Socially Engaged Art, Experimental Pedagogies, and Anarchiving as Research-Creation

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Abstract

Archives, as repositories of culture and knowledge, are closely linked to colonial power, control, hegemony, and conquest. In recognizing the limitations and problems of conventional archives, scholars and artists offer *counter-archiving* as a method of interrogating what constitutes an archive and the selective practices that continuously erase particular subjects. Unlike static, stable, and linear colonial archives, counter-archives are grounded in accountability and reciprocity. Similarly, the *anarchive* is concerned with what it can do in the present-future. As such, anarchiving is less a thing, then a process or an action. This article examines anarchiving as research-creation practices through three provocations: anarchiving as indeterminate transformation, anarchiving as felt, and anarchiving as response-ability. We examine a particular anarchiving project *Instant Class Kit* dedicated to radical pedagogies and social justice. Anarchiving is fundamentally about practicing an ethics based on response-ability, stewardship, care, and reciprocity that center relationships to land, territory, human, and more-than-human bodies.

Keywords

socially engaged art, research-creation, new methods and methodologies, methodologies, counter-archiving, anarchiving

Archives function as technologies of power and serve dominant ideological and political structures (Thompson, 2018). Archives, as repositories of culture and knowledge, are closely linked to colonial power, control, hegemony, and conquest (Derrida, 1995). Rather than being neutral repositories of the past, archives are conditioned by values that most often center Whiteness and erase queer, trans, Black, Indigenous and people of color. Feminist, queer, anti-racist, and anticolonial contributions to archival thought and practice have provoked considerations of the authority given to the archive and what (or what it does not) contain. The archive has become a contested site and the subject of work across many disciplines including the arts.

In recognizing the limitations and problems of conventional archives, scholars like Cheryl Thompson (2018), Syrus Ware (2017), and Jin Haritaworn (2019) offer *counter-archiving* as a method of interrogating what constitutes an archive and the selective practices that continuously erase particular subjects. Unlike static, stable, and linear colonial archives, counter-archives are grounded in accountability and reciprocity. They often emerge from community-based and collaborative processes. Counter-archives build on struggles from the past that continue to impact lives in the present. Furthermore, counter-archives include what is traditionally understood as non-archivable—affects, bodies, performances, and embodied events—that which is

ephemeral and fleeting (Cvetkovich, 2003; Springgay & Truman, 2017a).

With the increase of digital technologies, questions about the materiality and circulation of archival matter have also been raised. Kate Hennessy and Trudy Lynn-Smith (2018) use the term anarchival as a framework for the transformations that occur over time to archival matter (including chemical reactions and insect infestations to name just a few) to address the precarity and loss of the archive. The anarchive for them is the possibility of the archives' destruction not as a loss but as a generative force. Although entropy is conventionally resisted in the archive, Hennessy and Lynn-Smith attend to the potential of the anarchive as molecular transformation.

Springgay & Truman (2017a) state that anarchiving is excessive potential, or that which exceeds the archive. Anarchiving in this sense is about "feed-forward mechanism for lines of creative process, under continuing variation" (Massumi, 2016, p. 7). If the archive functions as a repository

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and operates to uphold state narratives, the anarchive is concerned with what it can do in the present-future. This can be done through disruption, or departures in established techniques and procedures. As such, anarchiving is less a thing, then a process or an action.

Counter-archiving and anarchiving practices are political, resistant, and collective. They disrupt conventional narratives and histories and seek ways to engage with matter not typically found in official archives and the affective experiences and lived histories of human and more-than-human bodies. For the focus of this article, we use the term anarchiving as research-creation practices committed to queer, feminist, anti-racist, and anti-colonial frameworks and ways of being and doing.

In the first section of this article, we briefly discuss the problems and limitations of conventional archives as repositories of power and ideology. From there, we turn to the practice and theory of counter-archives and provide a few examples by contemporary artists to ground our discussion. In the third section of the article, we explore anarchiving as research-creation practices through three provocations: *anarchiving as indeterminate transformation, anarchiving as felt*, and *anarchiving as response-ability*. To do so, we examine a particular anarchiving project *Instant Class Kit* [https://thepedagogicalimpulse.com/category/instant-classkit/] a mobile curriculum guide and pop-up exhibition of 14 contemporary art projects dedicated to radical pedagogies and social justice. Anarchiving as research-creation becomes a practice of responding to and countering the logic of the archive, while attending to its ephemeral and affective qualities. It is also fundamentally about practicing an ethics based on response-ability, stewardship, care, and reciprocity that center relationships to land, territory, human and more-than-human bodies.

