

# The Diary - Collective Notes on Archives of Commons

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Full program and readings: <https://padlet.com/archivalburnout/s5xl3t0qe3pr30sg>, Map: Archive Commons, Alliances, Feelings <https://padlet.com/archivalburnout/bbjmg8mnx49kgb6c>

## Listing Archives:

- Harun Farocki Institut - <https://www.harun-farocki-institut.org/en/>
- Interference Archive - <https://interferencearchive.org/>
- Pad.ma - India
- 858.ma - Egypt
- bak.ma - Turkey, Germany
- Syrian Archive
- Lili-Elbe-Archiv Berlin
- bildwechsel - Hamburg
- ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives at the USC Libraries
- Black Trans Archive
- lefttove.rs / Maydayrooms Archive, London
- <https://0xdb.org/> Berlin
- The South African History Archive (SAHA)
- Lesbian Herstory Archives, NY
- Media Burn Independent Video Archive, Chicago
- Rise Up! a digital archive of feminist activism, Toronto
- The Archivo de la Memoria Trans Argentina
- Prelinger Archives LA
- Simone de Beauvoir Center's Archive Paris
- The Archive of Migrant Memories, Rome
- The Black Archive, Amsterdam
- Kollektiv Bibliothek, Berlin
- <http://www.reactfeminism.org>
- Saqmi - Swedish Archive for Queer Moving Images
- Women's Library and Information Center
- Diyarbakir's memory
- <https://www.digitaltransgenderarchive.net/>
- <http://www.wmf.org.eg/en/>
- <https://www.territorioarchivo.org/about/>

**09.10.2021**

**Workshop Session 1 with guest Pelin Tan**

- Archiving is not about the past – but about this moment and future
  - How to make it more layered than static?
  - How to make it a practice of commoning?
- The “dispossession” is a tool by the state – is it possible to create an archive for the subject of dispossession, eviction, and genocide – to tell the story of the oppressed & to keep their memories
- Archive as collectivity
- You can distort the discourse with an archive – “archive as discourse”
- How to create an archive that is active for the future?
- How can the archive hold multiple voices and discourses?
- Jalal Toufic’s term “Surpassing Disasters” -- when it is impossible to bear witness,
- What about things that communities do not want to remember? – what is the responsibility of the archive in that case?
  - Contemporary art practices help us to tell stories not in a journalistic way – not in a dry archival way but to play with the discourse – “to maneuver”
  - You don’t have any image to resurrect after the catastrophe -- to reactivate – archive does not give an answer – so you have to be creative – “imagination” / “fiction”
- When you make an exhibition, curate the archive – who has access?
- The case of Abkhazia – when the apathy is so high (de facto state) – when there is no motivation for the archive?
  - Agamben writes about this – some people want to talk about it (be a witness) and some not (because it is so traumatizing – and they want to forget -- “the right to forgetting”
  - “testimony” – non-state archive
  - What can an archive be in the wake of its absence?



*Image: Workshop Session 1 with Pelin Tan, Screenshot of all Participants*

## Research Methodology

- Archival Research: Documents and Reports in Alami Archive, Personal Archives (autobiography) , Ford Foundation archive,
- Oral Interviews,
- Arab Development Society Archive,
- Site research - building analysis
- Social History research,
- Discourses on Modernity,
- Artistic Intervention (for example Susanne Bosch)

*Image: Workshop Session 1 with Pelin Tan, Screenshot of Pelin Tan's powerpoint presentation*

