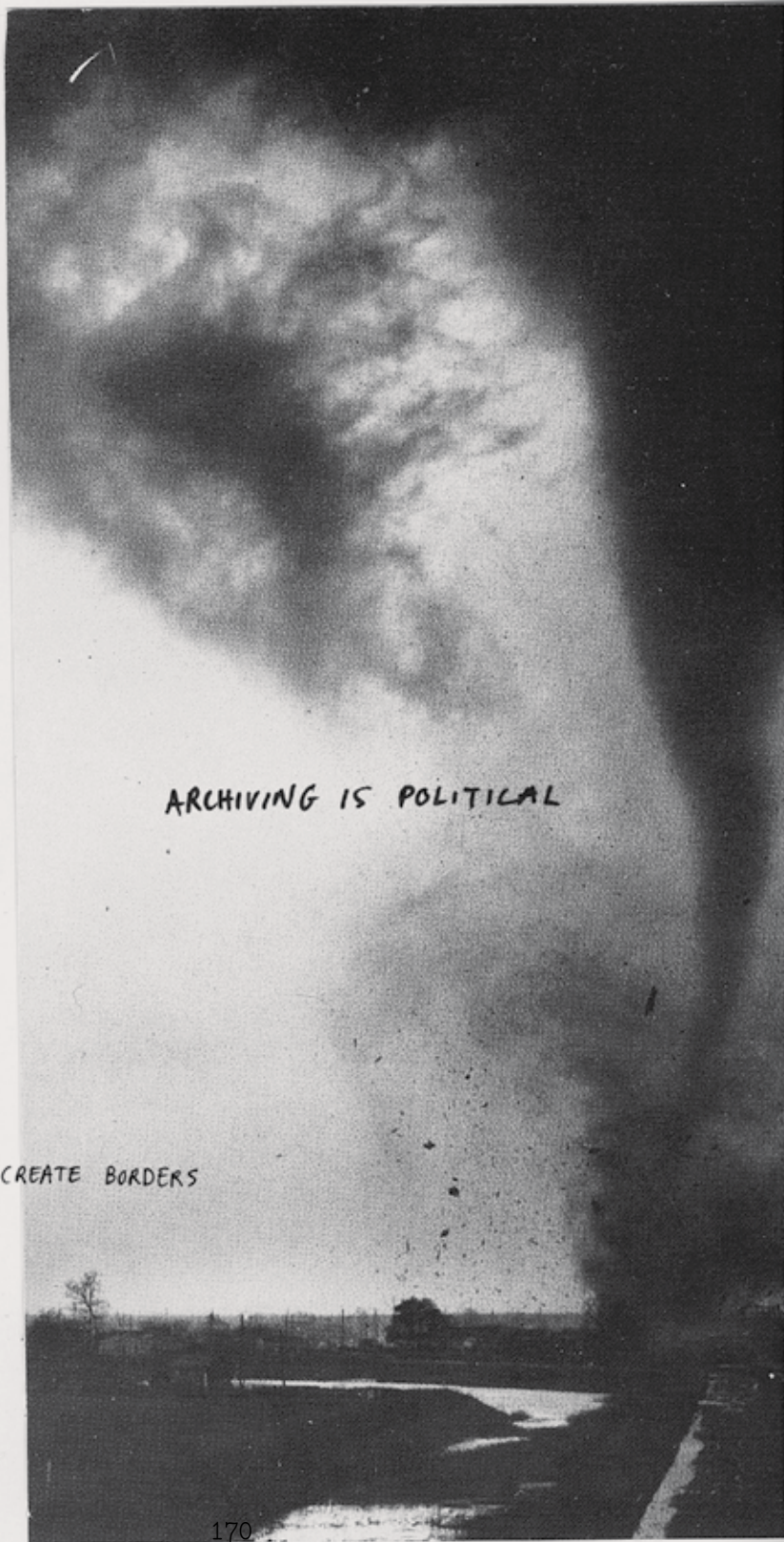
817576 250120 Screen-Shot-2018
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PAIRS
RHYTHMS
COLOURS
COMPOSITIONS
HANDS
SILHOUETTES
REPETITIONS

ALTHOUGH THE IMAGES I COLLECT ARE NOT MY OWN, BY SELECTING

THEM AND PUTTING THEM TOGETHER IN A FOLDER, THEY BECOME MINE.



ARCHIVING IS POLITICAL

FOLDERS CREATE BORDERS

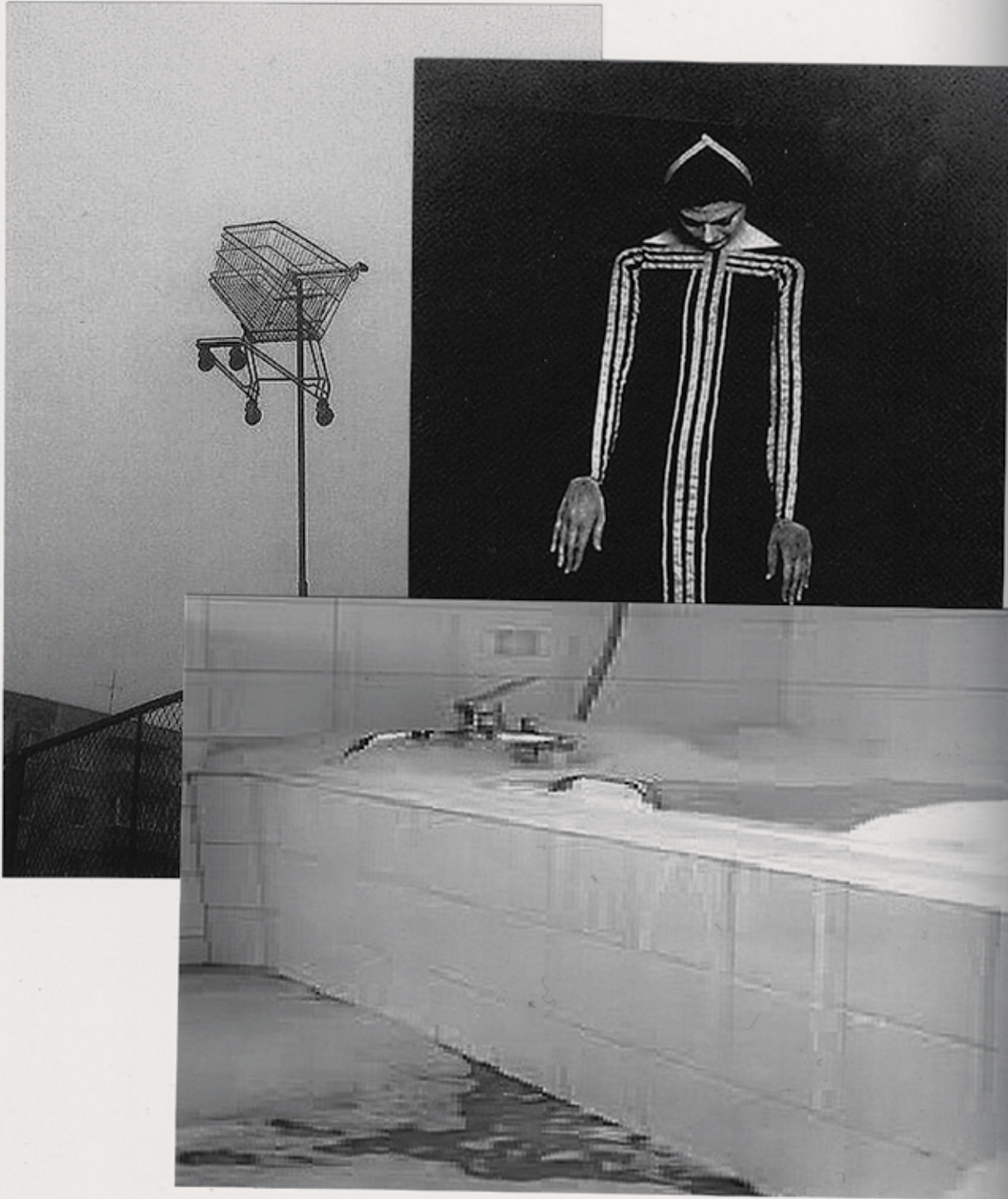
WHAT IS AN ARCHIVE?



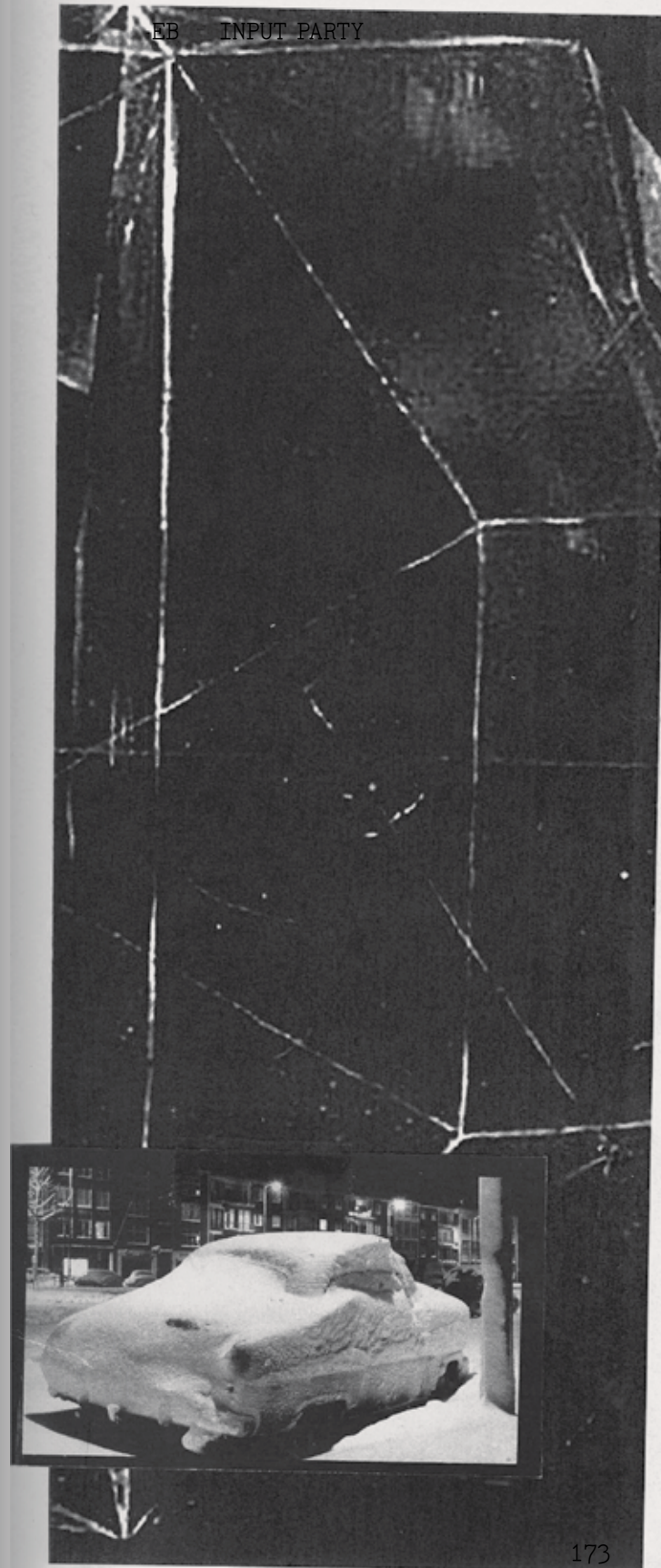
THE GAP BETWEEN WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR AND WHAT IS FOUND.