The Problems With Conventional Archives

In an attempt to understand the drive to collect, organize, and conserve the human record, Derrida (1995) describes the construction of an archive as a desire to affirm the past, present, and future. The archive is used (however ineffectively and partially) to "reconstruct, restore, recover the past, to present" (Bradley, 1999, p. 109). By preserving records of the past, it embodies the promise of the present to the future. Derrida's work largely contributed to the recognition of the "contingent nature of the archive—the way is it shaped by social, political, and technological forces" (Manoff, 2004, p. 12). Derrida points out how the methods for transmitting information shape the nature of the knowledge that is able to be produced. He elaborates on the notion that the structure of the archive determines what can be archived and that history and memory are shaped by the actual practice of archiving. He believed the archiving or

collection process (and its mutations) change not only "the archiving process, but what is archivable—that is, the content of what has to be archived is changed by the technology" (Derrida, 1995, p. 46). In this sense, new technologies change the way artifacts and information are preserved, which in turn transforms the very essence of what is chosen to be preserved. Rather than being a site of knowledge itself, the archive is a site for collective knowledge production, produced in the past, while it is also a center of interpretation, that influences the future.

The collection and creation of an archive is closely linked to the social conditions during the time it was created, as well as the artifacts and information it contains (Derrida, 1995). As such, there are absences, distortions, and limits. The archive does not accommodate, it excludes and erases. Derrida (1995) points to the relationship between political power and the archive. He argues how "effective democratization can always be measured by . . . the participation in and access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation" (Derrida, 1995, p. 11). Derrida also notes that the archive is constantly producing more archives, it is never closed: "It opens out of the future" (Derrida, 1995, p. 68). Therefore, control over the archive implies command and representation in the past, which it also shapes representation in the future.

Foucault (1969/2013) compares the archive to archeology (the practice of learning about the past through its material remains). For Foucault, the archive "is first the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events" (p. 28). It is a discursive system that governs what is said or unsaid, recorded or unrecorded. Ann Stoler (2002) points out how scholars studying archives often ask questions regarding the dominant socio-political forces and moral virtues that produce qualified knowledges which disqualify, marginalize, and erase other knowledges and ways of knowing. Imperial and colonial powers have traditionally controlled the archive and influenced the dispersal of history by wielding power through law, the state, order, and regulation (Sekula, 1986). However, political power is not necessarily dependent on rule. When thinking about the archive, political power is a relationship between the exercising of power against historically marginalized subjects, those largely excluded from the archive itself. Archives are simultaneously sources of exclusion and monuments to particular power configurations.

David Greetham (1999) argues that what gets included in an archive is reflective of dominant ideologies. Archives are bound by historical structures of categorization, identification, and state-sanctioned logic and are solely representative of those with power and control in the past. Only particular traces and records of the past are documented as archives concealed, revealed, and reproduced the power of the state. As such, archives predominantly leave out or erase queer, trans, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (Sekula, 1986).

Archiving practices must be thought of as extractive rather than ethnographic (Stoler, 2002). Although archives may appear to be built on principles of neutrality and inclusion, they in fact reflect colonial violence. What is included in the archive is selected "to confirm the colonial invention of traditional practices or to underscore cultural claims" (Stoler, 2002, p. 90). According to Greetham, "all conservational decisions are contingent, temporary, and culturally self-referential, even self-laudatory: we want to preserve the best of ourselves for those who follow" (p. 9). Due to this rigidity and desire of classification and control, any individual lacking authoritative power or being regarded as different from the hegemonic group were put in a precarious position. They were either at risk of being written out entirely, or at being further marginalized and labeled as deviant. As Cheryl Thompson (2018) argues, "the invisibility of black subjects in Canadian archives has as much to do with past collection practices as it does with present ones. We continue to idealize certain aspects of our collective identity while demonizing others" (p. 84). Archives, Thompson contends, are more than repositories but serve as technologies of power. They are ideological and political. She states, "The choices that go into the creation of an archive, such as choosing certain images while excluding others, have implications on what is considered important" (p. 86). Although some identities and voices are recorded and made visible in an archive, others are rendered invisible and absent. Thompson (2018) contends, "where white bodies are named, described, and given agency in the archive . . . black bodies become disembodied, nameless, and/or appear inferentially in the archival record" (p. 87).

Syrus Ware (2017) similarly argues that conventional archives regulate what is allowed to be remembered. The archive, he claims, always begins with Whiteness. Even queer and trans archives, Ware contends, are marked with erasures of Black and Indigenous lives. He states, "This erasure is part of a larger conceptualization of the black queer subject as a new entity, whose history is built upon an already existing white LGBTTI2QQ space and history" (p. 172). Both Thompson (2018) and Ware (2017) argue that what is necessary in re-thinking the archive are *counter-archiving* practices.