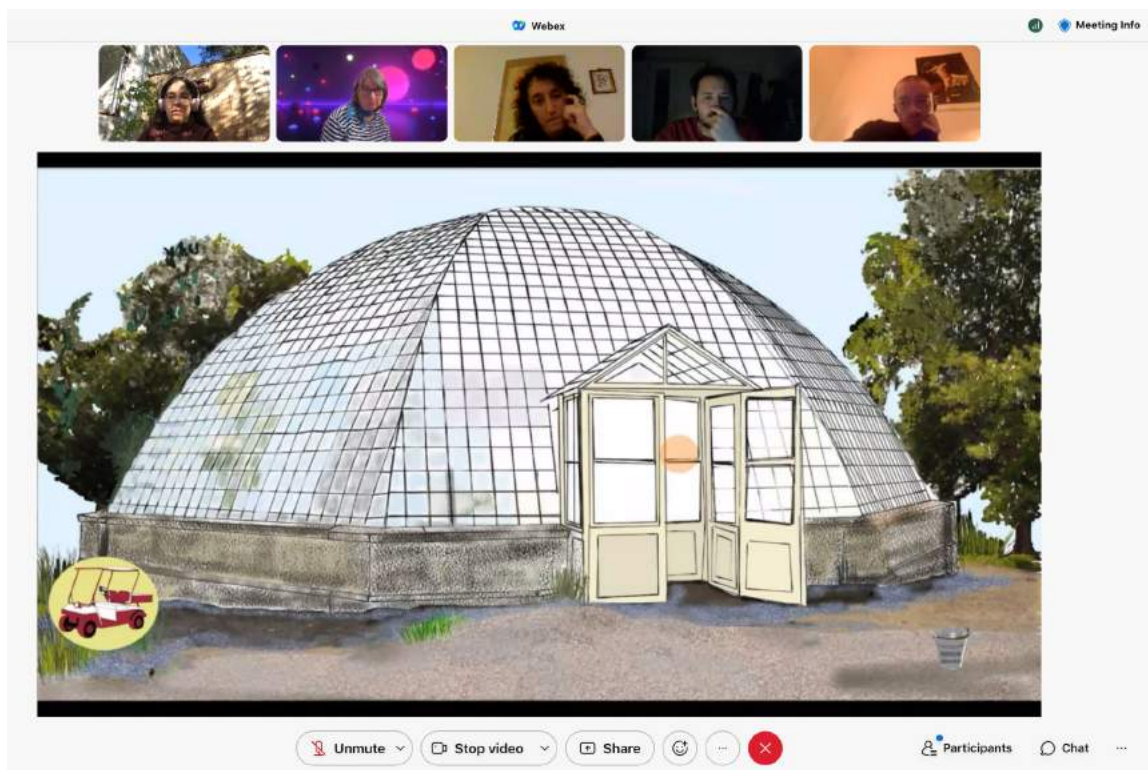
**13.11.21**

**Workshop Session 2 with guest Dagmar Brunow**

- the position of archives in the digital era
  - in the frame of LGBTQ community and archives
  - from the archive (static / memory storage) to archiving (flux / creating narrative)
  - Archiving needs to create the narrative.
  - The question of visibility?
  - What are the methods to create "living" archives in the digital era?
  - What are the problems of digitalization of minor archives?
- Collecting - Circulating - Contextualization = in general **curating** in digital era
  - Article about curating in post-digital era:  
<https://www.e-flux.com/journal/94/219462/curating-in-the-post-internet-age/>
- Minor archives
  - LGBTQ
  - The archives of minority groups
- Some methods of online archiving
  - Digital exhibition or archive; could be interactive; create online space and make it public?
  - Website
  - Some online interfaces such as miro, graph commons as network mapping
- <https://wp.nyu.edu/digitalgallatin/>
  - <https://omeka.org/>
  - <https://leafletjs.com/>
  - <https://gisgeography.com/free-gis-software/>
- Vulnerabilities in and of the archive
  - Where are vulnerabilities?
  - Who is vulnerable?
  - What is vulnerable?

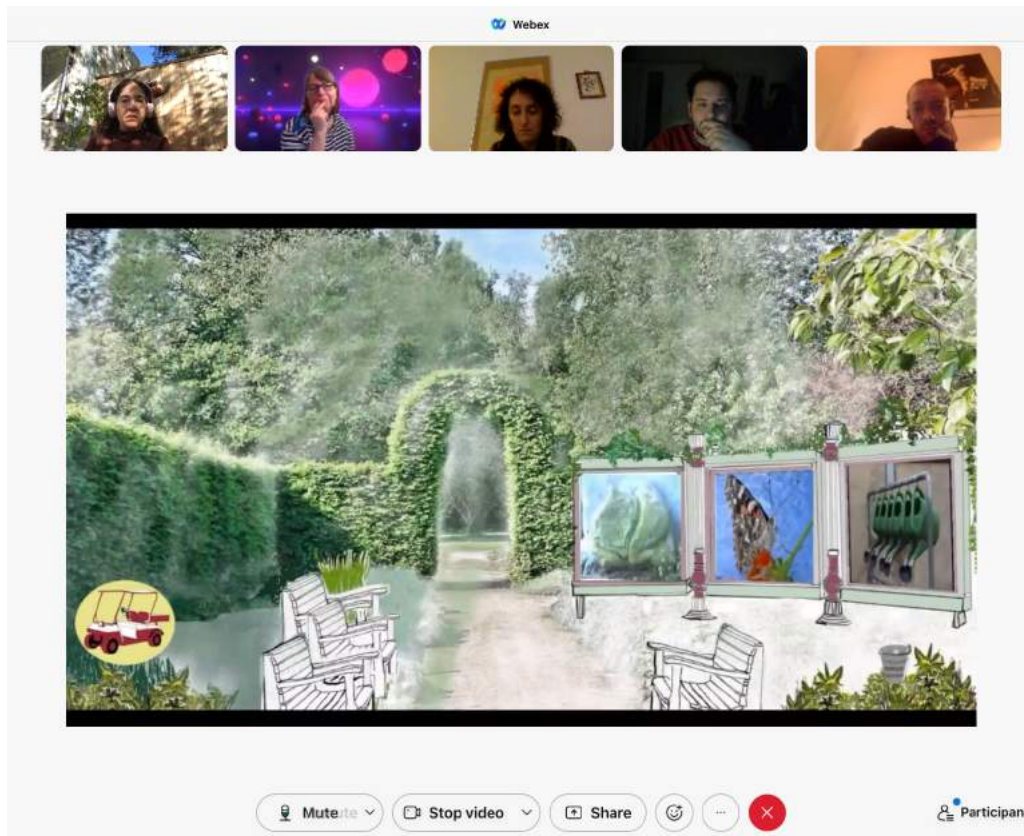
- Vulnerabilities of the archive (answers from the group):
  - lack of access to technology to create archives
  - underrepresented communities
  - perishable materials , awkward objects
  - following from underrepresented communities - communities that have been systematically marginalised who themselves do not believe their experiences are worth recording
  - where -> in the gaps
  - vulnerabilities are all over the archives. the material can be vulnerable. the people who are included can be vulnerable in terms of their way of 'inclusion.' exclusion can cause vulnerability in different forms.
  - what -> excess, abject
  - those that defy categorization
  - in terms of audiovisual material both analog and digital is vulnerable
  - cultural preconditions - i.e. whose voices matter more/less in what cultures and what medium can best express that
  - what -> permeability
  