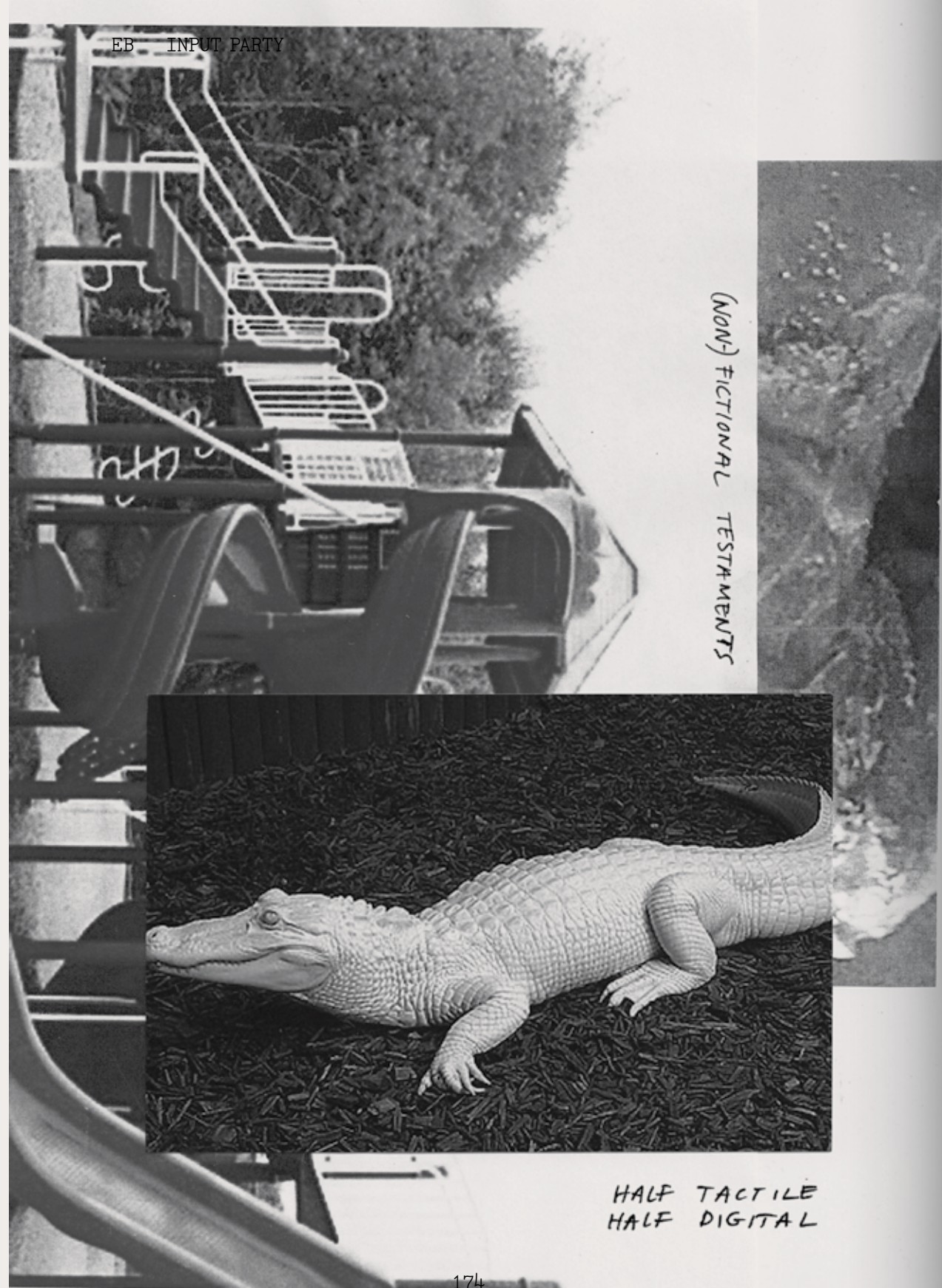


COLLECT, SAVE
COINCIDENCES HAPPEN



THEY ARE NOT MINE , BUT THE SELECTION IS THE ARTWORK .





(NON-) FICTIONAL TESTAMENTS

HALF TACTILE
HALF DIGITAL

- 1 "Homeless images", P. Monk, *Disassembling the Archive*
- 2 Schlak, T. *Framing photographs, denying archives: the difficulty of focusing on archival photographs.* Arch Sci 8, 85-101 (2008). doi.org/10.1007/s10502-009-9081-6

The image shifts, moves, turns around. It represents, encompasses, informs and holds. It is exchanged, traded, destroyed and upgraded. The image adjusts to, adapts to, responds to and mirrors. It is composed by a toner or cartridge, firmly transferred onto paper. It is broken down into hundreds of thousands of pixels and then carefully reassembled. It moves from one folder to another. The image is everywhere at once and never definitive. The image moves.

For me, images are always in motion. In a constant flux, they move from their production to an application. Through reproduction the images nestle in our media and our retinas. Especially in the seemingly all-encompassing world of the internet, images play the leading role. They tell stories, mirror, create illusions and activate. They illustrate our social media and keep us captive on the platforms. We share and communicate through images, and we laugh with, cry over, are startled by and distrust the image. Often within seconds of each other. The image moves itself but it also moves us.

There is power in the image. For media, companies, power holders or seekers, in education, and for the artist. For the artist, an image is often a reference, inspiration, source or even material. By looking at existing images, a personal language forms that the artist needs to create their own images. Collecting visual material has always been an important part of the visual artist's process. With the rise of media and since the publication of the first photo in the French newspaper *L'Illustration* in 1848, photographic images began to spread more quickly and were received by more and more people. And with the release of the first commercial camera in 1888, "private" images also began to wander more. First on a small scale through photo albums, slideshows and legacies. Nowadays through countless devices, platforms and social media.

But all this time, artists have been cutting out, saving, hanging, archiving, editing and appropriating photos. As inspiration, for reference or as material in the work itself. The role of existing images in the artist's process is often leading. As creators, we communicate through images. In images, we capture concepts and insights that cannot be captured in words. It is therefore not surprising that images often speak to us creators more directly than text. That images harbour essential data with which we can enrich our own visual language again.

Thus, we might even see the image as an archive in itself. As Ernst van Alphen writes in *Staging the Archive*, the photo, in relation to archiving, can be characterised as an 'archival record': "From that perspective, photographs are dealt with as pictorial testimonies of the existence of recorded facts." The photo is viewed as evidence that an event has taken place, where all the facts of that event are stored. But he also calls the photo inherently unstable. For photos are never just "records" of the past. Unmoored from their original context and references, they can always be read in different ways. The original data and context of a photo give us a certain lens through which we can read it, but once this reference is unknown or lapses, all the details within the frame can suddenly become significant. Our imagination can then interpret each element itself, resulting in a variety of meanings.

Van Alphen points out that this contradiction, between factual document and unstable object with multiple meanings, creates a problem in dealing with photographs from an archival perspective. But this ambiguity of an image, in my view, nourishes the visual thinking of the viewer and can therefore significantly enhance the usability of images in an art practice. If we want to give our imagination complete freedom, we must make as much room as possible for all these different meanings of an image. And to achieve that, we must strip the image of its original information as much as possible. We should make the images essentially homeless¹ to fully experience their potential.

Stripping images of their context can be viewed as quite violent. But the violence is mainly done to the maker of the image. Their intentions are erased, leaving only what is actually seen in the image. This elimination of the author can certainly be violent and degrading in

some cases, but it can also offer liberation from a dominant narrative. By removing the author and their gaze, the power now lies with the viewer or user of the image. They can imbue meaning and intention in only what they see. The image becomes a shapeshifter that can adapt to each subsequent context, depending on its viewer or user. And it is this ability to shape-shift that makes images so interesting to artists. Unlike researchers or archivists, they do not necessarily have to relate to the source if they want to analyse or use the image. And often they choose not to do so.

It is therefore interesting to look at the intentionality of the artist in storing the image. Is the image stored because the context matters to them? Or is it more about the colour and shape of the depicted? Or does the image evoke a personal memory or another intimate feeling? The artist can attribute value to an image in all these areas, making it worthwhile to store it. And with this storage, they can create their own archive of visual material. This freedom in the process of archiving stands in stark contrast to all the rules and conditions that institutional archives must meet in dealing with visual material. Where the ambiguous character of the image provides freedom for the artist, it can cause problems for archivists. Tim Schlak says in his article *Framing photographs, denying archives: the difficulty of focusing on archival photographs*:

"Photographs compel us with their capacity to evoke rather than tell, to suggest rather than explain, so that they simultaneously allure and frustrate us with what we naively perceive in their content to be history and fact."

He describes the photo as a deceiver, making us believe that facts are stored in its content but actually guaranteeing no truth. A document of reality that exists only in the viewer's imagination.

SHOCK FOREST GROUP :

This Forest was Built to be Bombed

EUROMETAAL
PRODUCTION PROGRAM

GENERAL

Eurometaal manufactures a wide range of ammunition and pyrotechnical products for the Army, Navy and Air Forces. The company has current production experience in the field of the various types of tank, artillery and anti-aircraft rounds.

A flexible organization, modern installations and many years of experience and know-how do make it possible that special requests can be fulfilled. For many years already Eurometaal is awarded with the AQAP-1 certificate, the highest distinction within NATO for quality assurance. The products are well known for their reliability and long storability.



SHOCK FOREST GROUP: This Forest was Built to be Bombed

When you arrive on the terrain, the first thing you see are signs gesturing towards a forest that cannot be entered:

FORBIDDEN ENTRY
NO ENTRY FOR UNAUTHORISED PERSONS
TOXIC GASES
CONTAMINATED SOIL
ENTER TERRAIN AT YOUR OWN RISK

These writings mark an entrance to the Shock Forest, or Schokbos¹, named after the military tests that took place in it for the entirety of the 20th century. Legal documents now denote the monumental status of the forest and the trees inside of it. They explain that this forest was planted to be bombed—built strictly and strategically for military use.

The Shock Forest did not exist when the state-owned munitions company Artillerie²-Inrichtingen³(AI) first settled in the area of Hembrug between 1895 and 1900. The terrain was a natural body of water until 1876, when the North Sea Canal (Noordzeekanaal) was created and a tongue of land was artificially extended to become Hembrug.⁴ It became a dredging depot for peat, clay, and sand, and formed the substrate⁵ on which AI placed its factories. After the First World War, the Dutch government, which owned AI at the time, decided to plant the Schokbos.

Do trees, plants, buildings, stones, water have memories?

Over time, AI workers dug water channels to prevent the movement of ground fire and chemical contamination. Trees were planted or removed, the forest kneaded as necessary and its pattern of vegetation, growth and decay still maintains these traces of human activity. Is it possible, by listening to the forest, to plot the violent motives and metal shards that are buried in the body of the flora, the density of the water and chemical resonance of the soil as unwilling acoustic registers? The forest keeps a resonant memory of crimes against humanity and nature, its surfaces record what's been done to it.

⁴ When you Google the word "Hembrug", one of the top results is "klewang", a sword made by Artillerie-Inrichtingen and used in Indonesia by Dutch colonial armed forces. The word "Hembrug" is engraved on the sword.

⁵ The soil of the Schokbos contains many pieces of seashells from the North Sea sands, and was used in many parts of the Netherlands for similar construction purposes.

¹ It has also been called *Ploffbos* ('plof', like the sound of a bomb)

² Artillerie-Inrichtingen was a Dutch state-owned artillery, arms, and munitions company that was founded in 1679 in Delft in the Netherlands.
³ Having had its start in 1679, Artillerie-Inrichtingen was not only deeply entangled, but also directly profiting from the Dutch slave trade, its imperial missions and the exploitation of their colonies in the Americas which necessitated the use of heavy violence and arms. It is estimated that around 600,000 African people were enslaved, bought, and sold by the Dutch.



Promotional brochure by Eurometaal



'One's death... The Last Years of Eurometaal' (The black book) by the activist group BIPS Zaandam, 1990

We think about the origin of the word archive. It is a place where records are kept, we imagine material documents containing selective memories. What records does a place itself accumulate throughout time? What constitutes an archive of a place and all its human and non-human inhabitants?

For a long time, the Schokbos acted as a protective shield for AI's factories in the event of a catastrophe. It created a sonic⁶ and visual camouflage⁷ for all of its activities. Every structure in the forest was designed⁸ around the possibility of a potential explosion: the roofs of the buildings were weak points that would leave the walls intact in case of an explosion; all throughout the terrain, earth mounds were planted near concrete storage units to absorb and withstand the impact of detonating bombs. Military personnel tested the stability of bombs by placing them on vibrating platforms that emulate bumpy roads.⁹ Explosives of all kinds, even cluster bombs were loaded into crates, placed in small roofless concrete bunkers and shaken.

The sound of a potential explosion is in the air.

This space seems to be fighting nature, taming it, constraining it; it has rendered its earths, waters, and fires defensive. We have voluntarily moved in.

7 In her 1945 essay "The Great Camouflage," Suzanne Césaire describes how in the Antilles, the brightness of nature camouflages the violence of colonizers from those who do not want to see it. "Once again the sea of clouds is no longer virginal since the Pan American Airways System planes have been flying through. If there is a harvest maturing, now is the time to try to glimpse it, but in the prohibited military zones, the windows are closed. On the planes they bring forth the disinfectants, or the ozone, whatever, you will see nothing. Nothing but the sea and the indistinct outlines of lands. One can only guess the easy lovemaking of fish. They make the water move and wink amicably for the aircraft's porthole. Our islands seen from above, take on their true dimensions as seashells. And as for the hummingbird-women, tropical flower-women, the women of four races and dozens of bloodlines, they are there no longer. Neither the heliconia, nor the frangipani, nor the flame tree, nor the palm trees in the moonlight, nor the sunsets unlike any other in the world. Yet they are there." See in *Writings of Dissent (1941-1945)* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2012), 40.

8 According to Latour, when a person kills with a gun "it is not only the person who kills. It is the larger assemblage that kills. Its murderous agency is distributed across its many parts including a finger, a trigger, a bullet, a human brain, violent films, and so on. Agency is always complex agency, unlocalizable and distributed across assemblages of both humans and things." See Sonia Hazard, "The Material Turn in the Study of Religion," *Religion and Society* 4 (2013): 66.

9 "One name for another, a part for the whole: the historic violence of apartheid can always be treated as a metonymy. In its past as well as in its present. By diverse paths (condensation, displacement, expression or representation), one can always decipher through its singularity so many other kinds of violence going on in the world. At once part, cause, effect, example, what is happening there translates what takes place here, always here, wherever one is and wherever one looks, closest to home. Infinite responsibility, therefore, no rest allowed for any form of good conscience." Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx* (New York: Routledge, 2006), xiv.

6 "In modern warfare, mechanical and metallic, the element of sight is almost zero. The sense, the significance, and the expressiveness of noise, however, are infinite." Luigi Russolo, *The Art of Noises* (Hillside, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 1966), 25.

