

BODIES AND CITIES AS ARCHIVES

EXPLORING ARCHIVAL FUTURES THROUGH MULTIMODAL REPRESENTATIONS

Dr. Aylin Yildirim Tschoepe (instructor) Seminar HS 2020



Social distancing: physical and mental analyses (Olivia Panchaud)



Obsolete Media (Judith Holly)



Queer Ark(ive) (Kaue Crima Bellini)



The way we communicate/ Digital Flow (Aude Schwitzguébel)

The readily available notion of an archive is that of an accumulation of two-dimensional records evidencing the past. In this course, we will revisit and go beyond this narrow definition and grapple with the diverse range of archives, often multimodal in their complexity. We consider different archives that use a variety of media and memory objects, including material to digital examples and the in-betweens. Along the following lines, we will also ask to what extent archives not only capture memory but also shape futures:

"In an enigmatic sense, ... the question of the archive is not ... a question of the past. ... It is a question of the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow.

The archive: if we want to know what that will have meant, we will only know in times to come." (Derrida 1996, 36)

As a site of selective memory, a collection of evidence in material and immaterial form shaped by various power dynamics, and a metaphor for holding data, the archive is central to the mediated production and understanding of archiving agents - in this course, we focused on the body proper and the city. Furthermore, we concerned ourselves with the "data carrier" and questions of format, temporality, materiality, technological possibilities, and accessibility, as much as with cultural practices of memorizing and forgetting, categorization, valuation and visibility. Projects and literature supported our discussion on how archival bodies at different scale are "made" and which lines can be drawn between practices of intersectional discrimination, objectification, control, contest, movement, reflection, redefinition. Concurrently, we unpacked the power of the archive and its emancipatory capacities.



Tattooed Identity (Julia Colleluori)



Taxi Driving Archive (Byron Dowse)



Being Nature (Bettina Zumthurn)



An alternative archive for denk.mal (Emily Steward)

Archives have various - at times contradictory - purposes. Governmental and institutional archives hold a particular power over the narration of history, however, social movements, civil society organizations, and various activist groups have created a range of alternative collections, often using oral histories or sound archives. As much as archives preserve what is to be remembered individually and/or collectively, they also render certain knowledges forgotten. We critically considered the silences as much as the imposed inscriptions, and began to craft new, reflected narratives with the future impact of archives in mind.

Service Learning

The course constituted a platform for **transdisciplinary exchanges and critical reflection**, and was intended to bring us together as a team of as learners at different stages in a **community of practice** format. Our main local partner was the Museum of Cultures in Basel, and through a critical engagement with their current exhibit and the Zeitzeug:innenprojekt, we grappled with questions of memory and forgetting, the responsibility of archivist, and the crucial role of critical archives when it comes to inclusive futures. We also invited scholars and practitioners to share their experience with us. Through this collaboration, and the team members' individual involvement with further social actors, we explored ways to visibilize what is often absent from dominant archives.

Achievements

Depending on their projects, students received guidance with these methods: oral histories, open interviews, participant observation, deep mapping, sensory ethnographic methods, curation. We considered the interaction of ethnographic content, material and immaterial elements of the **critical archives** and **multimodal explorations** as an alternative to text-only formats, and a way to address wider audiences, inviting them to partake in archiving. As research artefacts that connected us in a physical way beyond online encounters, students received "archival boxes" with various materials for collecting **physical, digital, and hybrid forms of evidence** (text, images, audio, video, objects).

Participants

Silvia Arias	Noemi Parisi
Kaue Crima Bellini	Olivia Panchaud
Julia Colleluori	Rosanna Pensel
Byron Dowse	Aude Schwitzguébel
Linda Hirt	Emily Steward
Judith Holly	Bettina Zumthurn



Source for images: Included images show a selection of students' critical archives (documentation: Susanne Käser, Aylin Tschoepe)
The entire documentation will be included in a virtual exhibit. A physical exhibit is intended for HS2021, pandemic situation allowing.

Guiding themes

- _the archive as artefact that holds particular knowledges and memories in the context of power
- _the archive as inscribed onto human and non-human actors
- _ the archive as actor and witness itself
- _the larger temporal and spatial networks in which archives operate

This course had as its key elements the critical engagement with theory and practice through collaboration with local partners, scholars, practitioners, as well as the exploration of multimodal genres of knowledge production. To implement and realize this key elements, we were supported through IMPULS, a program of the University of Basel and U-Change: www.unibas.ch/impuls

Working with local actors, critically reflecting on gender issues and the inclusivity of urban spaces and communities, we mainly addressed the following Sustainable Development Goals (goals 5, 10, 11 integrated into course content and addressed in projects, whereby some also addressed SDG 9;SDG 4 raised in student feedback):



Source for SDG icons: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/news/communications-material/>