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Published online: 30 June 2025.

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MAPPING THE FIELD. THE ART ARCHIVE DEBATE.

In a recent book that discusses the materiality of art archives, Sue Breakell—one of the first to address art archives[1]—offers an approach to the question of the archive "not only as the primary unit of production but also as a material body in its own right, with a three-dimensional object form, drawing on literature for object analysis as a means of investigating the independent agency of the archive in a triangulated relationship between creator, archive and viewer."[2] Within a fascinating framework of observations, and starting from the perspective of the archive launched by artists in between the archival turn[3], Sue Breakell and Wendy Russel offer not only a status report but also potential investigative developments in the area of archival studies and practices from the standpoint of thinking which has been pursued in a range of areas (philosophical, historical, critical, curatorial, anthropological, etc.) for more than twenty years.

Another fundamental contribution that aids us in delimiting the field is that of Sven Spieker (2008) who proposed an intriguing approach in the interplay between art and archive by identifying 1881 as a starting date, the year in which one of the main archival principles, the one of "provenance", was defined in Germany. The "provenance" principle is, for Spieker, an interplay in which different conceptions of time, selection mode and registration are juxtaposed: "The archive

therefore is not simply a departure, a cipher for the condition of innovation; it gives a name to the way in which the new is also a return, an iteration in the true sense of that word."[4]   More recently, Gabriella Giannachi analysed how the concept of the archive has changed, seen today as a means for mapping daily activity, to which the artistic studies of the archival turn have contributed.[5] The archival turn is now recognised as one of the fundamental aspects of contemporary art to which Sara Callahan dedicated an overall analysis to restore its phenomenology, using an interpretive framework with five themes: materiality, research, critique, curating and temporality.[6]

These contributions are assumed as a reference point, in between the vast debate on archive and contemporary art, to underscore the extent to which the question of the relationships between art and archive has become almost pervasive today, and how the boundary between contemporary artistic practices and the historiography of contemporary art is no longer so clearly definable, as in past decades. The archive as a metaphor and as a place is a shared territory for artists, curators and historians, in which respective processes, practices and methods are nourished also thanks to the confrontation with other disciplinary fields. This is demonstrated for example by the first results of an ongoing research, *Staging difficult past. Transnational Memory, Theatres, and Museums*,[7] in which, thanks to an open comparison between different fields (theatre and performance studies, curatorial studies, visual artist practices, choreography), methodologies are questioned, comparing ways on reflecting and representing on memory processes.

Today reflections on archive should embrace the documentary flux—from the conception, to the collecting and the production, to the reenactment, but also to the experience of the public—but even the "materiality" of the archive, its complexity and its making. Professionals', artists' and scholars' contributions demonstrate how art and archive as intrinsically connected.

THE EPHEMERAL, TRANSFORMATIVE AND SENSITIVE DIMENSION OF ARTWORK AND ITS ARCHIVABILITY

As *Staging difficult past* lets emerge one of the most challenging problem for curators, archivists and art historians is the artwork temporal dimension between generative and growth processes, memory, forgetting and removal, that of the ephemeral, and of the transformative,[8] emphasized by the role of media as a "sensitive environment."[9] Such a dimension raises the question of the archivability of the contemporary art research and imposes a reflection on what kind of archives historians have to question and how to dig them and where does them refer to, confronting the artists' processes with artworks' life as well.

Venturing into the dense web of studies summarised by Giannachi,[10] we realise that every historian must necessarily be aware of the transformation of the archive and archives, from both a theoretical and a practical standpoint, taking into account the role of those who build the archive: the artist, the curator,

the museum archivist, with their different ways of approaching the ephemeral, transformative and sensitive dimension. The archive keeps a multiplicity of periods in its documentation, and bears witness to actions that are individual,[11] collective[12] and institutional. It is contextual, but also diasporic. It is an instrument of power[13] but also decolonised.[14] It is the result of censorship, and omission. It restores the identity and purpose of institutions, restores processes, and is mediated and shared.

