UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Collecting Experiences

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in Information Studies

by

Andrew J Lau

2013

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Collecting Experiences

by

Andrew J Lau

Doctor of Philosophy in Information Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor Anne J. Gilliland, Chair

This dissertation is an ethnography conducted with the Los Angeles-based community arts organization called Machine Project. Operating both a storefront gallery in Echo Park and as a loose association of contemporary artists, performers, curators, and designers, Machine Project seeks to make "rarefied knowledge accessible" through workshops, site-specific installations and performances, lectures, and various participatory projects. Machine Project exists as but one instantiation of a larger movement in contemporary art around “alternative spaces,” or organizations and projects that resist and/or refigure the discursive structures imposed on art by institutions of cultural heritage and the art market. Alternative and artist-run spaces often operate with a Do-It-Yourself and independent ethos, and are often sustained by its communities of artists and the publics that support them. Many of the efforts of alternative spaces are process-based operations, whether as an exhibition space for experimental forms of

contemporary art, forums and workshops on a range of topics, performances, participatory projects, among others. Records created about the events, programs, and operations of these alternative spaces are often elusive, if created at all.

Historically, alternative and artist-run spaces have been invested in community building, the public circulation of aesthetic knowledge, the exposing of museums and other institutions of cultural heritage as discursive frames, and public participation. How does documentation serve to support such orientations? If an alternative or artist-run space describes its operations in terms of values like community participation and relational aesthetics, how might such values be folded into the production, circulation, and preservation of its records?

This dissertation is comprised of two primary sections. The first section includes a critical review of the archival science literature, identifying fundamental concepts of archival theory and practice that are directly relevant to the research questions, such as the principle of provenance, evidence, and records creation. This section also includes a chapter devoted to describing and assessing ethnography as a methodological approach for archival research, drawing in insights culled from social systems theory and information theory.

The second section of the dissertation is comprised of observations and reflections on Machine Project and its documentation practices at three levels of analysis. The first level explores documentation issues that emerge out of the organization's collaborations with arts institutions. The second level adopts a finer-grained view and looks at collaborative relationships between artists affiliated with Machine Project. The third level looks to notions of community as they are expressed in a selection of Machine

Project's events and programs, and analyzes the documentation produced by audiences and shared in social media spaces. The dissertation concludes with reading of Machine Project's documentation practices through the theoretical lens of the records continuum, which forms the basis for a critique of the records continuum and the burgeoning area of research on community archiving. Following this critique, the dissertation then presents a series of recommendations for future research and describes the metaphorical figure of the "itinerant archivist" as a conceptual intervention and strategy for self-reflection among archival scholars and practitioners.

The dissertation of Andrew J Lau is approved.

Johanna R. Drucker

Jonathan Furner

David Halle

Anne J. Gilliland, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the faculty members that have supported and encouraged me throughout this research process, and in the larger context of my postgraduate studies. Since I entered graduate school in 2006, Dr. Anne Gilliland has been a constant source of inspiration and knowledge. As members of my dissertation committee, Drs. Johanna Drucker, Jonathan Furner, and David Halle have provided invaluable insight and helped to cultivate this research project. Dr. Ron E. Day has been a dear friend and colleague since I began my doctoral studies, and has been one of my most vocal supporters. Thanks also go to Drs. Sue McKemmish and Frank Upward, for offering their wisdom and advisement.

Members of the Machine Project community have been integral to this research; without their assistance and spirit of openness, this study could not have come about. Thanks go to Mark Allen, Emily Lacy, Chris Kallmyer, Kimberly Varella, Liz Anderson, Sam Meister, Brody Condon, Michele Yu, David Eng, Melanie Heston, and the countless individuals that I have met and had conversations with about documenting alternative and artist-run organizations.

I would also like to acknowledge my colleagues and loved ones. Thanks go to Amelia Acker, Michelle Caswell, Jason Taksony Hewitt, David Kim, and Michael Wartenbe for reading my drafts, listening to my presentations, and offering their critiques and collegial love. Jeffrey Edwards, bless his heart, has provided me with immeasurable love and encouragement throughout this research process. And finally, special thanks go to my family, for believing in me even when I didn't always believe in myself. Thank you.

VITA

Education

Master of Library and Information Science, specialization in Archival Studies. University of California, Los Angeles. June 2008.

- Thesis: *Footprints of Identity: Migration Testimony, Cultural Memory, and Notions of the Subject*

Bachelor of Arts, Psychology, option in Research Methodology. California State University, Los Angeles. June 2005. Graduated *Cum Laude.*

Selected Publications

Gilliland, A.J., Lau, A.J., McKemmish, S. (in preparation). *Research in the archival multiverse.*

Lau, A.J., Gilliland, A.J., & Anderson, K. (2011). Naturalizing community engagement in information studies: Pedagogical approaches and persisting partnerships. *Information, Communication, and Society, 17*(1).

Pluralizing the Archival Curriculum Group (PACG). (2011). Educating for the archival multiverse.*The American Archivist, 74*(Spring/Summer), 61-101.

Day, R.E., & Lau, A.J. (2010). Psychoanalysis: Freud, Lacan, and Deleuze and Guattari. In *Critical Theory for Library and Information Science: Exploring the Social from Across the Disciplines*, edited by G.J. Leckie, L.M. Given, & J. Buschman. Santa Barbara: Libraries Unlimited.

Gilliland, A., McKemmish, S., White, K., Lu, Y., Lau, A. (2008). Pluralizing the archival Paradigm: Can archival education in Pacific Rim communities address the challenge? *The American Archivist, 71*(1), 87-117.

Lau, A.J. (2008). Burning down the shelf: Standardized classification, folksonomies and ontological politics. *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies, 4*(1), Article 4. http://repositories.cdlib.org/gseis/interactions/vol4/iss1/art4

Gilliland, A., Lau, A., Lu, Y., McKemmish, S., Rele, S., White, K. (2007). Pluralizing the archival paradigm through education: Critical discussions around the Pacific Rim. *Archives and Manuscripts 35*(2), 10-39.

Selected Presentations

Lau, A.J. "Quasi-records: Documenting Experience and Participation in Contemporary Art." Presented at the third annual Archival Education Research Institute (AERI) at Simmons College, Boston, MA. (July 10 – 15, 2011).

--. "The Archive in the Archives: Postcolonialisms in Archival Studies." Presented at the joint conference for the Association of Asian Studies (AAS) and the International Convention of Asian Scholars (ICAS) in Honolulu, Hawai'i (March 31 – April 3, 2011).

--. "'All Description is a Form of Creation': Constructing the Event Through Documentation." Presented at the Reimagining the Archive Symposium at the University of California, Los Angeles (November 12 – 14, 2010).

--. "The Technologic Puncture of the Archival Screen: The Question of Identity in the Age of Technofutures." Presented at the 2010 Conference for the Forum for Archives and Record Management Education and Research for the UK and Ireland (FARMER) and the Network of Archival Educators and Trainers (North Western Europe; NAET) at Wolfson College, Oxford, UK (July 5-6, 2010).

--. "Marginal Evidence: Towards an Articulation of Postcoloniality in Archival Studies." Presented at the second annual Archival Education Research Institute (AERI) at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (June 20 – 25, 2010).

--. "Technologized Memories: Identity Formation, Migration Testimony, and Psychic Stakes." Presented at the Archival Education Research Institute (AERI) at the University of California, Los Angeles, California (July 6 – 11, 2009).

--. "Evidence of Identity: Cultural Narrativity, Transmigration, and 'Records'." Part of the panel *Towards a Postcolonial Information Studies* presented at the 2009 iConference in Chapel Hill, North Carolina (February 8 – 11, 2009).

--. "Archival Education for Critical Consciousness: After Friere and Postcolonialism." Panelist at the annual meeting of the Association for Library and Information Science Education conference in Denver, Colorado (January 20 – 23, 2009).

Machines do more than revolutionize the world: they completely recreate it.

-Felix Guattari, *Soft Subversions*

Prologue

On Hyperion Boulevard in Silver Lake sits a bar called "The Other Side," above the Flying Leap Café. Almost every time I had been before, the clientele was a generally older crowd than my own mid-to-late twenties age bracket. More recently I had been noticing that in the later hours of Friday and Saturday nights, a younger crowd would saunter in sporting cut-off shorts and tank tops or otherwise dressed in some fashion-forward retro-inflected outfit. Perhaps The Other Side's distinction as the premiere queer piano bar on the east side of Los Angeles was the factor that pulled both demographics to converge over live showtunes and cheap drinks.

Occasionally, my friends and I would arrive in the earlier hours of the evening, after dinner, but before the late night rush would overtake the bar. On one of those evenings, I noticed that a customer was going to perform a song. I had seen the mic opened before for guest performances, for someone itching to belt out (with a robust and perfectly oscillating vibrato) his favorite Judy Garland tune. This time, I recognized the guest performer. It was Wu Tsang, a performance artist and filmmaker based in Los Angeles.

I had seen Wu before. The year before, a close friend of mine had taken me to a Tuesday night party called Wildness, at the Silver Platter in MacArthur Park. For a time, Wildness became the only place at which I wanted to share Negro Modelos with my compatriots and toast to an evening of drag performances and smart and sexy beats. I began to look forward to Tuesdays as a way to ring in the humdrum of each week's impending Hump Day.

Nearly every time I had seen Wu before (at Wildness and other queer events held around town), he had his hair tied up in a bun on the front of his head. It was worn that way as he walked up to the microphone. Wu began singing and it became apparent that he was going to perform the song *a capella*. I could hear the audience whispering among themselves, trying to figure out among themselves what they were about to witness.

The bar grew quiet. Everyone seemed to be studying Wu.

Suddenly, a wail bursts from Wu's mouth. Glottal stops. Sounds that did not sound much like words. Sounds that would start out forcefully, and then dissipate into vapor trails and whispers…and then a crescendo, and then more whispers.

It was one of the most powerful performances I had seen in a long while. I looked around and the crowd appeared divided in response. Though the light in the bar was dim, I could make out some of the facial expressions through the shadows. Some were dumbstruck with their mouths slightly agape and their eyes brimming with tears, others were looking at each other and communicating their mystification through shrugs and nervous chuckles. Perhaps Wu's performance was not standard fare at The Other Side, where a song like "New York, New York" reigns as one of the most oft-requested (but begrudgingly performed) tunes. Perhaps this was the reason that some of us found Wu's performance to be so beautiful, so moving, in its difference from the tried-and-true repertoire, a song for the sake of the song.

***

Performance artist and filmmaker Wu Tsang was a featured speaker at a January 2011 public symposium on performance, spaces, and community, held at the alternative space ART2102 in Los Angeles. The event was organized to coincide with the launch of a book project called *Dispatches and Directions: On Artist-Run Organizations in Los*

Angeles, edited by Ronni Kimm, former director of ART2102, and Los Angeles-based artist Jesse Aron Green. *Dispatches and Directions* was the final publication of ART2102 before the organization ceased its operations as a bricks-and-mortar exhibition space. The book itself is comprised of a four small booklets, featuring critical essays that range from describing the specific cultural landscape of arts communities in Los Angeles, focused descriptions of eight alternative/artist-run organizations, a directory of organizations and projects in Los Angeles, and a self-reflexive critical essay on ART2102 as an artist-run organization itself. The book also includes a fold-out constellation map of alternative and artist-run spaces that also doubles as a cover for the booklets (Figure 1.1).

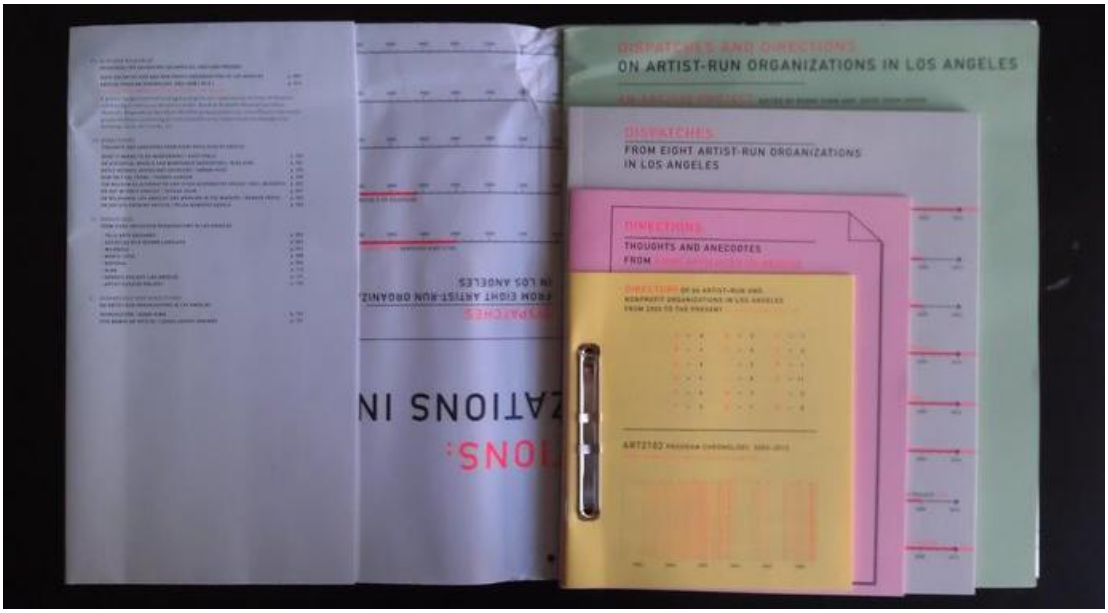


Figure 1.1. Dispatches and Directions: On Artist-Run Organizations in Los Angeles
Source: Andrew J Lau

One of the booklets included in *Dispatches and Directions* is a directory of 66 artist-run and non-profit organizations in Los Angeles, between 2003 and 2010. Kimm and Greene, through their efforts in culling together the essays, descriptions, graphics, charts, diagrams, and chronologies for the publication, have created documentation of a

distinct segment of the local arts community, one that is largely eclipsed by the museums and arts institutions of Los Angeles. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the publication was the manner in which it describes the organizations in its pages as a network of and for cultural producers, a social system of sorts that includes research think tanks, community educational projects, collaborations, informally constituted organizations, itinerant organizations, and exhibition and performance venues.

Dispatches and Directions includes a feature on Wildness, a weekly party that ran between 2008 and 2009 and was held at the Silver Platter, a bar in the MacArthur Park neighborhood that has served as a safe space for local Latin/LGBT communities in Los Angeles since 1963. Wildness was co-organized by Asma Maroof, Ashland Mines, Daniel Pineda, and Wu Tsang, who write:

> As a collective body we are brown queer trans creative people, working together with the Silver Platter to produce a night of music, dancing and live art. We've been organizing since February 2008 to offer a creative platform and dialogue between our intersecting LGBT [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender], POC [People of Color], and artist communities. Our event is free and self-sustaining. Our mission is to invent new ways of visualizing, physically experiencing, and talking about complex identity politics that surround our queer lived experience, through late night art making and partying.[1]

The inclusion of Wildness in *Dispatches and Directions* alludes to the publication's scope of coverage, with seemingly endless boundaries while also centrally featuring a spectrum of artistic organizations and collectives that sometimes defy conventional expectations of what constitutes contemporary artistic performance and exhibition. For many of these alternative and artist-run spaces, the focus is on building community around aesthetic projects and/or forms of artistic practices and expressions that may not

[1] Ronni Kimm and Jesse Aron Green, eds., *Dispatches and Directions: On Artist-Run Organizations in Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: Art2102, 2010).

be accepted as art within established structures. In some cases, legitimation and recognition from the larger art world and longevity might not even be a goal or interest. Rather,

> What makes these spaces alive is the vibrancy of the ideas, the idealism of its founders, and the underlying political, cultural, or social cause toward [which] they fight through concrete actions – be it exhibitions, happenings, programs, marketing or political campaigns. This underlying motivation is what fuels the innovation of formats. And it, again, brings us back to the notion of temporality, or rather, timeliness…like performance art, they are not rooted in permanence.[2]

It is important to note that these are themes and formats that gave rise to previous generations of alternative spaces since the 1960s. However, *Dispatches and Directions* sought to document the specific local activities of alternative and artist-run spaces in Los Angeles. Self-consciously selective, the final product of Kimm and Greene's efforts culminated in the creation of a publication that acts as a record for which none had previously existed through its survey the landscape of alternative and artist-run spaces in Los Angeles, however specific in its vantage point from within the city.

However, the manners in which *Dispatches and Directions* acts as a record differs from more traditional conceptions of the record in archival literature, in that it was not created or produced out of the administrative or bureaucratic activities of a single records-creating entity. Rather, the publication proclaims its partiality by acknowledging its observational gaze external to each of the organizations and projects it describes (i.e., from the position of ART2102), as well as its temporal boundaries and descriptive shortcomings and limitations. Kimm, in her introduction to the text, notes the diversity of the sorts of projects that such organizations undertake but also calls attention to the fact

[2] Pablo Helguera, "Alternative Time and Instant Audience (The Public Program as an Alternative Space)," in *Playing by the Rules: Alternative Thinking / Alternative Spaces* (New York: apexart, 2010), 31.

that each also "acts as a catalyst for the artist-driven community that surrounds it, creating a network through which relationships may be built, for the exchange of ideas, and in the pursuit of much needed discourse."[3] Reflecting on the seemingly quick turnover of many of these projects and organizations, Kimm continues, "The starts and stops of these projects are inevitable consequences of their independent ethic; longevity is often not the goal, and it is accepted that they should last only until the ideas – or the organizers – are worn out."[4] The importance of documentation is thus underscored, for the time-sensitivity of the activities of these organizations, for the in-the-moment kinds of programs they offer, and their artistic events that disappear almost as quickly as they are executed. As traces of the event, documentation is the means by which the events and activities of alternative and artist-run spaces might persist beyond their ephemeralities.

When I first thumbed through the pages of *Dispatches and Directions*, I became aware of my own position in the local art scene; I was struck by how familiar some of the events represented seemed. Some photographs included the familiar faces of friends or friends of friends, individuals I may have only met in passing and one of these art events, or people that I may have sat beside during the course of a workshop offered by one of these alternative spaces. I had interfaced with quite a few of these alternative spaces in Los Angeles already by attending an event or interacting with individuals who worked with such spaces, unaware of the network of relations in and between these spaces. Until I read the description of Wildness in *Dispatches and Directions,* it had not occurred to me that a weekly party at a little-known bar in MacArthur Park could be considered "art,"

[3] Kimm and Green, *Dispatches and Directions: On Artist-Run Organizations in Los Angeles*, 149.

[4] Ibid.

however liminal, temporary, or transitory. Perhaps the inability to distinguish between the politics of everyday life and art is precisely what the organizers of Wildness sought to catalyze, where art can be more than mere objects to be viewed at a distance, while emphasizing the interactions and relations between people in the limited time and space of the event, in all of their dynamisms and volatilities. In shifting my own conception of contemporary art practices to include important events like Wildness and the other organizations and projects in *Dispatches and Directions*, I began to see art in Los Angeles in a different way than I had previously. I began to see the entire city as a museum with hidden galleries and elusive exhibits to be uncovered if only you knew where to look or who to know.

Chapter 1: Documentation and Alternative and Artist-run Spaces in Los Angeles

Discussions of the alternative arts movement frequently include references to institutional critique, new genres, public art, community-based projects, and debates over the very notion of alternativeness in contemporary art. One might observe similarities among alternative spaces based on their common difference as alternatives to established arts institutions and as spaces, and yet they can be drastically different from each other in terms of their scopes, practices, methods, and interests.[5] Some utilize multiple forms of activity in order to construct projects and events around social interaction, including (but certainly not limited to) workshops, lectures, performances, and exhibitions. Some might adopt explicitly political missions to undergird their activities while others might locate their motivations elsewhere. Art educator Pablo Helguera identifies many of these projects as falling within two general categories: art-centered events (such as performances) and education-centered events (such as discussions, lectures, courses, and workshops). In his view, among the most innovative attempts at public programming in this vein are those that "…emerged from an informed conjunction of the two, along with non-content components – such as food, drinks, a party atmosphere – that emphasize a sense of communion."[6] He adds, "these experimental public programs cannot, and should not, aspire to be art or education as outcomes, but rather, as their medium. More than a balance between informal and formal education, this type of experimental programming

[5] Arlene Goldbard, "When (Art) Worlds Collide: Institutionalizing the Alternatives," in *Alternative Art New York, 1965-1985*, ed. Julie Ault (New York and Minneapolis: The Drawing Center and University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 183–187.

[6] Helguera, "Alternative Time and Instant Audience (The Public Program as an Alternative Space)."

is closer to informal conceptual art and informal education structure with a formal social agenda."[7]

At the College Art Association's 2009 Annual Conference held in Los Angeles, a panel conversation on the city's alternative exhibition spaces featured Christine Wertheim, a professor at the California Institute of the Arts (Cal Arts), Michael Ano of After School Art Project (ASAP), Sean Dockray of the Public School of Los Angeles, and Mark Allen of Machine Project.[8] Discussing the contextual significance of Los Angeles as an urban locale, the panelists described the features of the Los Angeles that made it particularly conducive to the proliferation of the "feral institutions," a term coined by Christine Wertheim and her sister Margaret Wertheim in 2002. Moderator Mathew Timmons drew a link between the rise of the alternative spaces of the late 1970s and the contemporary art scene of Los Angeles, noting that the current iteration of such exhibition spaces have taken the previous wave's agenda and expanded upon it in significant ways, especially in areas of arts educational programming. In response, Wertheim stated that she perceived a general lack of no or low-cost intellectually stimulating public programming in Los Angeles that did not treat "culture as spectacle," and that this apparent hole in the local cultural fabric was, for Wertheim, among the primary factors catalyzing the founding of her own itinerant arts/mathematics organization, the Institute for Figuring.