- Vulnerabilities of the archive (from Dagmar):
  - decaying materiality
  - Gentrification
  - who is doing labor? – unpaid labor
  - Service and databases – being hacked
  - Visibility of the group
  - Representation
  - Metadata – do you highlight or not? Does it put individuals at risk?
  
- Collection (video is underrepresented as a format in archives)
- Cataloguing (Metadata) — how do we deal with old and problematic metadata? (such as character defect, deviant, etc. from National Archives UK)
  - Metadata is never objective – metadata is becoming, constantly changing
  - Metadata as a performative act — carving out utopian spaces for future possibilities — to disrupt dominant narratives
- Curation
  - Archive and cultural memory relation
  - Memory is not storage but we need constant migration and circulation of footage, it needs to be alive
  - Living Archive, Arsenal (Berlin) — they do this

- Challenges:
  - Copyright issues
  - Personal rights
- “minor archives” as a term rather than community & counter – Dagmar’s choice as a term
- Methodologies for protection:
  - Using a password for restricted access
  - Checking with filmmaker and participant whether they’d like to participate in streaming of archive and making it public
  - Taking oral history with the footage could be a solution to this
  - Especially due to criminalization of LGBT
- Ethics of Curation — recognition vs the possibility of digital refusal
- Conference -- free attendance:
  - <https://www.stiftung-imai.de/en/events/research/fringe-fringe>



*Image: Workshop Session 2 with Dagmar Brunow: bildwechsel Videoschloss - Detailed view garden. (c) durbahn, bildwechsel.*





*Image: Workshop Session 2 with Dagmar Brunow: bildwechsel Videoschloss - Detailed view garden. (c) durbahn, bildwechsel.*

**08.01.2022**

### **Workshop Session 3 with a digital excursion to Lili Elbe-Archiv (Niki Trauthwein)**

- Establishing a culture of remembrance – an archive makes this possible
- Private documents (correspondence, diaries, etc) or community owned magazines, fanzines, etc – an archive that can contain documents that you cannot find at libraries
- An open place to exchange ideas to deal with the topic professionally or privately
- They don't throw any documents – continuous preservation
- 15th-21st century documents

- Understanding one's own history opens up new perspectives and courses of actions
- It's a key to self-image
- How do networks establish themselves? – archives to understand this and to establish more when needed
- It's a "thank you" to people who stood there before us – previous activists
- Preserve cultural heritage that does not get preserved otherwise
- Social acceptance and scientific recognition cannot be taken for granted
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZeS3C7pRxU>
- The role of serendipity in the archives
- There is no hierarchy – decisions are made collectively
- Voluntary-work
- There is no funding for non-institutional archives
- The emotional burnout of the archival work – how sustainable is it?
  - Burnout because the stories are repeating – history of oppression is repeating through time
  - Burnout because people (interviewees) are passing away
- Making it available for the public – historical expensive books, etc
- Member of <https://www.digitaltransgenderarchive.net/>
- Collaborates other trans activist groups and organizations in Germany and beyond

