

## New Forms : Archive/Document/Social Policy

A Queens College Social Practice Research Seminar

Maureen Connor & Greg Sholette, Fall, 2014, Mondays 1:40-5:30, Klapper 174

Journalism has been described as the first rough draft of history and yet the same assessment could be made about the archive. What the archive contains is raw material for constructing everything from historical narratives and fictional encounters to informed public policies. At the same time the archive is of increasing interest to artists for two different reasons. First it provides insight into overlooked and/or repressed histories of workers, women and minorities among others. And second the archive has become a source of material and conceptual content as well as an artistic medium and form in its own right for many artists including Gerhard Richter, Walid Raad, Brassai (Involuntary Sculptures) August Sander (People of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century), Sol Lewitt (*Autobiography* and *Walls of The LES*), Hans Haacke (*Shapolsky et al Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real Time Social System as of May 1, 1971*), Harun Faroki (*Counter Music*) Hannah Hoch (*Album*), Hanne Darboven (*Posthumous homage to my mother*), to name just a few. This seminar combines original research, readings and discussion, with studio-based practice in order to explore the relationship between the archive and the document and how these in turn impact broader social relations and policies. By examining in detail the many ways collections of objects, ephemera, material traces and impressions can be used by artists to not only reconstruct the past, but also to re-imagine the present, the class will culminate in individual or group projects based on knowledge generated by our investigations. Field trips and guest speakers will be incorporated into the seminar and students will be tasked to make presentations of their research throughout the semester.

### Requirements, Grades, and Evaluation

- 40 % Enthusiastic involvement in seminar
- 30 % Participation in reading, discussions, originality of research work
- 30 % Attendance (3 or more unexcused absences = a drop in grade)

WEEK ONE - Sept 8 Introductions: each of us offers a conceptual and visual overview of what we'll be presenting, discussing and researching. We will also review assignments and expectations for the class, as well as arrange field trips to visit specific archives and exhibitions.

WEEK TWO – Sept 15 (Greg) Imaginary Archive: *documents about a past whose future never arrived.*

Imagine yourself uncovering a cache of printed materials and documents that record a past whose future never arrived (but perhaps should have). Imaginary Archive is just such a repository: printed matter, small objects, artist's books and self-published narratives that imagine an alternative history, which nevertheless sheds a surprisingly strong light on concrete realities. Imaginary Archive is made up of under-represented, unknown, invisible, dreaded and/or hoped-for "historical" materials that point to multiple ways of interpreting the past, the present, and the future.

Readings:

*Archive Fever* J. Derrida (4 pg excerpt from C. Mereweather's *Archive*, Whitechapel, 2006)

"On Maidan Uprising & Imaginary Archive Kyiv" G. Sholette (<http://transversal.at/blog/maidan-uprising> -2014)

WEEK THREE – Sept 22 You are the Archive I: Learning and Pedagogy

If you think about your experiences within the context of formal education (school, afterschool programs, music or dance lessons, etc.) you will probably report a mixed bag of memories that range from horrible to just unpleasant, from deadening to merely routine with only a few that stand out as exceptional and inspiring. Yet those moments of excitement were enough to keep you coming back for more. This class will explore how a range of innovative educators in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries managed to open up pedagogical processes and opportunities, using research, experiments and their experience as teachers despite tremendous resistance from the powers that be. In addition to reading about the work of some of the most influential educators we will also exchange stories of positive and negative events from our own

educational histories and try some experiments with exercises in learning from recent cognitive studies.

Readings from summaries of the following: Fredrich Froebel, Reggio Emilia, Summerhill, Paolo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Popular Education, the Free University Movement.