---

[7] Ibid., 27. The "party atmosphere" of these projects referenced by Helguera was also described by art critic and curator Nicolas Bourriaud in terms of "relational aesthetics," as a model of participation in contemporary art premised on "inter-human conviviality." See Dave Beech, "Don't Look Now! Art After the Viewer and Beyond Participation," in *Searching for Art's New Publics*, ed. Jeni Walwin (Chicago: Intellect, 2010), 15–29; Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. Simon Pleasance, Fronza Woods, and Mathieu Copeland (Les Presses du Réel, 2002).

[8] *LA's Feral Institutions* (College Art Association Annual Conference, 2009), http://www.archive.org/download/AfterallLAsFeralInstitutions/LAsFeralInstitutions022709.mp3.

Among the panelists, most significant was the theme of the democratization of artistic practice, which suggests a consonance with past artists and collectives since the 1960s developing agendas to engage local communities and publics, to turn "viewers into producers" through the enlisting of audience participation. What was of central importance (and continues to be for contemporary artists working in these modes) is the construction of the audience through a critical engagement with the very idea of "audience," and the limits and opportunities attendant to viewing or participating in the work. Who is the artist? Who is the audience? How does the participation audience shape the work? Art historian Claire Bishop posits three areas of continuity between the early interventions of conceptual art in the 1960s and contemporary scenes of participatory art: 1) the activation of the participatory subject in artistic practice; 2) the methodology of devising a non-hierarchical social model through the ceding of individual authorial control over the production of the work via collaboration; 3) and the attempt to provide a forum that seeks to encourage a collective elaboration of meaning mediated by artistic intervention.[9]

Julie Ault, former member of the now-defunct New York-based arts organization Group Material (founded in 1979), attributed the proliferation of alternative spaces between 1965 and 1985 to the specific cultural, social and economic contexts of the time. These alternative spaces were critical of established institutional structures of art production and circulation, commercialization and corporate underwriting of museums, marginalization of women and artists of color, among other concerns. Some of these organizations sought to reinvigorate artistic production and reception with a renewed

[9] Claire Bishop, "Introduction: Viewers as Producers," in *Participation*, Documents of Contemporary Art (London and Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel Press and the MIT Press, 2006), 12.

attention and commitment to issues of social justice and politics through the production and presentation of art that reflects or acts in service of efforts to underscore broader social and political issues such as racial, gender, and sexual oppression. Artists involved with these organizations sought to achieve these goals through the creation of independent grassroots spaces for art positioned in opposition to the "mainstream" and its institutions. It might come as no surprise that many of the alternative spaces had short life spans, with few lasting more than five or six years. Art critic and curator Brian Wallis identified the rise of alternative spaces with increased funding by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for such "Artists' Spaces" from 1972 through the 1980s. By the late 1980s, Wallis notes, the alternative spaces "movement" had atrophied as a result of the culture wars that characterized the Reagan presidency, and the radical right's use of "…oppositional rhetoric focused mainly on certain kinds of objectionable imagery, which they labeled pornographic or blasphemous."[10]

Ault laments that many of the documents that exist about these short-lived organizations remain elusive and distributed across museum and personal archives, with what little writing that exists about such groups captured in local newspapers, surveys in art history journals, reviews, and self-published documents.[11] Some of these documents were collected and preserved by organizations like Franklin Furnace, which began as an alternative space in the form of a community-based archive. Since its founding in 1976 by artist Martha Wilson, Franklin Furnace advocated for emerging forms of

[10] Brian Wallis, "Public Funding and Alternative Spaces," in *Alternative Art New York, 1965-1985* (Minneapolis and New York: University of Minnesota Press and The Drawing Center, 2002), 161.

[11] Here, Ault specifically speaks to the difficulty of gathering documentation for her exhibit *Cultural Economies: Histories From the Alternative Arts Movement, NYC* exhibition held at The Drawing Center from February 26th to April 6th, 1996, and for compiling her subsequent edited volume, *Alternative Art, New York, 1965-1985*.

contemporary art and had developed the largest collection of artist books which was later acquired by New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in 1993.

Artist-run organizations with a uniquely archival mission like Franklin Furnace are rare but important as examples of arts communities taking upon themselves the task of collecting documentation of events, happenings, performances, etc., which would otherwise disappear into the past. In describing alternative and artist-run spaces, Ault states:

> Because many alternative initiatives are ad hoc, time-based, or anti-institutional, documentation is frequently fugitive. Accessibility is another variable. For some long-defunct entities only a meager paper trail exists – a mention here and there in print. In some cases, material has been saved but remains unorganized due to lack of money, labor, energy, or interest. In still other cases, histories and data have been compiled and packaged. *What becomes history is to some degree determined by what is archived* (emphasis added).[12]

And yet the situation today is much different. The growth in the popularity of the internet as a means to access and share information, as well as the widespread adoption of social media technologies and personal computing devices, has catalyzed an unprecedented proliferation of possibilities for how individuals connect and interact with one another. While earlier generations of archivists grappled with the rise of electronic communications and its implications for recordkeeping, few have turned their attention to exploring the socio-technical implications of social media, and how earlier debates over electronic records might be translated today in such areas.

Whereas artists' documentation was once captured primarily in the form of analog materials (e.g., notebooks, diaries, disparate pieces of ephemera, film, video, and the like), the popularity of social media and networking websites like Flickr, YouTube, Vimeo,

[12] Julie Ault, "For the Record," in *Alternative Art New York 1965-1985*, ed. Julie Ault (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 2–3.

Facebook, Twitter, etc. presents new opportunities to artists for the circulation of documents of their work. Relatively low-cost mobile recording devices like digital cameras, video, and audio recorders facilitate the possibility of near-instantaneous capture of moving and/or still digital images of the events which may be then uploaded to a social media website to be shared with the online public. By the same token, this quick capture of a representation of event in digital form also allows for relative ease in editing video and photographic content with the goals of public dissemination with little turnaround time between capture to dissemination.

When distributed in the spaces of social media, these documents are able to circulate with little effort on the part of the artists and their organizations after the initial uploading to the extent that they are placed within social networks of information sharing. Using social media and social networking platforms, artists are able to upload videos, photographs, statements, and other descriptions of their work for direct delivery to their audiences. Recalling Ault's earlier statements regarding the "fugitive" documentation of the alternative spaces of New York, the significance of artists' use of social media platforms to disseminate and publicize their works suggests myriad possibilities for artists to represent, mythologize, and project themselves through their documentation, to present themselves to spatially and temporally dispersed audiences that may have been unable to attend an event, audiences that they would otherwise be unable to reach if their documentation were held only in their studios, personal collections, or managed in institutional archives or special collections. Similarly, alongside the "official" or artist-approved documentation created and shared on social media platforms are the documentary artifacts created by other individuals – such as collaborators and audiences

– participating in or observing the events of alternative spaces. In contrast with the situation of documentary scarcity described by Ault, the problem that future art historians and interested audiences are much more likely to face now is the overabundance of documentation rather than its paucity, emanating from multiple sources *including the audience*. How might archivists begin to approach such a volume of documentation, particularly in terms of archival operations such as selection/appraisal, description, and long-term preservation? What specialized knowledge can archivists bring to bear on understanding the socially complex dynamics of participatory documentation?

Documenting alternative and artist-run organizations is a time-sensitive endeavor, and artists create and keep records in a number of ways to create documentary artifacts as representations of events. Digital video recording and still photographs are popular media for documenting events and, when shared in online space, have the potential to become communicative objects whose functions extend beyond mere recall and might "reincarnate" the event as a new event in another time and place. How do such documentary artifacts come into existence? What is involved in the processes of creating and constructing records as objects of reference to an event, and how might an event transcend its temporal and spatial boundaries through new and emergent contexts for the sharing of arts documentation? To answer these questions, this study explores, analyzes, and describes the documentation practices of a Los Angeles-based artist-run organization called Machine Project. I aim to illustrate that the documents produced by artists, arts institutions, and audiences function together and alongside each other, offering perspectives on the work from different positions of viewing and experiencing the event, including audience documentation functioning alongside "official" artists' documentation.

Machine Project: "Heroic Experiments of the Gracefully Over-Ambitious"

Machine Project's storefront gallery, which loosely serves as its headquarters, sits at the intersection of Alvarado Street and Sunset Boulevard in the exceedingly hip and increasingly gentrified neighborhood of Echo Park. Often, Echo Park is lumped together with other "east side" neighborhoods like Los Feliz and Silver Lake, geographically situated between the grimy glitter of Hollywood to the west and the recently revitalized Downtown Los Angeles to the east. Echo Park exhibits many of the qualities that we have come to expect of such urban, transitional, or working class neighborhoods: a hyper-mixed local community comprised of immigrants, artists, musicians, and other creative professionals that seek low rent living situations in an urban bohemia with graffiti murals and wheat-paste posters as backdrop to the dense diversity of the local environs.[13] At the Alvarado/Sunset intersection, there is a burrito stand, a frozen yogurt shop, an all-night diner called The Brite Spot (favored by cops assigned to that stretch of Sunset Boulevard), the Edendale branch of the Los Angeles Public Library, an American Apparel store that is seemingly always empty despite its prime location and large neon-encrusted footprint, and the Machine Project storefront.

[13] For an in-depth historical investigation into the communities of Edendale (present day Echo Park, Silver Lake, and Los Feliz) see: Daniel Hurewitz, *Bohemian Los Angeles: And the Making of Modern Politics* (University of California Press, 2008).

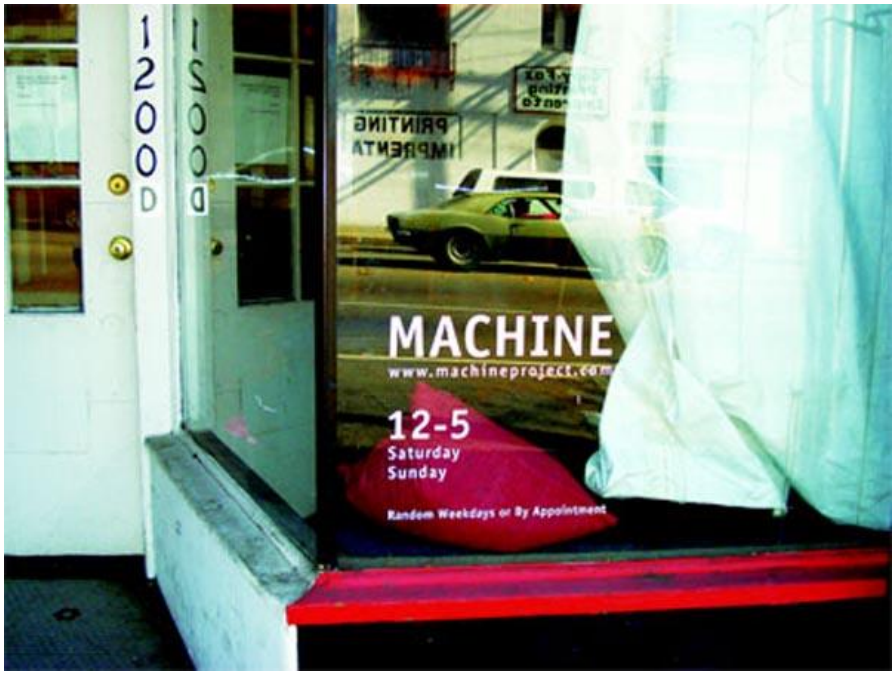


Figure 1.2. Machine Project Storefront Gallery
Source: Machine Project

The uninitiated would likely stroll by Machine Project without so much as a second glance. Flanked by the Down Beat Cafe and the Echo Park Film Center, the space is announced by a decal in the window (Figure 1.2). On the days and/or evenings when Machine Project is holding events, however, it is not uncommon to see bodies crammed into the small gallery space, or to see a cloud of cigarette smoke billowing up from the crowd spilling onto the sidewalks amid the din of laughter and convivial chatter.

The space that would eventually become Machine Project was discovered in 2003 by director and founder Mark Allen while he was searching for an apartment in which to live. He stumbled across the storefront and on a whim decided to lease it. The space would also eventually become the staging ground for the installation of a forest (Figure 1.3; installation view from inside the gallery toward Alvarado Street):

Figure 1.3. Forest at Machine Project by Christy McCaffrey and Sara Newey (2009).
Source: Machine Project

And the shipwreck of an imaginary sea-faring vessel called the Sea Nymph (Figure 1.4):

Figure 1.4. Sea Nymph at Machine Project by Joshua Beckman (2010).
Source: Marianne Williams

And a gallery-sized camera obscura into which visitors can walk and view an image of the street outside, inverted and displayed on a projection screen (Figure 1.5):

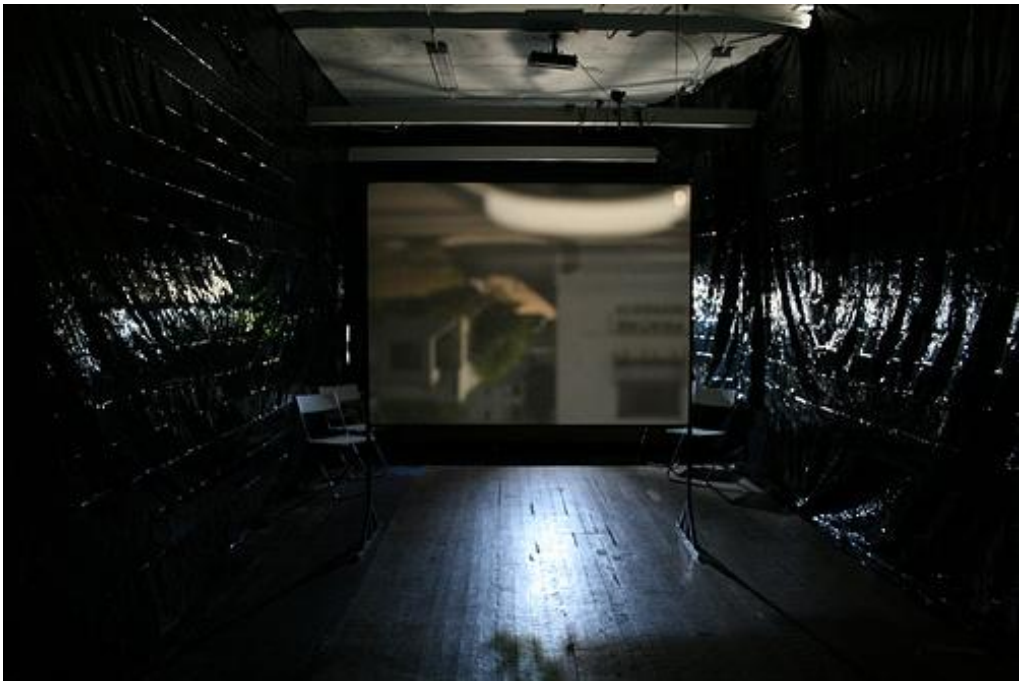


Figure 1.5. Camera Obscura by J. Frede at Machine Project (2010).
Source: Machine Project

It is difficult to say exactly what Machine Project is, and this indeterminacy is partly what allows it to thrive. Is it a gallery? An artist-run space? Is it a collective? Is it a sustained experiment in collaboration? Machine Project is all of these and more, and is itself an organization that is built upon a certain measure of ambiguity, openness to the circulation of ideas, and experimentation. For Machine Project, with ambiguity comes the opportunity to shift views and provoke new experiences in audiences through the programming of events designed to be accessible to the public.

In 2006, the LA Weekly published an article describing Mark Allen as "the collector of experiences."[14] Journalist Gendy Alimurung describes Machine Project thus:

> It's a gallery, but there is no art hanging on the walls. It's a community center, but the "community" has no concrete parameters and is ever shifting. People take classes there — events are often structured around lectures, a setup Allen calls "casual pedagogy" — but it isn't a school. People attend art openings that feel more like intimate house parties, but anybody, literally anybody, is invited to just walk on in. Allen is a collector of people, not artists necessarily, but rather people who have interesting ideas and ways of looking at the world — engineers, chemists, physicists, astronomers, computer geeks, historians, students, teachers, enthusiasts of all kinds. He is also a collector of experiences. Any machine, after all, is a sum of its parts.[15]

Allen has written in the introduction to the *Machine Project Guide to Cultural History & the Natural Sciences*, "The name 'machine' places us in deliberate contrast to the traditional functions of museums and galleries. We wanted to create a machine for cultural transformation, a place for working rather than archiving and commoditization."[16] Machine Project "exists to encourage heroic experiments of the gracefully over-ambitious" and to make rarefied knowledge accessible.[17] In this capacity, they seek to provide educational resources to artists and the interested public while working with artists to produce site-specific, non-commercial works, and encourage and promote conversations between artists, scientists, poets, technicians, performers, and the communities of Los Angeles as a whole.[18] However, as Alimurung noted, Machine Project offers no explicit definition of how the community is understood. Rather, what is

[14] Gendy Alimurung, "The Collector of Experiences: Mark Allen and His Machine Project," *LA Weekly*, December 27, 2006, http://www.laweekly.com/2006-12-28/news/the-collector-of-experiences/.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Machine Project and Pomona College Museum of Art, *Machine Project Guide to Cultural History & the Natural Sciences*, Project Series 29 (Claremont, CA: Pomona College Museum of Art, 2006), 8.

[17] Machine Project, "FAQ and Other Information," *Machine Project*, n.d., http://machineproject.com/faq/.

[18] Ibid.

implied is that the community is comprised not of a prior constituted audience, but as a contingent collective, an "instant audience" that comes together in and because of the ideas and obscure obsessions of the artists/lecturers/facilitators/performers, a community that forms and dissolves within the time and space of the event.

In 2011, Allen drafted a vision and values statement as a formal codification of the organization's investments, its mission, and its orientations. While many working notes describing Machine Project's philosophical orientations have been created since the inception of the organization, the vision and values statement outlines its *raison d'etre*, the organizational program that delineates the scope of the sort of events that Machine Project aims to offer its audiences:

> Machine Project seeks to foster collaborative exploration and experimentation as modes of learning and to support emergent forms of cultural production that don't fit within established structures. We do this by creating spaces for open engagement between people, institutions, and bodies of knowledge and technology.
>
> Machine Project is founded on the belief that exciting and truly original ideas come out of conversations and processes of making and doing that are not goal-oriented and do not follow prescribed patterns, but are rather approached with genuine and invested curiosity.
>
> As an entity, Machine Project is mobile and multi-nodal, an energetic and constantly shifting configuration of particular interests and subjectivities that interact with each other and their environs. We use art to inject an ambient sense of inquiry, permissibility, and intellectual engagement into daily social life.[19]

From this vision statement, Machine Project extrapolated six core values:

- Openness
- Relational learning and growth
- Active engagement
- Specificity

[19] See Appendix 1. Mark Allen and Kirsty Singer, "Machine Project Vision and Values" (unpublished document, 2011).

- Experimentation
- Potential and emergent forms.[20]

These values assume a programmatic role in describing the events, practices, interests, and motivations of Machine Project; the significance of the organization's vision and values statement allude to the structuring capacities of documentation, as an authoritative self-description of the organization and the sorts of projects that Machine Project takes to be its scope.

The creation of the vision and values statement came eight years after the initial founding of the organization in 2003. As such, the document is the product of the organization's reflections on its programming since its founding while simultaneously projecting toward its future programs. Machine Project was born out of Mark Allen's previous work with the Los Angeles-based artist-run organization C-level, which he co-founded in 2001.[21] Two years later, Mark Allen founded Machine Project. The organization's website, which includes an Archive of Past Events in the form of a running list of event announcements, identifies as the first Machine Project event *Sexy Midi* by artist and animator Kelly Sears (November 15, 2003). *Sexy Midi*, a mobile musical metal site-specific video performance, coincided with Machine Project's ribbon-cutting ceremony. On May 17, 2005, Machine Project was granted 501(c)(3) status as a not-for-profit organization by the State of California, and one month later on June 13, 2005 became recognized as a business entity by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).[22]

[20] Ibid.

[21] "About," *C-level*, accessed January 12, 2012, http://c-level.org/about.html.

[22] Machine Project, "FAQ and Other Information."

It is important to note that Machine Project's programming is built around certain exclusions of more traditional forms of art, such as drawing, painting, or photography, since such forms are well-represented in other commercial and not-for-profit galleries and institutions throughout Los Angeles. Rather, Machine Project is interested (at the time of this writing) in accommodating:

- Experimental or ultra-traditional acoustic musicians who play anything but guitar;
- Installation artists with a strong research component on topics outside of purely art historical and aesthetic concerns (anthropology, sociology, natural sciences, etc.);
- Lecturers/researchers/performers combining subjective material with pedagogical elements.[23]

Despite this broad scope, there is a continuity that coheres it, namely the organization's focus on the immediacy of its events and the specific time and places in which they transpire. The emphasis of Machine Project's programming is less on the production of supposed "art objects" or objects to be viewed at a distance, and is instead shifted toward developing projects and events that highlight active participation and the provocation of new or unlikely experiences in audiences. For Machine Project, the medium of their collective practice is the programming of events intended to build a community of artists, technologists, curators, amateur enthusiasts, do-it-yourselfers, and audiences through collaboration and public engagement.