#### **Group discussion:**

- Serendipity as an archival methodology – you make your own narrative in the archive and archive has this amazing offering
- Why is it free work? How can we highlight that?
- The burnout of the work
- The archivist as a caretaker
- Archives that have to do the work as institutions are not doing that
- Cvetkovitch: how trauma challenges the idea of archives, so it "demands an unusual archive."
- Naz "how do we archive when there is so much trauma?" that keeps repeating in my mind.
- Resonating with ephemera- how ephemera holds the archive of feelings and emotions that is very much there in Naz's piece
- [http://www.anncvetkovich.com/uploads/9/9/3/8/9938110/ephemera\\_lexicon\\_for\\_affective\\_archive\\_2017\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.anncvetkovich.com/uploads/9/9/3/8/9938110/ephemera_lexicon_for_affective_archive_2017_pdf.pdf)
- Serendipity as archival methodology (Eye Film Amsterdam for example)

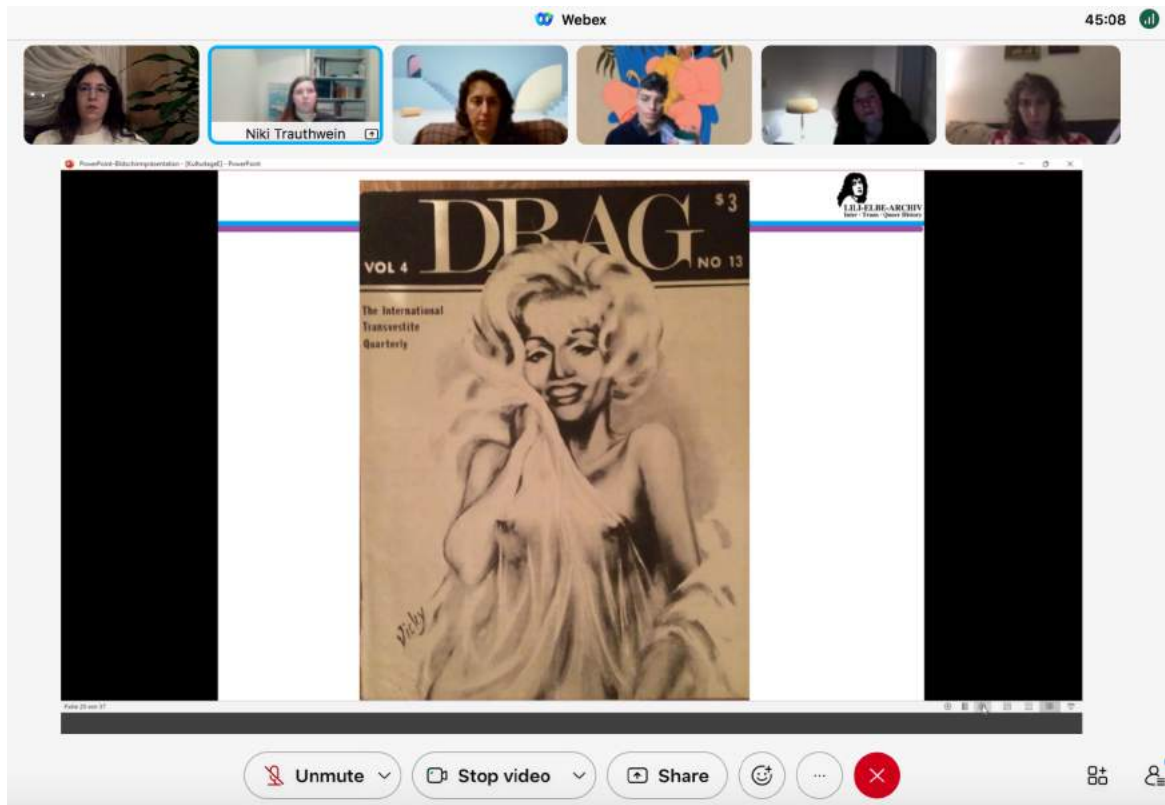


serendipity			
			
"serendipity" teriminin Türkçe İngilizce Sözlükte anlamları : 6 sonuç			
Kategori	İngilizce	Türkçe	
1 Genel	serendipity <i>i.</i>	şans eseri değerli birşeyler keşfetme yeteneği	...
2 Genel	serendipity <i>i.</i>	mutlu kaza	...
3 Genel	serendipity <i>i.</i>	aramazken bulunan	...
4 Genel	serendipity <i>i.</i>	mutlu tesadüf	...
5 Genel	serendipity <i>i.</i>	tevâfuk	...
6 Psikoloji	serendipity <i>i.</i>	serendiplik	...