Counter-Archives and Counter-Archiving

Counter-archiving is more than a process of diversifying conventional archives. This means it is not simply about adding previously erased or hidden histories to an archive, but a method of interrogating the logic of archives. As Ware (2017) notes, counter-archiving is a practice of interrupting the whiteness of archives. For Ware, this means disrupting the narrative that Black subjects are new additions to existing archives and an insistence that Black lives have always

been present. This requires an unlearning and undoing of dominant narratives and cartographies. Counter-archives, according to Jin Haritaworn, Gaida Moussa, Rio Rodriguez, and Syrus Ware (2019), are about imagining "futures beyond displacement and dispossession" (p. 5). As Ware (2017) contends, this necessitates a move from damaged-based research to what Eve Tuck (2009) calls a desire-based framework. Desire-based research examines

> not only the painful elements of social realities but also the wisdom and hope. Such an axiology is intent on depathologizing the experiences of dispossessed and disenfranchised communities so that people are seen as more than broken and conquered. This is to say that even when communities are broken and conquered, they are so much more than that—so much more that this incomplete story is an act of aggression. (Tuck, 2009, p. 416)

In a similar way, counter-archives insist on a mode of visibility detached from state produced documents and narratives. The goal is not "better representation" but to target and disrupt any claims of authority and value over the archive. Counter-archives become practices that are more relevant to lived experiences and histories.

Counter-archiving is also about opening up the archive to affects, bodies, performances, and other ephemera not traditionally considered archivable. Alvis Choi (2017) argues that archives need to be understood as living bodies that "requires balancing between academic and community expectations, and forces us to engage in deep reflection, honest communication, and ethical practices of the kind that prefigure the kind of community we wish to be a part of" (np). This means attending to the uncapturability of an event—it's lived traces that are embodied in bodies and memories—and that cannot be contained or recorded in a text. Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E. Truman (2017a) consider the material, vital and affective tonalities of archives and draw on the work of Anne Cvetkovich's (2003) queer archives of feeling. A queer archive of feeling resists coherence in favor of fragmentation, it follows an archiving practice that is illogical where documents represent far more than the literal value of the objects themselves, and are "composed of material practices that challenge traditional conceptions of history and understand the quest for history as a psychic need rather than a science" (Cvetkovich, 2003, p. 268). Although the materials and documents that constitute a traditional archive or a queer archive can be similar, a queer archive of feeling does not fulfill an institutional or official function. A queer archive of feeling is a form of counter-knowledge production, as a dynamic that unlocks, or liberates the archive. As an archive, it is not rooted in a fixed notion of a past but rather a futurity and urgency, shifting between fields of destruction, subversion, and regeneration. A queer archive of feeling seeks to share the affective tone of a process or event rather than relay

strict chronologies or typologies of identification. The affective tone of an event outlives the event. This shifts the function of the archive. Rather than an archive encapsulating what happened, the archive creates invitations to reactivate the event's core propositions. Thompson (2018) writes that

> The act of locating black voices, then, requires that researchers become forensic investigators with clairvoyant tendencies. Stated otherwise, we have to not only read between the lines but also sense where black bodies might have been in relation to white bodies. (p. 87)

Maandeeq Mohamed (2018) points to the ways in which the absence of archival materials can leave space for "a recognition of the fact that what is/isn't archived is but one of many fictions (a dominant one to be sure, but still fiction nonetheless) that constitute blackness in public life" (np). To that extent, a number of contemporary artists turn to speculative fiction and performance as a counter-archiving practice. For example, Canadian artist Camille Turner's audio walk *BlackGrange* leads participants through Toronto's Grange neighborhood, stopping at points of importance to the city's Black history. The stories are narrated by Afrofuturist space-time travelers, accompanied by evocative music which provides a consistent aural reminder that the narration is positioned in a time when "the reckoning has come, justice has been served . . . the crimes against humanity have been exposed and those whose futures were stolen have been compensated . . . We have not only survived, we have thrived" (Turner, 2018, np). Turner begins the walk by inviting a specific style of engagement with these histories. "Immerse yourself in this knowledge, savour it in your body. This walk is an act of memory, love and care. We invite you to come along with us, to honour the ancestors" (Turner, 2018, np). This invocation of embodied immersion in history and affective response is a reversal of the archival mechanism of neutral, pseudo objective analysis. As described in the project's statement, "*BlackGrange* not only re-maps this erased and forgotten history onto the Canadian landscape, it also questions the mechanisms that enable this ongoing erasure" (Truman, 2018, np).

BlackGrange's narrations and reenactments directly instruct and remind participants throughout the tour that the work demands a particular stance and style of attention. "Listen, listen closely," the narrator commands, "listen for sounds of the future, listen for echoes of the past, listen within, listen above, listen on the frequency of justice, listen for the agents of change" (Turner, 2018, np). In this way, listeners are not permitted to remain passive but are implicated in the project of meaning-making and justice-seeking, and are called to be mindful (". . . listen within," Turner insists) of our own role in the settler colonial project that underlies the histories being retold (Turner, 2018, np).

BlackGrange offers us an education in embodied counter-archiving practices.