When time is introduced as an element of a work of art, such as in the case of Machine Project's events, documentation of those events serves as the means by which to access the event through its representations. Art historian and curator Martha Buskirk identifies significance in the moment of "the transition from a work of art's initial appearance to its extended life as an object to be preserved, collected, and contextualized

[23] Ibid.

as part of a historical narrative."[24] From this transition emerges a complex negotiation that surfaces a host of questions, not least of which includes the emergence and construction of relationships between a work and its documentation: "The more immediate, the more ephemeral, the more of-the-moment or of-the-place the work is, the more likely that it is known through images and accounts, the two sometimes working together, sometimes in isolation from one another."[25] This insight resonates with the documentation practices of Machine Project and for the organization's interests in developing its events. In the context of Machine Project's events, the specificity of the locations at which they were held supplies a necessary component of the creative context of event documents.

Site-specificity as a critical concept provides a means by which to engage Machine Project's recent turn toward collaborating with museums.[26] These references to site-specificity in Machine Project's oeuvre construe the city's art institutions as part of an urban laboratory, coinciding with the organization's convention of naming some of its institutional collaborative exhibitions and their associated catalogs as "field guides," e.g., *Machine Project: A Field Guide to Los Angeles County Museum of Art* (held at LACMA, November 15th, 2008), and the *Machine Project Guide to Cultural History and the Natural Sciences* (held at the Pomona Museum of Art, January 22nd – April 9th, 2006).

Art historian Miwon Kwon traces the genealogy of site-oriented works from the conceptualism of the 1960s and 1970s through the movement of critique directed at the institutional frames in which art is exhibited. "Going against the grain of institutional

[24] Martha Buskirk, *The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 12.

[25] Ibid., 223.

[26] Machine Project, "FAQ and Other Information."

habits and desires," Kwon states, "and continuing to resist the commodification of art in/for the marketplace, site-specific art adopts strategies that are either aggressively anti-visual – informational, textual, expositional, didactic – or immaterial altogether – gestures, events, or performances bracketed by temporal boundaries."[27] However, she identifies recent turns in site-oriented artistic practice as having diverged from the critique of the institutional frame as the primary locus of critical intervention, focusing on interjections that place artistic practice within the "realm of the social" and everyday life.

Nick Kaye advocates for a perspective that understands the site-specific work in terms of theatricality and performance, or the site-specific work itself *as* performance. He argues that "site-specificity should be associated with an underlying concept of 'site', rather than with any given or particular *kind* of place or formal approach to site…site-specific practices are identified, here, with a *working over* of the production, definition and *performance* of 'place.'"[28] Reviewing site-specific practices reaching back to the early projects of Conceptualism in contemporary art, Kaye foregrounds the role that documentation plays as part of the work, whether in the form of instructions or choreographies for performance or of photographs serving as evidence of an event. Despite this role, the documentation of the work is mired in the contradiction of its own limits: the inability for documentation to fully reproduce the work in the act of recording, the construction of a representation for later re-presentation. In this sense, documentation provides a means by which to access the work at a remove, which requires the viewer of

[27] Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 24.

[28] Nick Kaye, *Site-Specific Art: Performance, Place and Documentation* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 3.

the documentation seeking access to the work to construct it him or herself in the act of viewing.

This project seeks to build upon the notion of site-specificity as part of Machine Project's documentation practices in order to describe the importance of considering the physical site of the organization's events as a crucial aspect of the art itself. That is, site specificity engages with the notion that an art event held at one location necessarily means that the event would be a completely different event were it transposed to a different location. Moreover, temporality figures prominently in attempts to document or archive the events and activities explored in this dissertation. As many of Machine Project events are indeed time-based or of limited duration *in addition* to being site-specific, the question becomes how to account for the temporalities and durations of the events represented in the documents. These are questions not only of representations of events as captured in documents but also how information and communications technologies shape the construction of those representations.

The Scope and Objectives of the Dissertation

This research sits at the disciplinary intersection between archival studies, art theory, and sociological theory. Mapping across these conceptual terrains requires active engagement at the disciplinary interstices in order to identify common areas of interests and investments and draw connections between them. In recent years, the question of collaboration has become a major point of discussion in the information professions. With the rise in popularity and public access to networked technologies, interest in collaborative work has been expressed in multiple areas, including the development of national and international infrastructures for science (e.g., cyberinfrastructure, eScience),

commerce, and social interaction. The mediating roles that networked technologies play and the speed with which communications occur by way of emerging information and communications technologies (ICTs) are rooted in the compression of space and time.[29] Insofar as distributed communications may occur almost instantaneously, major shifts have occurred (and continue to unfold), expanding and changing the ways in which we are able to share and circulate information. One cannot ignore the impact of social networking and social media on contemporary communications in light of the popular rhetoric that touts the internet's capacity for democratization of information through participation, user generated content, collaboration, and the formation of online communities.[30]

The archival profession, which has long focused on the preservation of records of enduring value,[31] has found it difficult to keep pace with such large-scale technological changes, particularly in dealing with the shift from analog to digital communications. The relationship between recordkeeping and technology has been at the center of many debates in the archival discourse, extending the American tradition of archival practice as far back as Theodore R. Schellenberg's manual on modern archives.[32] Reflecting on the

[29] See (Chapter 6, in particular): Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture* (John Wiley & Sons, 2011).

[30] Linda Lai and Efraim Turban, "Groups Formation and Operations in the Web 2.0 Environment and Social Networks," *Group Decision and Negotiation* 17, no. 5 (2008): 387–402, doi:10.1007/s10726-008-9113-2.

[31] David B. Gracy, II identified a "fateful paradox" in the concept of permanent value, which he refers to as the basis for the shift in terminology from notions of records' "permanent value" to "enduring value." He states: "…nothing is permanent. People and society acknowledge no absolute, no permanent, value. The interests, aspirations, foundations, and values of society are forever shifting, forever developing, forever changing." See: David B. Gracy, "Is There a Future in the Use of Archives?," *Archivaria* 24 (1987): 4.

combination of social conditions at the time of his writing and the increasing use of technologies of mechanical reproduction (e.g., the mimeograph, hectograph, the Photostat, typewriter, etc.), Schellenberg delineated a set of principles and techniques that attempted to grapple with the increasing accumulation of records, many of which were duplicates.[33] In doing so, Schellenberg implicitly sought to revise the role of the archivist for society, which he fashioned around the archival function of appraisal, the identification of what records would be of most interest to future users.

Simultaneously, the archival profession adheres to long-held traditions and practices that do not reflect the pace of contemporary networked society. To date, the archival profession has only expressed spotty interest in exploring how to map its principles, theories, and practices onto the largely uncharted terrain of today's online realms, often focusing only on the online presentation of digital objects, rather than how online space can be used to facilitate public engagement with archival collections in meaningful interactive ways, or how archival functions might be enriched with the complex affordances of networked technologies. On the archival theoretical front, recent technological developments, especially in terms of interactivity, have challenged fundamental concepts of the field, including records creation and authorship, the provenance of records, arrangement (specifically the principle of original order in which records are to be arranged in the order created or received) and perhaps most

---

[32] Theodore R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques*, Archival Classics Reprints (Topeka, KS and Chicago, IL: Kansas State Historical Society and the Society of American Archivists, 1996).

[33] Ibid., 82–83. See also: John Ridener, *From Polders to Postmodernism: A Concise History of Archival Theory* (Duluth, MN: Litwin Books, 2009), 110–111.

disconcertingly for the profession, the concept of record and of what constitutes an archive.

In order to approach the complexity of records, the context of their creation and potential meaning, what is needed is multi-level and multi-dimensional inquiry that not only includes the situated culture of records production within the organization, but also the records that are produced outside of the organizational boundaries.[34] One area where these boundaries of identities are crossed is in collaboration, wherein multiple entities temporarily come together in order to produce a common event or product. Collaborative relationships are examples in which the boundaries of those engaged in the relationship become temporarily permeable and negotiable.

This dissertation is concerned with the definition of the record, as both an informational and evidential object in the context of alternative and artist-run spaces. What are the processes leading to the creation of documents? Can documentation, as the creation of a representation of an art event, act as record and if so, in what ways? Who decides such definitions? Disentangling and disambiguating the concept of the record is no small undertaking, since archival science has itself emerged from disparate historical situations (e.g., Sir Hilary Jenkinson's war archives, Theodore Schellenberg's modern

[34] Not all archivists agree that records are complex objects, nor is theory entirely accepted by the archival profession as an integral part of its discourse. In fact, there is within the archival profession a clear disdain for theory coming from certain segments. Speaking of electronic records, archivist Paul Marsden notes: "…there seems to be a tendency for theory to be such a distance ahead of method and practice as to disconnect the two entirely. The result is a body of literature on electronic records possessing not just a confident didactic tone, but a tone of presentation which casts doubt on the current context and practices of archivists, indeed calls upon them to recast their minds. One witnesses a constant redefinition of terms and the appropriation of others, all of which leaves a sense that whatever archival footings remain, they are on very stable ground. *For most archivists, however, the need is not to attack the past nor to resist the future. They are largely interested in such theoretical debates and want merely to reconcile the present and the past with the future so that they can continue practicing their profession* (emphasis added)." See Paul Marsden, "When Is the Future? Comparative Notes on the Electronic Record-Keeping Projects of the University of Pittsburgh and the University of British Columbia," *Archivaria* 1, no. 43 (December 2, 1997): 158–173.

archives and the rise of mechanical reproduction, etc.), with theories about organization and preservation extrapolated from those practices. Far from being a unified and cohesive body of ideas, many archival principles and theories have been exported from their geographic and temporal places of origin, and adopted in contexts other than where they initially emerged. The archival principle of provenance (or *Provenienzprinzip*) is an example of this, with roots that date back to 1881 when the Prussia State Archives issued regulations that records of the same provenance should be kept separate from records of a different provenance, and that records should be kept in the order of their creation (also known as *Registraturprinzip*).[35]

Often such theories and codified best practices often appear unified or even universal, particularly when established and circulated as standards (e.g., standards for practice as described and disseminated by national and international professional associations). But despite the widespread adoption of such professional standards, it remains necessary to revisit and revise the conceptual bases of archival ideas, in order for the field to remain relevant to broader cultural and social, and increasingly, networked technological situations.

Chapter Two of this dissertation describes and critiques concepts within archival discourse in order to situate the current investigation, looking to the concept of the record as it emerges in two dominant strands of archival theory: diplomatic theory and criticism, and the Australian records continuum theory. While these schools of thought are not the only ones within the archival field that have attempted to grapple with the concept of the

[35] Anne J. Gilliland-Swetland, *Enduring Paradigm, New Opportunities: The Value of the Archival Perspective in Digital Environments* (Washington, D.C.: Council on Library and Information Resources, 2000), 12–14.

record, both offer divergent – one might dare to say opposing – perspectives on the record and thereby offer competing views of the record and its relations to the events and activities that it purports to represent. This chapter also reflects on the emerging literature on community archives and the stakes of such grassroots initiatives on society's social and cultural heritage.

Chapter Three is devoted to describing the ethnographic method used for this study. Rather than assuming participant-observation as the epistemic foundation of ethnography, this chapter offers a theoretical exposition on how ethnography's focus on participant-observation, relationality with informants, and thick description might be problematized rather than accepted as self-evident in ethnography. I draw upon insights from sociologist Niklas Luhmann's social systems theory in order describe the complex relationships that comprise the Machine Project community and the development of its documentation practices.

Chapter Four focuses on two of Machine Project's institutional collaborations: 1) Machine Project and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) for the *Field Guide to LACMA* event; and 2) Machine Project and their yearlong residency at the Hammer Museum in Westwood, California. While certainly not the only institutional collaborations in Machine Project's history, the two cases described in this section provide an interesting comparison between collaborative relationships of different timescales. The purpose of this comparative analysis is to explore the implications of collaboration on the production of documentation, some of which would necessarily comprise a part of both institutions' archives.

Chapter Five describes collaboration between Machine Project (as an artistic identity) and the individual identities of the artists associated with Machine Project. The purpose of this section is to explore how the negotiation of artistic identity is captured in documentation. That is, the central focus of this section of the dissertation is on the intersections between the documentation of Machine Project and of the individual artists. Focusing on key collaborators (sound artists Emily Lacy and Chris Kallmyer, archivist Sam Meister, and graphic designers Kimberly Varella and Liz Anderson, this section describes how documentation conveys the negotiation between individual and collective identity, between the individual artist and the collective. Related to the question of how records are defined is the question of authorship. Given that contemporary networked environments offer the possibility for a greater degree of collaboration, ascertaining the authorship of records and their provenance is much more complicated today than in the past. On one hand is the documentation produced as a result of institutional collaboration, which is produced at the limits of the boundaries of those institutional entities. On the other hand, how are we to understand bodies of records and documentation that are produced by the public outside institutional boundaries? How are archivists to contend with publicly created documentation, created and "co-authored" with the institutions, but without the institutions necessarily endorsing such documentary acts, if the institutions are aware of them at all? On this latter point, I explore recent discussions about audience participation in contemporary art practice, and explore how technology provides a means to extend the participatory agenda into areas relating to the creation of collective memories. This dissertation proposes that the mediation of social media and networking allows for contingent communities, coalescing and coming apart around the work, to not

only to participate in the artistic works themselves but to also create documentation of their experiences, the basis of a participatory distributed archive premised on the notion of the dispersal of its authorship.

Thus, Chapter Six focuses on a type of "collaboration" that is tacit and emergent: between Machine Project and its audiences' documentation of the organization's events. This study posits that the nature of this form of collaboration contrasts with the forms of collaboration outlined above insofar as the endeavor to document Machine Project events (i.e., the community on one hand and Machine Project on the other) is not the product of a formally articulated agreement to enter a collaborative relationship. Instead, the production of documents on both sides is catalyzed by the experience of the event, without consensus or prescription about how that event should or can be documented from either side.

The dissertation will conclude with an analysis of how the insights gleaned from the ethnographic study might contribute to the discourse surrounding the archival profession and its theories and concepts. Taking up the banner for pluralization for archives, I hope to contribute to the discussions centered on community-based archives and the democratization of archives, but also to plot the professional implications of broadening of the definitions of records, documentation practices, and archives.

Chapter 2: Archival Concepts

This chapter is focused on the archival issues raised throughout the course of my research with Machine Project. Reviewing the literature of archival science – particularly in terms of the concept of the record, the records continuum theory, and recent discussions about community archives – this chapter describes the theoretical path upon which the current project proceeds. This chapter begins by describing some of the debates over the concept of the record that have surfaced since the 1990s, highlighting the growing discontent over traditional conceptions of the record in light of the trends toward electronic and digital recordkeeping. In the era of the rise of electronic records, they were seen as a challenge to traditional notions of the record and presumptions of fixity and stability of the record through time. Heather MacNeil and Bonnie Mak argue that digitized and digital-born materials pose a challenge to traditional notions of authenticity because of the fact that digital technologies enable and encourage the proliferation of multiple and simultaneous copies. Reviewing descriptions of authenticity as they are described in the literatures of philosophy, art conservation, textual criticism, and law, they characterize authenticity as marked by contingency, change, and circumstance, and argue that authenticity (and inauthenticity by extension) is itself a social construction rather than an inherent characteristic of digital resources, that "the meaning of authenticity changes with context or purpose."[36] From this perspective, MacNeil and Mak advocate for an understanding of the preservation of digital resources in terms of their multiple intentionalities, multiple meanings, and multiple authenticities.

[36] Heather MacNeil and Bonnie Mak, "Constructions of Authenticity," *Library Trends* 56, no. 1 (2007): 46.

A survey of the literature reveals that around the concept of the record is a constellation of definitions, varying from assumptions of a universal and true past that records represent (a strong definition of the record), to perspectives that understand records to be objects to be interpreted rather than merely an index of past reality (a weak definition of the record). The chapter reviews the InterPARES project as an example of an archival research initiative based on a strong conception of the record rooted in diplomatic theory and criticism, with records continuum theory presented as a contrasting weak sense perspective. Following this, I describe the recent interest a growing interest in community archives among archival scholars and its motivations in the pluralization of archival knowledge, community empowerment in and through archives, and broader social justice imperatives. This chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the extant archival questions to be addressed in the observations of this study.

The Concept of the Record

In 1993, a conference was convened in Stockholm, Sweden to discuss the continued relevance of the archival principle of provenance in the age of computerized communication. Coinciding with the 375th anniversary of the founding of the National Archives of Sweden, conference attendees identified three primary areas of concern with regard to the principle of provenance: the meaning of provenance, how it might be applied in service of various archival functions, and what administrative strategies and procedures might be developed or adopted to implement it within these functions.[37]

[37] Kerstin Abukhanfusa and Jan Sydbeck, *The Principle of Provenance: Report from the First Stockholm Conference on Archival Theory and the Principle of Provenance 2-3 September 1993* (Stockholm, Sweden: Swedish National Archives, 1994); Tom Nesmith, "The Principle of Provenance: Report from the First

Three years later, a follow-up conference was organized around the theme of archival science and the concept of the record. The Second Stockholm conference identified the rise of electronic records and shifting tides of information technology to warrant the assessment and revision of the concept of the record, reprising the themes surfaced in the first Stockholm conference around shifts in recordkeeping attendant to the rapid development of information and communications technologies. Conference presenters agreed that developments in information technology and the increasing movement toward electronic recordkeeping prompted a need to revisit the fundamental terms of the professional discourse, calling into question the continued relevance of the concept of the record.

In 2005, the Society of American Archivists published an online version of the *Glossary of Archival Terminology* as a resource providing standard terms for the profession. The glossary's entry for "record" delineates three primary characteristics that records must possess: fixity of content, structure, and context.[38] Upon this presumption of the fixity of the record, the glossary states that the record's content must be stable over time, that its content not change due to alterations or degradation. The record's structure refers to its form of inscription (or the medium upon which it is inscribed, whether analog or digital) and the constitutive elements dictating how its content is arranged. The glossary additionally invokes the notion of the record's uniqueness: "A document's structure is contained within boundaries, which define the record as a unit and give it identity by distinguishing it from other information. A record may consist of many

---

Stockholm Conference on Archival Theory and the Principle of Provenance 2-3 September 1993 (Book Review)," *Archivaria* 41 (1996): 250.

[38] Richard Pearce-Moses, "Record," *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* (The Society of American Archivists, 2005), http://www.archivists.org/glossary/term_details.asp?DefinitionKey=54.

physically or logically discrete parts that function together as unit, such as several pages or data values from many tables. However, those parts must be bound together in some fashion."[39] Finally, the glossary provides a two-fold definition of context, on the one hand referring to the organizational, functional, and operational circumstances in which the record is created, stored, and used, while on the other hand referring to the subject position that the viewer of a document occupies that allows the document to be intelligible, to be apprehended as a meaningful object.[40] The glossary compiles the terms of the professional and scholarly discourse of archives as a meansvto establish a shared understanding of the concepts of the field. Included with each entry are bibliographic references to texts in the archival literature, demonstrating that beneath the seemingly common understanding of terms like "record" or even "archive" are tangles of contention and debate over what the very objects of the archival field are, or what criteria might be used to identify them.

Archivist Brien Brothman observed this growing trend among archivists to converge upon a common definition of the record in order to establish a shared frame of reference through the standardization of professional terms. He critiqued professional concerns over identifying qualities of "recordness" in documents as a fixation on the transcendent qualities and characteristics that all records ought to possess. Establishing these qualities of recordness meant constructing"…idealized accounts of the nature of record formation processes" and "specify[ing] those attendant properties which are

[39] Ibid.

[40] Richard Pearce-Moses, "Context," *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*, 2005, http://www.archivists.org/glossary/term_details.asp?DefinitionKey=103.

inherent to records."[41] Despite these attempts to locate the nature of the record, Brothman argues, the various conceptions of the record as deployed in the archival literature are varied and fall along a continuum ranging from strong to weak claims.[42] Strong claims center on:

> Only those writings that provide accurate, complete, and credible information about real actions or events that have passed into some inaccessible past, such that their contents depart in no significant way from what actually transpired – what some would term "the facts." In other words, it is in their accounts of record formation that archivists reveal a "realist" and "objectivist" position: truth entails an exact correspondence between the written word – recorded propositions and statements – and a single worldly reality of now-inaccessible past people, actions, and events, "non-propositional" facts.[43]

Brothman traces one strong sense of the record to ancient Rome, where records were exclusively public documents or documents of the state: "This strong definition of a record is indeed a narrow one, for it encompasses exclusively those documents created by state institutions under obligation of public law to systematically and reliable record all official, public actions with accuracy and completely." [44] He goes on to describe even stronger senses of the record. One version stipulates that records are those public or business documents made during the course of, or in order to, complete an action. Even stricter is the conception of the record that limits the status of the record to only those documents that fall within an a priori defined beginning and end of an event, or "transaction," and excluding all else. Examples of the latter would include revisions to

[41] Brien Brothman, "Afterglow: Conceptions of Record and Evidence in Archival Discourse," *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 315.

[42] Although he offers a schema describing the nominal categories of the strong-to-weak continuum of conceptions of the record, these specificities lie outside the scope of the current project. For a fuller analysis of the positions of strong and weak sense theories of the record in the archival literature, see Ibid., 225.

[43] Ibid., 317.

[44] Ibid., 317–318.

meeting minutes, retrospective narratives and accounts of events, and other documents that are temporally distant from the event – outside "the present" of the event, as it were – to which they refer.[45] Within the archival field, the strong-sense conception of the record is often associated with the life-cycle model (i.e., which makes a distinction between active/current and inactive records to be selected for archiving or destruction), and perspectives like diplomatics (to be discussed more fully in the following section in this chapter) that privilege the administrative, juridical-legal, and historical definitions of records.

