

## **Archives in Motion**

### **Artists' Publications between Circulation and Preservation in a Global Perspective**

International symposium on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Center for Artists' Publications and the Research Association Artists' Publications

08. - 9.11.2019

The symposium will examine the importance of an artistically comprehensive approach, ranging from art archives to artists' archives, from performance archives and mail art archives to archives for artists' publications with their different contexts in contemporary art.

Art archives and archives for artists' publications are really extended archives. Both conceptually and in terms of archive material, they transcend traditional ideas of what constitutes an archive in the strictest sense. At the same time, they include alternative and ephemeral art forms alongside correspondence and written material of an artistic nature. Since the 1950s, artists themselves have collected artists' publications in self-created, international archives, for example Ulisses Carrión or György Galantai. This practice originates in their own artistic work. But collectors and curators have also collected artists' publications in the form of archives, such as Guy Schraenen in his Archive for Small Press & Communication, founded 1974, or the Re.act.feminism initiative, which creates a mobile archive presenting the work of international women artists. This latter archive travels constantly while simultaneously growing, enriched with materials from the countries where it is shown (<http://www.reactfeminism.org>). Without these archival initiatives, many artists' publications and artistic documents would have been lost.

The symposium will examine various aspects of archives and archiving within the context of *extended archives* in five sections:

#### **Alternative Archiving Practice**

The question of the relevance of the widely varying materiality of archives is connected to further reflections on the structure, tectonics, inclusion or exclusion criteria and artistic conceptions. What are the challenges for extended archives, for their extension and updates, for imaginary and digital archives? What is the significance of the practice of anomic archiving (Ernst van Alphen) as an alternative approach to collecting?

#### **Living Archive**

The aspect of anarchic archives is closely linked to emancipatory ambitions which play an important role especially in totalitarian contexts (Eastern Europe, Latin America and currently also in Turkey, etc.). Especially for minorities and fringe groups, the possibility of historiography 'from below' arises. Issues relating to the political situation or the relevance of archives that are constituted in precarious conditions or whose stocks are endangered are further aspects. Fragility and power, loss and relevance characterize the constitution of archives as antipodes. The themes in this section are the political implications of using and manipulating archive material. To what extent are the various art archives counter archives or identity ar-

chives that represent and establish the perspectives of particular groups, both in terms of their content and in terms of their organization and cataloging?

### **Agency of Archives**

Archives today hardly serve as locations of depositing knowledge in terms of its collection and administration. With the replacement of the bureaucratic notion of an archive, the question arises in how far visualizations and enactments of archival material allow for spaces of human action to emerge. How can concepts of extended archives make their potential of knowledge and reception accessible by forms of agency, based on new approaches such as staging, curating or performing the archive? The idea of the extended archive also poses the challenge to situate the curating the archive and the archival inventory within the political field. Mediation and performativity, dislocative practices and interventions broaden the contexts and the public impact of archives.

### **Archiving as Documentation**

One theme of this section is the question of the documentation of artistic, cultural or social contexts of performances. Migration is also an important focus here, raising fundamental questions about who stores the experiences, knowledge, records and documents of artists affected by migration. How to document contexts of networking and counter-publicity in which alternative, marginalized and emerging socio-political, sociocultural and / or artistic ideas are taken up, made public and disseminated?

### **Archiving as Artistic Practice**

This section reflects on the use of documents, photographs, sketches, audio recordings and other documents, whose heterogeneous materiality and semantic meanings enter the production of new works of art. What is the significance of the use of archival material for artistic practices, which intervene with updating questions in the ordering structure of the inventory, bringing it to speak with new forms of display. In which way can such methods of reactivation change the status of documents or whole complexes of works? And which artistic premises are associated with individual works or work complexes of artists conceived from the point of view of archives or archiving and how do they relate to this discourse? Which ideas and theories of archives and archiving underlie such works?

Scientists, curators and artists from all over the world are invited to present their research and their artistic ideas concerning these themes and to discuss the significance of their approaches for art archives, artist archives, performance archives and mail art archives, as well as archives for artists' publications.

The symposium is jointly conceived by Prof. Dr. Cristina Freire (University of São Paulo), Prof. Dr. Ursula Frohne (University of Münster) and Dr. Anne Thurmann-Jajes (Center for Artists' Publications/ Weserburg).

## **Co-operating partners**

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