At first, the building looks sterile, as if it stored no records of life, of violence, ever so sanded down and polished. We feel the evidence of a past, but we can not see it, we can not find it. We keep waiting for traces to re-emerge, we know they were there but we know they were never meant to be found. It feels like we are constantly chasing evidence, a perpetual chase and exploration for a 'sound' that was never heard. We know the building heard it first. We know the violence was imprinted but we couldn't see it, but physically, materially, historically, all these imprints were and are in a constant state of erasing themselves. Like a chase for evidence and knowledge that has been so buried or lost within the soils and waters of this terrain, our only anchor is the belief that it, they, them, we, are still there. The contradiction between physical distance and emotional presence becomes our reality.

The forest is steganographic: consider these trees to be the first audience for sounds that may be the last for countless people.

In 2001, when the military site was abandoned, developers found unexploded bombs and highly toxic materials buried under the clay soil. Since then, new efforts to gentrify the area have taken place. Hembrug restaurant Lab-44's official statement glosses over the course of events: "The Hembrug site is the 'place to be.' The 'vibe' here is unique and it is precisely on this site that Lab-44 opened its doors in May 2017. We are located in one of the most striking buildings on the Hembrug grounds, both in terms of style and history: our building actually served as a laboratory for the former weapon and ammunition factory, which was located on the grounds. After completion in 1918, chemical weapons were developed here, including the very notorious mustard gas. From 1936 the building was used as a metallurgy laboratory and for the inspection of ammunition and today this is the hotspot of the Hembrug area."¹⁰

This space was inhabited with the sound of labour; repetitive, mimetic, hypnotic. According to the workers, the sound of the machines in the factory was so loud that it caused permanent hearing damage.

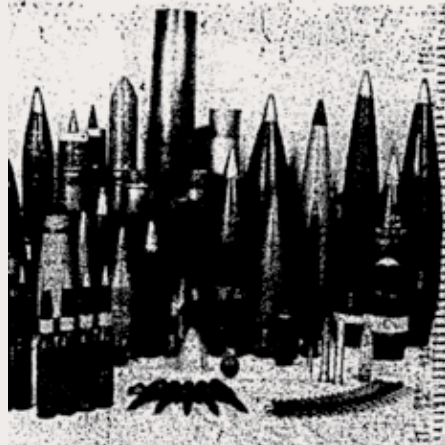
This sound was no longer audible, but it was still there; a faint echo lurking over us like a moving canopy. Space keeps the score.

Today, the main hall on the first floor of the factory is empty. A sound played in the centre is afforded clear paths to the far walls



One's death... The Last Years of Eurometaal' (The black book) by the activist group BIPS Zaandam, 1990

Wat is Eurometaal?



Printed banner. Installation at Het Hem, SFG, 2019

almost 100 metres away. The echo is cacophonous and clearly defined, a muffled mirror of the 200m shooting range in the basement that repeats itself at least four times.

"Violence is an intellectual and pedagogical force, underwritten by formidable schools of thought whose very purpose is to hide things in plain sight.

- BRAD EVANS AND NATASHA LENNARD, VIOLENCE

What we wanted to compose was a polyphony with different channels of recording history. As new elements, introduced in an already inhabited space we had to make acquaintance with its spirits.¹¹ But how much can we exhume if what was buried was intangible? Does the past's echo get replaced with the contaminated soil? Is that sound contaminated? A scar can be evidence of a wound or of healing, depending on how you wish to define it. A mark can be evidence of a sound. A visual remnant of a sound demonstrates past motions of energy. An image without its sound is only half there. The building is filled with half spoken images, the only record left.

In an attempt to describe an experiment in presence, a process in continuous transition, our words needed to be as free and movable as possible, ready to change their physical state according to the stories they, in turn, animated.

Inspired by the practice of Sonic Meditations by musician, theorist and composer Pauline Oliveros, we started with a simple exercise called "teach yourself to fly". We sat in a circle on the floor of the Phase Transition Space and we first focused on listening to the rhythm of our own breathing. Then, we tried to make our breaths audible to ourselves, to others, to the space. Later we introduced the sound of our voices, focusing first on our own voice, then on the voices of the others, and after, on the voices of the space. Many of us encountered a certain level of resistance to singing, an invisible barrier of insecurity and fear. Why is it so scary to play an instrument that is inside ourselves? Slowly fighting against these boundaries, we were able to hear our own voice, the voices of the others, and the voices of the space gradually increased and resonated together, becoming less and less distinguishable from one another. After this first session, we decided to stand in the space. We tested resonances, fullnesses, emptinesses, echoes and barriers through the space's responses to our bodies. It all mixed with the sound of the boats outside and the tunnel piece entering from the pipes. We could hear the drilling outside from some construction.

How can we heal a space if we first do not heal ourselves? How can we get comfortable in a room if we first do not get comfortable in our own bodies? Sound starts to disorganise our own matter while it holds the power to harmonise our whole bodies back into their natural consistent vibrational state, soundlessly. The sound of the human voice is the sound our ears can hear with the most precision and intensity.

Each day we eat together by the windows that look over the Noor-dzeekanaal. We take photos of ships that pass by that have names like ENDURANCE, CONQUEROR, EXPEDITION, STRANGER, FOR-EVER.¹²

Stranger, For-Ever

The canal was the main throughway for thousands of pieces of military¹³ equipment made in this building. They ended up used against the Palestinians by the Israeli army and by the Turks against the Kurds. They were used against uprisings in Mozambique and Angola, in apartheid South Africa, in Indonesia. The forest is a mass grave of buried sounds, a tomb for the buried elsewhere.¹⁴ The Schokbos is a cenotaph.¹⁵ In 2006, the Schokbos was declared a regional and national monument, along with the other factory buildings of Hembrug.

11 Genti loci, the guardians and protective spirits of a place in ancient Roman times, were revered by new occupants.

- 12 "What kind of river, then, has no middle? Is nothing there but straight ahead? Is this boat sailing into eternity toward the edges of a nonworld that no ancestor will haunt?" Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), 7.
- 13 One of the most important rifles manufactured in this building was the AR-10. It was originally manufactured in the US but Artillerie-Inrichtingen got a five year license to manufacture it from 1957 to 1962. Throughout its history, AI supplied anti-communist missions of the Dutch Army around the world. The first sale of the legendary AR-10 rifle was shipped out in 1958 to the US-backed Batista government in Cuba. The deal was originally brokered by American small arms dealer, Sam Cummings. But on New Year's Day in 1959, as the rifles were still on their way to Cuba, Fidel Castro and his band of revolutionaries took control of the country. The shipment of rifles arrived at the port without a receiver. Sam Cummings, the mastermind behind the proliferation of the AR-10 rifle, called Castro and asked him if he would like to test them out and buy them instead. They tested them and Castro agreed to buy the entire shipment. An anti-communist factory supplied guns to Castro's revolutionaries in their first days in power.
- 14 A list of the countries the products ended up in throughout the 20th century: Albania, Angola, Argentina, Bosnia, Macedonia, Moldova, Kosovo, Congo, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Dutch Antilles, Germany, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Suriname, Sweden, Tanzania, Turkey, the United Kingdom. Our research data is publicly accessible here: bit.ly/SFGdata.
- 15 "The cenotaph, as an empty tomb, presents a hole in the story which points in an exact and unmistakable direction: the entrance to the barren compound of the necropolis or the real underground network. In a necropolis surface-site, everything - from empty tombs filled with sham bodies to treasures deliberately buried within the ground - suggests to the discerning that there is something else, a missing site nearby." Reza Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials* (Melbourne: re.press, 2008), 64.

However, not all of the flora of the Schokbos received monumental status—only that which is in closest proximity to the military buildings. The forest's trees and their roots are protected, but not the flora that lives in between. According to the Ministry of Culture, "The greenery that spontaneously developed further afterwards is not valuable from a cultural-historical point of view because there is no concept behind it."¹⁶

Vegetal memory¹⁷ arises at the site of material inscription on the body of the plant, just like traces of traumatic events are imprinted on the unconscious, becoming unavailable in the shape of conscious representations.

The forest remained closed to visitors until 2020 because of soil contamination. By the time we arrive at Het HEM its remediation is almost complete. Once useful, the monument-trees that witnessed military tests are unceremoniously replaced by new, uncontaminated ones. Trees are ripped out of the soil to the root to uncover what lies beneath: chemical leftovers, bullets, and residue from mustard gas. The contractors who remediate the soil cut down and dispose of more than 700 contaminated monument-trees. We ask if we can keep

16 The full paragraph reads: "The original planting of 1902 was based on a planting scheme that can still be recognized in some places: the forest near the B cluster and the avenue to the east of the former M buildings. The greenery that spontaneously developed further afterwards is not valuable from a cultural-historical point of view because there is no concept behind it. In the system of this designation it has been decided to designate that planting that is not only specially laid out, but that is also located in or near a cluster of buildings to be designated [monumental]. Buildings and plants reinforce each other in those places. That is why only the planting at cluster B and the Zaanam Sector Park has been designated as a national monument." This document from the National Office for Cultural Heritage's Ministry of Education, Culture and Science explains the National Monument status of the forest and other buildings on Hembrug terrain. See Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, Monumentnummer: 527730 Hembrugterrein te Zaanam, 2006, 8, monumentenregister.cultureelerfgoed.nl/monumenten/527730, author's translation.

them. They give us the last two trees to be cut from the Schokbos and we place them in the middle of the main hall at Het HEM, their roots directly on the concrete ground. Finally they grow flowers because of the heat inside the building.

It is freezing outside.

The veteran trees are discarded and no longer monuments, but the new trees don't carry the memory of the military assault, only an abstraction of the role of the forest that kept the Dutch government's secrets. Monuments often expose the fragility of memory and denial. The way that Dutch history is taught constructs a notion of the monumental as nationalistic, by crafting a myth of a great Golden Age which completely leaves out its central role in the spread of slavery, settler colonialism and extractive practices, some of which continue to this day. As Gloria Wekker writes, "There was, until the last decade of the twentieth century, a stark juxtaposition between the Dutch imperial presence in the world, since the sixteenth century, and its almost total absence in the Dutch educational curriculum, in self-image and self-representations such as monuments, literature, and debates about Dutch identity."¹⁸

These trees are monuments, but to what?

The Schokbos continues to be a performance of itself—a theatre,¹⁹ no longer useful for the colonial territories where its armaments were tested and ultimately used, but an apologetic simulacra for myths of neoliberal renewal²⁰ and white innocence, which as Wekker explains is "an important and apparently satisfying way of being in the world, [encapsulating] a dominant way in which the Dutch think of themselves, as being a small, but just, ethical nation; colour-blind, thus free of racism; as being inherently on the moral and ethical high ground, thus a guiding light to other folks and nations."²¹

It's nearly the end of our residency and we decide to go back to the forest to record sounds from different locations to create a score-map of the Schokbos. It's too windy. The recordings are useless. The wind usurps all sounds and transports them further away from their origin.

We speak to the former workers. Many of them tell us that faulty arms produced for NATO in the factory were re-sold to African dic-

20 "Peace becomes war by other means through the platforms of media technologies that have their own evolutionary autonomy in excess of human needs and desires." Steve Goodman, *Some Warfare* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), 32.

21 See *White Innocence*, 2.

19 Carl von Clausewitz defines a theater of war as "a portion of the space over which war prevails as has its boundaries protected, and thus possesses a kind of independence. This protection may consist of fortresses, or natural obstacles, or even in its being separated by a considerable distance from the rest of the space embraced in the war. Such a portion is not a mere piece of the whole, but a small whole complete in itself." In the case of the Schokbos, the theater set is defined by its vegetation which hides the actors inside. See *On War* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1908), 2.

18 See *White Innocence* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 13.

tatorships. One of them uses a bullet casing as a whistle, laughing as he blows on its end, moving his arm like a train driver: We hear about a production error, a lathe's error. Workers say that while lathes made bullets in the factory, grenades would be tested underground, exploding intermittently. The vibrations of the explosions would shake the whole building. They would also shake the lathes. The bullets made during these explosions would be rendered useless. For every explosive test, a bullet is inscribed with the frequency of its vibration. Like the forest, faulty bullets also become acoustic registers. We hear about fatal accidents on the factory floor. And the romances. Sex in the industrial elevator. We hear from one worker who tells us he has always been a pacifist.

On September 14, 1984, Rob Ovaa, a worker at Eurometaal, was killed by a faulty mine in the forest's testing grounds. Fred Spijkers, another worker at the company, was told to tell Ovaa's widow that it was due to carelessness on her husband's part. Holding a private investigation he discovered that the faultiness of these mines had been known internally since 1970. By these accounts, the company had been responsible for the deaths of at least eight workers on the premises. Spijkers, who refused to lie, became an enemy of the company and, by extension, an enemy of the state. As such, he suffered defamation and intimidation attempts: dismissed as paranoid and schizophrenic, he was threatened with death by State Secretary of Defense Henk van Hoof if he was to make light of his investigation. Today, his documents are stored in the National Archives, embargoed from the public until 2026.

History is in flight.

There are multiple crypts in Het Hem-myths, blind spots and pot-holes. Living with them, among them, was stomach churning at times.

How can we imagine a future, translating this past?