The strong-sense concept of the record is fixated on the truthfulness of the record, related to archival notions of authenticity, integrity, reliability, and evidence. Such conceptions of the record tend to privilege expert information management systems that automate, routinize, self-register, or in other words, attempt to remove the human element from record-keeping, to depersonalize its processes. These automatic operations are, in Brothman's view, "unadulterated truth-telling conditions [that] may be established to the point of virtually 'disintermediating' the making and using – the reading and writing – of records."[46] The claims to truth at the center of the strong conception of records are based on a series of fundamental assumptions: the correspondence between documented "truth" in records and a single-worldly reality, the objective status of records and the presumption of their ability to indexically represent the events and activities of the past, and the coincidence of the creation of the record and the event it represents.

[45] Ibid., 319.

[46] Ibid., 322. See also: Victoria Lane and Jennie Hill, "Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going? Situating the Archive and Archivists," in *The Future of Archives and Recordkeeping: A Reader* (London: Facet, 2011), 3–22.

The following section reviews an example of a strong conception of the record in diplomatics, and how it has been used in the International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems (InterPARES) project to explore record-keeping requirements for experiential, dynamic, and interactive systems. The purpose of this critique is to acknowledge the gains made in this area of research, but also to identify the limitations of applying a strong sense conception of the record in, as a case example, documents of performance art.

InterPARES 2 on Performance: Stelarc

To date, the most prominent example of an archival initiative exploring the possibilities of archiving ephemeral works of art (such as performance) is the International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems (InterPARES) project, which involves academics, industry professionals, and archival institutions from Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Italy, China and Hong Kong, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Portugal. Directed by Luciana Duranti, who is widely credited with introducing diplomatic theory and criticism in the North American archival context, InterPARES sought to identify needs and requirements for the long-term preservation of authentic records created and/or maintained in electronic or digital form.

At the onset of the project in 1999, the researchers adopted a set of definitions from which to identify the elemental units (i.e., records) of a range of electronic recordkeeping practices and systems. These definitions provide the scope for the InterPARES investigations, explicitly describing its objects of inquiry:

> The team adopted the traditional archival definition of a record as any document created (i.e., made or received and set aside – i.e. kept, saved – for action or reference) by a physical or juridical person in the course of a practical activity as an instrument and by-product of such activity. It defined 'document' as recorded information, 'information' as a message intended for communication across space or time, and 'data' as the smallest meaningful piece of information. Finally, an 'electronic record' was defined as a record that is set aside and used in electronic form irrespective of the original form in which it may have been made or received.[47]

Like the second Stockholm conference in 1996, the InterPARES reports reprised the question of whether traditional notions of the record hold up in digital contexts of records creation, maintenance, use, and preservation. InterPARES adopted a deductive approach, identifying from the onset the aforementioned definitions of the record, document, and information, culled from archival theory and diplomatic theory. These definitions were then tested via case studies in order to extrapolate the necessary characteristics for an electronic document to be considered an electronic record. These include: 1) fixed form, such that the record "entity" remains complete, unaltered, and able to render its message (i.e., content) in the same documentary form as when it was initially set aside; 2) unchangeable content; 3) explicit linkages to other records within or outside of the digital system via classification or unique identifier; 4) an identifiable administrative context; 5) an author, an addressee, and a writer; and 6) an action, in which the record participates or which the record supports either procedurally or as part of the decision making process.[48]

InterPARES 1 (1999 – 2001), the first phase of the project, was concerned with deriving conceptual requirements for the preservation of authentic electronic records, developing appraisal criteria and methods for selecting such records, delineating methods

[47] Luciana Duranti and Kenneth Thibodeau, "The Concept of Record in Interactive, Experiential and Dynamic Environments: The View of InterPARES," *Archival Science* 6, no. 1 (October 18, 2006): 15, doi:10.1007/s10502-006-9021-7.

[48] Ibid., 15–16.

and responsibilities for preserving authentic electronic records, and constructing a framework for policies, strategies, and standards.[49] This phase of the project focused specifically on electronic records created in databases and document management systems, and kept for accountability and administrative needs.

Building on the findings in the first phase of the project, InterPARES 2 (2002 – 2006) sought to identify expressions of experiential, interactive, and dynamic records through case studies across three focus areas: the artistic, scientific, and government sectors. Focus 1 of the project was devoted to investigating electronic record-keeping in the arts. Among these studies, one was specifically devoted to exploring the records of performance art: a study of Australian performance artist Stelarc.[50]

Stelarc (born Stelios Arkadiou , 1946 –) is a Cypriot-Australian performance artist whose works often include the integration of technologies with his body. A "high-tech Frankenstein," Stelarc insists that "the body is profoundly obsolete" through experiments in augmenting his own body with a range of prostheses, turning him into a kind of self-elected cyborg, a "humachine."[51] Examples from his oeuvre include his early suspension events in which the skin of his arms, torso, back, and legs was perforated with large metal hooks, his body hoisted up and suspended in both private gallery settings and public spaces. He would later go on to demonstrate the symbiotic coupling of his body and a robotic arm capable of sensing touch in a project called *Third Hand*. One of his

[49] Heather MacNeil, "Contemporary Archival Diplomatics as a Method of Inquiry: Lessons Learned from Two Research Projects," *Archival Science* 4, no. 3 (2004): 213.

[50] For the case study final report on Stelarc, including the case study proposal, overview, characterization, and other associated documentation, see: http://www.interpares.org/ip2/ip2_case_studies.cfm?study=2

[51] Mark Poster, "High-Tech Frankenstein, or Heidegger Meets Stelarc," in *The Cyborg Experiments: The Extensions of the Body in the Media Age*, ed. Joanna Zylinska (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2002), 15–16.

ongoing projects, *The Extra Ear*, involves constructing an ear-shaped soft prosthesis (in contrast with the hard steel of his Third Hand) on his left forearm, built from skin grafts, mature adipocytes, and stem cells derived from adipose tissue in his body. Stelarc plans to have his Extra Ear outfitted with a microphone connected to a wireless transmitter that will broadcast on the internet the sounds that the ear "hears."[52]

The InterPARES Stelarc case study was structured around a template derived from the first phase of the InterPARES project and outlined five expressions of context relevant to record-keeping: the provenancial context, juridical-adminstrative context, procedural context, documentary context, and the technological context. [53] The authors identified the documentary and technological contexts for Stelarc's practice to be most relevant for the creation and management of digital records. The authors of the final report identified issues associated with collaboration and its implications for the creation of records. Stelarc's artistic practice is such that he often works with a team to actualize his performances, which includes his webmaster who maintains his website, his technology developers who collaborate in designing and engineering the technical apparatuses used by Stelarc in performance, and collaborating institutions involved in the execution of his performance works. This case exemplified the difficulty of preserving

[52] Mark Ahlmark, *Stelarc: The Man with Three Ears*, Motherboard (VBS IPTV, 2009), http://www.vice.com/motherboard/stelarc-the-man-with-three-ears--2; Roland Hancock, "Implanting Organs in the Name of Art," *The Telegraph* (UK, February 4, 2011), sec. How About That?, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/howaboutthat/8303322/Implanting-organs-in-the-name-of-art.html.

[53] Henry Daniel and Cara Payne, *Case Study 02 Final Report: Performance Artist Stelarc*, InterPARES 2 Project: International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems (Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia, September 2007), 1–2, http://www.interpares.org/display_file.cfm?doc=ip2_cs02_final_report.pdf.

digitally born materials in the context of collaborative production and distributed involvement of actors in the creation of Stelarc's performances.

Although the case study describes the exemplariness of Stelarc's performative practice within the larger range of InterPARES investigations, the authors of the final report adopt a fairly unidimensional and limited definition of performance. Notably absent is any mention of audiences' experiences of Stelarc's performance, which one might surmise, occludes an important aspect of his performative experiments in cyborg grotesquerie.

Art critic Mark Fernandes describes a Stelarc performance in terms of audience's reactions to what they witness:

> The subject that is the spectacle is the artist [Stelarc] who will inflict bodily harm on himself in his performance. The audience physiologically reacts as the hooks become visibly close to his body. As an anticipation of pain, the audience member's skin crawls, or a lump amasses in their throat. These are autonomous responses of the body being stimulated by the performance, despite not being under direct threat, the audience continues to feel the sensations associated with duress. On a physiological level the audience's body is the same as Stelarc's and goes through a simulated physical response.[54]

Fernandes' description of how he understands audiences' visceral reactions to Stelarc's performances calls attention to the artist on one side and audience on the other as agents mutually constituting the event of the performance, the audience's perceived and imagined experience of bodily trauma, the individual and collective context of the performance, and the audience's physiological reactions to the stress that Stelarc inflicts on his body. Such bodily responses, in Fernandes' view, are both a global and singular experience among audience members. He further argues that audiences'

[54] Mark Fernandes, "The Body Without Memory: An Interview with Stelarc," *CTheory* (November 13, 2002), http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=354.

phenomenological experience of stress and stimulation is a crucial, if not integral aspect of understanding the art-making process of Stelarc's performances, and the performances themselves.[55] Just as Stelarc performs for his audience, so too does the audience perform for Stelarc.

The InterPARES Stelarc case study identifies the difficulty of archiving the digital records of his performances and the processes leading to them, but is ultimately predicated on an understanding of performance that fails to account for audiences' role in co-constituting a Stelarc performance as a necessary element of the event. Consonant with Fernandes' framing of Stelarc's performances, critic Aitor Baraibar locates in Stelarc's work the provocation of audiences' self-reflection on their own bodies. For Baraibar, the ways in which Stelarc elicits such responses from his audiences is the intervention, whether audiences gaze upon his machinic body with shock, awe, amusement, horror, or a combination thereof. "It is through this work that audiences are provoked to confront their reactions and their understanding of how they view their bodies. He operates under the assumption that the body is commonly understood to be a fixed entity whose limited sentience must be maintained through strict guidelines of mediation as governed by society…in Stelarc's performance discourse, the body becomes a concept, rather than a fixed material site. It is understood as an existence that perceptually mutates."[56] Performance theorist Richard Schechner describes Stelarc and his contemporaries in the early years of performance art (including Allan Kaprow, Chris Burden, Shiraga Kazuo, Carolee Schneemann, Hermann Nitsch, and Paul McCarthy) in

[55] Ibid.

[56] Aitor Baraibar, "Stelarc's Post-Evolutionary Performance Art: Exposing Collisions Between the Body and Technology," *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 11, no. 1 (1999): 164, doi:10.1080/07407709908571320.

what he terms "rasaesthetics," arguing for attention to "…the increasing appetite for arts that engage visceral arousal and experience; performances that insist on sharing experiences with partakers and participants; works that try to evoke both terror and celebration. Such performances are often very personal even as they are no longer private."[57]

Despite these assertions that the point (that pierces the skin) of Stelarc's works is the provocation of audiences (e.g., their perception, reaction, and interpretation of the performances), the authors of the InterPARES Stelarc case study do not account for audience and instead focus their observations on Stelarc as a professional artistic identity. Ultimately, this distinction privileges the artist as the authorial identity of the work, the central position from which the master choreographer coordinates the various processes of production. The Stelarc case study does not acknowledge this assumption, nor does it recognize the limited and narrow definition of performance that ignores audience roles in co-constituting the performance. This allowed for the authors to model the complex processes of Stelarc's practices to begin from the artist's conception of the event and end with its final execution, the "final performance," serving as the closure of the work, which can later be re-performed.

The strong definition of the record that permeates the InterPARES case studies can be traced to the framing of the investigations in the terminology of diplomatics and

[57] The term "rasaesthetics" is a portmanteau of the Sanskrit word "rasa," meaning "essence" or "juice," and "aesthetics," and was coined by performance theorist Richard Schechner to describe theatricality as it experienced not only in terms of visual or auditory sensation, but as experience by the whole bodily sensorium, including smell, sight, and touch in addition to sight and hearing. Richard Schechner, "Rasaesthetics," *TDR/The Drama Review* 45, no. 3 (2001): 27–50, doi:10.1162/10542040152587105; Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 358.

archival science.[58] Diplomatics is a methodology for the systematic analysis of documents with the purposes of distinguishing authentic documents from forgeries and to ascertain the authenticity of documents on the basis of its formal qualities. Luciana Duranti traces the origins of diplomatics and its sister discipline paleography to the year 1681, on the occasion of the publication of *De Re Diplomatica Libri VI* by the French Benedictine monk Dom Jean Mabillion.[59] In his six-part treatise, Mabillion analyzed some two hundred medieval documents, inducting broad categories in which to group the documents, and describing and comparing their formal characteristics, such as ink, material, language, script, punctuation, abbreviations, formulae, notes, seals, etc. Mabillion's early attempts at schematizing the medieval document were later reprised in 1765 by the German historian Johann Christoph Gatterer, who, in the pursuit of describing universal history, "introduce[d] to diplomatics a version of the classification system adopted by Linnaeus in the natural sciences."[60]

Duranti can be credited with introducing diplomatic theory and criticism to the North American context of archival discourse, and is a vocal advocate for the construal of archival theory and practice in scientific terms. She states (and is worth quoting at length; emphasis added):

> At the core of diplomatics lies the idea that *all records can be analyzed, understood, and evaluated in terms of a system of formal elements that are*

[58] Authenticity Task Force, *Lineage of Elements Included in the Template for Analysis (pre-InterPARES): From Tradition Diplomatics to Contemporary Archival Diplomatics* (Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia, June 2000), http://www.interpares.org/display_file.cfm?doc=ip1_lineage_of_elements.pdf.

[59] Luciana Duranti, *Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science* (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 1998), 36–40.

[60] Ibid., 38. For a fuller discussion of the works of Johan Christoph Gatterer, see Peter Hanns Reill, "History and Hermeneutics in the Aufklärung: The Thought of Johann Christoph Gatterer," *The Journal of Modern History* 45, no. 1 (March 1, 1973): 24–51.

> *universal in their application and decontextualized in nature*. *The essential assumption of diplomatics is that the context of a document's creation is made manifest in its form, and that this form can be separated from, and examined independently of, its content*. Thus, diplomatists view records conceptually as embodying a system of both external and internal elements, consisting of a) acts, which are the determinant cause of record creation, b) persons, who concur in record formation, c) procedures, which are the means by which acts are carried out, and d) record form, which binds all the elements together.[61]

The diplomatic record is most fundamentally an archival document, distinguished from other types of documents as "a document created or received by a physical or juridical person in the course of a practical activity."[62] Juridical persons, Duranti describes, are records-creating entities "having the capacity or the potential to act legally and [are] constituted either by a collection or success of physical persons or a collection of properties."[63] She excludes personal documents from her understanding of the archival document on the basis that diplomatic analysis of such documents (e.g., diaries and love letters) would yield little insight into their "real nature", insofar as the formal construction of the document is subject to the "inner freedom of human beings", with the personal contexts in which such documents are created would thus vary from person to person.

The fundamental distinction that Duranti provides as to whether a document is archival is whether the facts contained in the document are juridically relevant or irrelevant.[64] This is despite the assertions that diplomatics can ascertain the legal, juridical, and historical authenticity of documents *as evidence* from its form, independent

[61] Luciana Duranti, "The Archival Bond," *Archives and Museum Informatics* 11, no. 3 (1997): 215.

[62] Duranti, *Diplomatics*, 42.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid., 43.

of the content of the facts contained in the documents. Combining the focus of diplomatics on individual documents with the focus of archival science on bodies of records, Duranti relates the diplomatic definition of the record to the "archival bond" of archival science, referring to "the network of relationships between each record with the records belonging in the same aggregate."[65] Her perspective is consonant with Sir Hilary Jenkinson's definition of the archive being organically constituted by the accumulation of traces in an administrative or bureaucratic structure.[66] Administrative structure is thought to confer a natural structural relation between records in an archive, as indexical representations of the event of their creation. As supplementary disciplines, diplomatics takes the individual archival document as its object of inquiry in search of its internal coherence, while archival science views collections of archival documents as its object in search of the internal coherence of the aggregate.

Embedded in Duranti's mythology of diplomatics is a description of a documentary reality from an ontological perspective of a society that is first and foremost juridical and administrative. And while the corpus of studies undertaken by the InterPARES project are certainly a significant contribution to providing insight into the complexities of preserving electronic records, they are not without limitations. In particular, the diplomatic perspective that permeates much of the reports and their operational definitions of the record are especially problematic when applied to the questions of documentation and performance, such as in the case of the Stelarc case study.

[65] Duranti, "The Archival Bond," 215–216.

[66] The notion of the organic nature of the "archive group" (to use Jenkinson's terms, as a revision to the notion of the *fonds*) can be traced further back to Muller, Feith, and Fruin's *Dutch Manual*. See: Samuel Muller, Johan Adriaan Feith, and Robert Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* (Society of American Archivists, 2003). and Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration Including the Problems of War Archives and Archive Making* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922).

What seems to be most apparent in Duranti's aforementioned diplomatic definition of the record is the upholding of a positivist view of the record, particularly in the way that she emphasizes the ability to analyze, understand, and evaluate a record based on the assumption of the formal elements that transcend the material instantiation of the archival document. This universalizing tendency attempts to foreclose qualitative differences between contexts of creation, as well as the contexts of interpretation or reading where meaning might be constructed, through the dogmatic adherence to the notion of an "the record" as ideal-type of the record.

Heather MacNeil, in drawing equivalence between the diplomatic definition of the record with the Weberian notion of the ideal-type, explains that the ideal-type is "not a description of reality but a methodological construct designed to assist the social science researcher in understanding and explaining social phenomena."[67] For the purposes of the InterPARES project, this deductive approach premised on diplomatic theory of the record was paired with inductive case studies, in order to extrapolate a richer and complex picture of electronic records and systems. However, MacNeil notes that the reduction of such records "to a set of well-defined elements that will be apparent to any knowledgeable observer" (i.e., the diplomatic perspective) was not supported, likely owing to the difficulty of determining the boundaries of the records, as well as the clear demarcation of records creators and the boundaries of the systems themselves.[68] She further assesses the effectiveness of the InterPARES project to be limited in its conceptualization of electronic records, offering an insufficient elaboration of the

[67] MacNeil, "Contemporary Archival Diplomatics as a Method of Inquiry," 216.

[68] Ibid., 219.

contexts in which the records are situated.[69] Notably, the most glaring methodological error committed in the InterPARES project was that the diplomatic model upon which the analyses were based was not revised or adjusted to account for the discordance between the case studies and the model. Instead, the model was "re-interpreted as a normative or ethical model, the purpose of which was to prescribe the components *ought to possess rather than to identify the nature and purpose of the components electronic records actually do possess*, which was its original purpose" (emphasis added).[70]

These criticisms should not be taken as a wholesale dismissal of the findings of the InterPARES project to date. Rather, it would be more productive to view the project and the assessment of its limitations and weaknesses as warrant for further theoretical and conceptual refinement of our understanding of records and documentation. More than reflections of the project itself, the limitations outlined above allude to the broader implications of employing narrow and/or strong definitions of records, such as those which were operationalized in the InterPARES studies.

Community Archives and the Records Continuum

Brien Brothman contrasts the strong conception of the record with weak-sense theories, which are conceptions of the record that are comparatively more inclusive and fluid than their strong-sense counterparts. Whereas strong-sense theories of the record stipulate institution- or process-based conditions and criteria for establishing the concept of the record (e.g., as the coincident production of records out of administrative or bureaucratic activity), weak sense theories challenge the assumption that some

[69] Ibid., 222.

[70] Ibid., 225.

fundamental or universal essence of recordness is inherent in every record. Instead, weak sense theories tend to emphasize the interpretation of the record, and the variability of contexts in which the creation and interpretation of records might occur (e.g., economic, institutional, political, sociological, philosophical, psychological, historical, etc.).[71] Under the weak sense, "…a record might include any unique inscription on any medium created in the past, any writing related to public affairs or private life, any and all private-sector institutional records and personal manuscripts, even those documenting processes leading to "events" or 'transactions.'"[72] Such a view would reject strong claims as to the "nature" or essence of records, and similarly, the diplomatic perspective that reduces the social processes in which records participate to their juridical relevance or irrelevance.

Insights from the recent literature on community archives can supply illustrations of the weak sense conception of the record. Archival scholar and labor historian Andrew Flinn deploys the term "community" to refer to "groups who define *themselves* on the basis of locality, culture, faith, background, or other shared identity or interest."[73] In conjunction with this broad definition of community, which underscores the importance of considering the agency and self-identification of members of the community, Flinn also argues for an expanded notion of what constitutes the archives of the community, noting the variegation in terminology regarding community archives, which are sometimes referred to as community heritage projects, local history societies, or oral history projects.

---

[71] Brothman, "Afterglow: Conceptions of Record and Evidence in Archival Discourse," 321.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Andrew Flinn, "Community Histories, Community Archives: Some Opportunities and Challenges," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 28, no. 2 (2007): 153, doi:10.1080/00379810701611936.