BlackGrange also operates within the practices of Afrofuturism and is narrated by time-travelers. These practices furnish a speculative future context for the narrators, who then tell stories from the past, but importantly the audio walk itself is situated in the present. The narrators have traveled back to our time to share their insight and in so doing they demonstrate a temporality that is interwoven and in flux. This specific approach to time offers a possible response to a question posed by Maandeeq Mohamed (2018; herself also a participant in the original *BlackGrange* performance walk), namely "how are we to understand the archive and its contents as 'past' when black folks are still living out the afterlife of slavery and settler colonialism?" (np). *BlackGrange* does not allow the histories it recounts to be situated in the past, it looks forward and backward simultaneously. Turner's work allows for continuous activation of a counter-archiving re-temporalization, insisting that the continuum between the ancestors, participants, and time-travelers is active, intersubjective, and embodied. The stops along the way become a living geography of present day Toronto, full of the still audible (if one listens properly) voices from history. The overlooked black history of the Grange neighborhood thus refuses to be seen as a resolved "past" but comes to assert an ongoing, lively existence of ancestral presence, in opposition to archival erasure or accounting. This offers participants an embodied engagement not only with this particular narrative but invites us to consider employing counter-archiving practices and affective methods more widely. *BlackGrange* thus proposes a method of counteracting archival absence.

Another example of performance-based counter-archival art practice *Tape Condition: Degraded* is a project by Cait McKinney and Hazel Meyer that "addresses the state of porn and other representations of sexuality" in the VHS tape collection of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (CLGA; Meyer, 2016, np). Their project asks, "how might digital interventions broaden, diversify, or queer the kinds of bodies, pleasures, and identities the archives collects?" (Meyer, 2016, np). As a performance lecture, *Tape Condition: Degraded* examines the work of preserving queer porn. A central component of *Tape condition: Degraded* was the creation of an opportunity for members of the public to digitize their own VHS tapes. Within the installation at CLGA a digital transfer station was available to be booked, along with a volunteer to assist in converting aging VHS tapes to digital format. "Hidden behind a 'false wall' that references the archives' attempts to protect the porn collection from police raids in the 1980s" ("Tape Condition: Degraded," 2016, np).

This digital intervention has been characterized by Mary Kidd and Marie Lascu (2018) as an instance of "horizontal mentorship" (np). Part of an activist media framework that

attempts to address the loss of audio-visual works by marginalized communities, horizontal mentorship "supports the idea that audio-visual preservation skills can be taught to anyone, given they are provided with accessible documentation, tools, and instruction" (Kidd & Lascu, 2018, np). As Ann Cvetkovich (2003) elaborates, "in the face of institutional neglect, along with erased and invisible histories, gay and lesbian archives have been formed through grassroots efforts" (p. 8). *Tape Condition: Degraded* does not simply create a supplement to the existing archive. As Alvis Choi (2017) describes, in reference to QTBIPOC art and performance, it can be read as an example of "archiving practice that builds alternatives to the dominant narrative, rather than simply complementing it" (np). McKinney and Meyer's work offers an additional critique, embedded in the 1980s aesthetic of the exhibition itself, which "evokes the contentious history of porn and censorship in Canada and at this archives, but with reference to the present" ("Tape Condition: Degraded," 2016, np). They identify additional exclusions and threats of erasure (at times literal, as VHS format tapes degrade and their contents disappear completely if they are not deemed worthy of digitization) within the existing counter-archive, both at CLGA and in personal collections. The source of this secondary threat originates within the community itself, due to what they identify as "the pressures of liberalism and 'normal' aspirations for LGBTQ politics today (that) challenge the (CLGA) archives' longstanding commitment to preserving sexual representations" ("Tape Condition: Degraded, 2016," np).

Tape condition: Degraded is clearly not purely an exercise in archival preservation. Instead, its counter-archival methods engage with the feelings and bodies of the media makers themselves. McKinney and Meyer directly name the archive's role in "preserving and protecting queer desires, sexual subcultures, and the pleasures of collecting" ("Guardians Gather to Watch Porn, Reminisce," 2016, np). By integrating social practice, performance, counter narratives, and personal archives, *Tape Condition: Degraded* troubles linear notions of time and probes the ways in which the body and feelings can themselves function as archival sites and traces. Cvetkovich (2003) argues that

> In the absence of institutionalized documentation or in opposition to official histories, memory becomes a valuable historical resource, and ephemeral and personal collections of objects stand alongside the documents of the dominant culture in order to offer alternative modes of knowledge. (p. 8)

Counter-archiving practices highlight the histories, bodies, and voices that are typically absent or ignored in conventional archives. However, counter-archiving is more than a retrieval of erased or missing information. It also takes into account the ways that feelings, trauma, desires and memories are imprinted on the body:

> QTBIPOC art and performance often incorporates a strong physical embodied presence that is non-static. Each time we create and perform, we are not only externalizing; we are also internalizing. As performers, we know that whatever is manifested through the body (e.g., words, gestures or feelings) is simultaneously getting written into the body, becoming part of what the body remembers, an archive that is the body itself. (Choi, 2017, np)

Performance-based counter-archival practice acknowledges the body itself as a repository of memory and trauma. Not simply a matter of resurrecting forgotten or erased texts, counter-archival practice is located in the act of bringing forth and honoring embodied feelings and experiences that were often traumatically hidden and even criminalized. This is not a simple act of preservation of disappearing VHS tapes and their content, but one of at once transcoding both the media and the intimate, embodied histories they represent. Tellingly, the newly digitized material went home with the individual collectors, as the counter-archive being created was not added to the CLGA's collection, but existed in the activation of change to the media and participants themselves.