Reading on Froebel: <http://infed.org/mobi/fredrich-froebel-frobel/>

Reading on Waldorf (Rudolf Steiner,) Reggio Emilia and Montessori and <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v4n1/edwards.html>

Reading on Summerhill

[http://playpen.meraka.csir.co.za/~acdc/education/Dr\\_Anvind\\_Gupa/Learners\\_Library\\_7\\_March\\_2007/Re\\_sources/books/summerhill.pdf](http://playpen.meraka.csir.co.za/~acdc/education/Dr_Anvind_Gupa/Learners_Library_7_March_2007/Re_sources/books/summerhill.pdf)

Popular Education <http://www.practicingfreedom.org/offerings/popular-education/>

Pedagogy of the Oppressed

<http://muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/rac/v002/2.2.freire.html>

Free University [http://ism-global.net/statement\\_for\\_free\\_universities](http://ism-global.net/statement_for_free_universities)

**Assignment to be presented IN class on Sept. 22:** We all operate in relation to our personal memory archive and the past often influences the present in ways we don't realize. And even though we are reading about radical educators who have had a very positive impact on the way we learn, chances are most of us had to find our own path through the educational maze that somehow brought us all here. Please be prepared to describe a positive pedagogical experience (the moment when you learned something that had an impact on you or changed your thinking, or when you simply discovered that you enjoyed learning) as well as a negative insight (for example when you felt discouraged, misunderstood, unacknowledged.) Or to look at it from a different angle, could you try to think of learning as a practice just like painting, drawing, making videos, etc. and think about when it has been successful for you and when it hasn't. If you prefer you can use quotes, images, video clips, etc., that you feel represent your experiences. exercise from *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* by Peter C. Brown,

**WEEK FOUR-- September 27 visit to Interference Archive or NYU?**

[http://whitney.org/file\\_columns/0005/5248/aalt\\_taylor\\_final.pdf](http://whitney.org/file_columns/0005/5248/aalt_taylor_final.pdf)

WEEK FIVE – Oct 6

You Are the Archive II: the Art of Remembering

What is memory? Why and how do we remember things? Just about every field, from literature and music to math and science use rhymes, prompts and images, sometimes in combination, to translate information into forms the brain can remember more easily. The exploration of human memory has been a subject of science and philosophy for thousands of years and more recently has become one of the major topics of interest within cognitive psychology. We will look at how the memory systems developed in Ancient Greece, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance methods continue to influence the way we think and learn. We will also look at the field of heuristics, cognitive studies of how memory impacts judgment and decision-making, the results of which are used in marketing and politics to impact our choices.

Readings: Excerpts from *The Art of Memory* by Frances Yates (PDF)

Aby Warburg's Archive and the Mnemosyne Atlas

<http://osaarchivum.org/galeria/catalogue/2008/warburg/index.html>

And excerpts from George Didi-Huberman, *Atlas, How to Carry the World on One's Back*  
<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Into+the+wild%3A+Daniel+Birnbaum+on+%22Atlas--how+to+carry+the+world+on...-a0270159657>

Heuristics [http://changingminds.org/explanations/theories/availability\\_heuristic.htm](http://changingminds.org/explanations/theories/availability_heuristic.htm)

Next Week, Oct. 20, Students will present sketches, research for their choice of 2 from the following assignments that are related to Weeks 1-6 see **separate sheet with assignments**

No class Oct 13

WEEK SIX – Oct 20 3. (greg) PAD/D Archive: *the grin of the archive*.

PAD/D (1980-1988) was a cultural organization co-founded by myself, Lucy R. Lippard, Jerry Kearns, and other individuals in a attempt to link visual artists with progressive political causes while developing an archive of socially engaged art work that is now housed at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. The nature of the collection, its curious location within the “belly of the beast,” and what function such an opposition archive takes on under such circumstances will be discussed in detail. We will also discover what was the one item the PAD/D archivists decided not to add to the collection!

Readings:

“The Grin of the Archive,” G. Sholette from *Dark Matter*, Pluto Press, 2011 (PDF).

“Excavating Radical Women In Progressive Era California,” Sherry Katz, from *Contesting Archives: Finding Women in the Sources*, Chaudhuri, Kat, Perry editors, U. of Illinois, 2010. 89-106.