In identifying the significance of such grassroots approaches to community-based archival projects primarily operating outside of formal archival institutions, Flinn advocates for archivists to become "active agents in the process of collecting and constructing archival heritage."[74] Such a stance, Flinn argues, serves a particular vision of archival practice that aims to ensure that archival collections represent all aspects and communities of society, including those at the margins that are underrepresented in the dominant institutional frameworks, or are transitory.[75] This perspective on the archivist as an active agent views the archive as necessarily a site of marginalization. This agent seeks to identify the gaps, absences, blindnesses, and limits of the official record, and works at the grassroots level to remedy such documentary omissions. The active archivist understands the community's archives to be authored and owned by the community, and aims to capture the experiences of its members as speaking subjects that participate in the larger societal negotiations of cultural memory rather than merely as evidence of the past. Community archives are, in a sense, a means by which a community observes itself and the unfolding of its past through documentation attesting to the collective experiences of its members.[76]

These insights overlap with the "evidence of me" that speaks to the significance of personal perspectives and how they might relate to community archives. In her

[74] Andrew Flinn, "Other Ways of Thinking, Other Ways of Being. Documenting the Margins and the Transitory: What to Preserve, How to Collect," in *What Are Archives? Cultural and Theoretical Perspectives: A Reader*, ed. Louise Craven (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 110.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Andrew Flinn, "Independent Community Archives and Community-Generated Content 'Writing, Saving and Sharing Our Histories'," *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* 16, no. 1 (2010): 39–51; Flinn, "Community Histories, Community Archives"; Jeannette Allis Bastian and Ben Alexander, *Community Archives: The Shaping of Memory* (Facet, 2009).

hallmark essay, Sue McKemmish critically reads examples in literature in which authors describe the relationships they have with their personal manuscripts and effects. Describing personal recordkeeping as a "kind of witnessing," McKemmish effectively points to the field between experience and memory, the field in which the "evidence of me" operates.[77] A far cry from the traditional view that asserts the primarily administrative and bureaucratic view of archives, McKemmish's assertion of the social significance of personal papers was premised on the decentering of the institutional archive as the primary locus of social and cultural memory. But perhaps even more significant was the way in which McKemmish's arguments ultimately sought to recover the objects signifying personal experience from the "blind spots" of traditional archival discourse. This recuperation was thus an attempt to locate an aspect of evidence rooted not in the authority of the institutional archive, but in authority of experience and witnessing embedded in the objects of individual memory.

Recent initiatives led and supported by archival institutions have explored the link between collective memory and personal experiences. In 2005, the National Archives of the UK and a consortium of 30 institutional partners (including archives, libraries, museums, and cultural organizations) launched a project called *Moving Here*, which sought to collect and provide access to some 200,000 digitized artifacts, genealogical resources, curricular modules about specific community histories, and links to other resources related to community history and transmigration.[78] In addition to the curated content of the website, the project includes a forum to collect site visitors' "Stories." In

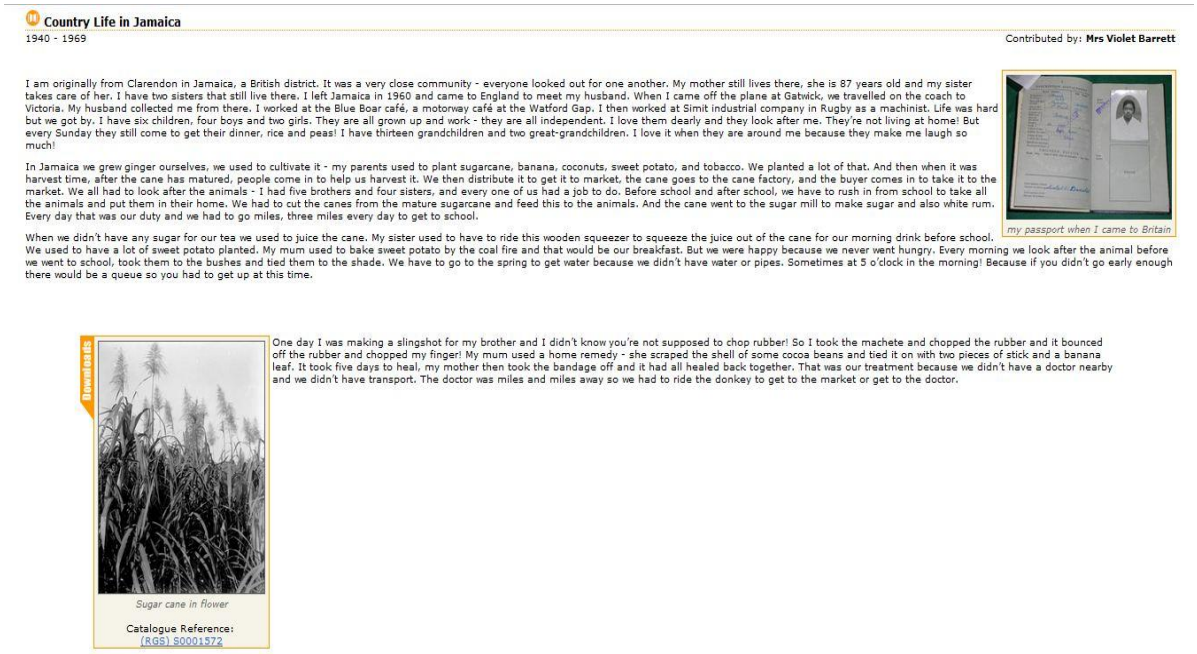
[77] Sue McKemmish, "Evidence of Me...," *Archives and Manuscripts* 24, no. 1 (May 1996): 28–45.

[78] See: "Moving Here: 200 Years of Migration to England," October 14, 2009, http://www.movinghere.org.uk/.

this forum, visitors were invited to contribute and share their own personal narratives of migration to the UK. Visitors were also invited to add multimedia content to their narratives, either uploaded from their own collections as digital files and appended to their descriptions, or culled from the National Archives' digital collections. The latter examples (which are primarily digitized photographs from the archives) are interesting for the contingency of their meaning: despite their status as historical records, in their digital form and placed within the context of the *Moving Here* website, they are invoked to exemplify a the fluidity of meaning in the event of "reading" the image, for purposes that the original photographer (the "author" of the documentation) could not have anticipated. These objects are, in effect, recontextualized and, I argue, refigured as new record objects.

A contributor to the *Moving* Here "Stories" forum named Violet Barrett described her experience growing up on a sugar cane farm in Jamaica before she moved to England. Alongside the written description of her experiences growing up in Clarendon, Jamaica, she includes a digitized photograph of her passport from when she arrived in England, and a digitized black and white photograph of sugar cane plants in bloom (Figure 2.1).[79]

[79] Mrs Violet Barrett, "Country Life in Jamaica," *Moving Here | Stories*, accessed February 15, 2012, http://www.movinghere.org.uk/stories/story_WMMHJamaican07/story_WMMHJamaican07.htm?identifier=stories/story_WMMHJamaican07/story_WMMHJamaican07.htm.



Country Life in Jamaica

1940 - 1969

Contributed by: **Mrs Violet Barrett**

I am originally from Clarendon in Jamaica, a British district. It was a very close community - everyone looked out for one another. My mother still lives there, she is 87 years old and my sister takes care of her. I have two sisters that still live there. I left Jamaica in 1960 and came to England to meet my husband. When I came off the plane at Gatwick, we travelled on the coach to Victoria. My husband collected me from there. I worked at the Blue Boar café, a motorway café at the Watford Gap. I then worked at Simit industrial company in Rugby as a machinist. Life was hard but we got by. I have six children, four boys and two girls. They are all grown up and work - they are all independent. I love them dearly and they look after me. They're not living at home! But every Sunday they still come to get their dinner, rice and peas! I have thirteen grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. I love it when they are around me because they make me laugh so much!

my passport when I came to Britain

In Jamaica we grew ginger ourselves, we used to cultivate it - my parents used to plant sugarcane, banana, coconuts, sweet potato, and tobacco. We planted a lot of that. And then when it was harvest time, after the cane has matured, people come in to help us harvest it. We then distribute it to get it to market, the cane goes to the cane factory, and the buyer comes in to take it to the market. We all had to look after the animals - I had five brothers and four sisters, and every one of us had a job to do. Before school and after school, we have to rush in from school to take all the animals and put them in their home. We had to cut the canes from the mature sugarcane and feed this to the animals. And the cane went to the sugar mill to make sugar and also white rum. Every day that was our duty and we had to go miles, three miles every day to get to school.

When we didn't have any sugar for our tea we used to juice the cane. My sister used to have to ride this wooden squeezer to squeeze the juice out of the cane for our morning drink before school. We used to have a lot of sweet potato planted. My mum used to bake sweet potato by the coal fire and that would be our breakfast. But we were happy because we never went hungry. Every morning we look after the animal before we went to school, took them to the bushes and tied them to the shade. We have to go to the spring to get water because we didn't have water or pipes. Sometimes at 5 o'clock in the morning! Because if you didn't go early enough there would be a queue so you had to get up at this time.

One day I was making a slingshot for my brother and I didn't know you're not supposed to chop rubber! So I took the machete and chopped the rubber and it bounced off the rubber and chopped my finger! My mum used a home remedy - she scraped the shell of some cocoa beans and tied it on with two pieces of stick and a banana leaf. It took five days to heal, my mother then took the bandage off and it had all healed back together. That was our treatment because we didn't have a doctor nearby and we didn't have transport. The doctor was miles and miles away so we had to ride the donkey to get to the market or get to the doctor.

Sugar cane in flower

Catalogue Reference:
[RGS] S0001572

Figure 2.1. Screenshot of "Country Life in Jamaica" by Violet Barrett (2008). Source: National Archives of the UK

Below the image of the *Sugar cane in flower* is a catalogue reference identifier, which also functions as a link to the digital collections contributed by the Royal Geographic Society in partnership with the National Archives of the UK for the Moving Here project.[80] The full record for the item provides a glimpse into the origins of the photograph. Taken sometime between 1908 and 1909 in Cuba (not the Jamaica of Violet Barrett's youth), *Sugar cane in flower* comes from the collections of colonial administrator, botanist, anthropologist, and linguist Sir H.H. Johnston, who used his camera as a tool in service of colonialism in his endeavors to document the "inferior races of the world", and to collect evidence to support his theories of biological

[80] Harry H. Johnston, *Sugar Cane in Flower* Photograph, 1909 1908, Royal Geographic Society, http://www.movinghere.org.uk/search/catalogue.asp?sequence=75&resourcetypeID=2&recordID=75.

determinism and race.[81] However, the origins of the photograph are elided (literally hidden behind a link to the National Archives' digital collections) as the photograph is re-presented and re-contextualized in Violet Barrett's migration testimony.

Projects like *Moving Here* gesture toward the conceptual expansion of the record through which the record is viewed as a document contingent not only on whether the creator or author says that is indeed a record, but whether the document is understood as a record. This is an insight that was described by the Records Continuum Research Group of Australia and articulated in records continuum theory, which attempts to problematize the life-cycle of records as an authoritative model for the management of records.

A North American version of the records continuum, articulated by Jay Atherton in 1985,[82] served as a critique of the life-cycle model at the center of North American records management and archival discourse since the mid-20th century.[83] The life-cycle model posits that the "life" of a record could be divided into eight stages, which could be further subdivided into the domains of the records manager, concerned with management and administrative efficiency in the present, and the archivist, concerned with history,

[81] Although hardly surprising of ethnographic and ethnological work of the time, H.H. Johnston's descriptions of, for example, the "races of the Congo" reveal his motivations as an anthropologist in uncovering markers of "true Negros" (though he himself was dubious as to whether such markers do exist). In describing the populations of the Congo, Johnston assessed whether the "races" were civilized or uncivilized (or half-civilized), or steeped in their "immoral" ways. See: Harry H. Johnston, "On the Races of the Congo and the Portuguese Colonies in Western Africa," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* 13 (1884): 461–478.

[82] Although Atherton articulated the model in the form of a published article in 1985 with the United States and Canada at the focus, Flynn notes that the Australian archival theorists have traced the model further back to Ian Maclean, the first Archives Officer of what would become the National Archives of Australia. See: Sarah J. A. Flynn, "The Records Continuum Mode in Context and Its Implications for Archival Practice," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 22, no. 1 (2001): 79–93.Sue McKemmish and Michael Piggott, eds., *The Records Continuum: Ian Maclean and Australian Archives - First Fifty Years* (Canberra, Australia: Ancora Press, 1994).

[83] Jay Atherton, "From Life Cycle to Continuum: Some Thoughts on the Records Management-Archives Relationship," *Archivaria* 21 (1985).

research, and the past.[84]

Records Management Phase	Archival Phase
1.Creation or receipt of information in the form of records;	
2. Classification of the records or their information in some logical system;	
3.Maintenance and use of the records;	
4. Their disposition through destruction or transfer to archives;	
	5. Selection/acquisition of information in the form of records;
	6. Classification of the records or their information in some logical system;
	7. Preservation of the records or information in the records;
	8. Reference and use of the information by researchers and scholars.

Table 2.1. Stages of the Records Life-Cycle Model.

Australian archival scholar Frank Upward asserts that the Australian continuum thinking predates Atherton's articulation, and is present in the writing of Ian Maclean, an archivist whose career extended back to 1944 with his appointment as Archives Officer of the Commonwealth National Library, who later served as Chief Archives Officer in the Archives Division of the Commonwealth Library (1952 – 1961) and Chief Archivist of the Commonwealth Archives Office (1961 – 1968).[85] Although continuum thinking has been present in Australian recordkeeping since Maclean's terms (implemented in the Australian series system developed by archivist Peter Scott in 1966), records continuum theory gained international attention in the 1990s as an archival "way of seeing" in an era

[84] Ibid., 43–44.

[85] McKemmish and Piggott, *The Records Continuum: Ian Maclean and Australian Archives - First Fifty Years*; National Archives of Australia, "Ian Maclean," 2012, http://www.naa.gov.au/about-us/grants/ian-maclean/bio.aspx.

of concern (and sometimes befuddlement) over the challenges of electronic and digital recordkeeping. This revival in continuum thinking was due in large part to the research and publication efforts of the Records Continuum Research Group in Australia (Frank Upward, Sue McKemmish, Livia Iacovino, Chris Hurley, Barbara Reed, Glenda Acland, and Michael Piggott), and was in turn influenced by international archival scholarship originating from North America in the work of Terry Cook, Margaret Hedstrom, and David Bearman.[86]

Continental origins aside, in its critique of the life-cycle model of records, records continuum theory asserted the need to incorporate the view of the archivist at the moment of records creation, rather than locating it outside of the daily operational processes of the organization and as a domain separate from records management. The records continuum challenged the split between records managers and archivists on the basis of currency and activity, and their respective interests in the operations of the organization (administrative efficiency for records managers, and for archivists, history and other secondary uses such as research). With the domains of the records manager and the archivist collapsed in records continuum theory,

> Recordkeeping is seen as a continuum of activities which together are designed to ensure that the meaning, context, accessibility and evidentiality of a record are captured and maintained through time. Because of its through-time perspective, the continuum approach recognises that records serve multiple purposes. They mean different things to different people in different contexts, both immediately and through time. They therefore need to be made and maintained in ways that represent and enable these different perspectives, understandings and uses.[87]

Records continuum theory thus recognizes that the meaning of records resides not only in

[86] Kate Cumming, "Ways of Seeing: Contextualizing the Continuum," *Records Management Journal* 20, no. 1 (March 30, 2010): 41–52, doi:10.1108/09565691011036224.

[87] Ibid., 42.

the record itself, neither solely in its content nor its formal elements (as diplomatics would have it), but is constructed in the record's interpretation and use. A critical contribution of the development of records continuum theory is the recognition of the possible plurality of meanings that a record might engender, contingent on the interpretation of the record rather than the assumption of its reflection of a unitary and single-worldly reality.

The most glaring discontinuity between the positivist position of the diplomatic-archival scientific approach[88] and records continuum theory is the manner in which contingency figures into definitions of the record. Aligning records continuum theory with the postmodern turn described by Cook,[89] the proponents of records continuum theory assert that records and their context as captured in their associated metadata move through space and time, accruing "ever-broadening layers of contextual knowledge in order to carry their meanings through time."[90] Records continuum theory thus provides a theoretical basis for an understanding of the record that is premised not on the neutrality of its automatic creation (e.g., records as the context of creation made manifest in documentary form), but on possibility for the unfolding of meanings of records over time and space, rather than fixed or arrested in the documentary object itself. At stake in

[88] Terry Cook offered a critique of the diplomatic-archival scientific approach on the grounds of the logical positivist insistence that they (quoting Duranti) "find their validity in…internal logic and consistency, rather than in their historical, legal, or cultural context…fully autonomous from the influences of political, juridical, or cultural conceptions." However, Heather MacNeil maintains that despite these positivist roots, the contemporary diplomatic-archival approach is more accurately described as postpositivism, which is cautious of claims to absolute knowledge but "retains the belief in empirical reality and in the existence of laws or theories that govern the world and that need to be verified in order to make sense of that world." See: Terry Cook, "Archival Science and Postmodernism: New Formulations for Old Concepts," *Archival Science* 1, no. 1 (1987): 3–24; MacNeil, "Contemporary Archival Diplomatics as a Method of Inquiry."

[89] Terry Cook, "What Is Past Is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift," *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997): 17–61.

[90] Sue McKemmish, "Placing Records Continuum Theory and Practice," *Archival Science* 1 (2001): 354.

records continuum theory is the ability for archivists to account for the multiple realities, multiple values, shifting interrelations, and the dynamic evolution of recordkeeping systems and practices, and is described by some of its proponents to be the only archival model capable of accounting for electronic records and virtual archives.

In 1996 and 1997, Frank Upward offered his rearticulation of continuum thinking in his records continuum model, influenced by British sociologist Anthony Giddens' structuration theory. As such, Upward's model inherits the social reality as described by structuration theory; transposed into the terms of the Australian recordkeeping paradigm, the model articulates four nested dimensions of recordkeeping:[91]

1. *Create*: The actors who carry out the act (decisions, communications, acts), the acts themselves, the documents that record the acts, and the trace, the representation of the acts.
2. *Capture*: The personal and corporate records systems which capture documents in context in ways which support their capacity to act as evidence of the social and business activities of the units responsible for the activities.
3. *Organise*: The organisation of recordkeeping processes. It is concerned with the manner in which a corporate body or individual defines its recordkeeping regime and in so doing constitutes/forms the archive as memory of its business or social functions.
4. *Pluralize*: The manner in which the archives are brought into an encompassing (ambient) framework in order to provide a collective social, historical and cultural memory.

In addition to these four dimensions, records continuum also specifies four axes representing themes of archival science: recordkeeping, functionality, evidentiality, and identity. Together, the thematic axes and the concentric rings depicting the four dimensions of recordkeeping serve as graphic tool to identify the status of a record as it

[91] Frank Upward, "Structuring the Records Continuum (Part One): Postcustodial Principles and Properties," *Archives and Manuscripts* 24, no. 2 (1996), http://infotech.monash.edu/research/groups/rcrg/publications/recordscontinuum-fupp1.html; Frank Upward, "Structuring the Records Continuum (Part Two): Structuration Theory and Recordkeeping," *Archives and Manuscripts* 25, no. 1 (1997), http://infotech.monash.edu/research/groups/rcrg/publications/recordscontinuum-fupp2.html; as cited by Cumming, "Ways of Seeing."

moves away from the context of its creation.

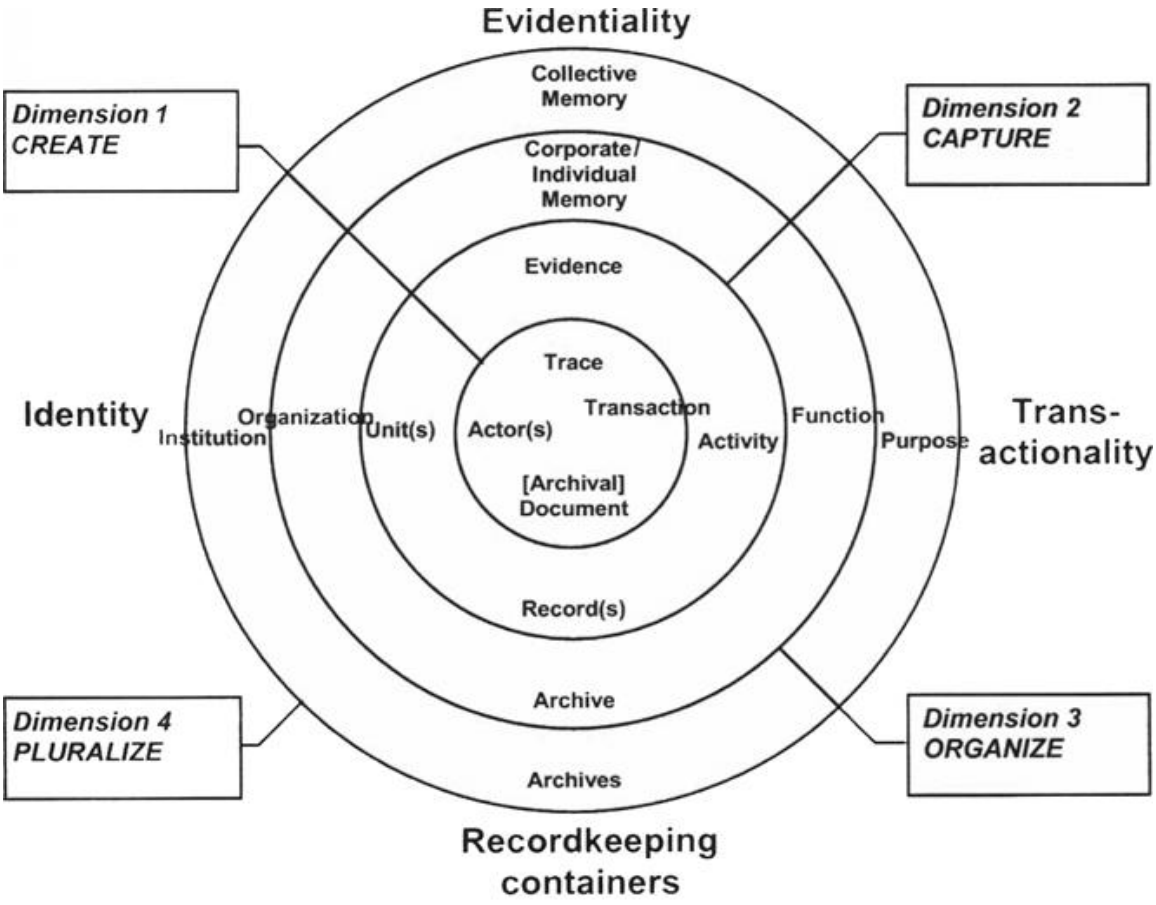


Figure 2.2. The Records Continuum Model.
Source: Frank Upward

Records continuum theory and Upward's model supply the terms of a documentary reality in which records are observed as a "special genre of documents in terms of their intent and functionality," distinguished for their "evidentiary, transactional, and contextual nature."[92] The coordinates of the model might be refigured as a matrix to clarify the relationships between the archival themes and the dimensions of the continuum, or rather, to illustrate the "objects" of each archival theme included in the continuum.

