ARTICLE

THE HOUSE OF VERA
MEMORY RECONSTRUCTION THROUGH PERSONAL ARCHIVE AND MACHINE VISION

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates reconstruction of personal and political memory through hybrid archival practice, drawing on the author's ongoing project, *The House of Vera*. Anchored in the memory of a family home in Smila, Ukraine, the essay examines two objects—a Nazi porcelain plate and a Soviet Pioneer tapestry—as affective sites through which intergenerational trauma, ideological history, and diasporic identity converge. Combining autobiographical research, artistic practice, and digital mapping tools like Google Maps, the project constructs a "hybrid archive" where analog and digital materials and personal and institutional records coalesce into a living system of remembrance. Through the lenses of postcolonial memory studies, affect theory, and digital humanities, it proposes an *autobiography-as-archive* methodology, positioning memory as a mode of knowledge and a form of resistance. Ultimately, it argues that hybrid archives are not static repositories but evolving ecologies of belonging—acts of cultural survival under conditions of displacement and war.

KEYWORDS

Ukrainian diaspora, Hybrid archive, Autobiographical methodology, Postmemory, Wartime domesticity.

INTRODUCTION

This article explores the reconstruction of personal and political memory through a hybrid archival practice. The point of departure is a personal story: the memory of my great-grandmother Vera's house in the village formerly known as Stantsiya Shevchenko (today part of the city of Smila, Ukraine).[1] I was named after her. Although I emigrated from Ukraine over a decade ago, and the house was sold long ago, two objects from that home—a Soviet Pioneer tapestry and a Nazi porcelain plate—remain with me in Israel. When the war in Ukraine began on February 24, 2022, these objects reemerged in my consciousness with new urgency.

The tapestry, handmade in the early 1920s by my great-grandmother's sister, Anastasia, was part of her legacy as a textile artist. Shown in Figure 1, it features children in the Pioneers, an iconic Soviet youth organization,[2] clothed in red ties and uniforms, carrying drums, horns, and flags. As I studied it more closely, I noticed that nearly all the children carried weapons. Although originally sewn with hope—in the ideals of the "bright future" Communism promised—it now stands for violence masked as innocence, ideological indoctrination from childhood, and the suppression of Ukrainian autonomy.

The second object, a coarse white porcelain plate, was left behind by a German logistics officer stationed in our house during the 1941 Nazi occupation of Ukraine.[3] Stamped with a black Parteiadler, an eagle atop a swastika,[4] it turns a mundane object into an ideological weapon. Since childhood, I have been terrified by its presence. I remember my first encounter with the reverse side of the plate—the swastika etched into its base, not as an ornament but as authority. In a still of one of my video works (Figure 2), I am washing this plate, trying to scrub off the swastika, in a futile gesture symbolizing inherited trauma and resistance.

This article situates the affective weight of those political heirlooms within an expanded archive comprising personal artifacts, family photographs, and artworks created by my relatives who spent summers in the family home in the 1970s and 1980s, as well as external archives. I ask how personal memory, fragmented and displaced, can be reconstructed through material traces and technological tools. What are the politics of remembrance when history is violently cyclical?

In the context of Ukraine's ongoing struggle over national identity and historical narrative, such personal archives carry political weight. As Honcharenko argued, post-Soviet Ukraine's reconfiguration of World War II narratives and the policy of decommunization reflect a broader effort to reclaim agency over historical memory.[5] This process has intensified since the full-scale Russian invasion, which produced new identity challenges for Ukrainians everywhere, including those of us living abroad.

From a postcolonial perspective, Törnquist-Plewa and Yurchuk highlighted how Ukraine's memory culture operates within overlapping regimes of power—Soviet, nationalist, and European—producing hybrid and contested forms of remembering.[6] Within this framework, hybrid archival practices become tools of



Figure 1
Hand-embroidered Pioneer tapestry by Anastasia, early 1920s.



Figure 2
Washing the Plate, video still, 2022

survival and cultural continuity for diasporic Ukrainians negotiating displacement.

In her book, *Burden of Dreams: History and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine*, Wanner reminds us that post-Soviet identity formation is deeply entangled with memory's burdens—the dreams, losses, and silences carried across generations.[7] The war's ruptures only deepen this tension, demanding new strategies for remembering that bridge absence and belonging.[8] By revisiting material traces like the tapestry and porcelain plate, this project seeks not only to document but also to reanimate a lived past, transforming the archive into an evolving site of identity, mourning, and creative reconstruction. This essay also proposes a hybrid archival methodology in which personal memory, material objects, and digital technologies are mobilized as sources of remembrance as well as agents of diasporic identity reconstruction under conditions of political rupture.