## **Student presentations**

WEEK SEVEN – Oct 27 Private Archives and Public policies: Embedded Practice

Embedded art practices represent one of a number of forms of socially engaged art that have grown out of what are often called “post-studio” practices. But there is a tradition of embedded art practice, usually called embedded journalism that has included writers, photographers and documentary filmmakers working in situ to gather information that would be otherwise hidden. Artists such as Jacob Riis, Margaret Bourke White, Dorothea Lange, Frederick Wiseman and many others have captured documents that raised public awareness and produced policy change. After an introduction to the achievements of these innovators we will examine the work of pioneering embedded artists such as Artist Placement Group, WochenKlausur and others, ending with more recent projects including some I have worked on: Personnel, Winter Holiday Camp and others.

Readings—brochure from APG show at Raven’s Row, London (PDF)

“Context is (not) Everything,” Maureen Connor from *Artists Reclaim the Commons*, ISC Press, 2013 (PDF)

WEEK EIGHT – Nov 3 (greg) Stephen Wright: *theories of reality, representation, and escapology*.

For at least a decade or more Paris-based critic Stephen Wright has attempted to explore the “infrathin” line between art and the everyday by proposing the abolition of artistic autonomy from life. We will take his theories at face value and see where their application might lead and speculate on the barrier that separates document from fiction, fact from fantasy.

Reading: *Toward a Lexicon of Usership*, 2014.

See also his 2004 Apex Art exhibition *The Future of the Reverse Readymade*:

WEEK NINE – Nov 10 (Greg in Europe) Visiting speaker or class, perhaps about policy—Caron Atlas, Charlotte Cohen or Tamara Greenfield from 4<sup>th</sup> Arts Block

WEEK TEN – Nov 17 (greg) *Communities, Dissidents and Public Art Policy*

The concept of “the community” is one of the most fraught in the realm of art and especially public art today. What is a community, what binds it together, what governs its internal functions, who should be included, excluded from it, and is it ever necessary to exert control over it from another community, or the public, or the State, or a political party? What are the pros and cons of artists working with specific, self-identified communities?

Readings:

Benedict Anderson “Cultural Roots” from *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983)

Plato “book X of *The Republic*” (5<sup>th</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Century b.c.)

WEEK ELEVEN – Nov 24 *The Archive of Everything: Surveillance and Big Data*

Were you ever inclined to wonder if you had an FBI file or if your phone were being bugged? Well now we know we all have one, but not, as some of us thought, because we were spotted at a political protest or signed a petition against a powerful politician. Instead these files track our subway rides (or Subway lunches) for no better reason than that it is possible to do so. In this class we will trace some of the historical precedents including scientific discoveries and powerful individuals that brought us to our current condition of round the clock surveillance. We will also look at how google searches and other uses of big data via the web might limit our knowledge and understanding instead of expanding it.

*The Century of the Self* by Adam Curtis, Parts 1 & 2 <http://vimeo.com/85948693>, <http://vimeo.com/75779119>

Excerpts from historian Timothy Garton-Ash’s book *The File*, about his 1992 discovery of his Stasi file from his time in East Berlin in the 70s-80s (to be scanned or Xeroxed)

Adam Curtis blog on surveillance: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/adamcurtis>

article from this site <http://networkcultures.org/query/reader/articles-for-download-society-of-the-query-reader/>

WEEK TWELVE – Dec 1 (g.) *REPOhistory: history that disturbs the present*, interview by Dipti Desai.

REPOhistory (1989–2000) was a New York City-based public art collective that was made up of visual artists, writers, media-artists, and scholars. The principle goal of REPOhistory was to: “retrieve and re-locate absent or overlooked historical narratives at specific sites throughout the New York area...” The group’s public art projects sought to re-claim the unknown past and represent these narratives as a multi-layered narrative that includes those who have been marginalized or disenfranchised because of class, race, gender or sexuality in order to provoke critical and multiple readings of the past. The legacy of this group and its work has become a key thread in the theory and practice of social art.

Readings:

“History that Disturbs the Present” g.sholette from *Dark Matter*, 2011.