[92] McKemmish, "Placing Records Continuum Theory and Practice," 335.

	Recordkeeping	Functionality	Evidentiality	Identity
Dimension 1: Create	[Archival] Document	Acts	Trace	Actor(s)
Dimension 2: Capture	Record(s)	Activities	Evidence	Unit(s)
Dimension 3: Organize	Archive	Functions	Corporate/Individual Memory	Organization
Dimension 4: Pluralize	Archive(s)	Purposes	Collective Memory	Institution

Table 2.2. Matrix of Records Continuum Terminology.[93]

Records, in the records continuum perspective, are fixed at the moment of creation, but are not stable and are constantly in a state of becoming. Sue McKemmish notes:

> Recordkeeping and archiving processes fix documents which are created in the context of social and organizational activity, i.e. human interaction of all kinds, and preserve them as evidence of that activity by *disembedding* them from their immediate context of creation, and providing them with ever broadening layers of contextual metadata. In this way they help to assure the accessibility of meaningful records for as long as they are of value to people, organisations, and societies - whether that be for a nanosecond or millennia.[94]

This "state of becoming" is perhaps seen most clearly seen in the archival function of description, in which the "ever broadening layers of contextual of metadata" wrap the document/record. Records continuum theory views the document to be the basic object of

[93] This table is not a reconceptualization of the records continuum model presented in Upward, "Structuring the Records Continuum (Part One): Postcustodial Principles and Properties". Rather, it is meant to serve as a supplementary figure to the one constructed by Upward to clarify the relationships between the four dimensions of the records continuum and its four axes.

[94] McKemmish, "Placing Records Continuum Theory and Practice," 336.

recordkeeping and localizes its initial appearance as a document to the dimension of records creation, rippling outward into the dimensions of capture, organization, and pluralization as the record moves in space and time (or spacetime, as Upward describes), disembedded and carried away from its context of creation.

Pluralizing Provenance: A Records Continuum View of Complexity

One of the central concepts of archival theory is the principle of provenance. Rooted in Western European traditions of archival practice, the definition of provenance for archives can be described in terms of two primary components, the first being the idea that records of the same creating bodies should not be mixed with the records of other creating bodies.[95] The second component is original order, which mandates that records should be arranged in the order in which they were created and kept. As a foundation for archival practice, the principle of provenance thus points to two dimensions of records collections within the archival context: the unique identities of records creators and collections of records themselves, and the linear arrangement of records within collections according to the order of their production.

The principle of provenance is often folded into the archival function of description, which is meant to capture and convey information about the records creators (i.e., identify who the records' creators were), the activities from which the records emerged, and what purposes the records served. Archival description is, in the context of

[95] Gilliland-Swetland, *Enduring Paradigm, New Opportunities: The Value of the Archival Perspective in Digital Environments*.

archivists' professional duties, the attempt to document the context of the records, narrativized as the story that the records tell, detailing their formation and their uses.[96]

However, some of these terms require disambiguation when referring to archival functions, particularly "formation" and "records creation." Hurley offers the following definitions:

> Formation is what archivists think of as *creation* or *production*. People and organizations are agents of formation, what archivists identify as sources of provenance. Function denotes the processes or activities undertaken by a formative entity – an activity that is of interest to us if it generates documentary objects. Formation confers provenance through the structure given to documents via function, not just through authorship (the generation or origination of artefacts). Context derives from both. Formation is meaningless without an understanding of the function or process that connects it with the resulting records.[97]

Notably, Hurley introduces an additional term: authorship. This is significant for the fact that acts of formation (synonymous with creation or production) of records are distinct from acts of authoring records, to the extent that records may be brought together as a body of records, culled and collated from multiple "authors," whether they are departments or organizational sub-units, or individual agents within. In such contexts, records creation refers to the formation of the organization's *fonds*, the apparently coherent body of records that the organization, as a composite entity, organically brings together out of the course of its activities and operations.[98]

---

[96] Chris Hurley, "Parallel Provenance (1): What, If Anything, Is Archival Description?," *Archives and Manuscripts* 33, no. 1 (2005): 110.

[97] Ibid., 4.

[98] Cook notes that rather than a literal set of documentary objects, the *fonds* is an intellectual construct. He states: "The *fonds* is not so much a physical entity in archives as it is the conceptual summary of descriptions of physical entities at the series level or lower, and descriptions of the administrative, historical and functional character of the records creator(s) - as well as descriptions of the records-creating processes

In contrast, the authoring of records might be conceived as the comparatively more granular processes in which the individual documentary objects come into existence through acts of intentional inscription. This idea of authorship seems to have been largely overlooked in the archival discourse, eclipsed by the priority placed on creation (versus authorship) resulting from institution-centric perspectives that assume records to be first and foremost the byproducts of bureaucratic activity. Within this conservative paradigm, often associated with a sense of traditionalism in archival discourse, the construction of the record-as-byproduct is arguably the source of the general inattention in considering authorship as a primary ontological concern for archives. That is, if records are conceived as byproducts, as originating out of some activity as the material residue of that activity, few provisions, if any, are made to include records that are created as intentional objects, designed and purposed as memory objects as they are authored into existence.

The record continuum theory's interest in the plural meanings of records was exemplified by the expansion of the concept of provenance, specifically parallel provenance as described by archivist Chris Hurley. He criticized the assumption that archival records possess a single provenance, which is often captured by the function of archival description to document the chain of custody for a group of records. The question of localizing the provenancial context of a group of records is, in effect, the attempt to ascertain the identities of the records' creators and stewards. But even more, establishing identity and provenance is the epistemic endeavor to establish, in part, the

---

(metadata). The *fonds* is thus the conceptual "whole" that reflects an organic process in which a records creator produces or accumulates series of records which themselves exhibit a natural unity based on shared function, activity, form or use. Terry Cook, "The Concept of the Archival Fonds in the Post-Custodial Era: Theory, Problems and Solutions," *Archivaria* 35 (1993): 33. See also: Laura Millar, "The Death of the Fonds and the Resurrection of Provenance: Archival Context in Space and Time," *Archivaria* 53 (2002): 1–15.

authenticity of the record by way of ensuring with certainty how those records came into existence and whose hands they have passed through. Hurley argues that provenance captured in a single archival description, while reducing the complexity of records creation by attributing creation to a single entity, simultaneously obscures the fact that the group of records in question may cross multiple *fonds*, or bodies of records produced by a records-creating entity. For Hurley, the internationally standardized idea of archival description is "too narrow to document the *formation* of records and the *functions* in which they took part."[99]

The need to expand the definition of provenance and its expression in the archival function of description was identified by Hurley as a means by which to extend archival principles and practices to recordkeeping in diffuse digital environments. In doing so, Hurley argues that the current conceptualizations of provenance as rooted in the attribution of a set of documents to a single entity is reflective of an outmoded paradigm, and that archivists must instead act with complexity in mind.[100] He states:

> Objects of description exist in radiating layers of structure and meaning - documents within dockets exist within files that are part of a series. Many different agents of formation are involved in all but the most simplistic of functions - at each layer of understanding within which the documents are cocooned. The author of a document (indisputably its creator in at least one sense) may be very different from the agents responsible for formation of the docket, file, or series in which it is placed. Other agents (to say nothing of functions) are involved via their relationships with agents of formation - the parent corporation of the business unit responsible for forming the series, for example, or the family

[99] Hurley was speaking particularly of the International Council on Archives' Descriptive Standards, which define archival description as: "The creation of an accurate representation of a unit of description and its component parts, if any, by capturing, analyzing, organizing, and recording information that serves to identify, manage, locate, and explain archival materials and the context and records system which produced it. The term also describes products of the process." See: Hurley, "Parallel Provenance.", and Chris Hurley, "Parallel Provenance (2): When Something Is Not Related to Everything Else," *Archives and Manuscripts* 33, no. 2 (2006): 52–63.

[100] Hurley, "Parallel Provenance."

> to which a personal correspondent belongs. These ambient entities contextualise documents vicariously. We cannot describe all of the possibilities. A selection must be made. Having done so, archivists took the fatal step of convincing themselves that the selection they prefer as the best one is the only valid one when preserving evidence. They are wrong.[101]

As remedy for the descriptive limitations of exclusive provenance, Hurley offers parallel provenance, which refers to "the coterminous generation of the same thing in the same way at the same time."[102] Records of parallel provenance are thus situated at the convergence(s) between two or more individual *fonds*, and are co-created in the course of participation in the act or circumstance in which a document becomes a record.

Hurley's use of the word "parallel" to describe this refinement to the concept of provenance is noteworthy for its emphasis on the individuality of a record-creating entity's *fonds*, and the points at which a *fonds* might intersect with other *fonds*. As an update to traditional notions of provenance, parallel provenance is invested in the multiplicity of records creators as they converge around the creation of a record, as well as the multiplicity of recordkeeping realities.

Extant Questions: The Record in the Current Project

John Ridener describes the current paradigm of archival theory to be one of questioning, which stresses context, interpretation, and critical reading.[103] The Questioning paradigm, as Ridener refers to it, can be traced to discursive shifts toward the recognition of the importance of context in culture; the importance of developing an

[101] Chris Hurley, "Parallel Provenance: If These Are Your Records, Where Are Your Stories?," *Archives and Manuscripts* 33, no. 1 & 2 (2005): 8, http://infotech.monash.edu/research/groups/rcrg/publications/parallel-provenance-combined.pdf.

[102] Hurley, "Parallel Provenance: If These Are Your Records, Where Are Your Stories?".

[103] Though he does not explicitly say so, Ridener's Questioning paradigm seems to exclude theories that Brothman would describe as strong sense theories, such as Duranti's versions of diplomatics and archival science proper.

archival praxis that attempts to blend insights on diversity, and more recently, pluralism; the rapid development and adoption of new information and communications technologies; and the adoption of postmodern critical theory among contemporary archival theorists and scholars that stress communication and interpretation.[104] Yet, despite the paradigm shift identified by Ridener, few archival scholars have further problematized the concept of the record. Although references to records abound in the archival literature, even those subscribing to weak sense conceptions of the record often subordinate the individual record to the archive. Few studies have looked specifically to the inner-most ring of Upward's continuum model, the locus of records creation. Sue McKemmish also identifies records creation to be the origins of the record, wherein the record is fixed in the midst of some activity or interaction: a record is the precipitate of such activity. What remains unanswered, however, is how and why that record comes to be fixed in a particular way. What are the processes that lead to the creation of the record?

Rather than specifying a definition of the record at the outset of this study, I opted for a different approach: to seek out and describe instantiations of records as they are created, used, and stored within the context of Machine Project's activities rather than relying on pre-given definitions to structure my observations. The current investigation departs from previous projects like InterPARES in which the record is narrowly defined, while also departing from such claims to records' capacities for "truth-telling", insofar as the impulses to ascribe such powers to records are rooted in the impulse to construe the theory and practice of archives as a scientific endeavor. In place of models used to guide the analyses of record-keeping systems (such as diplomatics) against which to "test"

[104] Ridener, *From Polders to Postmodernism*.

documents to assess their "recordness" against and idealized form, I argue for a perspective that views documents as records on the basis that they are *observed*, *interpreted*, and/or *used* as records, for methodological reasons that will be described in the following chapter. Rather than focusing solely on records as objects, I look to the various relations that the creators and viewers of records enter with them as documentary objects, as well as how information and communications technologies mediate both the creation and eventual use of records.

Chapter 3: Methodology

With the archival literature mapped in the previous chapter, the current chapter outlines the method for this study. This chapter describes the documentation and recordkeeping practices of the Machine Project community, describing the evolution of such practices over the course of the organization's existence as an artist-run community space. While Machine Project has sought to capture documentation in some form or another since the early stages of its development, documentation had not been adopted as an organizational practice until 2009, when Machine Project artists participated in the Hammer Museum's inaugural Artist in Residence program. While the Hammer residency was a watershed of sorts for Machine Project's documentation practices, they were far from sedimented. There were coordinated efforts to capture documentation of events, such as their group exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 2008, but nothing codified into a version of organizational best practices. The Hammer residency was an event in Machine Project's history that prompted a shift in the organization from viewing its documentation as descriptions of its events as they happened, to viewing documentation as opportunities for reaching new audiences and provoking new experiences in them, even if they had not attended a Machine Project event in person.

Drawing on the work of German sociologist Niklas Luhmann and various scholars across disciplines that have engaged with his work to explore socio-cultural issues around information and technology, this chapter will describe this study's program for ethnographic research into the processes of records creation, and the subsequent "lives" of records. This chapter does not attempt the unenviable task of mapping the

entirety of Luhmann's social systems theory, but instead selects relevant concepts from his oeuvre to identify points of intersection with ethnographic and archival discourse.

Archival Ethnography

Recent archival studies have used ethnography as a method for exploring the various social processes and settings in which records are embedded. Karen F. Gracy defines archival ethnography as a "form of naturalistic inquiry which positions the researcher within an archival environment to gain the cultural perspective of those responsible for the creation, collection, care, and use of records."[105] Combining ethnography with an ethnomethodological focus, Ciaran Trace observed fifth grade elementary school students as records creators and described the ways in which these students developed unofficial or informal literacies in their social lives in the classroom.[106] The record in the context of the classroom was for Trace an object of fascination, as she describes the "hidden curriculum" in which students learn how to become record-keepers while also learning how a document is constructed and for what purposes such documents might serve in students' everyday lives as social objects. Kalpana Shankar turns her observations toward the documentation practices of scientists, focusing on laboratory notebooks as records in the space of the laboratory.[107]

The method of this study was also inspired by Ann Laura Stoler's admonition that the archival turn in anthropology had been taken up through methods of reading "against

[105] Karen F. Gracy, "Documenting Communities of Practice: Making the Case for Archival Ethnography," *Archival Science* 4, no. 3–4 (February 2006): 335–365, doi:10.1007/s10502-005-2599-3.

[106] Ciaran B. Trace, "Documenting School Life: Formal and Informal Imprints of a Fifth Grade Classroom" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2004).

[107] Kalpana Shankar, "Scientists, Records, and the Practical Politics of Infrastructure" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2002); ibid.

the grain," in order to ascertain the gaps and voids of the documentary record. Such additive readings of archives tend to be motivated by the goals of identifying and filling those gaps, silences, and voids, with hopes and goals of recovering that which has been historically excluded from the archive. However, Stoler contends that such readings are methodologically limited in their inattention to what can be uncovered through readings "*along* the archival grain" for the cultural logic that drives the production of the documentary record in the first place.[108] Considering both as paramount to the treatment of the "archive as subject" is therefore crucial to understanding the epistemic underpinnings of the constitution of the archive itself and how it came to be.

The primary research "site" for the current project is Machine Project. However, this designation is much broader and complex than the physical space of the Echo Park storefront gallery. While Machine Project is indeed a non-profit organization with 501(c)(3) status, it also simultaneously acts as a loose collective of artistic production and dissemination. As such, one might observe it as a unity, whether as a federally and state recognized not-for-profit organization, as a collective of artists in collaboration, or as a "rhizomatic" and decentralized Los Angeles-based institution comprised of smaller emergent organizations that coalesce with the goals of planning and executing an event.

Machine Project's programming is constituted by the network of artists involved with Machine Project in their varying capacities, interests, and talents, with recurring or regular involvement to isolated instances of collaboration. One might also make the case that the audiences are also a fundamental aspect to Machine Project's programming, and

[108] Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance," *Archival Science* 2, no. 1 (2002): 87–109; Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

the chance encounters that audiences have at their events that might provoke a new way of seeing the world (though there is certainly no guarantee). At a Machine Project event, it is not uncommon to see audiences retrieving their mobile phones (which are often some generation of the Apple iPhone or one of many smart phones using Google's Android operating system). The still and moving images might then appear on social media websites, such as Flickr, YouTube, Vimeo, and increasingly Tumblr. As these sites offer users the ability to tag content as one-word descriptions of images or videos depending on the site, users are able to view a range of Machine Project documentation, including documentation created by the organization's documentation crew, by the artists, by audiences attending the event.

To be sure, none of this makes Machine Project and audience-created documentation of the organization's events unique. Similar dynamics of audience documentation might be observed at almost any contemporary public event (provided there are no prohibitions against the use of digital cameras and/or camera-enabled mobile phones). And there is redundancy in terms of what content appears across Machine Project's presences on social media and social networking websites. Machine Project utilizes both Vimeo and the Google-owned YouTube to as channels for the dissemination of their video documents, some of which (but not all), appear on both websites. Machine Project's Twitter feed is used primarily for event announcements, truncated to comply with Twitter's characteristic 140-character limit with a link to full event announcement on the official website. The Twitter feed is also occasionally used to post (or "tweet") observations in the storefront space (e.g., in a tweet dated February 11th, 2012: "there is a comical number of simultaneous yet unrelated things happening here right now"); solicit

information and/or participation from Machine Project's followers on the site (e.g., on November 4th, 2011, referencing their 2011 fundraising event *DMV After Dark* in which the Elysian LA event space was turned into "a DMV of Machine Project's imagination": "woah! running a fake dmv is a lot of work! anybody want to volunteer and help with our benefit sat?") [109]; and/or link to various press publications about Machine Project. Though collectively categorized under the general moniker "social media" or "new media" on the basis of their commonalities as online spaces for participation and sharing, each website also carries respective differences, such as appeal to certain users, e.g., Vimeo's appeal among digital media professionals and artists versus YouTube's broader adoption among more generalized publics.[110]

In light of these considerations, this methodology draws on insights from multi-sited ethnography. Anthropologist George E. Marcus, in reviewing the recent turns in ethnography at the time of his writing, described a method of ethnography that is positioned in the "world system," utilizing the mapping strategies of ethnography to situate cultural processes in a transnational and globalized context.[111] However, Marcus is careful to note that the goal of multi-sited ethnography is not to holistically represent the world system in terms of totality, but rather to trace the associations and connections of distributed geographic fieldwork sites. In contrast with the focus on localism to which ethnography has traditionally been attuned, methods of multi-sited ethnography conceive of the "cultural formation, produced in several different locales, rather than the set of

[109] Machine Project, "Machine Project Benefit 2011," *Machine Project*, 2011, http://machineproject.com/archive/events/2011/11/05/machine-project-benefit-2011/.
[110] For a fuller investigation of the specific differences and ensuing politics between platforms, see Tarleton Gillespie, "The Politics of 'platforms'," *New Media & Society* 12, no. 3 (May 1, 2010): 347–364.
[111] George E. Marcus, "Ethnography In/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995): 95–117, doi:10.1146/annurev.an.24.100195.000523.

conditions of a particular set of subjects that is the object of study."[112]

Recent applications of ethnographic methods in studying online communities (often referred to under a number of headings, including internet or virtual ethnography, cyberanthropology, netnography, etc.) suggests a consonance between multi-sited ethnography and viewing online space as "research space," comprised of multiple possible sites of inquiry. For the purposes of the current study, then, the designated research site of Machine Project is operationalized as an aggregate of sites that can be grouped into physical sites for events (e.g., Machine Project's storefront gallery, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Hammer Museum, and others that have emerged in the course of the current study) and virtual sites for the events, or spaces that emerge from the sharing and flow of information online (such as social media sites,[113] art-oriented blog posts and reviewing outlets, local events listings, etc.). This wide range of documentation produced around and in the nucleus of Machine Project is highly varied in terms of the form, content, and location, whether they exist in physical space or in online space.

The current project also engages the possibilities of bringing together the functions of archival description (which is traditionally characterized by a position of neutral objectivity and in a practical sense, parsimony) and archival ethnography as a research method. On this front, I aim to counter the professional function of archival description with a situated approach that treats archival ethnography not merely in support of archival description, but *as* a kind of archival description, thick and

[112] Ibid., 99.

[113] At the time of this writing, digital objects by and about Machine Project can be found on YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook, Twitter, and Ustream.

constructed *in situ* in the context of its production and as a product of intentional and focused observation and participation.