Anarchiving as Research-Creation Practices: *Instant Class Kit*

Informed by counter-archiving and anarchiving theories and practices, particularly in the arts, we approached a particular research-creation event via anarchiving practices. Anarchiving follows previous writing on research-creation by Stephanie Springgay and Sarah Truman (2017b) that argued for an approach to doing research attuned to speculative middles, (in)tensions, and more than representational practices. These practices are accountable to an ethics and politics that are situated, relational, and response-able. We use the term practice, as opposed to methodology or method, to signify the shift from form or medium, "toward open-ended actions, series, processes and projects" (Boon & Leine, 2018, p. 12). In contemporary art, writing practice, as opposed to an entity or artwork, denotes the dematerialization of the art object, the shift to social and political movements as art, and the interconnectedness of key concepts such as participation, relationality, and site-specificity. In this final section of the article, we explore three anarchiving commitments: *anarchiving as indeterminate transformation, anarchiving as felt*, and *anarchiving as response-ability* contextualized via the research-creation project *Instant Class Kit*.

Instant Class Kit is a portable curriculum guide and pop-up exhibition dedicated to socially engaged art as pedagogy. Produced as an edition of four, the kit brings together contemporary curriculum materials in the form of artist multiples such as zines, scores, games, newspapers, and other

sensory objects from a diverse group of artist-educators across North America. *Instant Class Kit* was curated in response to art historical and archival research undertaken as part of *The Pedagogical Impulse*, a research-creation project exploring contemporary art as pedagogy in schools. This research examined the experimental collaborative practices of Fluxus, Happenings, and other artist-teachers employed at art institutions across Canada and the United States during the 1960s (Miles & Springgay, in press). Fluxus was an international network of poets, artists, and composers who worked across different media, and who sought to integrate art into everyday life. Fluxus artists produced concerts and performances, as well as instructional works, ready-made objects, and printed editions. Against the backdrop of curriculum reforms, and social and political change, these artist-teachers produced and distributed printed matter and other multiples (such as posters, booklets and games) as documents of radical pedagogy. The current *Instant Class Kit* is inspired by the format and multisensory nature of Fluxkits. Fluxkits contained printed event scores, newspapers, and/or small, interactive three-dimensional objects housed in hinged boxes or retrofitted attaché cases. Fluxkits were produced in multiple editions, as part of anthologies, and for distribution via mail order.

Working in the Fluxus archives at museums, galleries, and postsecondary institutions, a number of challenges presented themselves—namely the tensions we have outlined earlier regarding the value and dominant ideologies that are contained within and circulate as part of the archive. Some of the tensions we encountered in the archives include the logic of who gets archived or who is most accessible in the archive. Fluxus events and artworks that are most available in art history records and the archive are one's typically associated with some of the more known names in history—John Cage and Dick Higgins, while many of the other 300+ artists who were officially or loosely affiliated are precariously documented. Furthermore, given that Fluxus work pushed the boundaries of the time in what constituted an artwork and ruptured dominant systems of the art market, only works that have particular value in the canon of art history in North America are classified and well documented in the archives. Furthermore, a great deal of Fluxus work existed as curriculum and pedagogy materials, and as such, these lesser known documents are often obscured in the archive. Another archival tension is that because Fluxus work was primarily event-based, a great deal of the archives are photographs and/or film reels, or publicity ephemera (e.g., posters, flyers, letters). Photographs, as archival documents, imply proximity to the original event, and as such act as a form of validation or proof. The photograph serves as evidence that an event happened, but becomes a precarious supplement to the event. In other words, while we could "see" in a photograph an event, the archival materials provided us with little to no context or information about the

actual event context or experience. Examining the photos became a speculative act—not unlike Fluxus chance event scores. In the archives, the Fluxus materials we encountered were further mediated by white gloves and cataloging systems governed by the archive. Fluxkits and Fluxus editions have become precious, collectible artifacts. However, according to art historian Hannah Higgins (2002), such objects demand to be touched, smelled, tasted, and heard, in addition to being observed, to fulfill their pedagogical function.