This article contributes to archival and memory studies by proposing the hybrid archive as a practice-based method that brings heterogeneous materials—inherited objects, oral testimony, institutional records, and machine-vision images—into a single relational system of memory reconstruction. Its contribution lies in showing that artistic practice does not merely illustrate personal memory but actively produces knowledge by connecting domestic traces to state violence, ideological history, diasporic displacement, and computational forms of seeing.

METHODOLOGY: AUTOBIOGRAPHY AS ARCHIVE

In this project, I work through an autotheoretical and autobiographical methodology, treating memory as both an object of remembrance and a way of knowing. Drawing on Smith and Watson's notion of autobiography as a critical framework,[9] I approach self-narration as an act of self-archiving—where lived experience converses with the historical, the political, and the aesthetic.

Within this framework, the memory of my great-grandmother's house in Smila, Ukraine, and the objects connected to it—family photographs, artworks, and political artifacts—become evolving sites of knowledge. The project takes seriously Mbembe's assertion that "the archive is not a thing, but a practice."[10] In this sense, the archive is not an inert repository of the past but an ongoing act of construction—one that becomes particularly urgent in contexts of war, displacement, and intergenerational trauma.

My practice involves focused memory sessions, intentionally recalling sensory details—smells, textures, atmospheres, gestures—that anchor the experience of the house. These recollections are then translated into visual mappings, overlays, collages, and hand-drawn diagrams, where memory becomes spatial and material. This method transforms recollection into a visual epistemology, wherein the aesthetic act becomes a mode of analysis.

The project also draws from object-oriented analysis described by Candlin and Guins, treating material artifacts as active participants in ideological history rather than passive witnesses.[11] The Pioneer tapestry and Nazi porcelain plate, introduced above, exemplify this duality: each is politically saturated and ethically complex, oscillating between personal inheritance and historical burden.

In this way, my methodology merges affective, material, and political analysis, situating the family archive as an emotional ecosystem and a microcosm of national memory.

ASSEMBLING THE HYBRID ARCHIVE

Beyond these material objects, I possess a *hybrid archive*—a constellation of media intersecting time, politics, and personal experience. It encompasses

- family photographs (1960s–1980s),
- artworks made by my mother and uncle in the house, and
- political objects with direct ties to WWII and Soviet regimes.

This hybrid constellation forms the project's mnemonic and symbolic foundation. Despite our home being filled with artwork, crafts, and images, these objects were among the few materials my family chose to preserve across borders and decades. Like many families in Ukraine, mine maintained a family archive of photographs and albums—a domestic ritual that preserved visual and oral history. As Woodham et al. noted, such archives operate as "identity containers," mediating between personal memory and collective belonging.[12] They shape the sense of who we are through what we keep and what we choose to forget. These albums serve as visual genealogies, transmitting affection and silence—stories told and untold—across generations.

The family home itself, like the one I remember in Smila, becomes its own kind of archive—a place where emotion lingers in objects and memory clings to walls. My hybrid archive follows this logic, extending the domestic archive beyond its walls into digital space, across diasporic distance, and through artistic practice.

The need to expand personal memory into a hybrid archive arises not from aesthetic preference but from existential urgency. In contexts of displacement and historical rupture, memory cannot be preserved solely through inherited objects—it must be extended, connected, and reanimated across media, time, and platforms. Derrida reminds us that the archive is never neutral; it is a structure of power and desire, shaped by what is remembered and what is suppressed.[13] For diasporic subjects, the hybrid archive becomes a living epistemology—where personal fragments coexist with external, institutional, and digital sources that do not simply illustrate memory but actively perform and verify it. Following Hirsch's postmemory theory, these external materials are not secondary.[14] They are constitutive, allowing the next generation to inherit and reshape memory through mediated, affective acts. In this way, the hybrid archive is more than a collection: it is a temporal, affective infrastructure, constantly evolving.

In this sense, my hybrid archive aligns with Ernst's notion of digital memory as recursion—a living system where interaction, image, and code continuously rewrite recollection.[15] The artworks, political relics, and photographs within this archive form a portrait of artistic family identity, shaped equally by creativity and constraint. Each artifact embodies personal trauma and ideological pressure, traces of the larger histories that permeated domestic life under dictatorship. To engage with them now is to enter a dialogue between history and affect, between inherited silence and the act of artistic revoicing—the hybrid practice of remembrance itself.