My preliminary assessments of Machine Project's documentation identified three levels of documentation for analysis from which to extrapolate research sites. First was the documentation produced by individual institutions: documentation created by Machine Project and by the museums with whom they collaborate. These include records that are created primarily for operational and/or planning purposes, email communications, event announcements, and the like. For Machine Project, this includes a wiki used by the organization and its network of artists, which functions as a working document used to capture and disseminate information in a collaborative context, as well as a tool to inscribe and access the accumulation of the organization's planning efforts. At the second level was the documentation produced by publication outlets, such as blogs, online journals, art reviews, and local events announcements. The identification of this level of documentation as a distinct group was to recognize historical instances of "fugitive documentation" of past artist collectives; it was the attempt to recognize that documentation produced by such outlets is a legitimate means by which future researchers might obtain information about an organization or institution and thus ought to be part of the collectives' archives. The third level of documentation was that which circulates in online space. This documentation, in the form of videos, microblog and social network postings and photographs serve a twofold purpose: to disseminate information about Machine Project's events-based programs, but to also act as a running archive of past events.

As the research progressed, however, this preliminary schema was abandoned as a

result of confounding factors, as well as practical considerations that emerging out of the course of my observations. Mark Allen began enlisting my assistance in developing plans and strategies for various documentation projects with Machine Project, such as organizing the internal documents of the organization and developing a reference library of sorts to facilitate collaborative planning with its artists, including grant proposals and reports, self-reflective notes and musings on Machine Project and what it is, etc. Furthermore, a number of the Machine Project artists that I conversed with about documentation and contemporary art practices, including Allen, remarked that the evolution of the organization's documentation practices were indeed influenced by the incursion of archival thinking coming from my research processes, as well as previous efforts by archivist Sam Meister (whose own contributions are described more fully in Chapter 5). As my involvement in Machine Project increased, I became less convinced that my contributions to the organization could be reduced to mere description of its documentation practices; it became clear that the objects of inquiry for my directed gaze – Machine Project's documentation practices – could not be extricated from my involvement with the organization.

Since 2010, I have attended and participated in a number of Machine Project public and member events, including: a class taught by artist and UCLA lecturer Chandler McWilliams on programming in the open source language Processing;[114] a "DIY Art Space Workshop or Whatever" in which Mark Allen fielded questions and

[114] Chandler B. McWilliams, "Intro to Processing," *Machine Project*, 2011, http://machineproject.com/archive/classwork/2011/02/22/processing/.

facilitated dialogue around the topic of starting an alternative or artist-run space;[115] a lecture by Megan Curran, Head of Metadata and Content Management at the Norris Medical Library of the University of Southern California, on the topic of "Ill-Gotten Brains" and "the Sourcing of Bodies for Anatomical Learning";[116] and countless other events. After my initial contact with Mark Allen in summer 2010, I volunteered to assist in the construction of the Sea Nymph shipwreck, spray painting pieces of molded plastic with iridescent hues of purple and pink so they resembled crystals. The plastic crystals were then affixed to the walls inside the Sea Nymph's hull, visible only if one climbed up into the cabin of the ship dropped her head through a small trapdoor.[117]

[115] Mark Allen, "DIY Art Space Workshop or Whatever," *Machine Project*, 2011, http://machineproject.com/archive/classwork/2011/08/06/diy-art-space/.

[116] Megan Curran, "Ill-Gotten Brains: The Grisly History of Sourcing Bodies for Anatomical Learning," *Machine Project*, 2011, http://machineproject.com/archive/events/2011/04/15/morbidanatomy/.

[117] Machine Project, "Josh Beckman's Sea Nymph: A Shipwrecked Boat Inside Machine," *Machine Project*, September 5, 2010, http://machineproject.com/archive/events/2010/09/05/shipwrecked-boat/.

Figure 3.1. Ako and Friend Aboard Sea Nymph.
Source: Marianne Williams[118]

As I attended and participated in Machine Project events, I recorded my observations in handwritten field notes, which were later transcribed, edited and analyzed. Depending on the event, I also captured videos, photographs and/or audio recordings as a means to triangulate my observations and textual descriptions. Some of these were later uploaded to YouTube and Flickr as instances of my participation in the documentation of Machine Project events as an audience member. I was also invited to contribute an essay to the final exhibition report for Machine Project's collaboration with the Hammer

[118] Machine Project and Marianne Williams, *Ako and Friend Aboard Sea Nymph* digital photograph, September 13, 2010, http://www.flickr.com/photos/machineproject/4987660761/.

Museum; the essay appears as an appendix to the larger report.[119] I analyzed documents produced by or about Machine Project in addition to the documents containg my observations in the field. These included the organization's email list communications, the organization's wiki (which has fallen into disuse, having been last edited in January 2012), the ever-expanding running archive of Machine Project's events on the official website, the official website itself, press publications and announcements, arts institution and museum blogs, personal blogs, exhibition catalogs, and administrative records, such as grant proposals/reports. Additionally, I explored and contributed to the corpora of digital photographs and videos across social media websites (i.e., YouTube, Vimeo, Flickr), attending to the ways in which such documentary objects, appear, reappear, and are described in such spaces. To supplement my observations at Machine Project events and online, I also conducted formal and informal interviews with key collaborators to document their experiences in working with Machine Project and their individual thoughts on practices of documentation in contemporary art.

This approach to studying the documentation produced by and about Machine Project was selected for a number of reasons. First was to address and emphasize the complexities of documentation through a thick description of documentation across form and context of presentation. Foregrounding the traditional definitions of documentation (e.g., archival records, records localized as the product of institutional activity, etc.) inevitably produces only a partial view of the extent of the documentation that is created, as demonstrated in the previous chapter. Rather, this study proposes that while the

[119] Machine Project and Hammer Museum, *Public Engagement Artist in Residence* (Los Angeles: Machine Project and the Hammer Museum, 2012), 174–181, http://machineproject.com/files/pdf/Machine_Project_Public_Engagement_Artist_in_Residence_Report_compressed.pdf.

documentation might be constructed in their contexts of origin as functioning in service of a particular purpose or set of purposes, they also exist as part of a larger web of meaning that might be elucidated by mapping where institutions, organizations, individuals, and their technologies intersect in the record. This method also contributes to the emerging debates over the use of ethnographic methods that include components or are completely predicated on employing the internet as a research context, through comparative analyses of networked documentation practices as a means by which to study online communities as social systems.

The current project, as an exercise in the narrative construction of ethnography, recognizes that a certain level of partiality is embedded in the process of writing itself, and as such, the resulting product cannot be comprehensive: certain details will necessarily be omitted, others will remain hidden, while others still are selected and esteemed as exemplary and integral to the narrative. Despite these concessions, the consolation is the richness of what *is* included in the final account, the construction of a thick descriptive narrative that performs ethnography by recording social dramas, ritual action, and other forms of reiterative behaviors in the context of community.[120]

Social Systems Theory and Its Terms

Niklas Luhmann's writings on social systems draw from a rich genealogy, including ideas from sociology (such as those of his mentor, sociologist Talcott Parsons), mathematics (borrowing from George Spencer-Brown and his calculus of forms), biology (borrowing from the work of Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela and their

[120] Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 65.

investigations into the autopoiesis of biological systems), the radical constructivist epistemology of philosopher Ernst von Glasersfeld, and discussions around second-order cybernetics (including figures such as physicist Heinz von Foerster, and anthropologists Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson). Blending these perspectives, social systems theory views society not as a fully formed entity, a whole as the sum of its interdependent parts as structural functionalism viewed it, but instead sought to understand society as a self-producing system comprised of subsystems, which may be further comprised of sub-systems. Luhmann's systems theory signals a shift from viewing society as a closed system to viewing society as self-producing system – an *autopoietic* system – that is operationally closed and informationally self-reflexive, while simultaneously observing and maintaining openness to its environment.[121] Whereas prior iterations of systems theory viewed systems in terms of inputs from the environment transformed into system outputs, the autopoietic view of systems sought to understand how a system transforms itself into itself.[122] The autopoietic social system is *more than* the sum of its parts.

Employed in this study as an epistemological framework for my ethnographic observations, social systems theory is based fundamentally the marking of a distinction between a system and its environment: this mark of distinction is the form of the system. These terms were borrowed from logician and mathematician George Spencer-Brown's

[121] N. Katherine Hayles locates Luhmann's work in the second wave of cybernetics, marked by a discursive movement away from inputs/outputs, feedback loops, the maintenance of system homeostasis, and the emphasis on control and communication that marked the first wave. The second wave, marked in 1960 by the publication of Heinz von Foerster's text *Observing Systems* in 1960, came to fruition by the 1980s, through the work of Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela's *Autopoeisis and Cognition: The Realization of Living.* See: N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (University of Chicago Press, 1999).

[122] John C. Mingers, "Can Social Systems Be Autopoietic? Assessing Luhmann's Social Theory," *The Sociological Review* 52, no. 2 (2002): 278–299.

Laws of Form, in which he describes form as the marking of a boundary between an inside and its outside.[123] The distinction – sometimes referred to as a cut or a boundary – forms the basis for indication of an "inside" of the system and its "outside" in the environment. Luhmann describes observation as comprised of these two operations in tandem: to make an observation is to mark a distinction and then indicate a side of the distinction as belonging to the system through self-reference, which, through negation, simultaneously indicates the side of the distinction belonging to the environment. The environment is thus other of the system, co-constituting the boundary between from the outside of the distinction. From the point of view of an observer within the system, the environment beyond the system's boundaries appears as an undifferentiated complexity, an excess outside of the system that "irritates" it and may trigger operations within the system without necessarily being their cause. The system observes the environment just as it observes its own internal operations, exhibiting what Bruce Clarke calls the double positivity of the system-environment complex.[124]

Observation is central to systems theory, and the observer making the observation generates the system: a system comes into being as a system when it is observed as a system, as either a simple unity, or a composite unity that can be further decomposed into smaller unities. [125] As such, the system does not exist as a bounded and autonomous entity, nor does it assume or promise a persistent identity based on some essential, transcendent, or inherent quality of the system. This insight is affirmed in the context of

[123] Bruce Clarke, *Posthuman Metamorphosis: Narrative and Systems* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 66.

[124] Ibid., 61–63.

[125] N. Katherine Hayles, "Making the Cut: The Interplay of Narrative and System, or What Systems Theory Can't See," *Cultural Critique* no. 30 (1995): 71–100.

this study by the ambiguity surrounding Machine Project and what Machine Project "is". Machine Project has been described in a number of press publications as an artist collective, as a performance venue, as a gallery, while Mark Allen refers to Machine Project as his practice, and the organization's Twitter feed refers to it as "your friendly neighborhood art space." While the differences between such descriptions seem relatively minor, they suggest a semantic differential in how Machine Project is observed, and how it is accommodated in the multiple realities of different observers.

In this regard, systems theory and its understanding of the multiple systems realities overlaps with records continuum theory's investments in accounting for the multiple realities in which records are observed, whether in the immediacy of the act of a record's creation in and of the moment, through to its plural uses as the record is disembedded and carried in spacetime from its context of creation into realms of collective memory. This is not to say that "it's all relative", nor to advance the argument that an external reality is impossible because observers are constructing their own realities. Rather, as Hans Georg Moeller explains:

> To observe is to produce cognition, and to produce cognition is to construct reality. That reality results from cognitive construction, that it results from observation, does, of course, not make it less real – a reality constructed by observation is not less real than one that is "at hand" prior to observation. It just makes reality different, more complex and plural.[126]

Observation necessarily entails blind spots: no observer can observe everything, or in more tautological terms, "the observer cannot see what he/she cannot see."[127] Moeller continues, "By observing something, the observer has to focus on something and

[126] Hans-Georg Moeller, *Luhmann Explained: From Souls to Systems*, Kindle edition (Petersborough, NH: Open Court Publishing, 2006), 1246, 1247.

[127] This statement, "the observer cannot see what he/she cannot see" is a reference to Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela's *The Tree of Knowledge,* in which they state: "See Moeller, *Luhmann Explained*.

not focus on something else…The operation of observation not only distinguishes the observed from the unobserved ["the unobserved" constituting the environment of the system, the "blind spot" of the system, that which the system cannot see], it also distinguishes the observed from the observer. Through continuous operations of observation, a system constructs what it observes."[128] These "continuous operations of observation" are crucial to the evolution of the system. In observing its environment, the system reduces the complexity that it observes through selection of self-referential information, and introduces this information to its own operations through descriptions of the environment "out there" in terms intelligible and familiar to the operations of the system. These descriptions of the environment generated within the system form the basis for the system's reality, and allow for the system's capacity for self-delimitation and autonomy.

Luhmann's work is not without its detractors, some of whom regard social systems theory as anti-humanistic. To be sure, a recurring theme of social systems theory is its attempts to unseat the human as the foundation for society, but perhaps more subversively, the ways in which it refigures subjectivity that does not exceptionalize the human as the fundamental unit of society *par excellence*. In the view of systems theory, the human being is too complex an assemblage to be encapsulated and properly understood as a single concept.[129] Instead, what might be understood as human beings are recast in social systems theory as "psychic systems", or systems of consciousness, which are structurally coupled with the biological system of the body, itself is structurally

[128] Ibid., 1257.

[129] Moeller, *Luhmann Explained*.

coupled with its physiological sub-systems (e.g., the nervous, circulatory, digestive, endocrine, immune, muscular, skeletal systems, etc.). Psychic systems are also structurally coupled with social systems, or systems of communication between individual psychic systems. Rather than taking the human as the atomic unit of society as a self-evident premise, Luhmann's social systems theory attempts to describe society as communicative events producing other communicative events. John C. Mingers argues that such a move ultimately overly simplifies and abstracts phenomena of social interaction, leading to an "impoverished" and "unverifiable" view of society with little more than metaphorical or descriptive value.[130] Others have described systems theory's focus on the recursive and self-referential operations of social systems to be needlessly complex, veering dangerously close to tautology through its circular reasoning to arrive at the conclusion that every observation is made by an observer. And yet, systems theory acknowledges these limitations – its own blind spots – that no description of a social system's reality can be total. This also includes *its own* descriptions of society and its systems; social systems theory views itself to be but one of an infinite number of descriptions of social reality.

N. Katherine Hayles argues that the construction of narrative can help to elucidate systems theory's blind spots: "narrative articulates what systems theory occludes; systems theory articulates what narrative struggles to see."[131] She locates in Luhmann's writing a mythology of the system, which, as previously mentioned, begins with the observer observing the system. This is itself a narrative of how a system comes to being.

[130] Mingers, "Can Social Systems Be Autopoietic? Assessing Luhmann's Social Theory."

[131] Hayles, "Making the Cut."

For Hayles, narrative and systems are two supplementary but opposite approaches to the construction of meaning: narrative requires an implicit system in order for it to be generated, while systems theory provides an epistemology to guide the generation of narrative, or in the case of the current study, the generation of ethnographic narrative. Lee makes a similar case in his assertion that "systems theory needs data, and ethnography needs systems theory" as a theory of observation to aid the participant-observer in seeing what he or she cannot see.[132]

When this project was initially conceived, it was designed with the aspiration that the resulting insights would be inducted from observations at Machine Project and its events, and the various spaces of the Internet where its documentation might be found (e.g., social media; official websites of the organization, its artists, and its institutional collaborators). However, it soon became clear through the course of observation and data collection, my role as researcher in the field of observation could not be extricated from the social fabric into which Machine Project is woven. I experienced a certain anxiety in standing in the midst of fluxes of activity in a network of shifting, contracting, and expanding social relationships, whose collective story of evolution and development required a narrative that could account for its complexities and emergent properties rather than merely present a series of descriptive snapshots. As I began my research for this project, I found myself confronted repeatedly by methodological questions around the very prospect of "writing culture" and around the various contradictions attending to participant-observation. What does participation entail and to what degree should I participate in the activities of the community? What does observation entail, and what is

[132] Daniel Lee, "Observing Communication: Niklas Luhmann and the Problem of Ethnography," *Soziale Systeme* 13, no. 1–2 (2007): 455.

at stake in conjoining the two for the sake of *in situ* empirical research? How does one participate in the first person, while simultaneously observing in the third?

In order to gain entry into the community at the focus of an ethnographic project, ethnographers often expend a great deal of effort and energy to establish rapport, develop trust, and ultimately perform as our selves for the communities we study. Establishing such relations with the participants of the study is integral to the ethnographic endeavor, including insinuating oneself into the community with reflexivity to ensure that observations are systematic and rigorous. And despite our best efforts in this regard, ethnographers rely on the participants in the study. Participants play an important role in steering the directions of the research, and ultimately in co-shaping the narrative itself. Early discussions with Mark Allen and other artists revealed a difference in how they viewed and understood the functions of documentation and my own understanding of documentation as an archivist. In grappling with these issues, none of which would be surprising to ethnographers, I turned to searching for theory that could account for the effects of my presence in the ethnographic scene as an observer and as a participant.

Sociologists William Julius Wilson and Anmol Chaddha bemoan the apparent split between theory and ethnography, arguing that ethnography is more than a battery of methods for the collection and analysis of data, and that theory can be brought to bear on the interpretation of empirical observations pursuant to ethnography. Among ethnographic studies, theoretical insights tend to be inductive (as I had initially projected for the current study), while others may employ both techniques of induction and

deduction, depending on the nature of the research questions posed.[133] Lee argues more forcefully for the role of theory in ethnography, stating "…while social events may indeed be observed in the field, their meaning cannot be seen…ethnographic methods document empirical operations and communicative practices as they appear and disappear in real time, but the social quality of each operation – it's meaning – must be imagined."[134] Systems theory, Lee offers, provides a useful theoretical framework to guide ethnographic observations for its attention to the operations of observation. Lee specifically draws on Niklas Luhmann's oeuvre to envision an "ethnography of recursion" based on ethnographers' analytic attention to properties of the system emerging out of its self-referential operations. Indeed, Luhmann himself recognizes the implications of systems thinking on ethnography, stating:

> Observation by participating psychic systems [e.g.,ethnographers] that cooperate in the communication and contribute actions is already observation from without. The distinction between external and internal observation already presupposes the system/environment difference. As a distinction it serves to observe observation, and a theory and methodology of so-called 'participant-observation' may find significant the fact that observing observation must presuppose that its object adopts the form of action.[135]

Educational researcher Tina Bering Keiding explicates this link between systems theory and ethnography, and views observation as necessarily entailing some degree of participation. She views ethnographic observation as a process of selection in which the actions and interactions observed by the ethnographer are translated from non-linguistic form (thoughts, sensations, imagination) into linguistic form, inscribed into field notes.

---

[133] William Julius Wilson and Anmol Chaddha, "The Role of Theory in Ethnographic Research," *Ethnography* 10, no. 4 (2009): 463–464.

[134] Daniel Lee, "Observing Communication: Niklas Luhmann and the Problem of Ethnography," *Soziale Systeme* 13, no. 1 & 2 (2007): 454–465.

[135] Niklas Luhmann, *Social Systems* (Stanford University Press, 1995), 180.

> This transformation cannot be seen as a "neutral" preservation of meaning from one medium to another. In this sense, the writing of notes must be seen as complexity-reducing processes that interpret and transform and, consequently, might produce new horizons of meaning that, due to the permanence of the notes, are likely to become all that is left of the evanescent interaction. In this perspective, the specific words and phrases used in note-taking have a strong impact on the constructed reality. [136]

Framed in systems terms, Machine Project looks less like a stable entity than a series of events observed as a unity. As collaborations between artists emerge, evolve, or dissolve in the context of Machine Project's programming, so does the character of the organization's activities and events. What then provides for the continuation of Machine Project? How and why does it evolve as an organization, rather than dissolving or splintering?

In light of these questions, I view the documentation practices of Machine Project framed as part of its operations of self-observation, leading to the creation of records as material descriptions of its activity, with records functioning as material instantiations of the social system's memory. According to Luhmann, autopoietic social systems need a temporal double orientation: toward the memory of the system of in one view, and the other oriented toward the future, with the present as the boundary between the past and future. Within this double orientation, Luhmann locates the dialectic between remembering and forgetting:

> Memory is performing a constantly co-occurring discrimination of forgetting and remembering that accompanies all observations even as they occur. The main part of this activity is the forgetting, whereas only exceptionally is something remembered. For without forgetting, without the freeing up of capacities for new operations, the system would have no future…memory functions as a deletion of traces, as repression and as occasional inhibiting of repression. It recalls

[136] Tina Bering Keiding, "Observing Participating Observation: A Re-description Based on Systems Theory," *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 11, no. 3 (2010).

> something, however short- or long-term, when the current operations offer an occasion to repeat, to 'reimpregnate' freed capacities.[137]

In addition to the research questions, this project is an exercise in self-reflexivity within the context of ethnographic research, on my own position within the social system of Machine Project community, as moving between the position of an individual who attends and participates in the organization's programs and the position of the "outside observer" of the organization. As such, I recognize that the very presence of the observer changes the system, in line with the notion of second-order observation as described in the works of Heinz von Foerster, Niklas Luhmann and other theorists of the second wave of cybernetics.[138]

Rather than assuming at its onset and throughout the investigation that the ultimate aim of the project is the preservation of "truth" or "facts" to be discovered, explicitly adopts as a methodological concern that that which is observed is actually in process or socially constructed along a horizon of possibilities, through processes of choices and decisions. This concern is partly motivated by the recognition that the documentation practices at the focus of this study are ultimately in constant negotiation and contingent on a variety of factors, including the devices available to capture footage of events; the uses of social media platforms for sharing documentation with distributed audiences, and the individuals involved in creating documentation of Machine Project

[137] Niklas Luhmann, *The Reality of the Mass Media* (Stanford University Press, 2000), 101.