WEEK THIRTEEN – Dec 8 TBA

WEEK FOURTEEN – Dec 15 Final Presentations

WEEK FIFTEEN – Dec 22 (More Final Presentations)

**Additional Resources So Far (more will be added, please suggest any you think are relevant)**

### **Archives you can visit**

Archives of American Art 12-399-5015 or [goodwinj@si.edu](mailto:goodwinj@si.edu)

<http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections>

Microfilm Reference Room

9:00 am -5:00 p.m.

Monday - Friday

300 Park Avenue South, Suite 300

New York, NY 10010

[Interference Archive](#)

[Fales Downtown Collection](#)

[PAD/D Archive](#)

[Lesbian Herstory Archives](#)

### **Online Archives**

**Redstockings** was a name taken in 1969 by one of the founding women's liberation groups of the 1960's to represent the union of two traditions: the "bluestocking" label disparagingly pinned on feminists of earlier centuries--and "red" for revolution. Redstockings women would go on to champion and spread knowledge of vital women's liberation theory, slogans and actions that have become household words such as **consciousness-raising**, **the personal is political**, the pro-woman line, sisterhood is powerful, the politics of housework, the **Miss America Protest**, and **"speakouts"** that would break the taboos of silence around subjects like abortion.. Redstockings today is a new kind of grassroots, activist "think tank", established by movement veterans, for defending and advancing the women's liberation agenda. The **Archives for Action** is a project Redstockings established in 1989 to make the formative and radical 1960's experience of the movement more widely available for the taking stock needed for new understandings and improved strategies.

[http://www.redstockings.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=53&Itemid=77](http://www.redstockings.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=53&Itemid=77)

**Citizenship by Design** investigates the design of international passports, identification technologies, and travel regulations to raise critical questions about contemporary citizenship, security and nation-branding. By highlighting the aesthetics of these bureaucratic documents and procedures, and by remixing graphic elements into multinational hybrids, the projects calls attention to the ways that citizenship is *designed* and the ways it might be reimagined in an era of proliferating global crossings. This project began with a competitive grant from the International Design Foundation in Ulm, Germany. It resulted in: a public booth installation in Columbus Park, Chinatown, where neighborhood residents contributed views on citizenship through bi-lingual ballots and discussions; an exhibition at the Van Alen Institute and Cornell

University in New York, titled as "Aesthetics of Crossing" and paired with an exhibit on US border stations (by Smith-Miller + Hawkinson Architects); a workshop at the Design and Culture program at the University of Arts in Zurich. Project collaborators: Kadambari Baxi, Irene Cheng  
See e-Publication

<http://issuu.com/kbaxi/docs/citizenshipbydesign>

A look at pre-photographic medical illustration

‘Between the French Revolution and the First World War Europe and America witnessed a golden age of medical image-making. The first generation of mass-market anatomical and pathological textbooks and atlases offered crisp, detailed colour illustrations of the human body in health and disease, and in doing so created a corpus of art that is beautiful and morbid, singular and sublime. Over the past year I’ve been writing about these images in *The Sick Rose* – the first fruit of a new collaboration between the Wellcome Library and leading art-book publishers Thames & Hudson. My name may be on the spine, but collaboration was one of the great pleasures of this project, and *The Sick Rose* has been immeasurably improved by discussions involving many expert voices: archivists and editors, librarians and designers.’

<http://thoughtcatalog.com/mark-dery/2014/08/sick-roses-disease-and-the-art-of-medical-illustration/>

<http://blog.wellcomelibrary.org/2014/06/the-sick-rose/>

***Free the Orphans*** The archive is always political, because it makes the decision about what is important and (pace Foucault) what WILL be considered important, or even available, in the future. ***Free the Orphans*** uses the phenomenon of the “orphan work” — a creative work whose copyright holder is impossible to identify, rendering it difficult to gain permission for distribution or use — to expose the paradox between the current ease of sharing information digitally and the existing regime of long-term copyright and new forms of fine-grained control. The orphan work functions as an epistemological ready-made, a fragment of found knowledge whose legal and existential origins create fertile ground for questions about the ownership, distribution, and uses of knowledge in a digital culture. We suggest that all of us seek out these “orphan” prisoners and “free” them, bringing them back into circulation. We invite you to join us by “fostering” and restoring to view the actual orphaned works you’ll find on this site.  
<http://free-the-orphans.com>