Working in the archives was incomplete—events, performances, and pedagogical works were only partially knowable. Particular stories, histories, and bodies were absent and ignored, and the affective, tactile, and sensory connection to the work was often lost. Taking our cue from contemporary art and curatorial practices of counter-archiving and anarchiving, we shifted our attention from asking: what does the archive tell us about radical pedagogy of the 1960s?—to *How do we want the archive to function now? What can the archive become?*

Fourteen contemporary artists contributed to the *Instant Class Kit*. The contemporary artists strive to deliver a curriculum based on the values of critical democratic pedagogy, anti-racist and anti-colonial logics, and social justice, as well as continuing the experimental and inventive collaboration that defined Fluxus. The lessons, syllabi, and classroom activities produced by this new generation of artists, many of whom are queer, trans, Black and Indigenous, address topics and methodologies including queer subjectivities and Indigenous epistemologies, social movements and collective protest, immigration, technology, and ecology. In exploring some of the kit contents, and the anarchiving practices that comprise the kit, we are guided by three anarchiving commitments: *anarchiving as indeterminate transformation, anarchiving as felt*, and *anarchiving as response-ability*.

Anarchiving as Indeterminate Transformation

Three of the four kits will circulate to local K-12 schools in the Toronto District School Board, and to postsecondary classes in North America. The fourth kit will remain inert, an archival repository of contents. It will have a fixed dwelling and a guardian and will be used for "research" purposes. The materials will be protected from wear and tear and will be reproducible if necessary. This *Instant Class Kit* is an archive—fixed, complete, cataloged, and preserved. It begins to assume the spectral quality of the conventional archive and its ritualized procedures: restricted access; gloved hands; dimmed lighting; silent, solitary, and supervised encounters. In relation to the preserved archive, the material of the body is understood as a force of contamination. For anarchiving practices not to close in on themselves, we needed to continue to ask questions of our

practice: How do we keep the anarchive moving? What does the anarchive do?

The three kits will travel by mail and the contents will be activated in different classes through chance encounters and indeterminacy. As the kits circulate and are handled in various educational contexts, the contents and the kits themselves (including the packing materials) will mutate and transform. This transformation is counter to conventional archiving practices but reflective of how we are practicing anarchiving, and also part of the Fluxus ethos. Fluxus artist Dick Higgins (1998) wrote,

> There was also the sense that if Fluxus were to incorporate some element of ongoing change—Flux—that the individual works should change. Many of the Fluxus objects were made of rather ephemeral materials, such as paper or light plastic, so that as time went by the work would either disappear or would physically alter itself. A masterpiece in this context was a work that made a strong statement rather than a work that would last throughout the ages in some treasure vault. (p. 225)

Hennessy and Lynn-Smith (2018) articulate the anarchive as the material transformation and change that occurs over time to archival objects. They argue that attending to these material transformations are significant because they speak to the dynamic and relational ways that humans interact with nonhuman objects. Entropy they contend "is the generative force of things breaking down on their way to becoming other things" (p. 131). Over time as the kits circulate and are handled by hundreds of students and teachers, the contents—made from paper, fabric, birchbark, spices, a sea shell, and other fragile materials—will show signs of wear. The pages will curl, fingerprints will mark pages, and the fate of the birchbark and shell are unknown. Unlike the Fluxkits, we encountered in the archives, no white gloves will be included in the kits. Rather, we invite activators to touch the objects, to hang them in their classrooms, to listen, smell, and respond to their materiality. Dick Higgins (1998) commented that

> Fluxus works do not lend themselves easily to becoming commodities—precious objects sold through stores, as art galleries want them to be, or beautiful fetishes to immortalize the donor of works in the local museum . . . There are only a few Fluxworks which could not be duplicated by the artist, more or less exactly, without any great effort. In fact, if a Fluxobject is damaged . . . it is often easier to remake it rather than repair it. This can be exasperating to the gallery or museum person. (p. 235)

In excess of the physical change that the kits would undergo, the kit contents await activation and transformation. Each of the contributions in the kit invites participation. But the "instructions" for activation are open-ended, indeterminate, and operate through an aesthetics of chance. Chance refers to operations where any number of outcomes can happen that cannot be predicted in advance. Artists use chance mechanisms to establish an initial set of procedures, but where the outcome cannot be predicted. As opposed to the idea of chance involving complete spontaneity and chaos, chance aesthetics typically include a degree of instructions and structure. Chance becomes "a way of introducing an element of uncertainty and contingency into the work, but it is not a matter of unbridled spontaneity or sheer chaos" (Iversen, 2010, p. 19). For example, Rodrigo Hernandez-Gomez *Listening Exercise* instructs,

> Multilingual pupils give a presentation in a language that the majority of the class does not speak. The presentation must be on a non-cultural topic of their choice and without translation.

Another example, Anthea Black's *Keep Queering the Syllabus*, a 16-page zine with hand-stitched binding, contains biographies and information on queer and trans artists. The zine contains information to be activated in class, but how this might happen is left open to its activators. What kinds of new activities, projects, and/or events emerge out of classroom engagements will contribute to further transformations of the kit contents? Brian Massumi (2016) describes the anarchive as a practice of creating new compositions, new forms of knowing, and being. Anarchiving practices invite embodied interaction turning them as Mereweather (2006) suggests from "excavation sites into construction sites" (p. 146). As the kits circulate, other kinds of counter and anarchival materials will accumulate in classrooms. Anarchiving is expansive, it seeds and germinates new ideas and new events, and they encourage a practice that germinates as it disrupts. This disruption involves messing with, or complicating, the impermanence and instability of materials.