THE WARTIME HOUSE: BETWEEN OCCUPATION AND SURVIVAL

According to family oral history, my great-grandmother Vera, her husband, and their two children—aged 11 and 8 years—were denied evacuation by Soviet authorities in 1941.[16] They had already boarded an evacuation train when, during a document inspection, they were ordered to step down and return home. One of

my great-grandfather's brothers had been labeled an "enemy of the nation" (*vrag naroda*) under the Soviet regime—an accusation that, as scholars Applebaum and Etkind observed, marked entire families with inherited suspicion and effectively deprived them of state protection.[17]

Thus, while others were evacuated eastward ahead of the German advance, Vera's family was forced to remain in their tiny railway settlement near Bobrinskaya Station. When the occupation began, German railway logistics personnel—not combat soldiers but technical workers responsible for maintaining the transport infrastructure that supplied the Wehrmacht—requisitioned the house, directly beside the railway line. They arrived with their equipment, uniforms, and rations—living embodiments of the mobile apparatus of occupation. The family was allowed to remain in a small section of the house, mainly confined to the kitchen and utility rooms.

My grandmother's memories of this period were marked by paradox. She recalled how these men, though not overtly violent, carried the full authority of the occupying system. They sometimes shared their rations—bread, tinned meat, and chocolate—with the family, gestures she remembered with both gratitude and shame. At the same time, she was forced to load railway wagons with agricultural goods bound for Germany, her labor feeding the same system that occupied her home. This fragile coexistence—part generosity, part coercion—captured what Berkhoff identified as the moral ambiguity of civilian survival under occupation.[18]

As a child, I experienced my own encounter with this history. Listening to my grandmother's stories was like hearing a moral riddle—where fear, silence, and unexpected kindness coexisted. The second, more shattering encounter came decades later, when, as a researcher, I found the aerial photograph of our family house in the digitized Deutsche Reichsbahn archive (Figure 3).[19] Seeing the outline of the roof, the railway tracks, and the small garden transformed what had been an imagined scene into a precise geography of occupation. The speculative memory I had constructed through storytelling and inherited objects suddenly acquired visual and spatial confirmation.

This archival photograph, produced during the Nazi occupation of Ukraine, depicts the railway infrastructure surrounding my great-grandmother Vera's house in the former settlement of Stantsiya Bobrinskaya. Captured from an aerial perspective, the image transforms an intimate landscape into a document of logistical control. Once filled with family life, the domestic terrain appears absorbed into the vast machinery of occupation. Yet, within this administrative gaze, traces of home remain: the faint geometry of rooftops, the outline of gardens, and the fragile persistence of daily life under duress. Recontextualized within my hybrid archive, this photograph becomes a site of *infrastructural memory*, where personal history and institutional record converge.

This archival encounter, evidential and affective, embodied what Jaskot revealed in his study of Nazi infrastructure: that logistical systems, architectural planning, and technical documentation were not peripheral to occupation, but central



Figure 3
Aerial view of railway settlement near Stantsiya Bobrinskaya, c. 1941-42 (Reichsbahn/Wehrmacht Archive).

to its enactment.[20] Initially produced to manage transportation and material flow, these documents—like the aerial photograph of my great-grandmother's house—have become key components of what I call the *infrastructural archive*: a system that makes visible the *banality of violence*. As Jaskot argued, infrastructure was not merely supportive of Nazi power—it was power, implemented through building codes, railway expansion, and bureaucratic control. By integrating this material into my hybrid archive, I positioned personal memory in direct dialogue with institutional systems of domination, reclaiming the image of the house not as a passive witness but as a geopolitical node within the broader machinery of war.

Lower documented that the Nazi occupation in Ukraine was not just a military invasion but a project of imperial restructuring[21]—one in which civilian homes, like my great-grandmother's, were requisitioned to house German railway personnel. These so-called "non-combatant occupiers" became everyday enforcers of imperial logistics, embodying the bureaucratic violence that structured the Nazi empire. My family's house thus became part of what Lower called the "civilian infrastructure of genocide"—an ordinary space transformed by extraordinary systems of control.[22]

For me, this discovery collapsed the distance between memory and evidence. The aerial photograph became an interface—a point of collision

between the imaginative geography of childhood memory and the documentary gaze of the occupiers. Viewing the house from above, through the very network that once sustained occupation, integrated my family's domestic archive into the larger infrastructural record of modern violence.