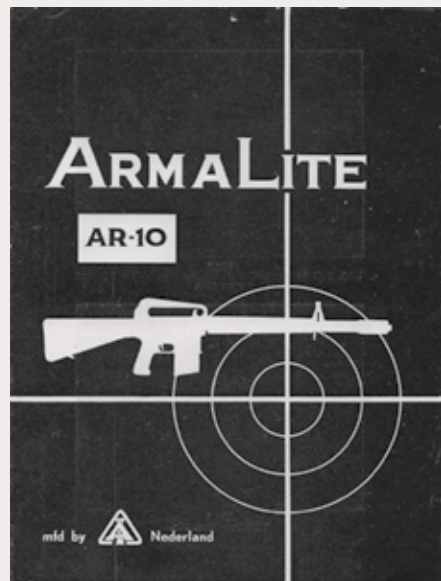
One day we organised a bread making event inside the former ammunition factory. We invited the community living around HH to make bread with us.

How to enact a process of collective recognition,
how to create empathy towards both the visible and the invisible,
the here and the elsewhere?

The practice of making bread is at odds with the highly mechanised production of ammunitions. Bread consumption builds communities. Weapon use destroys them. Even though the workers that were employed in Eurometaal were able to create strong bonds among each other, the ultimate product was meant to break other communities, other bonds. The serial repetition of industrial production made the workers focus only on parts of the process, alienating them from the consequences of their labour. Making bread collectively is the opposite of this process. It involves attention and care at every stage. It reclaims presence through the physical relation between body and matter, between self and surroundings. Each piece of bread we make is a lively sculpture with which we interact and which allows us to re-discuss the limits of our interior space. Manipulating the dough shows us how we can re-shape the world through our own hands, how we can re-shape its borders. Bread is made of visible and invisible fragments. Not only flour and water, but also smells, temperatures, atmospheres and memories. Bread can be a place in which we meet with others. By making bread together, looking at each other, we exchange stories, ideas and energies. By kneading our stories together, we are endowed with a new collective responsibility. The process of making and eating bread is a process of healing: by chewing we process history and traumas. History and traumas become ours. By sharing this space, eating this food, we get involved in a collective effort to digest history. A collective digestion of the past means internalisation and understanding rather than forgetting.

An old metaphysical parable asks, if a tree falls in the forest, does it make a sound?²² Sound is only classified as such if someone is there to hear it. But objects carry the traces of sounds that can be discovered in later acoustics. How do we respond to the urgency of these violent activities if we can only hear their traumatic traces? How can we discover the sounds no one was there to hear? In the 1960s, the forest was a hotbed for birds, especially herons, housing the largest population in all of Europe. Military personnel used to enter the forest with umbrellas to avoid the heron shit. By 1973, the herons were gone. We start to mine the trees for knowledge. The forest became an archive, a place filled with uncountable stories, traumas and pollution, the locus of mysterious disappearance.

"What is at stake [...] is that all appearance is supported by (dis)appearance, and that the only aspect of it that we can locate in the forest of meaning is its endless flight. Even



Promotional material by Artillerie-Inrichtingen (A.I.)



Het Hem logo sign outside of the building. Photo courtesy of SFG, 2021

locating the vanishing point - to say nothing of its seizure, which would mean its death - is in reality impossible. Because the vanishing point is that which, when it is in place, is outside-place [hors-lieu]. It is the outside-place in place. As it exists in its act only to the extent that it is outside-place when it is in place, we therefore cannot succeed in locating it accurately either. You want to show its fleeing, and in order to do so you must plunge deep into the forest that localizes its fleeing. And as you walk on, you learn that you can at most not show the flight, but show, from quite a distance, the sight of its fleeing: a thicket, a clearing ..."²³

We take samples from the discarded trees. Data from their rings shows a significant decrease in growth between 1970 and 1975. What happened here that made the herons leave? What else disappeared as a result of the actions committed here? We saw the soil as a sonorous territory, a subsurface that absorbed the immeasurable, a strata of simulated explosions and accidental deaths. In the Schokbos, sounds are trapped, squeezed in between every particle of soil, but it often felt like we were on a perpetual search for a sound that was silenced.

Some of us are living on the terrain. Every night we hear bombs going off in the forest. We see big yellow and white flares illuminate the trees in the distance and hear the flurry of birds escaping the scene. A few minutes of silence, then another explosion. Are they old bombs, detonating in the prohibited areas of the forest? Maybe the clean-up company has waited until nighttime to explode them, since no one sleeps on the terrain except for us.

One night we run into the forest, but meet only darkness and the eerie²⁴ smell of dynamite.

The failure of the future leads to hauntology, a condition of the reoccurrence of the past in the present, in the manner of ghosts. It is a "fatal pattern"²⁵ which is bound to repeat itself and a pattern which has not yet happened, but is already shaping the current behaviour. The power of capitalism to subsume and consume all of previous history and assign all cultural objects monetary value creates a ground for historical and cultural spectres to inhabit. It also allows ruins to be turned into luxury. And when luxury is built on ruins, hauntology will inevitably reveal itself in the form of the spectres²⁶ of the past.

We think about the difference between haunting and trauma. Trauma occurs when certain substances or events can't be metabolised, processed. They are locked in a perpetual cycle of repetition without difference. There is no separation between past and present. The traumatic event is constantly occurring in the present, as it did in the past. It's impossible to make a representation of trauma, but attempts of making it audible, visible, verbally expressed can lead to its displacement.

We finally meet the culprits. A crew of pyromaniac teenage boys from Zaandam. They have been throwing fireworks at the ex-bunker we sleep in. We tell them jokingly that we're glad it's them and not the unexploded bombs. They look at us blankly, unaware²⁷ of the history of the forest. For us, the kids are the subconscious of the terrain, repeating itself, staging the past. They are not the only ones.

On the first Saturday that Het HEM opens to the public at the start of our residency, someone is already leasing the street in front for a commercial. They have smoke machines, barricades, hay, an American school bus, and a dozen goggle-wearing kids shooting at each other in fake military gear. They're selling Nerf Guns. Visitors walking towards the entrance of the former factory have to brave past the fake bullets and smoke.²⁸

26 Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, 199327 "Lives are a messy and complicated mesh of always past and continuously present. So I am compelled to produce work that is against amnesia. Works [that] privileges the importance of the memory as an organizing principle." John Akomfrah, "Histories of Violence: Landscapes of Violence," interview by Brad Evans, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, June 5, 2017, lareviewofbooks.org/article/histories-of-violence-landscapes-of-violence.25 "Lives are a messy and complicated mesh of always past and continuously present. So I am compelled to produce work that is against amnesia. Works [that] privileges the importance of the memory as an organizing principle." John Akomfrah, "Histories of Violence: Landscapes of Violence," interview by Brad Evans, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, June 5, 2017, lareviewofbooks.org/article/histories-of-violence-landscapes-of-violence.24 "[Haunting] is] the way in which abusive systems of power make [Haunting] is] the way in which abusive systems of power make themselves known and their impacts felt in everyday life, especially when they are supposedly over and done with." Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), xvi.

28 "Weapons are tools not just of destruction but also of perception—that is to say, stimulants that make themselves felt through chemical, neurological processes in the sense organs and the central nervous system, affecting human reactions and even the perceptual identification and differentiation of objects." Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception* (London: Verso Books, 2009), 8.

That afternoon we sit by the Noordzeekanaal and watch more ships pass by.

CURAÇAO, EMPIRE, SPECTER, CONQUEST, MATADOR.

Nearby, another shoot is using the industrial buildings and the Noordzeekanaal as background.

It's mid-December and our residency is ending.

We draft an official request to the Zaanstad city government, hopeful to reinstate the two tree trunks back to the forest as anti-monuments. The city council declines. We ask the owners of Bind, a coffee shop and community centre on the terrain, whether we can place the trunks in their yard. They agree.

On our last day together, we drive the trees out of Het HEM on a large platform and make a procession towards the grassy area outside of Bind. We travel the length of the factory building. We pass under Het HEM's logo: a target.²⁹

Can you build an after-life for this forest that considers the dignity of those whose lives were erased by the products created here?

Infinite responsibility.³⁰

A crane lifts the trees fifty metres in the air before they land on the ground. We can only see their roots.³¹

From up there, the trees can see the whole forest.³²

30 "One name for another, a part for the whole: the historic violence of apartheid can always be treated as a metonymy. In its past as well as in its present... At once part, cause, effect, example, what is happening there translates what takes place here, always here, wherever one is and wherever one looks, closest to home. Infinite responsibility, therefore, no rest allowed for any form of good conscience." Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx* (New York: Routledge, 2006), xiv.

31 "Thinking beyond the limits of the understanding and in aid of (not against) the imagination does not require a flight as far away from the world as possible... Instead, it demands the opposite move: an attention to the world, to its existents and their elementary constituents. For after all, they are also the basic constituents of everything that is known to exist from here/now to the outer edges of the cosmos, that is, since its inception." Denise Ferreira Da Silva, "How," *e-flux Journal*, issue 105 (December 2019), e-flux.com/journal/105/305515/how.

32 "Seen from the point of view of death, the corpse can be said to have already begun its own living." Walid Sadek, "In the Presence of the Corpse," *Third Text* 26, no. 4 (July 2012): 480.



One of the trees from the Schokbos being transported from Het Hem to its final resting place. Photograph courtesy of SFG, 2019

29 It is not the first time the building has been branded with a target. In the 90's, anti-war activists discovered that a ship carrying nuclear weapons was going to illegally pass by the canal. They graffiti'd a large target on the canal side, hoping that the ship, carrying nuclear weapons would aim at the AI factory and destroy it.



One of the trees from the Schokkbus in the installation space, Het Hem, 2019

FEMKE DEKKER

ALICE WONG AND SIMO TSE

A Collaborative Manual
of Radio/Archive Research

FEMKE DEKKER, ALICE WONG & SIMO TSE: A Collaborative Manual of Radio/Archive Research

This text is a compilation of quotes from primary and secondary sources, collected by Femke Dekker, Alice Wong and Simo Tse.

The reason we choose to approach writing this way is to reflect upon our processes of researching radio archives, or archives with radio content. Instead of inventing, radio relays and distributes; once a radio transmission enters the archive, it becomes raw materials again. And this is the attitude we want to encourage in which artistic researchers actively and autonomously engage with signs and information, and it is in our meandering that meanings are being put forward and re-examined.

Episodic, immediate and unselective towards its own audience, radio programmes accumulate in real time. The archives of radio content can be both institutional and private as long as the listeners have access to airwaves, the sounds and voices are up for grasp. The following quotes are meant to be read in sequence and are put together with linearity in mind. However, they have also been isolated from their original context and are now being read as connecting puzzle pieces. The fluency, rationality and sequentiality of these connections are up for reshuffling and rethinking from each one of you. It is like tuning out to different stations on an old radio, catching fragments of different voices across the ether. Again, we encourage you to expand on the vocabularies and grammar when it comes to sonic and radio research. The list is, by no means, and is impossible to be read as finite.

Disclaimers aside, we as artistic researchers should not be fooled by the seemingly authoritative tone of voice or the seamlessness of how information is put together. The cacophony of voices and noises in our surroundings requires us to listen *care-fully*: if the order of a sentence or even a single word changes, their meaning and context could alter completely.

"Think of radio as words with wings."
Jacki Apple, 2015

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1 HOW TO BEGIN?

AW There is no right way to begin. The way I start always stems from what I want to know. I begin by asking questions from scratch. I believe we often overestimate our own common sense. We think we know, but we actually don't. And sometimes we assume we have no clue, but then, when we start writing or talking about it, we realise we aren't as ignorant as we thought.

ST I remember, at the beginning of our project, we have also spent a long time framing and reframing the research questions. The difficult part often is to figure out what was unknown and what was to be made knowable.

FD I agree with the notion of no right or wrong way to begin. When it comes to sonic archives in particular, the sonic will lead you to reframe and rephrase continuously as if you are having an actual dialogue with a person.

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AW Joost Grootens was the department head of MA Information Design at Design Academy Eindhoven, one of his motto: Listen to the data!

1 HOW TO BEGIN?

- RECOGNISING AND RECKONING WITH THE NATURE OF 'ARCHIVE'

"Archives, it seems, are everywhere, both in popular culture & academic discourse."

Hal Foster, An Archival Impulse, 2004
AW There's a fine line between being an archivist and a hoarder, and I could easily cross over into hoarding.

FD When I start my research I actually am a hoarder, gathering everything that even remotely piques my interest. Then after a while you know that a painful process of decluttering needs to start. I then go from hoarder to sorter to archivist.

"Any archive is a product of the social processes and systems of its time, and reflects the position and exclusions of different groups or individuals within those systems." Sue Breakell, Perspectives: Negotiating the Archive, 2008

"Foucault's notion of the archive: whereas in the old archive individuals were used to build or substantiate categories, in the new archive categories are being used to build or substantiate the individual."

Ernst van Alphen, When is Archiving Productive and When is it Not?, 2023

"Derrida also offers a psychoanalytic account of what attracts us to archives in the first place, regardless of their political and philosophical shortcomings. Because our Freudian death drive tends to erase the past, we rely on the archive as a form of prosthetic memory, toward which we run when we are overcome with 'irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia.' This self-defeating desire is what Derrida calls 'archive fever'."

Tadhg Larabee, Archive Fever, 2022

"Functional archives are the infrastructure and control instruments that guide and support action in the present. Neither administration nor political power can do without them." "Memory archives ... only come into being when what is no longer of interest or relevance for the present or the future is sorted out but not immediately thrown away... a new consciousness arose for that which is past and from which no normative force emanates any more, but is still of interest: history."

