

Interference Archive: Building a Counter-Institution in the United States

Jen Hoyer and Josh MacPhee

In the Fall of 2017, Interference Archive moved to a small, non-assuming storefront space just off a main commercial street in the neighborhood of Park Slope, in Brooklyn, New York. With acid-free boxes lined up along industrial metal shelving and flat file drawers stuffed with posters, the Archive opened the doors of its new home inconspicuously, but brought with it a formidable presence in the world of community archives. Initially founded in the Summer of 2011 by four friends and comrades (Kevin Caplicki, Molly Fair, Dara Greenwald, and Josh MacPhee), it grew out of a shared sentiment that the kinds of politicized culture these founders were active in both producing and collecting was not being adequately archived in more traditional academic and art institutions. All came from backgrounds in art and political engagement, but only Fair had formal training in archiving or library science.

Interference Archive is not the first of its kind. New York City is a vibrant environment for radical political archives as well as other political education and history projects. The Political Art Documentation and Distribution collective (PAD/D), active in the 1980s, existed as a collective focused on collecting and sharing political graphics. Earlier in the 20th century, the Tamiment Library flourished as an independent collection of socialist thought and labor history before becoming part of New York University in 1963. The Lesbian Herstory Archives, situated in the same neighborhood that Interference Archive calls home, has been operating since 1972, and the Moncada Library functioned as an anti-imperialist library and social center around the corner from Interference Archive's current location in the 1970s. Other spaces such as the Brecht Forum (now the Marxist Education Project) and ABC No Rio have focused on creating space for conversations about the history and present work of movement organizing; we are also grateful to the legacy of radical education projects in New York City such as Free University and Alternate U.

The concept of community archives also isn't new. These types of spaces are different from traditional institutional archives in that they create a place for communities whose histories are untold or mis-told in major archives to have control over their own story. Community archives do this in a variety of ways: by focusing on very specific issues or communities such as LGBTQ histories, immigrant histories, etc; by existing in independently run, community-controlled spaces that do not have to answer to the bureaucracy of overarching institutions; by rethinking the basic practices of archiving which have traditionally resulted in access barriers between some communities and the documents that tell their history.

After opening its doors as a highly engaged experiment in community archiving, Interference Archive quickly began holding exhibitions and events with a goal of giving voice to the movements represented on its shelves. These movements range across the political spectrum, representing a wide range of issues and ideologies: mobilization around labor organizing, racial injustice, prison organizing, international solidarity, immigration, climate change, women's rights, anti-colonial struggles, and more.

As the base of participants expanded, the collection initially donated by the four founders grew. Word-of-mouth spread across New York City and beyond that an actively politicized archive was preserving and sharing the culture produced by social movements, and many involved in these movements responded by donating to the collection. The material collected by Interference Archive reveals the broad output of all these organizations and political groupings, including newspapers, pamphlets, posters, t-shirts, films, and vinyl records. While some of this material is very text-based, such as newspapers and pamphlets, the collection as a whole gives testimony to the strong use of graphics across social movement organizing. Interference Archive provides a valuable testimony to the visual elements of radical politics.

Rather than continue with a stiff narrative about the evolution of Interference Archive, it will be more interesting to explore nine key pillars that give foundation to the thought and activity of the Archive:

History As a Tool for Change

We live in a culture that fetishizes the now. This only further solidifies the reification of our dominant socio-economic system, capitalism. In a context of permanent status-quo, we labor under the illusion that everything that is has always been and always will be, and as such, is immutable and impervious to change. But if we wield history as a flashlight to illuminate the fact that things have been different in the past, it can crack open the present to a renewed sense of future possibility. As an archive we focus on history not with the goal of preserving the past in stone, but to activate it as a tool which can help us imagine and organize for a better future.

Our 2015 exhibition *We Won't Move: Tenants Organize in New York City* explored the history of action by tenants across the city for affordable housing, and it brought more than ten current tenant groups into dialogue by including archival material which highlighted their greatest past accomplishments as well as their current organizing goals. Public programming included Know Your Rights workshops for tenants, a panel discussion of lawyers who work on housing rights issues in New York City, and a film screening around issues of gentrification. While portions of the United States left has a tendency to fetishize tenant organizing elsewhere (for instance in Italy in the 1970s) as revolutionary while diminishing local activity as reformist, through *We Won't Move* we were able to show a long history of radical housing organizing very close to home, including waves of rent strikes in the 1950s and '60s. This historic archival material became inspiration for groups of tenant organizers who visited the exhibition to rethink tactics available to them. A publication created to go with this exhibition functioned as more than a catalog, containing reproductions of archival material alongside curatorial text detailing the history of tenant movements in New York City, as well as a section of resources for current tenants and organizers.