MACHINE VISION AND SPATIAL RECONSTRUCTION

Even with such abundant materials—oral accounts, family photographs, artifacts, and wartime documentation—I lacked a framework to hold them together. Each object and story existed like a fragment in a constellation. I needed a base that could offer spatial and temporal coherence, a geography through which memory could be traced. That led me toward digital mapping tools, most notably Google Maps®. The platform provided a way to locate the historical sites mentioned in family stories and to overlay archival data—wartime photographs, railway maps, and satellite imagery—into a shared visual field. What began as a personal attempt to "find the house" evolved into a methodology: a hybrid mode of research where the subjective archive of memory meets the objective coordinates of digital space.

Such practices align with what Giannachi termed *archival mapping*[23]—using geospatial interfaces to recontextualize personal and cultural memory within digital environments. In her book, *Archive Everything*, Giannachi shows how Google Maps can function as an interface of everyday archiving, transforming dispersed stories into locationally anchored networks of meaning.

The composite image (Figure 4) overlays Google Street View imagery of the former family home at 5 Prov. Amurs'kyy, Smila (formerly Stantsiya Bobrinskaya), with family photographs and watercolors made by my mother and uncle in the 1970s and 1980s. The work visualizes the intersection of personal, institutional, and digital archives—an experiment I describe as *hybrid reconstruction*. Here, vernacular memory is embedded within the visual architecture of Google's cartographic interface, merging the private geography of domestic life with the algorithmic logic of global mapping. The result is a layered image in which wartime displacement, Soviet domesticity, and diasporic return coexist within a single cartographic frame. The collage repurposes a platform of surveillance and navigation as one of remembrance, treating the home as both data point and affective site.

For my project, this hybrid archive was not a generalized digital repository, but a site-specific constellation grounded in one concrete location—the coordinates of a single house and railway station in central Ukraine. Through this approach, I could connect the intimate scale of family life to the infrastructural and geopolitical scales of occupation, memory, and digital visualization. In the act of mapping, the family's domestic site became a spatial index of layered histories, a point on the map where oral testimony, archival fragments, and algorithmic vision converge.



Figure 4
House of Vera, (hybrid reconstruction), digital collage, 2024.

WORKING WITH MEMORY: ARTISTIC PRACTICE AS RECONSTRUCTION

Engaging with these archives—personal, institutional, and digital—eventually became more than an act of documentation. It became a practice of remembering, a process of consciously constructing memory through time, attention, and creative form. I began organizing what I came to call *memory sessions*: weekly, 1-hour periods of silent writing in which I returned mentally and emotionally to the sensory world of my great-grandmother's house. These were structured around schemas of specific events.[24] I would choose a particular scene or experience from my early childhood visits and focus on retrieving every possible detail: the textures of wallpaper, the rhythm of passing trains, the smell of wet earth in the garden, or the weight of an object in my hand. The goal was not merely to recall; it was to reconstruct actively—to write down even the smallest impressions while they surfaced. I also noted doubts, absences, and questions, which became prompts for later conversations with my mother and other relatives.

These sessions closely echo Kuhn's *memory work* concept—a method of excavating personal and intergenerational history through focused, reflective writing, particularly when memory is fractured by time, trauma, or silence.[25] Conversations with my mother became a central part of this work. We spoke about fragments of family life—about Vera, the wartime house, the silence that followed. These dialogues often moved between fact and speculation, between historical reconstruction and emotional translation. Each discussion became an act of intergenerational witnessing, echoing the *postmemory*: the way descendants inherit not the direct trauma but its emotional and imaginative residue.

The recordings, notes, and visual traces from these sessions later found their form in a series of collages and other artworks. By layering photographs, satellite imagery, and artworks, I sought to visualize the processes of memory itself—its ruptures, repetitions, and displacements. The resulting works became hybrid mnemonic systems, where personal recollection, archival material, and digital mapping coexisted in a shared visual field.

The collage in Figure 5 overlays a contemporary photograph of the Shevchenko railway station (formerly Stantsiya Bobrinskaya) with two archival fragments: a detail from the hand-embroidered Pioneer tapestry (c.1920s) and a family photograph of my grandmother and mother as Pioneers in the 1960s. The juxtaposition traces the cyclical recurrence of ideology across generations and regimes, linking domestic textile to public monument, personal lineage to state narrative. The railway station, once the site of my family's wartime confinement and occupation, becomes a symbolic stage where history repeats through gestures, uniforms, and inherited postures. The embroidered children of the 1920s and the photographed children of the 1960s mirror each other's formations across four decades, exposing the persistence of ideological choreography across regimes. The work questions how spaces of infrastructure become repositories of emotion, and how family memory is shaped by and resistant to the monumental narratives of the state.