**Pad.ma** - short for Public Access Digital Media Archive - is an online archive of densely text-annotated video material, primarily footage and not finished films. The entire collection is searchable and viewable online, and is free to download for non-commercial use.

We see Pad.ma as a way of opening up a set of images, intentions and effects present in video footage, resources that conventions of video-making, editing and spectatorship have tended to suppress, or leave behind. This expanded treatment leads us into lesser-known territory for video itself... beyond the finite documentary film or the online video clip.

The design of the archive makes possible various types of "viewing" and contextualisation: from an overview of themes and timelines to much closer readings of transcribed dialogue and geographical locations, to layers of "writing" on top of the image material. Descriptions, keywords and other annotations have been placed on timelines by both archive contributors and users.

The Pad.ma project was initiated by a group consisting of **CAMP**, from Mumbai, **0x2620** from Berlin, and the **Alternative Law Forum** from Bangalore. Two other organisations from Mumbai, **Majlis** and **Point of View** were part of its initiation.

<http://pad.ma/about>

## Battle of Brooklyn

Brooklyn's Prospect Park is well known for its bountiful farmers market, avid runners, consistent drum circle, and the waves of picnics and barbecues that dot its fields in summertime. A closer look reveals multiple histories hidden in plain site: a private, active Quaker cemetery dating from the 1820s, an 18th century farm house whose inhabitants gave the nearby neighborhood of Prospect Lefferts Gardens a third of its name. Even less conspicuous are markers of the **Battle of Brooklyn**, a pivotal moment in the war for American independence that occurred 238 years ago today on land that is now part of the park's East Drive. <http://urbanomnibus.net/2014/08/under-annihilations-sign-public-memory-and-prospect-parks-battle-pass/>

**The Queens College Civil Rights Archive** collects published and unpublished works relating to civil rights activities such as personal papers, community materials, organizational records, non-print materials, and artifacts. The archive is particularly strong in materials documenting civil rights work by Queens College students during the early to mid 1960s. The digital presence of the civil rights archive comprises only a small selection of our materials. Digitization projects and online exhibits are created by Special Collections staff and Fellows. <http://archives.qc.cuny.edu/civilrights/>

## Additional Resources: Readings

<http://artjournal.collegeart.org/?p=2395>

[http://www.e-flux.com/journal/after-ows-social-practice-art-abstraction-and-the-limits-of-the-social/#\\_ftn16](http://www.e-flux.com/journal/after-ows-social-practice-art-abstraction-and-the-limits-of-the-social/#_ftn16)

## Additional Resources, by week

WEEK TWO – Sept 15 (Greg) Imaginary Archive: *documents about a past whose future never arrived.*

WEEK THREE – Sept 22 You are the Archive I: Learning and Pedagogy

<http://infed.org/mobi/what-is-pedagogy/>

<http://www.summerhillschool.co.uk/asneill.php>; <http://www.summerhillschool.co.uk/history.php>

Popular Education <http://www.practicingfreedom.org/offerings/popular-education/>

[http://www.hrea.org/pubs/Popular\\_Education/PopEd2.pdf](http://www.hrea.org/pubs/Popular_Education/PopEd2.pdf)

*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Chapter 2 complete by Paulo Freire

<http://www2.webster.edu/~corbetre/philosophy/education/freire/freire-2.html>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/freedomsummer/player/>

Ivan Illich [http://ournature.org/%7Enovembre/illich/1970\\_deschooling.html](http://ournature.org/%7Enovembre/illich/1970_deschooling.html)

Free University <https://soundcloud.com/thenewschoollnyc/the-beginnings-of-the-free>

WEEK FOUR-- September 27 visit to Interference Archive or NYU?