Aleida Assmann, The Archives as a laboratory of the New: Where Remembering and Forgetting Meet, 2023

"Digital archives are often seen as a democratised solution to the issues raised by the role of the host institution and its selection processes, and by the paradox of wanting to keep everything yet the impracticality of doing so... The internet suggests permanence by using terms such as 'auto-archiving', but this is an illusion. The material needs to be actively captured and preserved. Archives that survive must inevitably be kept in some kind of houses of memory, whether real or virtual."

A Sue Breakell, Perspectives: Negotiating the Archive, 2008

ST An online archive does not immediately equate to accessibility. It still has to be actively maintained by a caretaker. I have often found that the most fruitful searches result from conversations with archivists, whether online or in person.

AW The search process is definitely an artistic adventure. It takes patience and creativity, especially when we have to tweak keywords or categories and be open to unexpected results. Indeed, working with an archivist feels like a luxury—it makes the whole experience more insightful and rewarding.

FD It makes me think of the work of Deep listener and researcher Ximena Alarcón Díaz. You could say that the archivist themselves are the embodiment of the archive, containing all of the intangible context of the physical archive. And therefore indispensable to our artistic research as conversations with archivists will always unearth new material.

"Exclusions are inherent to any archival organisation. This explains why memories and knowledge 'outside the archive' are also part of the archive, in the sense produced by archival rules of exclusion."

Ernst van Alphen, When is Archiving Productive and When is it Not?, 2023

"... Immigrant bodies continue to be rendered into archival materials, re-shaped and co-opted for political gain... Migrant bodies are continuously expected to reassure and attest to their origins and right to be here. One's legal status, employment status, economic productivity, English fluency, religious affiliations, and loyalty to the host country are continuously performed to avoid the humiliation of non-belonging.

James Nguyen, Lâm Chó Bó / Making Trouble, 2020

ST I think there is a specificity with immigrant radio programmes in which they become dedicated spaces for people whose voices are not heard and who are not often encouraged to speak. Immigrant radio is accessible by the mainstream but is not restricted by it.

"An archive designates a territory - and not a particular narrative. The material connections contained are not already authored as someone's - for example, a curator's - interpretation, exhibition or property; it's a discursive terrain. Interpretations are invited and not already determined.

Sue Breakell, Perspectives: Negotiating the Archive, 2008

FD I find that every archive I've visited did exactly that: presenting a particular narrative. It would reveal itself in the choice of material that was archived, in the sort of objects that were archived, the way it was archived (chronological, alphabetical, completely random chaos...).

"If the archive cannot be a site for self-representation, it can under certain circumstances provide a space for contestability, activism, and perhaps even retribution. Therein lies the paradox of the archive.

James Nguyen, Lâm Chó Bó / Making Trouble, 2020

• UNDERSTANDING RADIO AS MEDIUM

"Invented only in 1895, radio made it possible to bypass print and summon into being an aural representation of the imagined community where the printed page scarcely penetrated.

Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, 1983

"Radio affects most people intimately, person-to-person, offering a world of unspoken communication between writer-speaker and listener. That is the immediate aspect of radio. A private experience. The subliminal depths of radio are charged with the resonating echoes of tribal horns and antique drums. This is inherent in the very nature of this medium, with its power to turn the psyche and society into a single echo chamber.

AW This is what parasocial means, right?

ST True. I am also fascinated by how intimacy and memory are created through the medium of radio. Closeness comes easily when we remember, from listening passively to recalling actively.

FD And through those airwaves you can encounter what Franziska Schroeder calls 'Networked Listening', which provokes an "unselfing" or the "state of moving from oneself to the other." It has the potential of becoming a conductor of compassion.

"Radio is provided with its cloak of invisibility ... It comes to us ostensibly with person-to-person directness that is private and intimate ... a subliminal echo chamber of magical power to touch remote and forgotten chords.

"Radio gives privacy, and at the same time it provides the tight tribal bond of the world of the common market, of song, and of resonance.

All Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man, 1964

"Imagine radio that, instead of numbing us to sounds, strengthens our imagination and creativity instead of manipulating us into faster work and more purchasing, it inspires us to invent; instead of overloading us with irrelevant information and fatiguing us, it refreshes our acoustic sensitivity; instead of moving us to ignore thoughts and surroundings, it stimulates listening; instead of broadcasting the same things over and over again, it does not repeat; instead of silencing us, it encourages us to sing or to speak, to make radio ourselves; instead of merely broadcasting at us, we listen through it."

Hildegard Westerkamp, The Soundscape in Radio, 1994

• WHAT/WHO TO LISTEN FOR?

"Most radio engages in relentless broadcasting, a unidirectional flow of information and energy, which contradicts the notion of ecology. What would happen if we could turn that around and make radio listen before imposing its voice like an alien into a new environment? What if radio was non-intrusive, a source for listeners and for listening? Can radio be such a place of acceptance, a listening presence, a place of listening? Is it possible to create radio that listens, that in turn encourages us to listen to, and hear, ourselves?"

Hildegard Westerkamp, The Soundscape in Radio, 1994

AW Answering these questions in a contemporary light - happy to see something is happening: IG@aview.fromabridge (A person on a bridge picks up a phone and shares their view with the world).

"Perhaps it is true that we do not really exist until there is someone there to see us existing, we cannot properly speak until there is someone who can understand what we are saying."

Alain de Botton, Essays in Love, 1993

AW Radio may not be as effective as a standalone medium without the phone-in sessions or interaction between the hosts and their audience.

FD Going back to my teenage self though, even just the idea of there being more of "me" out there while tuning into a radio-show made me feel less alone.

"In radio, you have two tools. Sound and silence."

Ira Glass

"We're surrounded by signs; our imperative is to ignore none of them."

Jonathan Lethem, Ecstasy of influences, 2007

"In some ways, making radio is like composing music. The same care for form and content has to be taken in creating radio as in creating a piece of music. The same questions arise: when to have sound and when to have silence; what sense of time to create what sounds to select; what to say and how to say it; how to retain the dimensions of silence under a stream of sound; how to attract and keep a listenership."

Hildegard Westerkamp, The Soundscape in Radio, 1994

ST Silence is an interesting concept with live radio shows. The term "dead air" is damning. However, I was listening to an interview with Brené Brown the other day and she took her time and paused frequently. The use of silence was informative and as a listener, I followed along.

FD Which is why I'm so attracted by independent radio where dead air is not a threat but a tool. Where sonic landscapes of voices, music, field recordings and other material is free to find its own radio rhythm.

"They danced entranced to the tribal drum of radio that extended their central nervous system to create depth involvement for everybody."

Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, 1964

"A politics of listening sits uneasily with any form of institutionalisation, whether as a party or not. Institutions tend to have rules or practices which define expectations and tune in to certain voices, but not others. Institutions are not very good at listening even when they try to do it".

John Holloway, *Crack Capitalis*, 2010

"Sound and listening are situated as the basis for capacities by which to nurture an insurrectionary sensibility - a potential found in the quiver of the eardrum, the strains of a voice, the vibrations and echoes that spirit new formations of social solidarity - and that may support an engagement with the complexities of contemporary life."

"The hearing that is the basis for an insurrectionary activity, a coming community."

Brandon LaBelle, *Sonic Agency: Sound and Emergent Forms of Resistance*, 2018

2 HOW TO RESEARCH?

• WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF ARTIST-RESEARCHER-DESIGNER IN ARCHIVAL RESEARCH?

"Drifting from signifier to signifier, the artist invents meandering trajectories between cultural signs."

Claire Bishop, *Information Overload*, 2023

ST I believe it was in one of Louise Glück's poems that she wrote "We look at the world once, in childhood. The rest is memory." Perception is a learnt behaviour. Artist-researcher-designer enters an archive to reinvent this behaviour.

"The work in question is archival since it not only draws on informal archives but produces them as well, and does so in a way that underscores the nature of all archival materials as found yet constructed, factual yet fictive, public yet private. Further, it often arranges these materials according to quasi-archival logic, a matrix of citation and juxtaposition, and presents them in a quasi-archival architecture, a complex of texts and objects."

Hal Foster, *An Archival Impulse*, 2004

"Archivists find that researchers not only come with ideas of what they hope to find but also cannot accept that it is not there. There is an expectation of completeness. But, in reality just as much as in theory, the archive by its very nature is characterised by gaps."

Sue Breakell, *Perspectives: Negotiating the Archive*, 2008

ST I personally are not too caught up with missing information. I think if I were to work as a journalist, I would become more obsessed with filling the gaps. Perhaps art does the opposite, it is obsessed with absence.

FD But that absence we try to fill right? We fill those liminal spaces with our own thoughts, ideas, concepts, words, sounds, works. Adding new archive material to the ever expanding archive.

"Failing to recognise that not all historical gaps can be brought into institutional and archival art, not all archival material should be up for grabs."

James Nguyen, *Làm Chó Bò / Making Trouble*, 2020

"Lists are also a very simple manifestation of one's desire to order and to control, while acknowledging all along two universal rules, that whenever possible, destiny will take the path of the least resistance, and that chaos is inherent in all that surrounds us."

Fiona Tan, *Mountains and Molehills*, 2022

ST Serendipity. I am into that.

FD I love improvising with chaos.

"Inspiration could be called inhaling the memory of an act never experienced. Invention, it must be humbly admitted, does not consist in creating out of void but out of chaos. Any artist knows these truths, no matter how deeply he or she submerges that knowing."

Jonathan Lethem, *Ecstasy of influences*, 2007

"But once one is inside an archival organisation, other problems arise: one does not exist in one's unique, individual specificity but as an example of how one is categorised in the archive. "

Ernst van Alphen, *When is Archiving Productive and When is it Not?*, 2023

"I think the archive is a central component of the ambivalence that artists can feel towards making things at all, and situating them in the world at large, and within their own story of their life and work. At some point in their life artists usually confront, and answer in their own way, the follow-

ing questions: 'Why add anything more to the already overburdened culture?'
And, 'Why produce more stuff, which is going to become a commodity and lose
all its original, critical meaning?'"

Judy Vaknin, Karyn Stuckey, Victoria Lane (ed.), All This Stuff: Archiving the Artist, Artists and archives: A
Correspondence (Between Uriel Orlow and Ruth Maclellan), 2013

ST I've heard and read from many
artists that not-making was not an
option. What do we think about the
abundance (or overloading) of infor-
mation?

FD Sometimes I wonder about the
archiving of my radio practice. I
would actually prefer the broadcasts
to only exist in their own time and
space. To exist only for the (small
group) of listeners and myself.

• HOW DO WE PERCEIVE AND CONCEIVE INFORMATION FOUND
IN AND ALONGSIDE AN ARCHIVE?

"Obviously [the internet] is always my first point of contact with a subject
and many times it leads me to investigate things in a less methodological way,
a richer way. It situates normal people, everyday people, at the same level as
books and official sources. [The] internet is present all the time, and I don't
blame it for often being wrong. I like it. What better way to divert an inves-
tigation towards something contradictory or further from the truth. It is
there that one finds relations that potentially become something interesting."

Mario Garcia Torres, The Structures of Art: An Interview with Mario Garcia-Torres, 2012

FD Finding other methodologies is at
the core of what artistic research
should be about for me. Why hold
on to this predetermined notion of
doing research set by the academic
world?

ST Ditto. The shaping of research
methods is a much longer trajec-
tory than one project. The art that
I am attracted to usually shows a
great commitment to their methods.
Academic research methods tend to be

observational and descriptive, but
could also become restrictive and
didactic. The process is never as
tidy as it sounds.

"Martin Heidegger held that the essence of modernity was found in a certain
technological orientation he called "enframing." This tendency encourages
us to see the objects in our world only in terms of how they can serve us or
be used by us."

Jonathan Lethem, Ecstasy of influences, 2007

"Our task is to make trouble, to stir up potent response to devastating
events, as well as to settle troubled waters and rebuild quiet places.
Staying with the trouble requires making odd-kin; that is, we require each
other in unexpected collaborations and combinations, in hot compost piles.
Lots of trouble, lots of kin to be going on with."

Donna Haraway, Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene, 2006

FD "Standby.
This is the time.
And this is the record of the time.
This is the time.
And this is the record of the time.
Put your hands over your eyes.
Jump out of the plane.
There is no pilot.
You are not alone.
Standby.
This is the time.
And this is the
record of the time."
Laurie Anderson - From The Air, 1982

"The same archival burdens that blunts our capacity to fully access self-rep-
resentation provides us with the motivation to confide in the family and collude
in alternative strategies towards imperfect forms of self-determination. "

James Nguyen, Lâm Chó Bó / Making Trouble, 2020

"Other fundamental principles underpinning archive theory and practice - au-
thenticity and the context of the record - are also eminently compatible with
postmodernist thought in demanding that we do not take a document at face value
but rather look at the process of creation rather than the product itself."

Sue Breakell, Perspectives: Negotiating the Archive, 2008

• IT'S ALWAYS PERSONAL: MEMORIES VS. UNDERSTANDING

"I understand archives as places where remembering and forgetting meet."

Aleida Assmann, The Archives as a laboratory of the New: Where Remembering and Forgetting Meet, 2023

AW This is a poetic observation. I
view the world through the lenses
of familiarity and unfamiliarity,
allowing me as a designer to navigate
between these extremes. My goal is to
transform what I may have overlooked
into something I can see with fresh
eyes, or to take something that feels
alien and make it relatable.