A 2014 project, *Self-Determination Inside Out: Prison Movements Reshaping Society*, spotlighted the rich history of political organizing behind prison walls within the United States. While conventional wisdom posits incarcerated people as either monsters or victims, this

exhibition and event series showed how people in prison are not only protagonists of their own struggles, but they often innovate protest tactics and strategies which leave their cages and heavily influence organizing on the outside. In particular, activism around HIV/AIDS by women in prison was some of the first and most vital work towards articulating the disease as a key threat to poor women and women of color. Some of the strategies for AIDS and HIV education developed by women in prison became the blueprint for broader pedagogical work across society. Our collection includes newsletters from HIV education groups inside prisons in the US, as well as gay and lesbian publications publicizing these activities to those outside prison walls.

Interference Archive has also participated in the movement to improve Wikipedia, because we understand that the historic material in our collection, alongside our broad community of history-minded individuals, can play a key role in that change. Less than 10% of Wikipedia editors are women, and systemic biases in our society—racism, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism—are replicated across Wikipedia. We host regular Wikipedia edit-a-thons during which we increase representation of women, of social movements, and of underrepresented communities on Wikipedia by using source material from Interference Archive. These events also provide an opportunity for anyone to learn Wikipedia editing skills, thereby diversifying the Wikipedia editing community.

Social Movement Culture

When we speak as archivists about “culture,” we are referring to the physical materials—archival evidence, if you will—produced by a community. We believe the culture produced by groups of people organizing to create social change is unique from other types of culture. The culture that movements produce is created through a complex interplay amongst available resources, forms of expression and organization, as well as aesthetic decisions. In contrast to material produced, preserved, and celebrated in the mainstream mediasphere or commercial art world—some of which could be claimed “political” or “socially aware”—movement culture is usually generated through alternative means: authorship may be individual or communal but is often anonymous and prioritizes the right for broad reuse over creator rights; production volume may have been high and likely relied on ephemeral techniques such as cheap newsprint or fading ink; and all of it is fundamentally social and collective in its conception, creation, distribution, or all three.

For these and other reasons, traditional educational and art collections or archives have a poor track record of successfully assembling and managing this material. Many collections that do exist are housed in larger institutions which are directly antagonistic to the politics of the material produced by social movements. More often, social movement culture is overlooked for more mundane reasons: until recently its commercial value was limited. For example, the photocopied zines of the riot grrrl movement have only been identified as having commercial and academic value in recent years. Social movement culture is less studied than other forms of culture, generally lacking the academic cachet that would ensure its spotlighting and preservation. In art contexts, it is often lost in a sea of self-expression and passed over in favor of work by well-known authors.

By contrast, at Interference Archive we recognize that the creators and donors represented in our collections (many times one and the same) are essential elements in our community and are allowed to play a determinative role in our work, should they choose. We frequently remind ourselves that “we are who we archive.” In this community and organizing sense, Interference Archive itself is a form of social movement culture.

A key element of social movement culture is that most material generated by social movements was created for mass reproduction and distribution. While we do not claim to have the reproduction rights to the culture we house, we provide the option for visitors at Interference Archive to take photographs and/or make scans for further educational and movement use, honoring the original intent of the material. We have no interest in policing others’ claims to ownership of this material or supporting any attempts to monetize it; rather, we encourage individuals to track down creators when possible and to give credit where credit is due.

Our own interaction with other archives across the United States has shown us that many institutions claim ownership of rights to any material in their collection, unless the material specifically states otherwise. By contrast, we work from the base assumption that we do *not* own the rights to anything. When loaning material for exhibitions, we make careful stipulations about credits, and when available we provide contact information for borrowing institutions to obtain permissions from living creators before we include that material in the loan. We also work with artists who are interested in building on the design work of others to put them in touch with original creators, so that they can ask for appropriate permissions. We understand that this creates a large amount of labor for us, but we believe that it is critical to the ethics of movement collaboration. We also understand that we are only able to do this because we are in contact with so many of the organizers and creators whose material is in our collection. To us, this network is affirmation that we truly embody the community which we archive.