WEEK FIVE – Oct 6 You Are the Archive II: the Art of Remembering: additional resources

<http://warburg.library.cornell.edu>

[http://www.andremalraux.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Grebe\\_Malraux\\_Article.pdf](http://www.andremalraux.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Grebe_Malraux_Article.pdf)

<http://www.necsus-ejms.org/atlas-how-to-carry-the-world-on-ones-back/>

[http://hyperallergic.com/143774/concern-arise-about-future-of-important-warburg-art-history-archive/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Advice+to+Art+Students&utm\\_content=Advice+to+Art+Students+CID\\_fcae2b5f7346b70448611d7b8325a92&utm\\_source=HyperallergicNewsletter&utm\\_term=Warburg%20collection](http://hyperallergic.com/143774/concern-arise-about-future-of-important-warburg-art-history-archive/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Advice+to+Art+Students&utm_content=Advice+to+Art+Students+CID_fcae2b5f7346b70448611d7b8325a92&utm_source=HyperallergicNewsletter&utm_term=Warburg%20collection)

<http://www.ubuweb.com> UBU WEB (Kenneth Goldsmith): UbuWeb is a false archive, cobbled together on the whims of a poet who knows nothing about his subject. It's much closer to a Wunderkammer than a curatorial project. It is often mistaken for an institution, but that's mostly due to people's need to create and reify authoritative power structures.

WEEK SIX – Oct 20 3. (greg) PAD/D Archive: *the grin of the archive*.

WEEK SEVEN – Oct 27 Private Archives and Public policies: Embedded Practice

Sketching Terrorist Trials - Janet Hamlin and Molly Crabapple:

- <http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/gallery/2013/oct/17/sketches-from-guantanamo/>
- <http://mollycrabapple.com/2013/06/20/guantanamo-drawings/>

WEEK EIGHT – Nov 3 (greg) Stephen Wright: *theories of reality, representation, and escapology*.

"On the Seam: Fiction as Truth - what art can do?" Debra Kalmonowitz from the book *Art As Research: Opportunities and Challenges*, Ed Shaun McNiff, Intellect Pub, 2013 (also other possible chapters in the book?)

“The Act of Killing” interview with director Joshua Oppenheimer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hHGbb64YxAk>

WEEK NINE – Nov 10 (Greg in Europe) Visiting speaker or class, perhaps about policy—Caron Atlas, Charlotte Cohen or Tamara Greenfield from 4<sup>th</sup> Arts Block

Readings TBA

WEEK TEN – Nov 17 (greg) Communities, Dissidents and Public Art Policy

Week 11: Nov. 24 Surveillance, Big Data, additional resources

Century of the Self part 3 & 4

<http://vimeo.com/54417979>

<http://vimeo.com/75784765>

<http://rhizome.org/editorial/2014/aug/11/trailblazers-7-notes-game-master/?ref=newsletter>

[http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/bitwise/2014/08/what\\_is\\_big\\_data\\_good\\_for\\_incremental\\_change\\_not\\_big\\_paradigm\\_shifts.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/bitwise/2014/08/what_is_big_data_good_for_incremental_change_not_big_paradigm_shifts.html)

<http://networkcultures.org/blog/publication/society-of-the-query-reader-reflections-on-web-search/>

<http://kaleidoscope-press.com/issue-contents/curating-the-internetmoderated-by-karen-archey/>

<http://khole.net>

<http://regressing.deadspin.com/were-compiling-every-police-involved-shooting-in-america-1624180387/all>

<http://boingboing.net/2014/08/20/can-technology-become-a-force.html>

WEEK TWELVE – Dec 1 (g.) REPOhistory: *history that disturbs the present*, interview by Dipti Desai.

The Missing Picture (filmmaker uses miniatures to tell story of Khmer Rouge

[http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/the\\_missing\\_picture/](http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/the_missing_picture/) )