Image: Workshop Session 3 with Niki Trautwein: Screenshot Serendipity has different meanings in different languages

national trauma is grounded in the conviction that trauma challenges common understandings of what constitutes an archive.<sup>5</sup> Because trauma can be unspeakable and unrepresentable and because it is marked by forgetting and dissociation, it often seems to leave behind no records at all. Trauma puts pressure on conventional forms of documentation, representation, and commemoration, giving rise to new genres of expression, such as testimony, and new forms of monuments, rituals, and performances that can call into being collective witnesses and publics. It thus demands an unusual archive, whose materials, in pointing to trauma's ephemerality, are themselves frequently ephemeral. Trauma's archive incorporates personal memories, which can be recorded in oral and video testimonies, memoirs, letters, and journals. The memory of trauma is

Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2003.



*Image: Workshop Session 3 with Niki Trautwein: Cover of the magazine DRAG: The International Transvestite Quarterly Vol. 4 No. 13*

<https://sensorymovingimagearchive.humanities.uva.nl/>

<https://casa-kua.com/>

<https://anjaliarondekar.sites.ucsc.edu/>

- Minor joys in major archives
- Serendipity to let go of the power or authority of the archivist
- Physical body in the archive
- Serendipity as a archival methodology can be interpreted as a glitch.
- Archives of excess vs archives of loss (obscuring as a methodology)
- “right to opacity” (le droit à l’opacité), Edouard Glissant,  
<http://www.transcultural-english-studies.de/opacite-opacity-edouard-glissant/>
- Accessibility for bodies that are not able – how can we think about this in relation to archives?



*Image: Workshop Session 3 with Niki Trautwein: Screenshot of all Participants*

Project Ideas:

- Non-linear document
- Pictures of us with questions
- An audio document
- Taking analog notes on digital document and then making it digital again

Chatbox: (all links and notes) 01.08.2022

from Niki Trauthwein to everyone:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZeS3C7pRxU>

from Özge Celikaskan to everyone:

<https://www.digitaltransgenderarchive.net/>

from lalü they/them to everyone:

">The Academy related program will start Thur 24th March in the morning until Sat 26th March evening.<"

from Naz C to everyone:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/17tvR63AYOK21H-0BrjhzkVtQnliCQkT\\_GpUxCTVpeXY/edit#](https://docs.google.com/document/d/17tvR63AYOK21H-0BrjhzkVtQnliCQkT_GpUxCTVpeXY/edit#)

from maria morata she/her to everyone:

[http://www.anncvetkovich.com/uploads/9/9/3/8/9938110/ephemera\\_lexicon\\_for\\_affective\\_archive\\_2017\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.anncvetkovich.com/uploads/9/9/3/8/9938110/ephemera_lexicon_for_affective_archive_2017_pdf.pdf)

from lalu they/them to everyone:  
thank you

from Özge Celikasan to everyone:  
<https://sensorymovingimagearchive.humanities.uva.nl/>

from maria morata she/her to everyone:  
“right to opacity” (le droit à l’opacité), Edouard Glissant,  
<http://www.transcultural-english-studies.de/opacite-opacity-edouard-glissant/>

from Eshan Rafi they/them to everyone:  
I think her new book which isn't out yet will include what I mentioned, but here's her website:  
<https://anjaliarondekar.sites.ucsc.edu/>

from maria morata she/her to everyone:  
<https://casa-kua.com>

from maria morata she/her to everyone:  
<http://www.sicknessaffinity.org>

from lalu they/them to everyone:  
<https://vimeo.com/221641206> this is also sth i wanted to share thinking about lili elbe archives and cvetkovich. this is a short video accompanied a presentation on the emergence of a trans archive in turkey, and the community members discuss the possibilities/ impossibilities of archiving within trans communities.

**15.01.2022**

**Workshop Session 4 with digital excursion to Arsenal - Institut für  
Film und Videokunst (Markus Ruff)**

- Becoming an archivist “accidentally”
- Archive as labyrinth
- There is a relation between the objects in the archive – Neighbors → serendipity
- “Taking care” of the archive – to make it accessible, individuals bringing in their knowledge

- What are you taking care of? → Film history, film legacy, institutional legacy
- “Living Archive” - accessibility of the films
- Film restoration: rescuing films from decay
- Cultural artifacts – national legacy – how to deal with that?
- Sick prints / ill prints – archivist as a caregiver
- Political and hierarchical structures in institutions
- Building up the knowledge there vs in Germany – to deal with the hierarchy of colonial power (decolonizing the archive)
- Acknowledging your own vulnerability
- For whom the archive is intended?
- Analog vs digital modes – how this affects the material and the access
- The position of the outsider when archivist goes elsewhere like Lagos
- “Colonization can also be well-intentioned (!)”
- Film to watch: Spell reel by Filipa César
- Trinh T Minh-ha – poetics and fragmented narratives – fictional versus factual mode of archiving
- Onyeka Igwe – strategies for archival materiality – abstract
- Financial difficulty in digitizing – what can get digitized?
- Hierarchy at the institutions - challenges
- Decolonization (group discussion) and the position of the archivist, filmmaker, audience
- Migration of the films from one place to another (traveling), stories behind it  
“exemplify that an archive is not simply a recording, a reflection, or an image of an event, but that can also shape the event” (Annet Dekker)