These are all perspectives that define the nature of those documentation systems that contemporary art historians observe, and that make this articulated and stratified whole a complex corpus that poses a multiplicity of questions. First and foremost, the question of the coexistence of archives created in different time periods and contexts to meet specific needs. A significant example is the history of the collections of architectural drawings and designs housed in academies and universities with a primarily educational purpose that paved the way for the architectural archives in the latter half of the twentieth century.[15] This is a process often marked by a separation between the drawing within the design process and an inevitable dissociation from the subject matter, that is architecture. A similar process is that of archives museums or artists' archives in which the separation between the document and work is not inevitable —as occurs in architecture. This separation is upheld above all by museums in the distinction between collection and archive, or in the distinction between types of collections, and mainly by curators', conservators' and archivists' different practices and tools. This is a distinction which origins have to be conducted to the documental shift which occurred, for example, in Europe following World War II, thanks to which several archives were created: today, they are points of reference for historical study—for example, the founding of the historical archive of the Venice Biennale, the documenta archiv in Kassel, or the Centre national d'art et de culture Georges-Pompidou. One of the reference works is the short book by Suzanne Briet[16] which is now often cited and linked to the modern myth of universal culture that formed the basis of the work of Paul Otlet in the 1930s.[17] Briet suggests a new definition of the document as "any concrete or symbolic indexical sign [index], preserved or recorded toward the ends of representing, of reconstituting, or of proving a physical or intellectual phenomenon,"[18] bearing in mind the new context of information science. Even if indirectly, the need to define the nature of the document was the basis of much conceptual action between the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, conceptual artists, the first to acknowledge the archive a work of art, have based their practices on the revival of the mechanisms of power of which documents are the instruments, as a way of provoking, laying bare these mechanisms or of bringing about a self-reflection whose nuances vary, depending also on the different contexts. During those years, the archive was often seen as a metaphor for the power operation and, as such, it was represented through the spatial dimension of a depository and its visual configuration centred around the principle of order. Visualisation and spatial construction have changed with the archival turn. The archive of inaccessible power was brought into question within archival studies starting in the 1990s, as well as within the historiographical debate around the need to shift "from archive-as-source to archive-as-subject."[19]

In this context of change, today's complex system of museum archives refers to the transformation of the museological debate on how to face with the transformative processes of artworks—through the collecting and preserving—and the consequent transformation of documentation. This is a theme that runs through the history of art archives and becomes a challenge when these processes must be mediated through all archival tools, as well as those of communication. Museum archivists now are trying to face the problem, adopting different strategies, as testified by the interviews conducted by Giannachi and Westerman,[20] to create and manage the collection, to document the artworks live in the museum, to manage the interaction with artists, to communicate, and finally to preserve. This latter is a challenging issue which involves the contributions of those who catalogue and preserve these artworks and their identity by building lexicons and methods for registering, cataloguing and organising artworks.[21]

MAPPING CONTEXTS AND PRACTICES

In the face of a significant expansion of the reflection on art archives, in which different perspectives are intertwined—contemporary art collecting,[22] exhibition history,[23] performing arts[24] and, more generally, media studies—, signed by the underlying question of the archivability of contemporary art practices, we will address two specific contexts that, in their somehow antithetic dimension, contribute to the complexity of the contemporary condition: museums, a place of 'dislocation' first and foremost of performative practices, based on the dimension of temporality that trigger, also through archiving, negotiating dynamics with artists; the collective and shared dimension of participatory practices, with their intrinsic opposition to the institution, for which the issue of archiving is controversial.

ARCHIVES AND MUSEUMS

To analyse to what extent institutions, especially museums, contribute to transforming the relationship between artwork and archive, we will look at a widely known case that is well-documented thanks to the ongoing communication of the programmes involved and elucidation of the goals and methodologies employed. This is the succession of programmes undertaken by the Tate starting with its Online Strategy in 2010-12[25] which launched the interactive process between the museum and the public and formed the basis for subsequent specific projects. One of these is *Transforming Tate Britain: Archive & Access* (2012-2017): thanks to this project, 52,000 documents were digitalized and published online, becoming the backbone of a series of other initiatives, such as *Animating the Archives film series* and *AnnoTate*, an online crowdsourcing transcription tool that invites audiences to transcribe text from the collections.[26] This phase is marked by the desire to change the rapport with the public by upgrading the modes of access, including through archives, by relating the history of art in Britain through a selection of

stories and objects whose criteria would be interesting to analyse, as would be the public feedback. For our purposes, the most significant project is *Reshaping the Collectible* (2018-2022) because, from the desire to "bring to the fore" the role of the archive as a constituent part of the museum, it progresses to a rethinking of how collections are systematised and the interaction among those who contribute to their construction and management. *Reshaping the Collectible* is a system-oriented project which also inserts Tate into a national strategy of reinterpreting museum collections,[27] because it attempts to break through the rigid activities and processes subdivisions between the museums' various departments, starting from a redefinition of research and management processes.