Figure 5
Station Shevchenko, (composite with Pioneer tapestry and family photograph), digital collage, 2024.

In this practice, the archive ceased to be a static repository. It became a living, dialogical structure, a site where memory is continually reperformed. As Cvetkovich argues, affect can function as a form of knowledge production: emotions become archival.[26] My collages operate within this affective logic, turning the instability of remembrance into form. They are artistic and epistemological, visual hypotheses of how memory works when fragmented across generations, languages, and geographies.

Through this process, I understood that working with memory is not about recovering a single truth but about creating a framework for belonging—a structure within which the self can exist between histories and places. Together, the collages, conversations, digital maps, and archival fragments form a hybrid archive of identity: one simultaneously personal and collective, local and diasporic.

This methodology, drawing together artistic practice, digital cartography, and intergenerational dialogue, also points beyond the individual case: it offers a transferable model for diasporic memory work under conditions of displacement.

CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This essay argues that, in the context of Ukraine's ongoing war and its diasporic consequences, archives—especially hybrid, personal ones—function as both tools of remembrance and acts of resistance. As the war redefines what it means to be Ukrainian, identity is increasingly tethered not to territory alone but to shared memory, cultural stewardship, and the preservation of domestic traces under erasure.

The project is ongoing and will soon be presented as a solo exhibition. This phase gathers vernacular artifacts, family photographs, and intergenerational artworks and transforms them into a dialogic archive of domestic memory under duress. However, the exhibition is not an endpoint. The next phase proposes a methodological framework for participatory workshops, particularly for Ukrainian refugees, to collaboratively reconstruct displaced homes using memory objects, vernacular photography, and accessible digital tools.

In light of psychological and archival theory, archivists and researchers must approach such materials with care, consent, and reflexivity, recognizing that archives are not neutral repositories but sites of vulnerability and emotional intensity. Saramo and Savolainen reminded us that memory is mobile: it migrates through objects and narratives, reshaped in exile and reassembled through touch, voice, and imagination.[27] These efforts are not simply about recollection; they are about agency in the face of erasure. To remember is to resist forgetting; to reconstruct is to refuse disappearance. The homes we build in memory, with their uneven walls and affective debris, are themselves acts of belonging. Through this evolving archive of reconstructed domestic spaces—spaces we left behind, but which never left us—I seek to cultivate a practice of diasporic identity reconstruction that is situated, embodied, and future-facing.

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1 Stantsiya imeni Tarasa Shevchenka (formerly Bobrinskaya Station) is a major railway hub in the city of Smila, Cherkasy Oblast, central Ukraine. Established in 1876 under the Russian Empire and named after Transport Minister Count Vladimir Bobrinsky, the station played a vital role in connecting Ukraine's agricultural regions with the Black Sea. In Soviet times, it was renamed to honor the Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko, a symbolic gesture aligned with ideological nation-building. The station became part of the Odessa Railway and remains a central node in Ukraine's rail infrastructure, historically marked by imperial and Soviet legacies.

2 The Young Pioneers (Russian: Vladimir Lenin All-Union Pioneer Organization) was the official Soviet youth organization for children aged 9 to 14, founded in 1922. Modeled partly on the Scouts but rooted in Marxist-Leninist ideology, it aimed to shape children into loyal, disciplined citizens through rituals, uniforms (notably the red tie), and collective activities. Membership was nearly universal and ideologically compulsory across the Soviet Union.

3 Nazi Germany occupied most of Ukraine between 1941 and 1944, following the launch of Operation Barbarossa. The occupation was marked by extreme violence, mass executions of Jews, Roma, and political prisoners, and widespread forced labor. Civilian infrastructure, such as railways and homes, was requisitioned to support the Wehrmacht's logistics. Scholars described the occupation as genocidal and imperial, targeting Ukraine's resources, population, and national autonomy; see, for example, Wendy Lower, *Hitler's Furies: German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013).