#### **Links:**

- <https://www.decolonizationinaction.com/>
- <https://www.mercerunion.org/exhibitions/onyeka-igwe-the-real-story-is-whats-in-that-room/>
- <https://vimeo.com/user15683025>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fsQICxiPS1c>

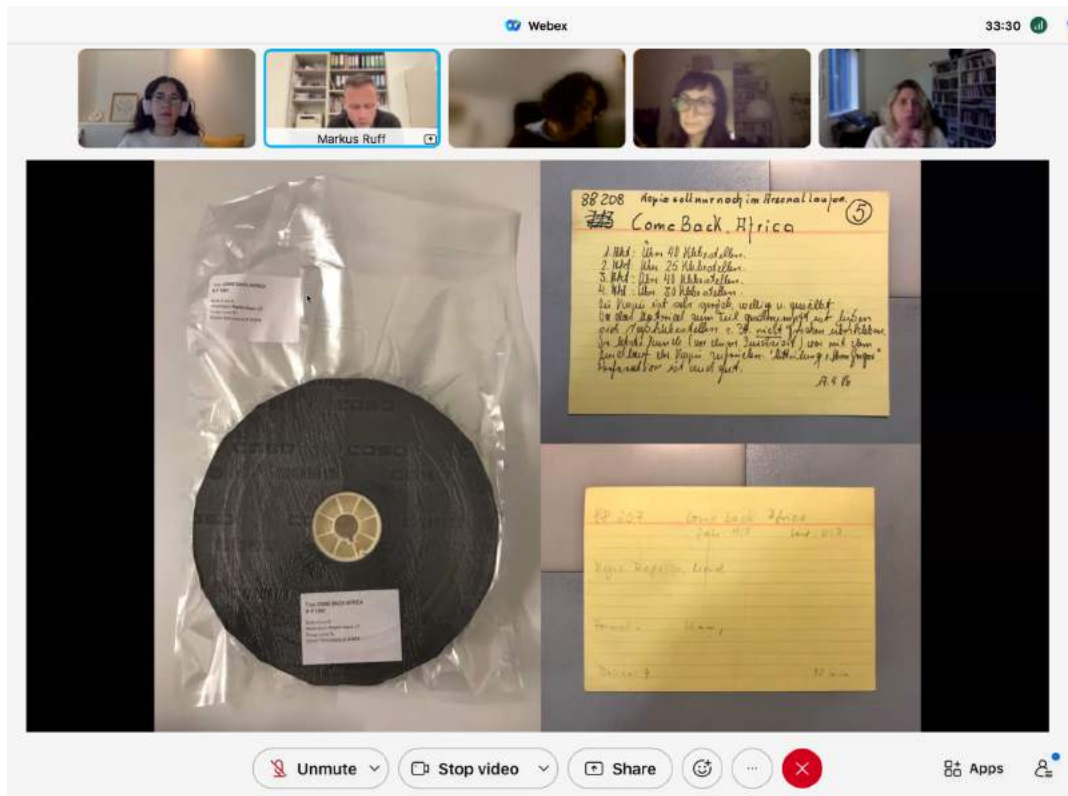
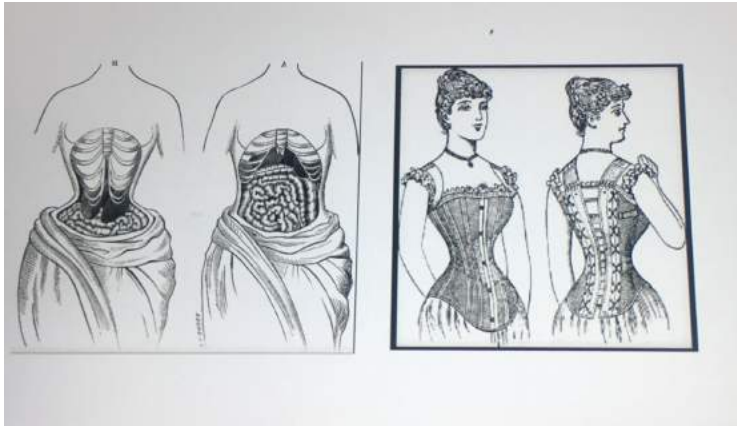


Image: Workshop Session 4 with Markus Ruff: left: A file of a 35mm film print of COME BACK, AFRICA (Lionel Rogosin, USA 1958) from the archive of Arsenal - Institute for Film and Video Art. For storage of the copy affected by the vinegar syndrome in the freezer, the files were individually vacuumed.: right: Index card with comments on the optical and mechanical condition of the copy.