Reshaping the Collectible is "focused on recent and contemporary artworks that challenge the practices of the museum […] works that unfold over time and exist in multiple forms; works that challenge the boundaries between artwork, record and archive, and rely on complex networks of people, skills and technologies outside of the museum."[28] This introduces a dynamic and temporal perspective that takes into consideration not only the changed nature of the artworks, but also their life in the museum and goes beyond the concept of the archive as a repository and the conservation mission as a priority. In this regard, we could also introduce in this context the concept of "continuous narrative" between archives, texts and life that Sue Breakell[29] includes exergo in her essay, citing a text dedicated to William Burroughs.[30]

The museums' self-reflective process proceeds, then, through perceiving the archive as a tool for activating greater involvement of the public, an intersection with the life of the museum artworks, that, as we shall see from the observations of Sarah Haylett,[31] is the result of multiple time frames. The analysis of what is the boundary between artwork and documentation is, in fact, a focus of the programme structured around two main pathways: firstly, the work on artworks conducted by three artists (Tony Conrad, Ima-Abasi Okon and Richard Bell), secondly the investigation into several themes, including the processes of re-making, remastering and reproduction, that characterize today's art world and curatorial projects, with a plunge into Net Art and, and the program *Archives and records live in the museum*.[32] Tate archivist Sara Haylett runs the project starting from an analysis of the museum's documentation system that conforms to British law. This means Tate houses the Public Records, the institutional archive and the Tate Archive which brings together materials on British art history. The need to reconnect the processes and integrate the records classified as about administrative management with those produced during the activities involved in artwork care and conservation emerges from the analysis. But, above all, what emerges is the need to rethink the concept of documentation concerning the specificity of the practices and works of art, in other words, their life in the museum. These are themes also examined in other contexts as can be seen not only in the reference literature cited by Haylett in her paper,[33] but also in Hölling's essay which, starting from research into a work by Nam June Paik, restores the relational network between the museum archive and

the network of micro-archives in which data and information are lost, and therefore the need to build a "heterogeneous space with many points of access, all of which can affect the meaning of objects. The serendipity and unpredictability of retrieved information are interesting aspects of searching through an archive."[34]

In considering the potential rethinking of the Tate documentation management model, Haylett refers to the "records continuum" approach conceived by Frank Upward[35] that is based on going beyond the concept of document life cycle by eliminating the distinction between the value of the creation of a document and its historical value within the archive. This model was adopted and adapted by Sabiescu,[36] for example, in her concept of archival practice as a performative action. How explicitly are declared the policies followed in the organisation, classification and, where possible, description of the documents? How can these management approaches—applicable at various levels depending on individual cases and contexts—impact historical research? What is the awareness of the fragmentation of the histories that also contribute to transforming of an artwork, as happens with the acquisition in the museum collection of performative or processual artworks? These are all crucial questions.

Another important factor that Haylett highlights is the change in perspective of artists today involving their documentation practices and ability to have an impact on museum policies. This problem is exemplified in the analysis of some cases identified by the project team specifically to create a broad sample of possible scenarios in acquisition processes. It is then that the museum creates important documents that accompany the artwork, documents that are fundamental for anyone looking to understand the "dislocation" process of the processual or performative artwork when it enters in the museum. The case studies presented indicate how often the artists themselves define the boundaries between artwork and document: what is an integral part of the work and what is documentary, what can be showed and how. This was the case for the performance of *Tatlin's Whisper #5* 2008 by Tania Bruguera, whose accompanying document describes the acquisition that

> Included documentation from its previous presentations, and states that the owner is responsible for collecting an archive of the work. A copy of the archive must also be sent to the artist. The artist stipulates that the documentation can never be shown in place of the performance, and the public can only see the documentation in the context of an exhibition about documentation and archives. The artwork would also have to be performed as part of this exhibition.[37]

In some cases, this separation between artwork and document is, therefore, demanded even by the artists. While for museums it is a choice connected, in part, to a hierarchical conception, an aesthetic evaluation, and based on conservation and care criteria, for artists the choice is often motivated by a desire to offer a faithful presentation of their work in terms of its conception and creation, thus separating the two aspects. Nonetheless, Haylett goes beyond a state-of-the-art analysis, looking to interpret from an archival perspective this situation and the transformation process of museum collections. This leads to the definition of a "generative archive" that

introduces a "type of conduct" not included in archival practices.