Anarchiving as Felt

Alison Knowles Fluxus performance *Make a Salad* (1962) used everyday objects as musical instruments. The score included the swift sound of knives chopping interspersed with ambient noises from the environment. Many Fluxus work involved activating nonvisual senses including sound, touch, and smell. In the *Instant Class Kit*, a number of the works activate similar provocations. The People's Kitchen Collective (Sita Kuratomi Bhaumik, Jocelyn Jackson, Saqib Keval) *Kitchen Remedies* invites participants to bring the stories, traditions, and wisdom of our elders and ancestors into the kitchen. Small pouches with food ingredients ask activators to smell and put their noses and memories to work. For example, one pouch contains "Sugar tit," a familial name for a baby pacifier, made by placing a spoonful of honey, in a small piece of cloth, then gathering the cloth around the honey and twisting it to form a bulb.

The collective seeks remedies for everything from upset stomachs to the patriarchy (because we know that these are, in fact, connected). Ingredients hold stories of our resilience. In the face of oppressive systems, such as White supremacy, capitalism, patriarchy, the prison industrial complex, and police violence, healing ourselves is an act of self-determination. Through the act of healing, we feel the strength of those who have come before us. *Kitchen Remedies* includes four cards corresponding to four remedies from the People's Kitchen Collective. Open a container and pass it around. Read the matching remedy card. What does it smell like? Are the remedies familiar or unfamiliar? Is there a sensation or feeling evoked with each remedy?

In the context of queer archives of trauma, Cvetkovich (2003) writes that an archive of feeling is

> an exploration of cultural texts as repositories of feelings and emotions, which are encoded not only in the content of the texts themselves but in the practices that surround their production and reception. Its focus on trauma serves as a point of entry into a vast archive of feelings, the many forms of love, rage, intimacy, grief, shame, and more that are part of the vibrancy of queer cultures. (p. 7)

Kitchen Remedies operates via this turn to affect and sensation, albeit not exclusive to queer cultures, with food as the medium for memory and knowledge. Julietta Singh (2018) in writing about the creative capacities of archives ponders about her own body as "a messy, embodied, illegitimate archive" (p. 27). We read Singh's introspections in line with our anarchiving practices that become "a way of thinking-feeling the body's unbounded relation to other bodies" (p. 29). Moreover, as she contends, these anarchiving affects are always partial and incomplete, never becoming representative of "her core." Rather anarchiving as affective recognizes the instability and the limits of knowability, its porosity. Furthermore, Singh reminds us that normative ingestion is informed by colonial legacies, and therefore anarchiving as bodied becomes a way to conceive of anti-racist and anti-colonial ways of affecting and being affected.

Anarchiving as Response-Ability

The verb "to curate" Latin origins mean "to care for." Caring for the kit requires two intertwined conditions: a tending and reciprocity as the kit moved from ideation to assemblage, and response-ability and stewardship as the kit circulates. In closing this article on anarchiving as research-creation, we reflect on the ways we are accountable "to take care" of the kit and our anarchiving practices.

Tending and reciprocity. To tend to, become attentive to, be tender, listen, bend into, share, be accountable to collaboration, and exchange are just some of the ways that we think

about these concepts. Practically and quite literally, tending and reciprocity entails legal contracts, payment for work and/or services, and proper citations. It also demands that when artists and artistic practices are brought into classroom spaces, particularly in spaces absent of critical conversations about the art market and representation, that they happen— that students and teachers understand how their engagement with works of art—as anarchiving practices—become artworks that circulate publicly, and they are given the opportunity to determine how and through what means that happens. Furthermore, tending and reciprocity embody a way of being in the world "with" others—or what Stacy Alaimo (2016) calls transcorporeal relations. Withness is informed by Indigenous scholars Juanita Sundburg (2014), Bonnie Freeman (2015), and Jon Johnson (2015), who articulate *with* as a "more than" orientation (Springgay & Truman, 2018). Withness is not simply about collaboration but rather emphasizes complicated relations and entanglements with humans, nonhumans, and land, and an ethics of situatedness, solidarity, and resistance.

Rodrigo Hernandez-Gomez's *Calling* embodies this tending and reciprocity of anarchiving. Included in the kit is a palm-sized seashell wrapped in a thick piece of brown fabric. The first line of the instructional score that accompanies the shell states,

> Ask every person in class to whisper into the shell the name of someone they love or admire, pass it around.