4 Karel C. Berkhoff, *Harvest of Despair: Life and Death in Ukraine Under Nazi Rule* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004). The Parteiadler (party eagle) was the official emblem of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), depicting a stylized eagle clutching a wreath encircling a swastika (Hakenkreuz). Adopted in 1920, the design fused classical imperial symbolism with the politicized iconography of Nazism. On the swastika's broader symbolic history and its modern political appropriation, see Steven Heller, *The Swastika: Symbol Beyond Redemption?* (New York: Allworth Press, 2000); Malcolm Quinn, *The Swastika: Constructing the Symbol* (London: Routledge, 1994).

5 Nadiia Honcharenko, "Transformation of the Historical Narratives of the Second World War and the Decommunisation of Memory Policy in Ukraine," *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 71, no. 2 (2025): 297–311, https://doi.org/10.1111/ajph.13040.

6 Barbara Törnquist-Plewa and Yuliya Yurchuk, "Memory Politics in Contemporary Ukraine: Reflections from the Postcolonial Perspective," *Memory Studies* 12, no. 6 (2019): 699–717, https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698017727806.

7 Catherine Wanner, *Burden of Dreams: History and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2010).

8 Wanner, *Burden of Dreams*.

9 Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

10 Achille Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and its Limits," in *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 19–26. Mbembe's conception of the archive as practice rather than repository directly informs the framework developed here.

11 Fiona Candlin and Raiford Guins, eds., *The Object Reader* (London: Routledge, 2009). The Object Reader is a foundational anthology in material culture studies that brings together key thinkers, such as Arjun Appadurai, Alfred Gell, Bruno Latour, and Bill Brown, to explore how objects operate as social agents within cultural systems. Candlin and Guins argue that objects are not passive witnesses to history but active participants in constructing ideology, identity, and memory.

12 Jonathan Woodham, Hazel Clark, Grace Lees-Maffei, and John Turpin, eds., *The Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Design*, Vol. 3: *P–Z* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 249.

13 Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 11.

14 Marianne Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," *Poetics Today* 29, no. 1 (2008): 103–28, https://doi.org/10.1215/03335372-2007-019.

15 Wolfgang Ernst, *Digital Memory and the Archive* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 87, https://doi.org/10.5749/minnesota/9780816677663.001.0001. Ernst's conception of digital memory as an active process directly informed my approach to "The House of Vera." His idea that the archive "performs" rather than "stores" helped me to treat digital mapping and collage not as simply preservation tools but as acts of temporal reanimation—ways of allowing memory to live, shift, and transform within technological space.

16 Following the German invasion in summer 1941, the Soviet State Defense Committee coordinated a large-scale eastward evacuation of industry, institutions, and civilian populations from the western territories, including Ukraine, to the Urals, Siberia, and Central Asia. The process was neither equitable nor systematic, and access depended heavily on political status.

17 Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History* (New York: Doubleday, 2003); Alexander Etkind, *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013). The term *vrag naroda* (enemy of the nation) was a political designation used during the Stalinist purges to label individuals accused of counterrevolutionary activity. Families marked by such accusations were frequently denied evacuation in 1941, leaving them exposed to the advancing German occupation. As Applebaum documents, such designations often resulted in the imprisonment, execution, or persecution of entire families.

18 Karel C. Berkhoff, *Harvest of Despair: Life and Death in Ukraine Under Nazi Rule* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004). On bureaucratic and infrastructural dimensions of the occupation, see esp. ch. 3.

19 Joachim Schmidt, "Bildarchiv der Eisenbahnstiftung," accessed October 22, 2025, https://eisenbahnstiftung.de/bildergalerie.

20 Paul B. Jaskot, *The Architecture of Oppression: The SS, Forced Labor, and the Nazi Monumental Building Economy* (London: Routledge, 2000), 14.

21 Lower, *Hitler's Furies*.

22 Lower, *Hitler's Furies*.

23 Gabriella Giannachi, *Archive Everything: Mapping the Everyday* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016), 12. Giannachi's notion of "archival mapping" treats the act of mapping as both remembrance and knowledge production.

24 Here, schema refers to a cognitive and narrative structure that organizes memory by focusing on a specific scene or context, such as a moment, place, or recurring activity, from which associative details can emerge. Drawing on memory studies and cognitive psychology, schema-based recall allows targeted reconstruction by anchoring memory within an event-specific framework.

25 Annette Kuhn, *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination* (London: Verso, 2002), 9.

26 Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 7, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11hp6xq

27 Samira Saramo and Ulla Savolainen, "Moving Memories: Mobility, Materiality, and Affective Heritage in Times of Displacement," *Memory Studies* 16, no. 5 (2023): 906.