Non-Sectarian Yet Partisan

Interference Archive is clearly a political project and is invested in fundamentally antiauthoritarian ideals rooted in social transformation towards increased equity and decentralized power structures. We share many common ideals related to racial equality, gender justice, migration as a right, prison abolition, and more. At the same time, volunteers do not share a unified political line, nor are ideological discussions at the center of the work. We recognize that we are partisan, yet we attempt to collect, preserve, and share the culture of a very broad base of social movements because we recognize that history is composed of multiple narratives and we value creating space for all of these voices and actions. We understand that our collection itself contains many conflicting points of view, and we welcome—and even encourage—conversations that include respectful disagreement. We recognize that we are working to create a space in which we may sometimes end conversations with more questions than answers. In order to foster this, as a public community space we do not allow harassing behavior or language.

In addition, while we would be defined as a project of the “left,” we also actively collect materials from far right movements. While we do not support the goals of these groupings, we recognize that they are movements attempting to disrupt the status quo and as such are equally deserving of study. In addition, because we see them as enemies—and often quite successful ones—it is arguably equally or more important for us to understand how they function as it is for us to study our own work. A 2018 exhibition on grassroots antifascist organizing gave us an opportunity to have conversations about the small number of explicitly fascist and white supremacist items in our collection. While we agreed that we do not want to provide any exhibition space for these kinds of ideas, we included them in a drawer of additional reading materials for the exhibition, and we marked them clearly with the disclaimer that they represented ideals in opposition to the viewpoints expressed in the exhibition.

Volunteer-Run

From its founding, Interference Archive has been entirely run by volunteers. While this began as a practical solution to having no capital, it has evolved into an ideological position. Our experiences within, and observations of, small non-profits within the United States has led us to a critique of traditional non-profit structures. We have seen that it is extremely difficult to maintain low-levels of hierarchy and healthy internal social relationships when an organization can only afford limited paid staff and must make troublesome decisions about which kinds of labor are financially compensated and which are not. Common examples of this that we see in the non-profit world include paying a salary to an Executive Director while providing hourly part-time wages without benefits to program staff and asking a volunteer to maintain website infrastructure. Or, within the context of libraries and archives, we often see that librarians and archivists in major institutions might have long-term job security and opportunities for advancement while technical staff—such as those who run the archive’s database and any other computer systems—are employed on a precarious contract basis.

Due to this all-volunteer nature, everyone at Interference Archive is involved because they want to be, and is both motivated by and a participant in the creation of our mission. Being organized around and through free association and desire means that, under ideal conditions, we can accomplish immense projects in short periods of time and are able to tackle multiple issues and problems simultaneously. All of this work directly encourages more participation.

At the same time, we can’t be ignorant of the problems this structure entails. Some of these include the difficulties in developing accountability structures in an all-volunteer context; allowing valuable opportunities to pass us by when no volunteers are available to take them on; confusion as to where institutional knowledge lies; and the danger of personal burnout. Additionally, we recognize that our society remains rooted in structures based on capitalism, and some individuals are not able to volunteer because they need to dedicate all their available time to earning money for basic living expenses. While being all-volunteer comes with these problems and more, we have decided—so far—that they are better problems to have.

Sustainability Through Community

The majority of Interference Archive's operational budget is funded by individual donors. The core of this funding is a sustainer program, where people donate between \$5 and \$50 per month to help us keep running. This sustainer base has hovered just over one hundred people for the past few years, with many of the archive's regular volunteers and users being part of this group. In addition, we collect donations at free public events we hold two or three times per week. The more active and engaged the archive is, the better we are able to draw in the revenue needed for continuing our activities.

We focus our funding structure on individual donors because we want to be accountable to the people that use our space, and by extension to the movements these people participate in and that we archive materials from. We recognize that many non-profit institutions root their budgets in large funding institutions. These granters that have little or no direct connection to the funded projects but hold large influence by virtue of their weight in the revenue stream. They often change their priorities, forcing organizations to scramble and adjust their work to fit new funding interests. We especially saw this phenomenon after the 2016 Presidential Election in the United States, when many large foundations were suddenly much more interested in supporting politically active projects. While this aligns more directly with our work than the traditional goals these funders express, we have viewed this shift with caution: we are wary of becoming dependent on this funding having seen how quickly it shifted to work in our interest, and knowing therefore how quickly it could shift away again. So far we have avoided this peril by ensuring our rent is paid by a broad base of individuals who are either active at Interference Archive in some capacity or invested in our existent mission.