ST I am staying with the poetics:
a pendulum between learning and un-
learning...

"Our memory limits what stories we see in the archive, and the archive limits
what information is available to our memory."

Tadhg Larabee, Archive Fever, Boston Review, November 17, 2022

"The act of remembering involves both storing and retrieving: it is not a passive
process, especially in the digital age. To be able to confirm the original
context and provenance of archives will become more important than ever."

Sue Breakell, Perspectives: Negotiating the Archive, 2008

"Preventing forgetfulness, stopping the disappearance of things and beings
seemed to me a noble goal, but I quickly realised that this ambition was
bound to fail, for as soon as we try to preserve something, we fix it."

Christian Boltanski

"In order to recognize an anachronism, one must know the difference between
the present and a past era. This cannot be done without archives, which are
the prerequisite for this invaluable cognitive achievement and the basis of
historical education. Only this education makes it possible to expand one's
knowledge of one's own past, to think critically beyond the narrowing of
traditions handed down and a one-sided image of oneself, and thus also to
recognise the foreign in one's own."

Aleida Assmann, The Archives as a laboratory of the New: Where Remembering and Forgetting Meet, 2023

3 HOW TO TRANSLATE?

• KILL YOUR DARLINGS

AW Haha! Simpson and I are getting pretty good at it. Like I said earlier, it's easy to slip into hoarding, but our approach is to let things go so we can refine the content. Otherwise, if everything speaks at once, it's just noise, it's pollution!

ST I think it's also about the quality of attention we are trying to cultivate. I am becoming less convinced by the passive quality of an installation and more drawn to event-based presentations.

FD I'm still practicing :). But I think that's also why I love event based presentations like Simpson. For me they allow my love of improvisation to take the reign and let the moment refine the content.

"I didn't have time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one instead."

Blaise Pascal, Lettres Provinciales, 1657

"Artists are surrounded by potential things that carry meanings which they may or may not put to use in a context that will endow them with many other meanings, through association, and make them art."

Judy Vaknin, Karyn Stuckey, Victoria Lane (ed.), All This Stuff: Archiving the Artist, Artists and archives: A Correspondence (Between Uriel Orlow and Ruth MacLennan), 2013

"If you collect everything, you collect nothing." Fiona Tan

"What will the sheer volume of material mean for researchers in the future, especially if it is decontextualised and without external authentication... Keeping everything is not a solution."

Sue Breakell, Perspectives: Negotiating the Archive, 2008

"Getting rid of the boring parts, and going right to the part that are like getting into your heart, you know you just have to be ruthless."

Ira Glass, Ira Glass on Storytelling, 2013

FD My problem is I'm never bored.

"... research-based art prizes open a gap between research and truth: Rather than being grounded in social themes (migration, translation, female labor, environmental damage), the artwork pulls disparate strands together through fiction and subjective speculation... For fabulation to have critical currency, it matters which histories are being retrieved and why."

Claire Bishop, Information Overload, 2023

• BETWEEN FAMILIARITY AND UNFAMILIARITY

"André Breton's maxim 'Beautiful as the chance encounter of a sewing machine and an umbrella on an operating table' is an expression of the belief that simply placing objects in an unexpected context reinvigorates their mysterious qualities."

Jonathan Lethem, Ecstasy of influences, Harper's Magazine, February, 2007

"How do you end a story that's not yours? Add another sentence where there is a pause? Infiltrate the story with a comma when really there should have been a period? Punctuate with an exclamation point where a period would have sufficed? What if you kill something breathing and breathe life into something the author wanted to eliminate? How do you get inside the mind of a person who isn't there? Fill the shoes of someone who will never again fill his own?"

Shailla Abdullah

"This is not a will to totalize so much as a will to relate—to probe a misplaced past, to collate its different signs (sometimes pragmatically, sometimes parodistically), to ascertain what might remain for the present... It assumes anomic fragmentation as a condition not only to represent but to

3 HOW TO TRANSLATE?

work through, and proposes new orders of affective association, however partial and provisional, to this end, even as it also registers the difficulty, at times the absurdity, of doing so. This is why such work often appears tendentious, even preposterous."

Hal Foster, An Archival Impulse, 2004

"Sound curation that starts from what sounds, from the invisible of sonic materiality, that which is neither seen through the expectations of visual arts nor via a musical language, is an experiment, an aesthetic Hadron Collider, that seeks to grant us access to another way things are but we cannot yet see. In this way curation becomes central in the intention to reach those dark particles, the dark matter of sound, to gain an understandings of the other, unperceived dimensions of the world which are not other worlds but slices of this world; and to comprehend their consequences - aesthetically, politically and scientifically."

Salomé Voegelin, Listening as Strategy for Research for and from the Arts, 2021

"This recycling of sounds, images, and forms implies incessant navigation within the meanderings of cultural history, navigation which itself becomes the subject of artistic practice. Isn't art, as Duchamp once said, "a game among all men of all eras?" Postproduction is the contemporary form of this game."

Nicolas Bourriaud, Postproduction. Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World, 2006

AW Seems like it!

ST Designers work more like stylists, artists work more like production managers and "everyone is a DJ!"

FD And if we all are DJ's then we all can perform live and postproduction is no longer a form of the game :)

• LISTENING TO THE ARCHIVES, LETTING THEM SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

The ear is hyperesthetic compared to the neutral eye. The ear is intolerant, closed, and exclusive, whereas the eye is open, neutral, and associative.

Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man, 1964

AW-ST We think the opposite.

FD Completely agree with you both: so adding two quotes by Pauline Oliveros:

"Deep Listening is active.

What is heard is changed by listening and changes the listener I call this the 'listening effect' or how we process what we hear. Two modes of listening are available - focal and global. When both modes are utilized and balanced there is connection with all that there is. Focal listening garners detail from any sound and global listening brings expansion through the whole field of sound."

"Listening is directing attention to what is heard, gathering meaning, interpreting and deciding on action.

We hear in order to listen.

We listen in order to interpret our world and experience meaning. Our world is a complex matrix of vibrating energy, matter and air just as we are made of vibrations. Vibration connects us with all beings and connects us to all things interdependently.

We open in order to listen to the world as a field of possibilities and we listen with narrowed attention for specific things of vital interest to us in the world.

ST While we live in a time where information are constantly and aggressively coming at us and are inducing stress and fear of missing out, I hope that, at least in the realm of art and artistic research, we could forge a gentler, less-demanding space. To lend an empathetic ear, for each other, so to speak.

We interpret what we hear according to the way we listen.
Through accessing many forms of listening we grow and change whether we listen to the sounds of our daily lives, the environment or music."

Pauline Oliveros, Quantum Listening, 1999

"Quoting from a written document is one thing. Listening to the soft spoken reflections and getting the nuances, the 'ah's' and 'uh's', the pauses and the thoughtfulness that are unheard by the transcription software I used, is for me a more intimate and instinctive method to spend with my material.

Femke Dekker, Open Field, 2023

AW Not just more intimate, it's more genuine, honest, and authentic.

"... the power of the archival for artists lies in this tension between matter and meaning: does the stuff that I accumulate mean anything, and how much control can I, or do I want to, have over that meaning? The archival document is a seductive metaphor for an object/fragment/trace that is not yet (and may never be) an art object, or an art idea."

Judy Vaknin, Karyn Stuckey, Victoria Lane (ed.), All This Stuff: Archiving the Artist, Artists and archives: A Correspondence (Between Uriel Orlow and Ruth MacLennan), 2013

"Traditionally the artist's archive told the art historian more about the art', whereas 'now we see increasingly how an artist can use it to tell us more about the nature of the archive.'"

Penelope Curtis, From Out of the Shadow, All This Stuff: Archiving the Artist, Artists and archives: A Correspondence (Between Uriel Orlow and Ruth MacLennan), 2013

"By choosing to make time-based art and to work with audiovisual media, I am condemned, so it would seem, to the transitory... all media are faulty, and yet each has its own intrinsic beauty... But all are most definitely translations, none represent reality... And yet in my own work as an artist, it is the translations that I must make do with, that I therefore welcome and embrace."

Fiona Tan, Fiona Tan: Mountains and Molehills, 2022

ST And getting back to the nature of radio... What if art could be more like radio, an omnipresence which is accessible, non-expensive and communal. Can we still trust art? Or, does art still warrant trust?

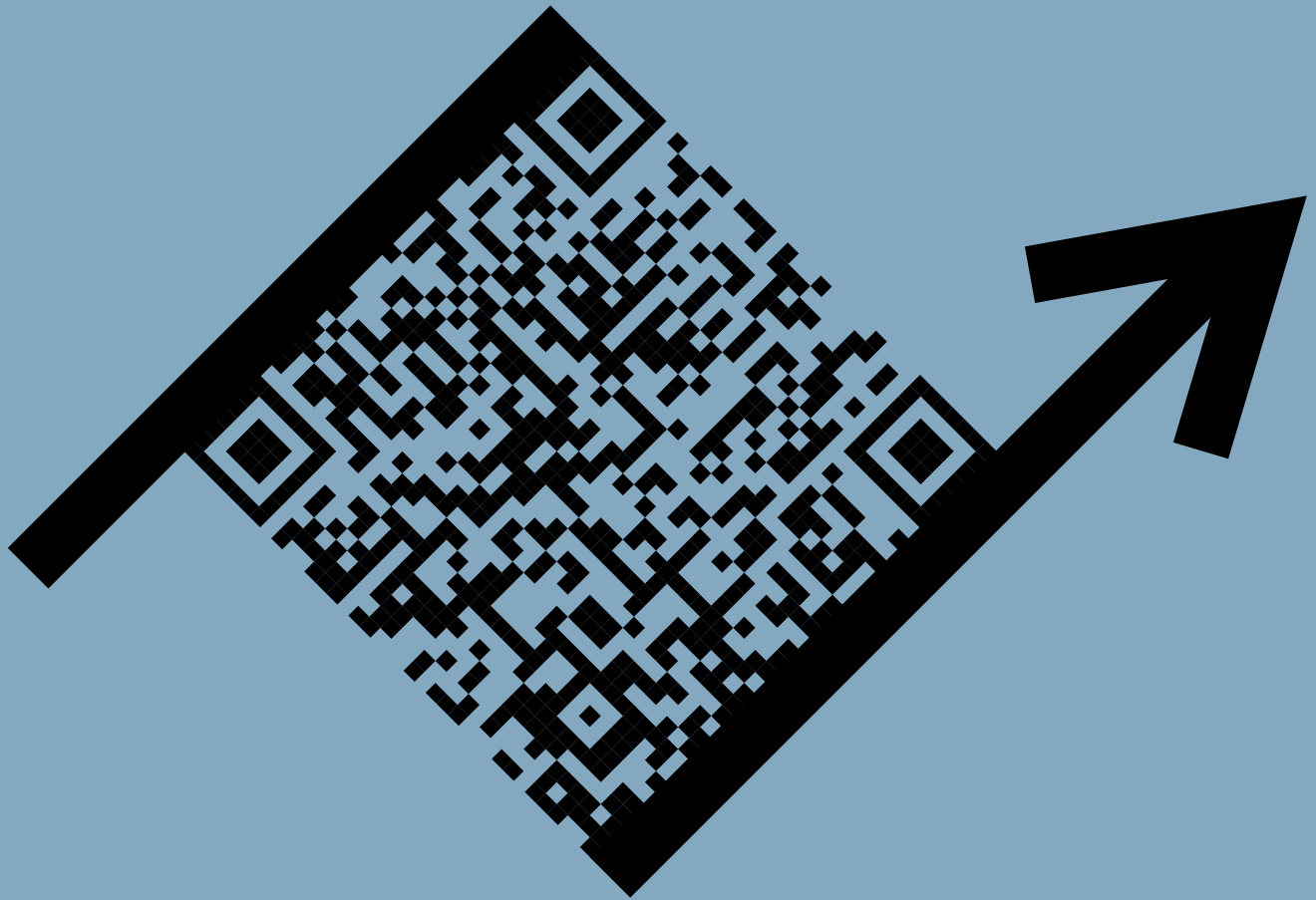
FD Was art ever meant to be trusted? For me art is meant to disrupt, to awe, to question, to hold, to discard, to laugh at or with, to mirror and to reflect upon. Anything but trusted.

"Humans think in stories, and we try to make sense of the world by telling stories."

Yuval Noah Harari

F E M K E D E K K E R
Re:Activate Radio

A L I C E W O N G A N D S I M O T S E
Voices and Breaths



FEMKE DEKKER Re:Activate Radio

RE:ACTIVATE RADIO, focuses on the reciprocal relationship between the media and activism. Activists have always made strategic use of mass media as a platform to broadcast their ideas. This project explores the notions of both mediated activism and activist media.

In the IISH, Femke Dekker came across the so-called 'Staatsarchief' (State Archive), the archive of the Dutch squatters' and activists' movement. It contains the vast audio archive of Radio de Vrije Keyser, which began broadcasting on 13 January 1980 from 'De Groote Keijser', a complex of six squatted buildings on the Keizersgracht in Amsterdam. The archive appeals to Dekker's interest in counterculture and represents radio's ability to function as a call to action and as a tool for community building. In this respect, the topics discussed in the historical radio broadcasts, such as gentrification, the housing shortage and the need for grassroots activism, are just as relevant today.