**05.02.2022**

**Workshop Session 5 with guest Mela Dávila-Freire**

- Curatorial Research in the Field of Archives
- Curatorial approach – coming together, and establishing new connections
- Archives are like corsets – invisible and painful



*Image: Workshop Session 5 with Mela Davila Freire: Screenshot*

- “Cronicas mecas” Facebook group – as a collective archive – a photographic archive of a small coastal town in northern Spain
  - Spontaneous, participative
  - But also in ownership of Facebook – what happens later?
  - Head image – communally decided
  - No rules, or regulations
  - Works in an “organic” way vs how institutions work
- Territorio Archivo by “Fundación Cerezales Antonino y Cinia” –  
<https://www.territorioarchivo.org/>
  - How to preserve digital when an item is in a family collection
  - Affective layers & emotions connected to images
- ¿Archivo Queer?
  - <https://www.museoreinasofia.es/actividades/archivo-queer>
- Camino Negro
- Frictional Conversations (documenta 15) – Google map taking out/blacking out the image of Palestine camp in Lebanon



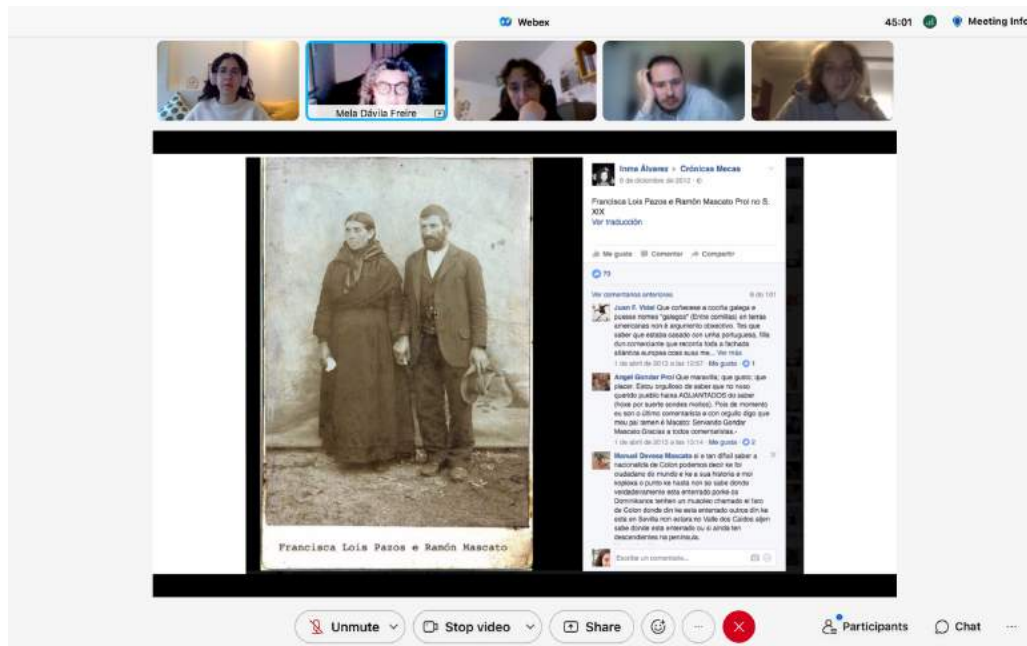


Image: Workshop Session 5 with Mela Dávila-Freire: Screenshot from the Facebook Group "Crónicas Mecas": photograph of Francisca Lois and Ramon Mascato from a family album, photographer unknown, without date (late 19th century) and comments about it from several members of the group in December 2012.