We also understand that Interference Archive exists within a broader community of archives and education institutions. We frequently host class visits from local schools, and some of our operational costs are funded by charging for these visits using a sliding scale: well-resourced institutions pay more than local high schools. We understand this relationship as an equitable exchange of the resources each institutions has at their disposal: our archive provides access to materials in a way that many institutions cannot offer, and these institutions in exchange have access to financial resources that we do not.

Primacy of Use

The popular imaginary of "the archive" is that it is a repository, a place where preservation of unique and fragile items is the primary goal. At Interference Archive we attempt to take that logic and turn it on its head. The material we archive was produced with the intent that it be distributed, seen, and used. Our mission is to continue this intended use. To that end we have open stacks—our collection is entirely available for public perusal when our doors are open. While many of our materials are rare and need to be handled carefully, this does not seem like a reason to keep them from the very communities that created them. If a torn poster corner or cracked book spine is the price of allowing people access to their own history, this seems like a fair price to pay.

We see many different types of use of our materials. Researchers visit from around the world to study specific movements—for example the Occupy Movement, Puerto Rican liberation movements, and the Black Panthers; creators—such as People’s Press or Fredy Perlman; formats—including comics, newspapers, and printmaking; or social issues, such as punk feminism, climate change, and prison abolition. We also see current movement organizers come through our door. They may be interested in learning how past activists have designed graphics to represent specific issues they’re currently dealing with, or they might want to learn about tactics used to combat various problems. Both of these identities intersect with each other and with our third category of visitor, the creator. We enjoy making our collection accessible to artists who are making various types of material in support of current movements and who seek inspiration from history.

As a volunteer-run archive we realize that our labor is limited, and we prioritize much of our effort towards keeping our doors open four days each week because our priority is access and this allows visitors to have access to our collection. We also host class visits from local high schools and universities during our open hours. Our collection has been organized such that visitors can locate materials they are interested in with only basic instruction from a volunteer: all material is organized by format (posters with posters, pamphlets with pamphlets, etc), and within most formats, materials are organized by subject. For several of these format-based sections (including our posters and ephemera files), we are able to provide visitors with lists of subjects; other formats (such as our pamphlets) have subjects clearly written on their boxes.

We know of other community archives who have made decisions to allocate their similarly scarce labor resources instead towards cataloging their collections; while we have an online database, we have made a conscious choice to spend less time working to catalog our materials than we do to give in-person access. We understand the value of browsing and serendipitous discovery in our collection—many visitors have found something much more relevant than they expected while browsing for the single item that they thought they wanted to find—and so we are not concerned with providing better in-person access through an improved online catalog. We understand that researchers who cannot travel to our archive will rely on online access to our database; because this is still very incomplete, we provide email reference assistance to any researchers who contact us.

Non-Hierarchical

While hierarchies are largely unavoidable, we believe it is possible to organize in ways that minimize their development. We also believe that where they do grow, they can be rooted in the quality of people’s ideas and labor rather than pre-existing societal prejudices and privileges. Our archive is organized through a series of interlocking working groups, none of which are more valuable than the others: Administration, Audio, Cataloging, Education, Born Digital, Staffing, and ad-hoc Exhibition Working Groups. One’s standing within any particular group is largely a product of the work one does, rather than one’s wealth, educational level, or social status.

It has generally been true that if power and hierarchy becomes concentrated anywhere, it is within the Administrative Working Group. This is the group that ensures rent is paid, the lights are on, overall communications are dealt with, and everything else that falls through the cracks of the other working groups is picked up and sorted through. Although being part of this group confers a certain amount of power, it also comes with a high level of responsibility. Because of this it has been one of the hardest Working Groups to keep volunteers engaged in. The Administrative Working Group constantly seeks new and better ways to share both power and responsibility with the wider volunteer community, largely through continual adjustment of training and communication strategies across all volunteers as the community grows.