> The archive material generated for *Tatlin's Whisper #5* could be reframed and approached as a living archive, but in the current framework at Tate, as this archive material is considered part of the artwork, these ideas must be discussed with the artist. In this example, all the materials have remained in the main collection as part of the artwork, managed by the Time-based Media Conservation team, but their existence is not known outside of the studio or the museum.[38]

Haylett's theoretical references are the definition of living archive by Ketelaar,[39] that introduce the collective and shared aspect of archive creation, and the one of "boundary objects" of Susan Leigh Star and James R. Griesemer[40] in tackling the problem of object categorisation and the change in their significance in terms of their inclusion within a specific context. The generative archive—the new definition that complements those of the documentary archive (all the materials connected with artwork life in the Public Record Collection) and the preparatory archive (all project materials, Tate Archive Collection)—provides the context for the artwork "and roots it in the history of its production, exhibition, display and, in some cases, audience interaction."[41]

Such a definition is the prerequisite for the ambitious project of laying out a new process which, from the very moment of acquisition, poses the questions and identifies the paths for describing and archiving artworks and nuclei of materials as a response to the various types of conduct still present in the museum. Differentiations related to the necessity of correctly interpreting very different media and practices, as demonstrated in the case studies analysed:[42] installations involving different media (Stephen Willats, *"The Lunch Triangle": Pilot work B. Codes and Parameters* 1974; Oswaldo Maciá, *Something Going On Above My Head* 1999; Yinka Shonibare, *The British Library* 2014), films (Pawel Althamer, *Film* 2000), and therefore performances and acts of activism.

We will dwell a moment on this last point because the reflection on the role of documentation has been intrinsic to the practice itself since the very beginning and it has also been the subject of much attention since the late 1990s in art history and criticism, but also as part of reenactment activity. In this case, we have adopted the viewpoint of historians on the role and nature of documentation.[43] In the introductory essay of the book, Westerman states that "performance and 'the institution' are dynamically co-determining—in much the same way as are performance and documentation—and have been for quite some time."[44] It is a recognition of the role of institutions or, more precisely, the acknowledgement of the need to take into account the context in which artists operate, clarifying the analyses on the media translation of video and photography through an expanded critical perspective. But, above all, what we find interesting is the position of this scholar regarding the debate between two performance theoreticians, Phelan (1993) and Auslander (2006). Their two different ontologies address performance from a formal perspective, placing it within the realm of the eternal (whether as

a live moment or the mediation of the event), while the historian, as Westerman observes, must keep in mind that the performer must always engage with the audience and the space, with the social dimension of the work, mediating between the aesthetic dimension and interaction with the public.

These prerequisites are the backdrop for several interesting contributions, starting with Barbara Clausen who mentions the sequence of research projects involving documentation strategies that testify to the relevance of this area in our discussion. Among her observations, we find a passage that touches on a key point that emerged from the cases analysed by Haylett significant:

> The layering of time and space within the photographic and moving image (and its recognition as a threshold where we see how the past collides with the present) has enabled the correlation of the archival and the politics of the live. This synthesis of the archival and the performative is most visible in the recognition of the documentation of performance art as both an inherent part of the medium as well as an integral part of the practice of performance.[45]

She clarifies this point through the analysis of an exemplary case, Jonas' *Organic Honey* (1973), from which the problematic nature of the interdependence between performance art and its documentation emerges, and therefore the archive on view in the exhibit, as occurred in two curatorial projects in Vienna (2005) and Montreal (2016):

> While clearly identified as an archive and not as an artwork, the presentation of the materials in 2005 as part of a group exhibition differed from its display in 2016 when it was part of the artist's retrospective. Despite the similarly chronological hanging order, the second rendition allows the visitor to question the status of the installation as an archive in relation to the artwork.[46]

While in the acquisition of Tania Bruguera's performance by Tate, the artist has made a distinction between archive and performance, the 2005 and 2016 exhibitions of *Organic Honey* are understood as an opportunity for experimenting on the dimension of the archive and on the nature of the system of fragments through which history is reconstructed, reflecting on the nature of performance.[47] These studies have contributed to reflecting on the history of this practice by comparing it with the transformation of the modes of "action" identified by artists who, today, choose not to leave behind documentation of their actions, interacting with space and time and with the audience, thereby calling into question the role of the archive, as Barbara Büscher noted:

> Curatorial practices and stagings have managed to rewrite discussions about performance's alleged tracelessness, which for a long time was considered the key characteristic of performance and its subversive qualities. And yet, the same question arises time and again: which documents and statements, traces and media artifacts, can performance art history rely on? Present investigations on archival processes and performance art combine the call for "fluid access" to past events—and thus

also to a newly contextualized appropriation—and questions related to media theory. Documents and traces are considered medial transformations, which, depending on the quality of each respective media, focus on different referential levels. What and how does a filmic recording represent differently than a series of photographs? What do we learn about spatial and temporal structures through notations and scores?[48]

However, from a historical perspective, the viewpoint should be even more radical, involving an assessment of all the traces left during the dialogues between artists and curators, in negotiations with institutions, and in installation actions, which we can find as well in the artist's studio, structured with different criteria and logic. Therefore, we should evaluate the interactions with the media's "sensitive environments",[49] even more ephemeral and immaterial. This is what Wielocha postulated in developing the assumptions of the Tate project from a conservation standpoint.[50] This challenging hypothesis of treating artwork as an archive, is even more challenging if tested in less structured environments than Tate on the one hand, and if verified in projects that programmatically operate outside the institutional context on the other. The enlarged perspective we are suggesting should embrace the documentary flux (from the conception to the production, the reenactment, but also to the experience of the public), but even the "materiality" of the archive, its complexity and its making.

ARCHIVES AND THE COMMUNITY

Starting from the questions regarding archive construction and considering the specific geo-political and cultural contexts as well as the impact of the different practices and media, another field of investigation that pertains to mediation and activation processes is opened. Today this field of research must still come to grips with the coexistence of analogue and digital on one side, and the developments that arise in the transition from the context of the artist's creation of the work—both in terms of individual as well as collective and shared creation—to the institutional context on the other. How concerned is the artist with cultural policies, conservation goals and sharing with the community, aspects that are intrinsic to cultural institutions? To what extent do the forms of mediation of the archive affect reception and, therefore, historical-critical investigation?

While in the previous section, we examined how crucial it is to understand the point of distinction between the intervention of those who curate and collect works and the artist's intention, we must now also consider the role of those who contribute to building and sustaining the archive through their interaction or mediation with communities within the framework of participatory activities, as well as the detached perspective of the historian/ethnographer. These are the crucial questions the nature of many contemporary art forms impels us to ask. They are expressions which, in many cases, must come to terms with those forms of archivation by modern-day communities[51] that have also led to the creation of the after-archive defined by

Spieker: "The 'after-archive' that I propose here would be a way of addressing the archive not, or not only, as a machinery designed to preserve the accidents of the past but rather as a way of thinking an archive of or in the present."[52] The image is, then, of embodied archives: active, rather than passive, tools of historiography. The after-archive, part of the digital sphere "favors remediation and post-production over a focus on single documents in a specific place; and it is part of a larger development in global art that creates artistic value not through individual works or practices located in one place but as a function of networks and connectivity."[53]

The after-archive is not, therefore, the place in which truth is found, but where it is produced. The archive is thus an environment, a product of biological processes. A variation of a metaphor that is common in the contemporary debate, which is adopted with a different meaning by Aleida Assmann in the chapter on the ecology of culture oh her *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, where she raises the question of the connections between the tendency toward preservation and the biodegradable nature of the artwork. Starting from Derrida's observation regarding the link between endurance and decay, Assmann situates the artworks between "the economy of transformation and decay", which renders it decipherable and assimilable, and the metaphysics of its duration.[54] These observations are crucial for us because they contain two of the fundamental aspects for writing contemporary art history within the complex system of sources and the inter-archive structure of contemporary art.[55]

In the broad realm of such practices initially defined by the fundamental studies of Bishop[56] and Kester,[57] we will focus here on the network of collaboration established within a project funded by the EU under the Creative Europe programme, *L'internationale*,[58] which trajectory since its very beginning reflects the contemporary art practices transformations during the last two decades. The project was launched in 2013 and had two important initial outcomes: the books dedicated to the processes of decolonisation of the museum[59] and the archive.[60]