Aryn Martin, Natasha Myers, and Ana Viseu (2015) remind us that "an attention to 'matters of care' remains open-ended and responsive: one does not know in advance where this attention will lead" (p. 630). Tending and reciprocity simultaneously demand that we consider the noninnocent histories in which care circulates. To engage with care as innocent, or an ameliorative good, only reinforces the ways that care already operates via capitalism, settler colonialisms, and other hegemonic structures (Murphy, 2015). Situating how and why we care means "paying attention not only to acts of care but also to the very conditions of possibility for care" (Martin, Myers, & Viseu, 2015, p. 635).

Syrus Ware's *Activist Love Letters* is similarly committed to an ethics of care. A project that Ware created, and which has been performed in a number of galleries and spaces internationally, asks participants "to think about their role in sustaining a movement and supporting their communities. Inspired by the powerful and often hidden letters that activists and organizers have sent to each other— words of support and encouragement, words of rage and fear, cautions and inspirations alike—this project has you considering your own activism and that of the people you hold dear. The project asks, "If you could reach out to one person who moves you by what they do, who would it be? What would you say?" Included with a set of love letter

scores are 10 letters that have previously been shared between activists, and the bios of 40 diverse activists, and a play list of activist music.

In an interview by Syrus Marcus Ware (2019, with Monica Forrester and Chanelle Gallant), the three activists use the framework of an interview-conversation as counter-archival work. In addition to supplementing existing archival materials on queer and trans sex-worker activism in Toronto, the interview, like *Activist Love Letters*, is grounded in lived experiences and personal narratives. The spatio-temporal period of the 1960s and 1970s activism is brought into the present-future through what Forrester names a collective "mapping of lives" (p. 42). The love letter project is about connecting through real and speculative writing to different people and about sharing in the response-ability of what that connection means. Ware asks people to mail the letters to the intended activists and to consider the kinds of actions of solidarity and care the writer will take in their own life. Gallant insists that this reciprocity and response-ability is paramount for cis-white people. Gallant writes,

> You must really, actually, in concrete ways, support the leadership of poor and working-class trans women of colour around the work that they're doing, whether they're innovating the work or resourcing the work . . . And then the other piece I see is really having those conversations and building up the capacity of other white cis folks to do that work as well, so that it is not left for trans people of colour to do. (Ware, 2019, p. 44)

Tania Willard's *Bush Manifesto* etched into a piece of living birchbark asks how gallery systems, institutional spaces, and art practices might be transformed by Indigenous knowledges, aesthetics, and land use (Willard, 2018a). "Land is art," writes Willard (2018b), "an interconnected power to create, imagine, and make real connections to the world, as well as to those who fly and those who swim" (p. 190). It is a practice of stewardship and decolonization that center Indigenous knowledges and creative land practices that "are born out of a lived connection to the land" (Willard, 2018a, p. 6). Christine Stewart (2017) writes, "Stewardship decentres the isolated individual as the privileged recipient or scene of care, and forefronts 'epistemically-diverse' conceptions and collective practices of care that centre upon relationships to land, territory, and nonhumans" (p. 4). Dylan Robinson (2017) contends that Indigenous counter-archiving requires research-creation practices that foreground situated knowledges, relationships, and Indigenous modes of perception.

Everything Is an Archive

Julietta Singh (2018) reminds us that archives are more than brick and mortar repositories of matter. A body of literature is an archive. A literature review. A comprehensive field of study. A stack of books. A syllabus. A digital hard drive of "data." A body—porous, entangled, and flesh of the world. Singh's words are significant because they remind us that everything is an archive—that whether you do research in an actual archive, or with archival materials, you are in effect archiving (or hopefully counter-archiving!). Research is the active making of an archive that organizes social and political values and systems of knowledge, rendering particular bodies, subjects, histories, memories, and affects absent. Therefore, it is imperative that we attune to counter and anarchiving practices to challenge dominant ideologies and narratives in our research practices. Queer, feminist and BIPOC scholars and artists emphasize collective and collaborative processes opening up dynamic possibilities that push archival impulses in new and urgent directions, affirming a future where the archive is open, unsettled, and relational. Anarchiving as a research-creation practice is concerned with the event of research, an affective and indeterminate process under continuous variation and intensity. Each anarchiving moment triggers a new event, and new chance encounters.

The response-ability that anarchiving engenders requires a capacity and willingness to respond—to collective action. As Martin, Myers, and Viseu (2015) write,

> If we were to hover in the moments before a researcher secures an object to care about, we would encounter an open field of potentialities–indeterminate subjects and objects, and expansive possibilities for forms and temporalities of response. To stay in this space is not to refuse to care, but to slow care down, to expose and to question the self-evidences that would otherwise prescribe its proper objects, as well as it seemingly necessary directions, temporalities, intensities, and forms of action. (p. 635)

The kit, unlike its name, did not happen in an instant! After years of labor in the archives and working with artists, the kit took 20 months to curate and assemble, and it will circulate for an additional 15 months anarchiving new modes of existence, relations, and encounters.

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