As an example of these changing training strategies, we began hosting periodic general volunteer orientations in 2013 as more individuals wanted to help run Interference Archive. However, our growing and increasingly active volunteer community has more recently inspired us to organize these general orientations alongside specific training for other activities, including staffing, event hosting, and archive cataloging. Specific working groups have also focused on skill sharing and training as a way to allow maximum participation from all volunteers. For instance the Audio Working group has held multiple skill shares focusing on the use of various recording and editing hardware and software. We are also constantly learning new ways to communicate as an organization. When the number of working groups began to increase, we implemented an online project management system that includes a shared calendar and separate digital spaces for each working group. We added a volunteer listserv to this strategy as a tool for engaging semi-regular volunteers in the various projects we are organizing, and then as our cohort of staffing volunteers has expanded to meet the increased traffic of the storefront space we relocated to in 2017, we have created a specific email listserv designated for staffing communication. We recognize that a key part of breaking down hierarchy is through communication, which distributes information more equitably through the community, and we implement all these various forms of communication to remain as non-hierarchical as possible.

Counter-Institutional

Our goal is to be an enduring counter-institution. A place—yes, a physical place—where the knowledge gained through organizing to transform society can be collected and shared. But also a place independent from mainstream institutions which all too often play key roles in the maintenance of the status-quo. We recently signed a ten-year-lease on our space, and plan on being around long after that. But we recognize that stability in an all-volunteer project with direct connections to social movements cannot be based in a set of rigid rules, but instead needs to be flexible so that it can evolve with the ideas and interests of the changing community involved in this work.

The organization of our project through overlapping Working Groups allows each semi-autonomous cluster of volunteers to set its own meeting schedule and communication patterns—which should be accessible to others across the organization. Members of all Working Groups come together at quarterly all-volunteer retreats, which provide a forum for sharing updates about our work, discussing bigger issues together, and thinking through

larger-scale upcoming projects. This system has evolved as we have grown and it is effective for our current community, but we continue to try new things in hopes of improvement. We see our open organizational structure, our community-rooted funding system, and our focus on material access to the collection and overall transparency as important elements which help define us as counter to traditional institutional structures.

Archives Should be Social Centers

We believe that archives can and should be social centers—in two distinct yet overlapping ways. First, the organization of the archive itself should be social, with relationships between the collection's caretakers being both key to the maintenance of the project but also important in their own right. Second, as a public-facing space, the archive should function socially, actively inviting people in to participate in all of its functions, from cataloging the collection to watching films, taking in exhibitions as audience or helping to organize and install them. At Interference Archive, we archive history so that diverse communities can have access to non-mainstream narratives about their role in society, and ultimately we hope that these communities will develop relationships with us as an archive and as individuals, playing a role in the way we archive all this material.

We hope that not only can we develop relationships with other communities in the context of our work, but also that we can be a nexus for connecting different groups across our broader community. As an example, in 2014 we began collaborating with Mobile Print Power, a local intergenerational and immigrant-focused print collective, by hosting them for research visits to our archival collection. This relationship grew, including a collaboration in 2015 where we hosted Mobile Print Power alongside friends from Combat Paper New Jersey for a paper making and printing event. In 2016, Mobile Print Power approached Interference Archive about organizing an exhibition in our space about their collaborative work with a series of other grassroots groups; this exhibition included their continued collaboration with Combat Paper New Jersey, which had grown since the groups were introduced to each other at Interference Archive the year before.

We are continually searching for new ways to make it clear that Interference Archive is a space for individuals and groups to take part in our public work. We understand that the average person does not imagine an archive to be a place they would want to hang out on a Saturday afternoon, so we organize an immense amount of programming with the goal of engaging people and encouraging them to become involved. Our goal is to make the archive both pedagogical and fun, and to encourage ourselves and others to interact with new people and new ideas. While in the abstract this claim to breaking down the barriers between audience and participant sounds utopian and gestural, the majority of Interference Archive's sixty-plus volunteers first interacted with the project as event attendees and researchers, and returned to participate at a deeper level. A local college student who spent time at Interference Archive to fulfill the requirements of her American Studies program became involved as a volunteer working on exhibitions and staffing shifts; one participant in a 2016 reading group on James Baldwin's essays returned to organize a new reading group; two attendees at a 2017 reading group have

become involved regularly, one by volunteering her graphic design skills for event promotion, and another staffing open hours shifts and working to organize our radical newspaper collection. This newspaper project has in turn inspired the same volunteer to pursue related graduate studies at a local university, with the hopes that he can spend more time working with the Interference Archive collection while he pursues his education.