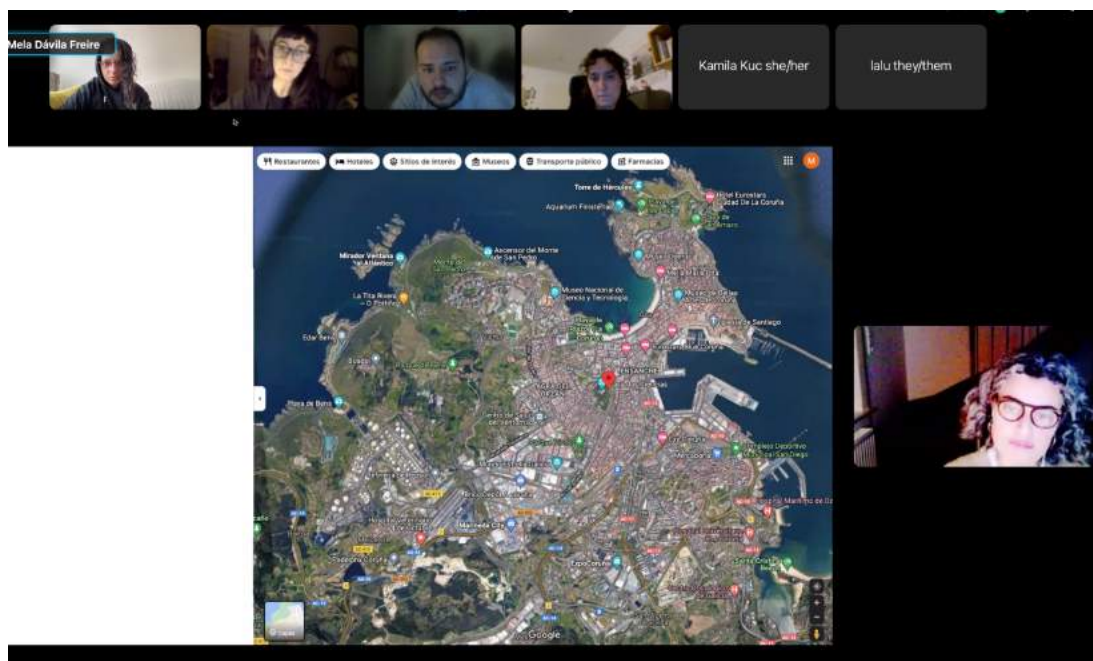


Image: Workshop Session 5 with Mela Dávila-Freire: A Coruña on Google Maps, 2022

**Group Discussion:**

- Making the archive accessible who cannot be there physically – “accessibility” of the archive
- How to bring zines or artist books into institutional archives?
- Use of language at institutions to talk about underrepresented groups – when it is offensive
  - Cultural differences
  - “Every taxonomic word needs to be dated and have authors”
  - Including communities in the conversation
  - Museums are slow to update their terminology – weak point
- Archive vs Collection
  - Archive – a person and entity produced as a result of their activity
  - Collection of documents – museum deciding to collect materials about a protest
  - It is about how it is built
  - The role of subjectivity – criticizing the objectivity is important
- The issue of institutional appropriation
  - Of the terms queer, radical, activism
  - Is it really institutions becoming liberal or is it commodification?
  - Institutional agendas
  - What are some strategies?
    - Involve the community

**Last chatbox:**

from maria sideri to everyone: 6:51 PM

i am sorry to close my camera, my internet signal is not good

from Kamila Kuc she/her to everyone: 7:04 PM

I am sorry I have to go everyone. Thank you for your presentation Mela! See you next week.

from maria morata she/her to everyone: 7:27 PM

Dears, I have to go now. Thanks a lot for this exciting presentation.

from maria morata she/her to everyone: 7:27 PM

Let me know about the discussion about our presentation for HKW

from naz cuguoglu to everyone: 7:28 PM  
thanks Maria!

from lalü they/them to everyone: 7:33 PM  
6 am we go

from naz cuguoglu to everyone: 7:37 PM  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/17tvR63AYOK21H-0BrjhzkVtQnliCQkT\\_GpUxCTVpeXY/edit#](https://docs.google.com/document/d/17tvR63AYOK21H-0BrjhzkVtQnliCQkT_GpUxCTVpeXY/edit#)

from maria sideri to everyone: 7:50 PM  
oh my god my internet collapsed

from maria sideri to everyone: 7:50 PM  
i am back

from lalü they/them to everyone: 7:53 PM  
i was saying how i love this group, and the whole thinking & experimenting going throughout the seminar. that it does not only talks about burnout, commons, but seeks to way to deal with them, commonize them etc.

from maria sideri to everyone: 7:59 PM  
Thanks Lalü!

from lalü they/them to everyone: 8:01 PM  
the real burnout , archive fire <3

#### **the unexpected encounters:**

“That makes contemporary art compatible with the Internet – and chapters in this book discuss the relationship between art and the Internet. Indeed, **the traditional archives** functioned in the following way: Certain objects (documents, artworks, etc.) were taken out of the material flow, secured and put under protection. Walter Benjamin famously described the effect of this operation as **the loss of aura**. Being taken out of the material flow, the object became a copy of itself – contemplated beyond its original inscription in the ‘here and now’ of the material flow. A museum piece is an object minus its (invisible) aura of originality (originality being understood as the original placing of the object in space and time). **Digital archiving**, on the contrary, ignores the object and preserves the aura. **The object itself is absent**. What remains is its metadata – the information about the here and now of its original inscription into the material flow: photos, videos, textual testimonies. The museum object always needed the interpretation that substituted for its lost aura. **Digital metadata creates an aura without an object**. That is why the adequate reaction to this metadata is the reenactment of the documented event – an attempt to fill out the emptiness in the middle of the aura.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Boris Groys, *In the Flow*, London and New York: Verso 2016, p. 4.