The museum decolonisation process promoted by L'internationale was initiated by exhibition experiments as the one held by Van Abbenmuseum, for example, and focused on reinterpreting collections, reactivating connections between museum narratives, including through the archive,[61] and strengthening the catalogue system as a connective tool.[62] Within this project, together with the museum, the archive is the institution under examination, starting with analysis of its nature and role. In the first contribution dedicated to the archive, the network offers a broad-based examination of the theme of its decolonisation by analysing the system, practices and tools. Regarding these themes, the media theorist Wolfgang Ernst talks about the digital dimension as an alternative to the traditional and imperial view of the archive: an alternative because it provides a reflective and dynamic perspective "less concerned with records for eternity than with order by fluctuation. As a result, new challenges arise: what if the public will prefer to use Google rather than institutional Internet portals to get access and information on national, academic and cultural memory? In other words, will the World Wide

Web, Web 2.0 and the emerging Realtime Net replace the traditional guardians of memory such as archives, libraries and museums, just as Internet radio and IPTV (Internet Protocol Television) are replacing the traditional broadcasting media?"[63]

Collected in a subsequent book,[64] is a constellation of testimonies that restores the many actions carried out from the L'internationale archives working group, with and on the archive, in institutional contexts and as part of activist projects. Within this new and updated landscape, we can see the surmounting of that sort of "alienation" of artworks from the creative flow frequently caused by institutional policies. Especially in the areas in which attempts are being made to create a renegotiation process with the past, the first step is to question the diaspora of documents that both the market and the reparatory acquisition policies of major Western museums are implementing through their collecting and acquisitions programs. This is the basis for the 2019 *Call for a Common Archival Policy* promoted by Red Conceptualismos del Sur: to defend the integrity of archives and documentary sets, a principle which, driven by the acknowledgement of the consequences of the distinction between the original artwork and the documents connected to it, "favoured the segmentation of the documentary body by highlighting some part to the detriment of the rest."[65] This vision presupposes a major intervention on consolidated bodies of works, embedded in western contexts which have assigned them meanings that are now intended to be revised.[66]

In the areas where this pursuit of redefining the connection with the original places of production is promoted, and the integrity of archives is asserted, the direction envisioned to digital communication by Wolfgang Ernst is gaining strength. The digital dimension is a new system of producing texts, images and sounds that redefines the traditional idea of document layering. This system is an active, dynamic network that often leaves no trace of time passing, in which authorship is questioned and, therefore, requires the verification of archaeological digging methods that Giannachi[67] used to define the approach to archive study. A system which proceeds by exploring participatory research positioned at the intersection of artistic practices and disciplines such as philosophy, historical inquiry and community engagement initiatives. It is an open field of experimentation we have to face to, which can be exemplify by the project *The Future of Indeterminacy Datafication, Memory, Bio-Politics*, in all its experimentality.[68] A research group of the University of Dundee is developing an Anarchive of Indeterminate Artistic Practices in which research processes proceed randomly thanks to algorithms designed to create a non-hierarchical space: the network now seems to be central, while the nature of traces has to be defined.

CONCLUSION

The reference to the *The Future of Indeterminacy Datafication, Memory, Bio-Politics* project is somehow a provocative way to suggest a conclusion with which open to future research trajectories, underlying the magmatic nature of the field assumed

as research topic. Datafication in fact is changing the phenomenology of the archive, imposes a methodological shift toward the latent spaces of AI generative models which in the opinion of Antonio Somaini will change cultural analysis. This domain now engages many scholars, thus further broadening the debate that we have tried to analyse by making some choices. Our aim was to identify within the current art system the main issues that emerge when archives and contemporary arts meet, or clash. To do this it was necessary to navigate within a dense network of critical hypotheses and projects, letting emerge the main issues we believe pertain to some of the contemporary art researches.

Choosing the identify two contexts of the museums' archives, and of the participatory projects and actions, instead specific case study, it has been a conscious choice to let emerge connections between the different perspective of curator, conservator, archivist and art historian questioning the role of the archive. It was a deliberate choice to connect different conceptions of the archive, the way they emerge in the debate as answer to the question on the nature of the artistic practices processual, time based, trans-medial, shared, ephemeral and transformative. Only taking in considerations different approaches help the comprehension of the artwork lives with its transformations and re-interpretation, with all the artists, or curator omission which in many cases have to be reconducted to institutional policies for the construction and maintaining of the collections. On the other hand, omissions and absences in the sphere of participation or performance have to be reconducted to the very nature of these practices.

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