In addition to providing access to Radio de Vrije Keyser broadcasts, Dekker is also producing four radio programmes that will be broadcast on the online station Ja Ja Ja Nee Nee Nee. These broadcasts reflect on the materials that Dekker has found and address the positions of the archivist as activist and the artist and activist as archivist.



RADIO RATAPLAN RAVAGE

De Radio Rataplan is een radiozender die wordt uitgezonden vanuit de Amsterdamse wijk Nieuw-West. De zender is een zelfgebouwd apparaat dat wordt gebruikt om te communiceren met andere zenders in de regio. Het apparaat is gebouwd uit een oude radiozender die is aangepast aan de huidige frequenties. De zender is nu te horen op 100.0 FM.

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Radio Rataplan, 1981, poster. CSD BG E30/181



RE:ACTIVATE RADIO also disclosed the archive of squatters station Radio De Vrije Keyser, founded in 1980 in Amsterdam. Scan the QR code to listen to the full archive.

GROOT FEEST
IN DE
GROOTE KEYSER
ZATERDAG
21 MAART

T.B.V.

DE VRIJE KEYSER
T.V. DMRDEP

TOEGANG: f 2,50

DE VRIJE KEYSER
IN DE
AMSTERDAMSE WIJKE NIEUW-WEST

VELE VERASSINGEN!

AN -
5 COACH
ALUMINIUM
INFORMATIE
... WE NIEUW
VROUW APOCRYPHE

VIDEO
"IN VERVOLGINGE TE VER - VOORUITGANG VER EEN MAAS
VOORVERTONING
KARL. PROGRAMME'S



Unknown, Poster. Staatsarchief Amsterdam, IISG BG

KIJK

Zó lost
Amsterdam
't woning-
probleem
op...



ALICE WONG AND SIMO TSE: Voices and Breaths

VOICES AND BREATHS is an audiovisual installation created by story designer Wong and artist Tse. The project is based on Snelle Berichten Nederland-China [Quick Messages The Netherlands-China], a Cantonese-language radio program about Dutch news and current affairs that was broadcast between 1990 and 2008. The main goal of the program was to make it easier for Chinese-speaking migrants to bond with members of their own community and build a bridge to Dutch society. The radio program was forced to end production in 2008 when the NPS (Dutch broadcasting foundation) stopped financing all non-Dutch-language programs. In retrospect, the program can be seen as an example of changing attitudes towards migrants, specifically the Dutch-Chinese, in both the decision-making class and among themselves. During their research Wong and Tse came across a private collection of cassette tapes with recordings made by one of the former radio presenters. He had arranged the recordings according to his personal story as a first-generation migrant in the Netherlands. On the recordings you can hear him speaking and listening, as if he is trying to find his own voice. The comparison between institutionalised archives and this personal collection provides interesting insights into how stories can be recorded and retold. In 2024 VOICES AND BREATHS got published by EEEBOOKS.

Use the barcode to listen to VOICES AND BREATHS, the subtitles are translated on the following pages.



An audiobook with subtitles
 On the history of the Cantonese-Dutch radio programme
Snelle Berichten Nederland-China,
 broadcast in the 1990s–2000s, with radiohost Chow Yiu-fai
 www.eeebooks.net/eeeeeeeeee

Voices and Breaths • Alice Wong & Simo Tse
 Published by EEEBOOKS



1992–1999

2002–2004

2021–2022

Side A

Chow Yiu-fai is the co-presenter of the programme, and he is also a lyric writer for Canto-pop music in Hong Kong.

More than 600 lyrics with many number one hits under his name, he also holds a PhD from the University of Amsterdam. He has written essays about young Dutch-chinese people and popular culture. He will be sharing with us at *Dichtbij Nederland* the Chinese music he wrote. In 1992, he has moved from Hong Kong to the Netherlands for love and on this evening, he will talk about his love for music. Welcome, Yiu-fai.

Perhaps our sentiments are old, and our life stories also. Time shifts and the world changes, since we have arrived at a new place, we then call ourselves newcomers. I would also call myself a newcomer, and how about you? How would you introduce yourself to me?

[Song: *Seems Like Old Friends Coming*, Anita Mui]
*We are both passers-by, both dreamers,
 and we are supposed to be a couple.
 When you are in a youthful dream,
 you don't release you have to leave upon waking up.
 Who would be sharing 3 meals a day
 and the evening together (with me).*

At that moment, I have met a Dutch person. It was 1992, and if I didn't land on this job, I might not stay for so long (in the Netherlands). But who knows?

Newcomers, new programmes. Every Wednesday, in *Snelle Berichten Nederland-China*, I, Chow Yiu-fai, will share with you the news and stories in the Netherlands, Hong Kong, Taiwan and also mainland China. Hopefully, we would become like old friends every evening.

The job at the radio quickly became an important anchor point. It motivated me to learn Dutch, to better understand and to observe the (Dutch) society. I wanted to be useful.

I have always explored these questions in my writing. I often ask: why does it have to be like this? or why shouldn't it be otherwise?

It was because my colleague Loi-che and myself have similar understanding with the role of broadcasting in the Dutch-chinese community. For example, we want to touch upon subjects like gambling, labour issues in the horreca (hospitality) industry, or domestic violence... All of these social, familial and even gender issues.

Without equality, there is no human rights. Equal opportunity is our bottom line. This is the slogan shouted by people joining a protest march in Hong Kong. They are asking the colonial government to draft laws fighting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. And the dress code today is Ray-Ban sunglasses, not because of fashion consciousness but because they don't want to be recognised.

From the beginning, the radio programme was linked with the church. They had found our ideas not clerical and were not suitable for the Chinese, nor the church's tradition. Luckily, our superior understood the difference in values and opinions, and had chosen to stand by our side. So we began to reorganise the programme, with new talents, and the new version of *Snelle Berichten Nederland-china* was born.

[Jingle] 747 AM, the NPS. News and current affairs, in Chinese.

Snelle Berichten Nederland-china, getting closer with you, every evening.

We would start with the news every evening, followed by the weather report. The duration would depend on the day, but no more than 10 minutes.

[Jingle] The forecast tonight would be occasional showers and the lowest temperature would be 8 degree Celsius.

And then there was one part for young people, mainly about the idols and entertainment news from Hong Kong.

[Jingle] Community information, entertainment news, leisure recommendation. Postbox 29170.

We would call a journalist in Hong Kong, and also another one in Guangzhou.

[Jingle] Shenzhen and Hong Kong, a special economic zone and a special administrative region. One wanted to change and the other wanted to remain unchanged for 50 years. We have family, friends and peers, and our roots in both cities: *Not-be-missed Home Affairs*.

There was another part about rights and newly-passed regulation. We hope our listeners would be able to have some agency themselves.

[Jingle] Our rights and duties, all the big cities and small towns in the Netherlands: *I Also Need to Know*.

Also, there were Dutch lessons, which were quite simple.

[Jingle] The alphabet is A B C, and we have D E F G.

Your will could move mountains, and what is difficult could become

easy. Let's learn Dutch.

And then, every Monday, we had a phone-in programme called *Same Voices, Same Breaths*. We would discuss current affairs of the week, but the most important point was the listeners could call us and share their views.

[Jingle] 08003000990, different topics, different opinions, we live under the same sky, we welcome you all the same: *Same Voices, Same Breaths*.

That programme was called *Same Voices, Same Breaths*, and the very fact that we could openly talk to one and another was already something. Even though the opinions might

That programme was called *Same Voices, Same Dreams*, and the very fact that we could openly talk to one and another was already something. Even though the opinions might not align, or they might even attract more toxic opinions. Our listeners might not speak Cantonese, but since they were already listening to us, they must understand Cantonese. It didn't matter, just like how some of us who might be better at listening than speaking Dutch. Still, we could all participate.

[People speaking different languages altogether]

Is it true that Chinese people practice writing their names when they were children?

I think, the ultimate meaning of communication is like how the two Chinese characters for it are, in which they denote mixing what's mine and what're yours, and our souls are connected through one and another. I think this is the most optimal way of communication.

[Song: Today, John Denver]

I'll be a dandy and I'll be a rover.

You'll know who I am by the songs that I sing.

I think that is really beautiful.

Life is difficult enough, and if someone thinks my songs are nice, and in that few minutes they received pleasure, then, for me, it is enough. I am satisfied with that.

We somehow carry this mission with us, hoping that even though they might have very different values, they could still co-exist. The migrant parents think differently to their Dutch-born children. On the other hand, the younger generation might not have heard about how their parents came over to the Netherlands, what life was like for them before and after, and why they would perceive the world in certain ways. I think this might bring us a little bit closer.

If the children are raised by Dutch nannies, they often feel distant to their own parents at home. Where do you think this sense of distance come from? And if this is a situation you are facing, what would you do?

When you work as a broadcaster, you would always want to bring your audience closer. In Cantonese radio, we always use the singular 'you', and never the plural. Our assumption is the audiences are listening to the radio alone. With radio, the relationship we built with our audience is 'parasocial', and it's not 'real' sociality per se. There is a familiarity with a full awareness that our lives are very different.

Side B

In tonight's programme, besides playing old (Chinese) songs, I would like to bring you a couple of Dutch songs. This one is about 15 million people who all have a dream each of their own.

[Song: Fluitsma & van Tijn, 15 Miljoen Mensen]

Land of a thousand opinions

The land of sobriety,

All together on the beach

Rusk at breakfast time,

the land where no one let go

Unless we win,

then the passion suddenly breaks loose

Then no one will stay inside

Recently, I believe we all have heard the word *integratie* (integration) very often on the news... The Chinese? If we were talking about integration, who are the ones that didn't? Besides new migrants and those who moved here in the 70s who never get a chance to learn Dutch, I think the Chinese are the least integrated community.

At the same time, I am a migrant myself and I understand how difficult it is with the larger society. It's understandable that you would grab onto something within your own sense of control, such as the so-called tradition.

If you look at how conservative the Chinese communities are, it is difficult to say that they are all well-integrated. But no one will speak about this. It might be a good thing that there are also no complaints from the outside. But, the strange reality remains, just because you are silent, the Dutch society would consider you as well-integrated. But this ain't the truth.

The popular Dutch newspaper *De Telegraaf* published an article pointing at 3 characteristics of Chinese migrants: No complaints, no trouble-making and hard-working. It even said that the Chinese are the model migrants.

The question is just a confrontation, between the East and the West. As the readers receive such reputation from the press, then they might think that all Chinese are corrupted, or everything in China is unsafe. I don't think this is a positive thing between the communications of the two worlds. The news is painting a negative picture for the young Chinese living in the Netherlands.

Through the years, we could sense that the Dutch government has a different attitude towards foreigners and migrants. If you are familiar with sociology, there is this idea about bridging and bonding. A migrant community, for example the Dutch-chinese, would first bond internally, and take care of their own business. Gradually, they would bridge over to the host population. This attitude has changed, foremost, comes the requirement of the Dutch language proficiency. One's mother-tongue is no longer relevant. The requirement to bridge over comes first, above anything else.

The cabinet proposal treats Dutch elderly and Dutch elderly migrants differently. Dutch elderly migrants will have to take Dutch lessons, and if they refuse, there would be consequences. However, Dutch elderly who are illiterate would be exempted. Furthermore, Dutch elderly migrants will have to pay for their own lessons, which is simply unaffordable for people with low income. We must oppose this motion!

The Dutch-chinese rarely took part in activism. But mother-tongue broadcasting was one exception. We obviously didn't succeed and that's not only for the Chinese, but also the Moroccans and the Turks. We all fought to preserve the programmes.

[Field recording] (Chinese radio! Chinese radio! Chinese radio! ...)

I don't quite know how to put these in words. I am not good at saying such things. I hope that, with or without the radio programme, we could all do our parts, to fulfil what was asked of us in this society, and to fight for our own rights, at the best of our capability.

Who would think that, on a peaceful Sunday evening, when the entire family is watching TV after a nice meal, everything could turn upside down? I think the Chinese people are very familiar with this feeling of losing everything in a blink of an eye, be them natural disasters or man-made incidents. A revolution, a war, everything has to start anew. Or if you move away from your home country, your family is scattered around the world...

The song is about the student uprising in 1989's Beijing. A significant period. I was working with Tat-ming Pairs on their second album. We wanted to do something with this historical event. But we are not activists with protest slogans, instead, we wanted to reflect upon what is Chinese culture, not necessarily about the faults in the political regime, but more about what is still possible within the Chinese cultural system.

[Song: Don't Ask the Sky, Tat-ming Pairs]

Depressed beneath a fiery sky,

the land is unspeaking

The wind blows up a purple haze,

people so scared they're shrinking

You enter into someone else's memory, someone else's life. I wouldn't say I am changing anything, but working in media means that we are aware about the fact that you are once part of someone's life, your voice was once in their living rooms.

Basically, I just want to let people know that there is someone like Yiu-fai, living in this city, who is about to turn sixty, but who doesn't really look like sixty. I think, I just want to give them some sort of diversity, some sort of possibility that I hope could be inspiring. I was visiting an archive in Berlin. When I arrived, the archivists were very happy to see me. They have kept a few early audio recordings of Chinese people in Germany but have no clue what they were talking about.

Last night, at 6 o'clock in the evening, a fight broke out in a MacDonald's opposite the parliament building in the Hague, between the staffers from the Chinese embassy and some Chinese activists. According to the Dutch police, since they could not understand what they were arguing about, all 14 people were arrested for vandalism.