We were excited to launch a new format of participatory “propaganda parties” in the summer of 2016, rooted in our core belief that history can be used as a tool for change. For each unique event we work with activists, organizers, artists, and designers focused on a political issue. We come together to make and share graphic and informational material that can be directly used in organizing work. Over the past two years we have worked with groups organizing around climate justice, closing city jails, women’s reproductive rights, and immigrant rights to produce posters, t-shirts, patches, block prints, stickers, and buttons. These parties has been one of our most successful series of events, with those organized after Trump’s election being attended by hundreds of people, all leaving with piles of agit prop to further distribute throughout the city. Public events like this also provide an opportunity for visitors to make new connections with each other and with organizations doing work around the city related to the issue that particular party has been organized in support of.

Our 2017 move into a public-facing storefront was also a consciously social decision. Previously, the archive was in the back of a warehouse space only three blocks from the new location; most individuals who visited Interference Archive made a very conscious decision to find its sequestered location. In its new space, Interference Archive is located off of a main commercial street with significant foot traffic. We have seen an immense increase in interest in the archive, with a steady trickle of people walking in off the street and asking who we are and what we do. In the United States right now, our very public facing expression of social movement politics is extremely rare and is a strong statement in its own right. Almost all street-level space is otherwise dedicated to various forms of commerce.

We recognize that our work is ever growing and changing; the Interference Archive of today is vastly different from only seven years ago when we first opened our doors. As we and the world around us continue to shift we are sure that our archive will keep evolving. While many archives thrive on notions of permanence, we understand our goal instead to be sustainability—and, for us, being sustainable means changing as our communities develop to face new circumstances. We hope that we continually rise to the challenge of creating space for social movement communities to store and re-tell their history, in whatever form is most pressing and by whatever means are possible. One of the most exciting components of our counter-institutional work is to continually ask ourselves how another world—and another archive—could exist, and what we can do right now to make that possible.

Interference Archive in Context: a broader network of radical community archives in the United States

While to our knowledge there are no other counter-institutional community archives quite like Interference Archive in the United States, there are a number of projects which share several of the above key values, and which help us understand the work of Interference Archive in relation to a broader context of domestic archives. Below is a list of some of the most important of these for readers who are interested.

It is helpful to note that the list could be much longer if we account for any archive that meets the majority of our nine key characteristics, but because we see our counter-institutionality and focus on social movement culture as especially critical to our identity, we have not included any archives that do not share these two characteristics.

We have developed relationships with some of the archives listed below. Beyond staying in communication and visiting each other when we happen to be in town, we send duplicates of archival materials to other collections, we help each other with particularly difficult research queries, and we share advice on secure database server options. Other archives listed here have provided inspiration as we follow their work from afar, and we look forward to becoming better connected to them in the future.

The Center for the Study of Political Graphics

Online: <http://www.politicalgraphics.org/>

In person: 3916 Sepulveda Blvd, Suite 103 Culver City, CA 90230

The Center for the Study of Political Graphics has worked for over three decades to collect visual resources produced by social movements around the world. At present, this amounts to over 90,000 posters that are made accessible for educational research and that are used for exhibitions, tours, and classes.

Freedom Archives

Online: <http://freedomarchives.org/>

In person: 522 Valencia St, San Francisco, CA 94110

The Freedom Archives is an independent, nonprofit archive that collects audio, video, and print culture from progressive movements, focusing on the 1960s through the 1990s. This archives collection has been created to uplift stories of resistance and to give space to marginalized voices, and the Freedom Archives hosts programming that engages young people with this material as an educational experience. Their funding comes from individuals and small grants, and not from government or corporate sponsors.

Kate Sharpley Library

Online: <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/>

In person: Grass Valley, CA

The Kate Sharpley Library is an all-volunteer, independently-funded institution that preserves and promotes anarchist history through an archives collection of the cultural production of the anarchist movement—books, pamphlets, newspapers, patches, recordings, and more -- as well as through publishing projects.

Lavender Library

Online: <http://lavenderlibrary.com>

In person: 1414 21st Street Sacramento, CA 95811

The Lavender Library was founded in 1998 by local community members as a research and information hub for Sacramento's LGBTQI community. Beyond preserving the history of the local LGBTQI community, one of the Lavender Library's key initial goals was to use this collection as a tool for meeting community needs.