Perhaps one day, someone would listen back (to the radio programmes) in the archive, and would want to learn more about these people, what they were thinking about and why they are speaking in certain ways; and under what circumstances, their voices entered the archive. The strings of questioning ripple into layers of Dutch history. After all, there are many histor(ies) and many people are writing them. Archive brings a different kind of writing, a different of structure and a different kind of histor(ies).

But, what is Canto-pop?

Erm, I don't know if you know the basic difference between Western music composition and Chinese music composition. In Chinese music, we only use 5 tones, instead of an octave, which is eight tones. So, it makes our music always a bit different from the so-called Western music. Actually, to the Chinese ears, music, that are made largely out of the 5 tone system, or completely out of the 5 tone system, are always more popular.

Credits Voices and Breaths by Alice Wong and Simo Tse was first developed for Open Archief in 2022. Thanks to VPRO for granting us permission to include copyrighted materials from *Hemelse Modder*. Design by Marius Schwarz. Published by EEEBOOKS in 2024. www.eeebooks.net/eeeeeeee (9)

Contributors (in order of appearance)

PG

Philipp Gufler (he/they) lives and works in Amsterdam and Munich. He studied at the Munich Academy of Fine Arts, and participated in residence programmes De Ateliers in Amsterdam (2015-17), Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture in Maine (US) (2019), Delfina Foundation in London (2021) und Launch Pad LaB in Champagne-Mouton (FR) (2023). Since 2013 he has been an active member of the self-organised forum Queer Archive Munich (DE). Philipp Gufler researches questions of queer pictorial worlds and challenges Western historiography, in which heterosexuality and a binary gender system are the social norm. In his artistic praxis he uses various media, including silk-screen printing on fabrics or mirrors, artist's books, performances and video installations.

BS

belit sağ (she/they) is a visual artist, videomaker, researcher and educator from Turkey based in Amsterdam. Her moving image practice is rooted in video-activist collectives she co-founded in Turkey in early 2000s. They were an artist-in-residence at Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten (Amsterdam) and International Studio and Curatorial Program (New York City). Her research-based artistic practice investigates visual representations of political violence, and archival representations of solidarity among queer and migrant communities of color. Their current research project *Remembering Otherwise* explores migrant political organizing, feminist solidarity and archival silences in the early period of labor migration from Turkey to the Netherlands. The project centers the unarchivable, intangible, and the speculative, while articulating the ways in which somatic practice and archival research intersect. Her work has been presented at Toronto, New York and Rotterdam International Film Festivals, Anthology Film Archives, Flaherty NYC, EYE Filmmuseum and Moca Taipei, among others. She presented her current research at EYE International Archive Conference and Sonic Acts Biennale 2024. They are a research fellow at Design Lectoraat, Royal Academy of Art Den Haag (KABK) and at ReCNTR - Multimodal and Audiovisual Research Center, Leiden University. They teach at Sandberg Institute, Gerrit Rietveld Academy and KABK.

SPSL

susan pui san lok < > ~~susan~~ lok pui san is an artist, writer and academic based in London. Solo exhibitions include *seven x seven* at Glasgow International Festival (2021), *A COVEN A GROVE A STAND* at Firstsite (2019), and *RoCH Fans & Legends* at QUAD and CfCCA (2015-16). Recent projects include *REWIND/REPLAY*, a major commission for *Rewinding Internationalism: Scenes from the 1990s, Today*, staged at Villa Arson, Van Abbemuseum, and Netwerk Aalst (2022-23); and *Centenary* a long poem and sound work commissioned by Create London for the Becontree Centenary, broadcast on ResonanceFM (2022) and installed at ESEA Contemporary (2023). Group exhibitions include *Found Cities, Lost Objects* curated by Lubaina Himid OBE, an Arts Council England exhibition touring to Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, Southampton City Art Gallery, Bristol, Royal West of England Gallery and Leeds Art Gallery (2023-24). They have also exhibited internationally at He Xiangning Museum, Diaspora Pavilion at the 57th Venice Biennale, Guangdong Museum of Art, Hong Kong Arts Centre, Shanghai Duolun MoMA, Beijing 798, Mori Art Museum, Site Sante Fe. They are Professor in Contemporary Art and Director of the UAL Decolonising Arts Institute, where they lead the 3-year projects, Transforming Collections (funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council) and 20/20 (supported by Arts Council England, Freeland Foundation and UAL). spsl-projects.net

PK

Paula Kommos is an independent curator and art historian. Her practice addresses issues around the politics and forms of infrastructures, their underlying power structures and explores the aesthetic strategies and methods

of art and sound through which artists engage with the public and public space. After completing her studies in art history, contemporary art history and American studies in Freiburg (DE), Bochum (DE) and London (UK), she gained professional experiences in museums, biennials and art institutions, including Drawing Room (UK), Fridericianum (Kassel, DE), Venice Biennale (IT), Dortmunder Kunstverein (DE), among others. From 2018-2021 she worked at Städelschule as a research associate, where she was responsible for the public program as well as the publications. As Artistic Director, she conceived the *Biennale für Freiburg - Das Lied der Straße* (2022-2023), which included a rich public program and an international exhibition throughout various institutions including Freiburger Kunstverein, Museum für Neue Kunst and CRAC-Alsace.

GB

Gill Baldwin (1992, Canada) is a multi-disciplinary artist. Working mainly in kinetic sculpture and painting she explores the biases and behaviours of contemporary technologies within the built environment and their affect on the neighbourhood, the self, and human agency. Baldwin was educated as a designer and interior architect. From there she developed as an artist who, in her work, also researches how digital technologies can affect our experience of the surroundings. Her works allude to future scenarios, but more importantly invite the viewer to contemplate our current day. In 2022 she was a recipient of the Mondriaan Fonds Starting Artist Grant and in 2023, the Canada Council Research and Creation funding. Selected exhibitions include, Art Rotterdam, Van Gogh Museum and V2_Lab for Unstable Media.

JdA

Jessica de Abreu (1989, NL) studied Social and Cultural Anthropology and Culture, Organization and Management at the VU University Amsterdam. Her passionate commitment to the field of African Diaspora led to research on upward social mobility in New York, Amsterdam and London. Her work focuses on post/anti-colonial perspectives and intersectionality. She is co-founder of The Black Archives, one of the first historical archives in the Netherlands to focus on Black history in the Netherlands and beyond.

PNP

Pablo Núñez Palma is a Chilean-Dutch experimental filmmaker and media researcher exploring the intersection of new technologies with film language and audiovisual archives. He directed the hybrid feature film *Manuel de Ribera* (IFFR, 2010) and co-founded MAFI, a documentary collective documenting Chilean society through web documentary (IDFA, 2012), art exhibitions, and three feature films (the latest premiering at Berlinale 2024). Pablo's versatility extends to documentary research and screenwriting, as demonstrated by his work on the documentary *Beaverland* (2014). In AI experimentation, he co-authored *Jan Bot* (2018), an AI filmmaker producing unsupervised short films from Eye Filmmuseum's archive. He also initiated *Typologies of Delusion* (2023), examining audiovisual archives using generative AI. His academic background includes a bachelor's in philosophy and one in social communication (with a professional track in audiovisual direction) from the Catholic University of Chile, as well as master's studies in artistic research at the University of Amsterdam and The Netherlands Film Academy. Pablo's work consistently challenges conventional filmmaking, combining traditional videography with emerging technologies to create reflective narratives and thoughtful archival explorations.

MH

Michiel Huijben (1985, NL) works with performance, video, research, and writing. His practice is concerned with interactions between (architectural) design, politics, and society. He holds a BFA from St. Joost Academy in Breda, and an MFA from Sandberg Instituut in Amsterdam. In 2013, he completed a short-track residency at De Ateliers in Amsterdam, followed by an MA in Architectural

History & Theory at the Cass, London. Shortly afterward, he founded the publishing project Flat i (welcometoflat-i.net). Influenced by his backgrounds in both fine art and architectural theory, Huijben's work moves between the languages and aesthetics of both of these fields. He studied architectural theory, understanding it as a tool chest holding historiography, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, and geography, but also poetry, biography, fiction, and journalism; all useful tools with which to reflect on architecture and the city.

PPP

The practice of Pieter Paul Pothoven (1981, NL) consists of installation, film, photography, different forms of writing and archiving. An interest in historiography and material culture pervades all his projects and connects them in both theoretical and visceral ways. Throughout his work, he searches for alternative ways to engage with artifacts, natural resources and oral histories in order to mediate new relationships between past and present. Pothoven received his BFA at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam and his MFA at Parsons The New School for Design, New York (US). He was a resident at, amongst others, Instituto Sacatar, Itaparica (BR), Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, MA (US) and the Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht (NL). Recent exhibitions include: *True Colors*, Kunstmuseum Den Haag, The Hague (NL); *Zaak no: 2108/85*, Artissima, Torino (IT); *Refresh #2*, Amsterdam Museum and the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam (NL); *The Other Kabul*, Kunstmuseum Thun (CH); *The Weight of a Stone*, blank projects, Cape Town (SA); *TK15223*, Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague (NL); and *In the Presence of Absence*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Pothoven lives and works in Amsterdam. pieterpaulpothoven.com

EB

Elki Boerdam is a visual artist, researcher, writer and photo-editor. She is captivated by the accumulation, circulation and consumption of images. In her practice she works with found images and uses them as a medium through which she researches topics like the philosophy of photography, image culture, image phenomena and technology. Examples of work are image assemblages, video renderings, science fiction stories and zines. Together with Rachel Sellem she developed the Input Party: a project where artists meet and share their personal referential image archives in an effort to explore how existing images are used in an artists practice. Next to this she also gives workshops, lectures and works as a photo editor for De Volkskrant.

SFG

Shock Forest Group (SFG) is a decentralized collective started in 2019 and consisting of artists, activists, ecologists, musicians and researchers. SFG is an experiment in presence, open research and improvisation, that involves opportunities for community engagement, public performance, collective improvisation, and other forms of experiments in radical presence. It consists of seven active members: Katya Abazajian, Sheryn Akiki, Axel Coumans, Susanna Gonzo, Nicolás Jaar, Daria Kiseleva and Jelger Kroese. Past members are Paula Dooren, Pantxo Bertin, Pamela Jordan, Erica Moukarzel, Simon Skatka Lindell, Sjoerd Smit and Bert Spaan.

FD

With her multifaceted practice as a sound practitioner and educator, Femke Dekker has spent more than a decade exploring sound as an agent for making. Known under her artist moniker Loma Doom, her signature style revolves around electronic experimentalism, both for the mind and movement, and seeks to create a space where intuition and understanding can meet. Dekker is currently a Professional Practice tutor at the BA department of Interior Architecture and Furniture Design and the BA department Fine Arts at the KABK, the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague. soundloud.com/lomadoom

AW

Alice Wong (1989 NL, she/her) is a story designer focuses on translating complex information into comprehensive, sharable storytelling. Her research is rooted in understanding how our perception of reality is shaped, prompting the question: who told you so? Her principal topic of interest lies in the intersection of biographical documentary, media, and social phenomena. missalicewong.com

ST

Simo Tse (1984 AUS, he/him) is an artist and a graphic designer based in Amsterdam. Anchoring upon the tension between individuality and collectivism, his artistic practice takes shapes in printed matters, audiovisual installation and participatory events. Through accumulating (auto)biographical and archival research, Tse is invested in building a constellation of anecdotic reminders of which an individual's agency is constantly being challenged, excised and examined. His work has been exhibited at the Kunsthal Charlottenborg (Copenhagen), TypoJanchi (Seoul), Het Nieuwe Instituut (Rotterdam), Unseen Photography Fair (Amsterdam) and the Hong Kong International Photography Festival. simo-tse.work

Designer

Marius Schwarz is a graphic designer and an occasional editor/publisher/writer/musician who is interested in architecture, art, literature, film, history and social movements. From his studio in Amsterdam he works with artists, designers, cultural- and non-profit organisations. Together they develop publications, websites and visual identities with the aim to create narratives that integrate text/image/film/audio in unconventional and inextricable ways. He publishes the serial digital publication EEEBOOKS. mariusschwarz.com eeebooks.net

Editors

Eline de Graaf is curator of collections and program manager at Nieuwe Instituut.

Michael Karabinos is a lecturer in Archival and Information Studies at the University of Amsterdam.

Thijs van Leeuwen is a public archivist and project leader at the International Institute of Social History.

Cees Martens is a project lead at Sound & Vision and director of creative reuse projects.

OPEN ARCHIEF
Artistic Reuse of Archives

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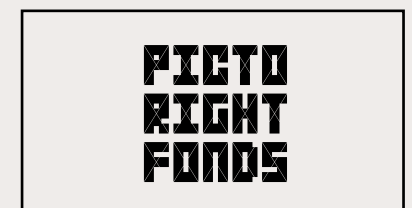
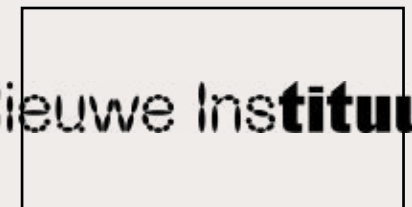
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This book follows three editions of the programme
OPEN ARCHIEF (2019-2022) and builds upon it in a new
way. OPEN ARCHIEF is a multifaceted collaborative
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