Leather Archives and Museum

Online: <http://www.leatherarchives.org>

In person: 6418 N Greenview Ave, Chicago IL 60626

The Leather Archives collects and preserves material related to leather, kink, and fetish lifestyles, and presents educational exhibitions as well as a reading library and archive in support of current research. It was created out of a desire to have a dedicated home for this history, independent of other arts and culture institutions.

Lesbian Herstory Archives

Online: <http://www.lesbianherstoryarchives.org/>

In person: 484 14th St, Brooklyn NY

The Lesbian Herstory Archives is home to the world's largest collection of materials by and about lesbians and their communities, and has existed independently since the early 1970s. The Lesbian Herstory Archives has owned its own home since 1993, and has several travelling exhibitions that can be requested by organizations in the United States and Europe.

Maximum Rocknroll Archives

Online: <http://www.maximumrocknroll.com/cat/mrr-archive/>

In person: The Maximum Rocknroll Archive gives home to recordings produced by the punk movement, the archive of the Maximum Rocknroll zine, as well as related ephemera—newspaper clippings, letters, postcards, flyers, and more. All of this material is made available for research, and is cared for entirely by volunteers.

Mayme Clayton Library and Museum

Online: <http://www.claytonmuseum.org/>

In person: 4130 Overland Ave, Culver City, CA 90230-3734

The Mayme A. Clayton Library & Museum collects books, films, documents, photographs, artifacts, and works of art related to the history and culture of African Americans in the United States, and exists as an independent organization under the umbrella of the Western States Black Research Center.

Museum of Reclaimed Urban Space

Online: <http://www.morusnyc.org>

In person: 155 Avenue C, New York, NY 10009

The Museum of Reclaimed Urban Space collects and provides free access to the history of grassroots activism in New York City's Lower East Side, with a focus on the history of squatting and community gardens. MoRUS exists as an independent organization within a former squat, and curates public programming including an annual film festival hosted in community gardens of the Lower East Side.

Queer Zine Archives Project

Online: <http://www.qzap.org/>

In person: Milwaukee, WI

The Queer Zine Archive Project (QZAP) collects and provides free access to queer zines, making them available to other queers, researchers, and anyone who has an interest in this culture. QZAP has a physical collection of zines but focuses its energy on making a digital database of downloadable zines available to the public.

Sexual Minorities Archive

Online: <https://sexualminoritiesarchives.wordpress.com/>

In person: 135 Lincoln St. 01040 Holyoke, Massachusetts

The Sexual Minorities Archive is housed in the home of its founder, and advertises itself as one of the oldest and largest collections of LGBTQIA+ historical documents, media, and artifacts in the world. It works to make sure that the voices of sexual minorities are not silenced, by preserving the histories of these groups and by engaging in education and community building work.

Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research

Online: <http://www.socallib.org/>

In person: 6120 S. Vermont Avenue Los Angeles, CA 90044

The Southern California Library documents and makes accessible histories of struggles that challenge racism and other systems of oppression so that all can imagine and work towards freedom. Founder Emil Freed began collecting Communist material during the McCarthy era, when comrades were forced to burn leftist materials out of fear of being caught with them. This collection also absorbed the library of the California Labor School when it closed in 1952. The Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research has existed in its current home, which it owns, for over fifty years.

About the Authors:

Jen Hoyer is a Canadian librarian based in Brooklyn, where she has been involved as a volunteer at Interference Archive since 2013. Her roles there include cataloging, exhibitions, communication management, and fundraising. She works as an educator in the local history archive of the Brooklyn Public Library and enjoys thinking through how archives can help people understand themselves and their place in the world around them. Her writing about libraries and archives has been published by *Archival Science*, the *American Library Association*, *Library Juice Press*, *Radical Teacher*, and *Reference Services Review*.

Josh MacPhee is a designer, artist, educator, and archivist. He is a member of the Justseeds Artists' Cooperative (Justseeds.org), the co-author of *Signs of Change: Social Movement Cultures 1960s to Now*, and co-editor of *Signal: A Journal of International Political Graphics and Culture*. He co-founded and helps run Interference Archive, a public collection of cultural materials produced by social movements (InterferenceArchive.org). Since 1998 he has organized the Celebrate People's History poster series, a collection of over 120 posters by almost as many artists which highlight organizations, individuals, and events that have been key to social transformation from the ground up. His writing is regularly published in print and online, and his graphics and artwork are featured on posters, t-shirts, stickers, and flyers across the globe.