[138] E. Von Glasersfeld, "An Introduction to Radical Constructivism," in *The Invented Reality* (New York: Norton, 1984), 17–40; Ernst Von Glasersfeld, "An Exposition of Constructivism: Why Some Like It Radical," in *Constructivist Views on the Teaching and Learning of Mathematics*, vol. 4 (Reston, VA: National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 1990), 19–29, http://www.oikos.org/constructivism.htm; Ernst Von Glasersfeld, *Radical Constructivism: A Way of Knowing and Learning*, vol. 6 (New York: Routledge, 1996); Niklas Luhmann, *Theories of Distinction: Redescribing the Descriptions of Modernity*, ed. William Rasch (Stanford University Press, 2002); Niklas Luhmann, *Social Systems* (Stanford University Press, 1995); Niklas Luhmann, *Art as a Social System* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

events.

Chapter 4: Institutional Collaborations

This chapter describes collaborations between Machine Project and the museums that they have partnered with between 2006 and 2011. I begin by describing the larger socio-cultural context of institutional critique in contemporary art as an art historical access point highlighting artists' work on and/or with museums as expressions of critique. I then situate Machine Project in terms of its similarities and differences from institutional critique, and describe a perspective that has been referred to by Mark Allen as "post-institutionality," a way of working with museums that focuses on collaborating with museums rather than assuming a necessarily oppositional or antagonistic position to the museum or mutual exclusivity between alternative and artist-run spaces and arts institutions. This is not to say that this shift in view on how contemporary artists might partner with museums devalues the political orientations of the previous waves of alternative and artist-run spaces nor does it discount this lineage. Rather, it calls attention to changing attitudes toward how artists might work alongside museums in combined efforts toward public engagement.

This chapter focuses on two exemplary cases of Machine Project's institutional collaborations: the *Field Guide to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art* exhibition (November 15, 2008) and Machine Project's yearlong residency at the Hammer Museum in Westwood, California (December 2009-2010). I describe both in terms of their specificities as significant events in the organization's history, and compare and contrast some of the methods of community engagement that Machine Project artists employ during events. These two events were selected for comparison based on their relative

time-scales, ten hours on one day for the LACMA event, and the Hammer residency over the course of a year.

Exploring the nature of collaboration between Machine Project and its museum partners elucidates Machine Project's vision of those institutions, as spaces where the meanings of its art objects are not given or preserved by the institution, but shared and constructed in and through spaces of dialogue. "In all of our institutional collaborations," Mark Allen explains, "we expand the museum's role as a place that preserves valuable cultural artifacts into a site of possibility in which each work of art may be taken as a proposition, inviting the viewer to allow it, for a moment, to re-frame the world."[139] Through its programming and strategies of public engagement (such as participatory sound installations, workshops and lectures, intimate performances in a coatroom closet in the case of the Hammer residency) Machine Project and its collaborating museums interpenetrate as social systems "enabling each other by introducing their own already-constituted complexity into each other."[140]

A Soft Spin on Institutional Critique

Between the late-1960s and 1970s, a number of artists confronted arts institutions such as museums with the claim that their public mission to facilitate "the production of public exchange, of a public sphere, of a public subject."[141] Artists engaging in such projects drew from Minimalism, Conceptualism, and other forms of "dematerialized" art

[139] Mark Allen, "Machine Project: A.I.R. at the Hammer," *Art:21 Blog*, July 12, 2010, http://blog.art21.org/2010/07/12/machine-project-a-i-r-at-the-hammer/.

[140] Luhmann, *Social Systems*, 213.

[141] Alexander Alberro, "Institutions, Critique, and Institutional Critique," in *Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists' Writings* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 3, http://mitpress.mit.edu/catalog/item/default.asp?ttype=2&tid=11854.

practices (to borrow a term from artist Lucy Lippard).[142] But more explicitly than their contemporaries and predecessors working in such modes, artists working in institutional critique rallied against "…Jim Crow, the military-industrial complex, patriarchy, the Man, and a host of other such perceived and actual hegemons."[143] Art Historian Blake Stimson argued that institutions were "understood to be the means by which authority exercised itself and were thus by definition – regardless of the politics of the institution in question – the embodiment of conservation and constriction, of untruth and unfreedom, of illegitimate authority."[144] For these artists, the museum was frequently viewed along similar lines, as emblem of hegemony and as a mausoleum "where art goes to die," supported by an infrastructures of institutionality that frame art as "'candidate for aesthetic appreciation' by agents situated inside the 'art world.'"[145] The challenges that institutional critique posed to art institutions were purposed to hold public institutions (including museums, but also at a broader level, universities, and government) accountable to their public missions.[146] At the heart of this purpose was the dismantling of the seemingly innocent space of presentation, the hermeticism of the museum or gallery, exposed as "institutional disguise" hiding the cultural framework that legitimates art as "art."[147] To critique the context of presentation was to treat "context as subject," to

[142] Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973).

[143] Blake Stimson, "What Was Institutional Critique?," in *Institutional Critique* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 20.

[144] Ibid., 22.

[145] Sven-Olov Wallenstein, "Institutional Desires," in *Art and Its Institutions: Current Conflicts, Critique and Collaborations*, ed. Nina Möntmann (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2006), 120.

[146] Stimson, "What Was Institutional Critique?," 32.

claim the art institution as part of the work.[148] Examples of institutional critique include the work of artists like Adrian Piper, Hans Haacke, Allan Kaprow, Andrea Fraser, Marcel Broodthaers, Merle Laderman Ukeles, and the late Michael Asher, among others.[149]

Despite the insights that practices of institutional critique provided into the cultural and discursive machinations of the museum, institutional critique as a loose movement is now regarded with a level of ambivalence. Robert Frieling asserts that it was but one mode of interrogating the museum as frame, through the dissection of supposed power regimes and ideological structures established within the art world.[150] Building on this insight, Stewart Martin adds that the crux of institutional critique is rooted in the attempt uncover the social conditions of art "through exposing how it is disciplined by the ideological forms of the art institution."[151] Martin further argues that the epistemological and ontological construction of the social within institutional critique is predicated on its attempts to "sustain an avant-garde utopia of the social as the revolutionary realisation of art in a non-capitalist life."[152]

---

[147] Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, 13.

[148] Buskirk, *The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art*.

[149] Of this list, Michael Asher is notable for the context of the current study. As a current faculty member of CalArts, Asher teaches a popular course on Post-Studio Art and was mentor to Machine Project founder Mark Allen. See: Kirsi Peltomäki, *Situation Aesthetics: The Work of Michael Asher* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010). Notably, sociologist Sarah Thornton devoted an entire chapter exploring "The Crit" (referring to art school classroom critiques) in her ethnography *Seven Days in the Art World* to observations of Michael Asher's class. See: Sarah Thornton, *Seven Days in the Art World*, 1ST ed. (W. W. Norton & Company, 2008).

[150] Rudolf Frieling, "Toward Participation in Art," in *The Art of Participation* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2008), 46.

[151] Stewart Martin, "Critique of Relational Aesthetics," *Third Text* 21, no. 4 (2007): 384.

[152] Ibid.

While past examples of institutional critique seemed to adopt explicitly contrarian positions to the museums they were reflecting on/in, contemporary artists today seem to be pursuing less aggressive modes of commentary. Laura Fried, assistant curator for the Contemporary Art Museum of St. Louis, characterizes these artists as posing not institutional critiques, but "ideological insertions," interested in facilitating playful experiences among visitors within the context of an institutional site, rather than merely "unmasking the institutional membrane" through strategies of discursively opposing the artist and institution, as earlier iterations of institutional critique sought to do.[153]

The "look and feel" of a number of Machine Project's events are superficially reminiscent of institutional critique, which Allen himself acknowledges as an obvious influence on Machine Project's site-specific events-based programming.[154] Such comparisons seem obvious, if not inevitable, owing to Machine Project's turn toward collaborating with museums and staging site-specific events with them. For those who have been following Machine Project since its inception in 2003, it is clear that the organization has grown exponentially in recent years. But rather than moving to a larger space or revamping itself to become more museum-like, Machine Project's model of organzational growth involves sending out satellites, so that during any given week, there

[153] Laura Fried, "Some Alternatives to Institutional Critique" Blog, *Art21 Blog*, April 30, 2010, http://blog.art21.org/2010/04/30/some-alternatives-to-institutional-critique-2/.

[154] Allen, in referencing institutional critique, stated: "All of those things [notions of institutional critique] are obviously hugely influential in my work. But because it's a different cultural moment, I have a different agenda, a different mission." Holly Myers, "Machine Project," *Art Review* (September 2010): 82; Fried, "Some Alternatives to Institutional Critique."

may be multiple Machine Project events at a number of locations throughout Los Angeles.[155]

One of Machine Project's most well-known events was the *Field Guide to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art* exhibition (November 15, 2008), in which the organization installed artists, performers, teachers/workshop facilitators, and other collaborators throughout the LACMA campus. The events that comprised the *Field Guide* unfolded over the course of ten hours that day, representing a variety of participatory projects, performances, and installations. Following the LACMA event, Machine Project was invited to inaugurate the Artist in Residence program at the Hammer Museum in Westwood, just south of the University of California, Los Angeles campus. Throughout its residency, Machine Project staged events at both the Hammer and at the Echo Park gallery, so that anyone could attend a Machine Project event no matter where they may be physically located in the urban sprawl that is Los Angeles. After Machine Project's participation in the Hammer Museum's Artist in Residence (A.I.R.) program, the organization programmed collaborative events with the Berkeley Art Museum and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in addition to contributing to group exhibitions like *The Artist's Museum* at Los Angeles' Museum of Contemporary Art (January 31, 2011) and most recently, the Getty's massive 2011-2012 cultural initiative, *Pacific Standard Time,* focused on the rich post-war history of art in Los Angeles between 1945 and 1980. These collaborations are of paramount importance when considering the artistic practices of Machine Project for how they demonstrate the mission and values of the organization. This chapter seeks to paint a portrait of

[155] Summer Block, "Literary Los Angeles: Machine Project," *PANK Blog*, June 18, 2010, http://www.pankmagazine.com/pankblog/?p=4789.

collaborations between institutions, as social systems that temporarily *interpenetrate* and cross their boundaries.

Machine Project's Field Guide to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

On November 15, 2008, Machine Project "took over" the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The daylong event was a festival of sorts; local artists were suffused throughout the campus, interspersed between the museum's disparately designed buildings and the adjacent pools of tar bubbling beneath (and in some places, spilling up onto) the streets of Los Angeles. In the gardens of the Pavilion for Japanese Art, a curious sight: a unicorn skeleton, crumpled on the grown in a heap, a sculptural homage to fantastic death, exhibited for passers-by to gaze upon and ponder its imaginary origins and its demise (paralleling the excavated remains of prehistoric animals on display at the adjacent natural history museum, the George C. Page Museum).[156] In LACMA itself, a cacophonic din emanates from the elevators. It sounds like three songs thrown together, playing simultaneously, one fading as another intensifies, the volume of yet another holding for a couple minutes before they start to recombine again and again. Strings, brass instruments, drums, some melodious but unintelligible vocalizations, a fife, all coming from within the elevators as they move up and down the shafts, the emergent (dis)harmony completely contingent on the museum's visitors, which floor they want to visit, and whether or not they are brave enough to step into an elevator with a tuba player.[157] A man wearing a suit made of five-hundred pepper cans signals his movement through the galleries with each step. He stops to perform a dance/noise improvisation in

[156] Karen Lofgren, 2008. *Believer.* Installed in the Pavilion for Japanese Art Gardens.

[157] Machine Project Elevator Players, 2008. *Machine Musical Elevator*. Performed in the Ahmanson Building.

which he bangs his hands to his body, sending the sounds of clanging aluminum bouncing off the white walls.[158] Outside in the BP Grand Entrance, motorized wooden "horses" trot (and hobble and teeter) across the concrete, while museum visitors delight in the precarious gait of their makeshift mares.[159] And then for literally one minute, the sound of an electric guitar cuts through the campus of the museum, one minute of speed metal every hour, on the hour.[160]

This exhibition was a stark contrast to the events typically held at the Echo Park storefront gallery, the organization's "home base," particularly in terms of scale. Events held at the gallery "...tend to be intimate, as the room only holds about fifty to sixty people. This scale creates a temporary bubble of community enclosing both the audience and the participants."[161] In contrast, the comparative size of LACMA as a complex of buildings necessitated that the organizers of the event conceptualize how to utilize the space effectively, when their previous events were generally small-scale in comparison; they "...decided to think of the day as multiple Machine-sized events erupting simultaneously throughout the museum, rather than trying to blow Machine up to a museum-size...[in order to] maintain a sense of intimacy..."[162]

Of course, this event required a great deal of planning, and indeed, conceptual and

---

[158] Corey Fogel, 2008. *Countercumulative Marcotting*. Performed at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

[159] Douglas Irving Repetto, 2008. *Foal Army (Budget Cuts)*. Workshop held at the BP Grand Entrance.

[160] Alexy Yeghikian and Mark Richards, 2008. *Gothic Arch Speed Metal*. Performed on a remote balcony of the Art of the Americas Building.

[161] Mark Allen, Jason Brown, and Liz Glynn, eds., *Machine Project: A Field Guide to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art* (Los Angeles: Machine Project Press and the Wallis Annenberg Photography Department at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2009).

[162] Ibid., 10.

intellectual work (and reworking). In his introduction to the catalog of the show, Allen outlines the process of planning the event. In the months anticipating the event, Machine Project artists visited the museum in groups of three to five, surveyed the site and took note of their observations. These observations were then captured in the Machine Project wiki (used for collaborative planning of events) and aggregated into a list of approximately five hundred ideas, which were then sorted into categories of (in their terms):

- What ideas they wanted to do;
- Ideas they were hoping would magically happen;
- Ideas which are funny to talk about but not actually worth doing;
- Fiscally or institutionally impractical ideas;
- Terminally impractical or dangerous ideas that were just never going to happen.

From this list, Machine Project identified, with the aid of LACMA staff member Charlotte Cotton, which of the ideas were actually implementable for the event.

For the *Field Guide to LACMA* exhibition, documentation crews were enlisted to create extensive photographic and video documentation of the day's events, many of which can be found online on social media sites. If one were to survey these online spaces though, one would also find an impressive array of documentation about the LACMA event created by visitors that day, photos and videos that simultaneously translate the experience of viewing (and/or participating) in the events, as well as referencing processes of the production of documentation emerging from within the community. Together, and facilitated in no small part by the social mediation that these technologies provide, these digital representations of the *Field Guide* events point to an collection of records existing outside the walls of literal archival domiciles, a corpus of

distributed documents in networked space that is observed as unified collection, if even around the broad common theme of Machine Project's events.

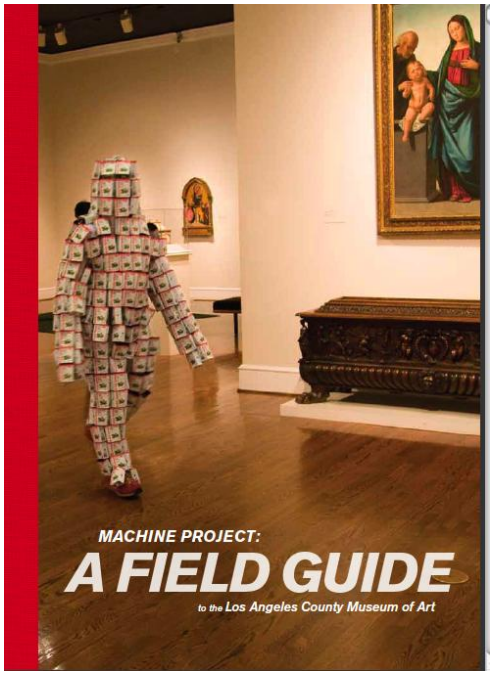


Figure 4.1. Cover of Machine Project: A Field Guide to the Los Angeles Museum of Art
Source: Machine Project

After the event, Machine Project published the accompanying exhibition catalog, *Machine Project: A Field Guide to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.* This publication was not meant to be a comprehensive record of the day's events, but rather was purposed to provide a documentary glimpse into the goings-on of the LACMA event. In the catalog, participating artists provided statements, interviews, essays, and other textual materials to accompany photographs of their works. On the whole, the catalog serves the purpose of providing an overview of the works, while providing a glimpse into the relationships that the individual artists have with their works that comprised the day's events.

The catalog is obviously not the only document representing the event, nor is

Machine Project the sole creator of the documents. In and around the event are multiple documenters, including Machine Project's documentation crews, Machine Project's artists and LACMA staff, press, journalists, and bloggers both advertising events as well as reviewing them, and members of the public who happened to capture their experiences at LACMA that day and place the resulting videos and photographs on social media sites.

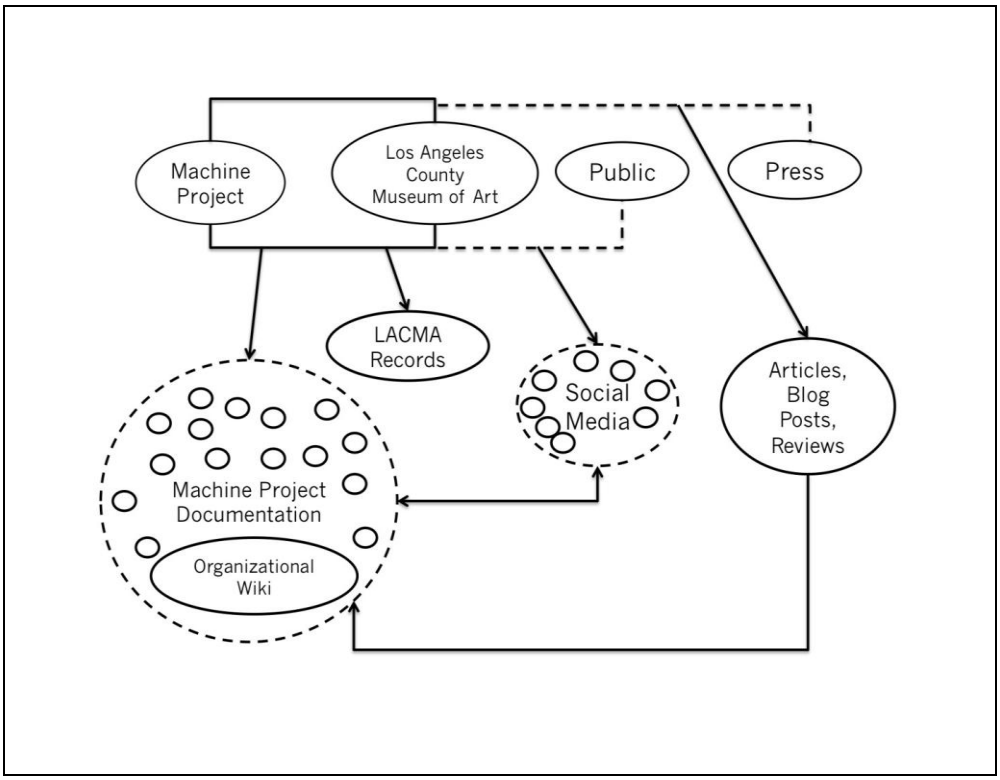


Figure 4.2. Diagram of the Machine Project *Field Guide to LACMA* documentation. Source: Andrew J Lau

The above diagram illustrates the multiple record-creating entities and the relationships between them as mediated through the documentation. This model depicts (at least) four possible groupings of document creators: (a) Machine Project and its artists; (b) LACMA (as a specific example of an institutional collaborator; (c) the public, whose constitution is dynamic and contingent on attendance to Machine Project events; and (d) the press

coverage from various media outlets. The collaborative relationship between Machine Project and LACMA are depicted by solid lines, meant to convey the formal collaborative relationship around the event, whereas the dotted lines convey the informal relationships with the public and the press that emerge out of the formal collaboration. The dotted circles around Machine Project's documentation and the social media documentation depict the permeable boundaries of the organization's *fonds* in their dynamism around what those documents are, while the solid circles nested within represent individual instances of documentation. Notably, this model illustrates that the archive of Machine Project's documentation is itself influenced and constituted by bodies external to the formal boundaries of the organization, and includes documentation created by audiences (e.g. videos and photos that circulate in social media spaces) and by the press (e.g. events announcements, exhibition reviews, interviews with artists, etc.). These externally sourced documentary objects thus act as indicators of Machine Project's social and cultural position within the landscape of contemporary art in Los Angeles and within the local community.

One of the events at the *Field Guide to LACMA* exhibition was an event called "Cheer Up the Loneliest Gallery." The catalog includes a description of the event, wherein the artists Stephanie Hutin and Florencio Zavala sought to shower LACMA's Photography Foyer, the museum's least visited gallery with "reckless pampering, unadulterated encouragement, and general acknowledgement." To do so, the artists organized a series of events, including a workshop on floral wreath arranging, a songwriting workshop, a laser lightshow and dance party, motivational speakers, and blindfolded art handling. The two pages in the catalog devoted to this particular event

included a textual description of the artists' motivations (i.e., to rectify, at least for a day, the gallery's neglect by visitors), two photographs taken at the event, and a photograph of the façade of LACMA with an arrow pointing to the location of the Loneliest Gallery.[163] As such, these two pages provide a curated view of the event from the perspective of Machine Project. However, YouTube contains video documentation of the blindfolded art handling activities: a user named lesupersteph has contributed a series of eight videos depicting participants blindfolded, spun around, and then let loose in the gallery to dizzily affix printed images to the white walls of the Loneliest Gallery without the assistance of sightedness.[164]

The catalog's description and the YouTube videos function together to offer a richer view of the Loneliest Gallery activities than if they were to be viewed alone. Acting in record-like capacities, both types of documentation reference each other while also referencing their limits. In other words, what is underscored here is the inability for each on its own to fully and comprehensively represent the event and its activities, for the affordances of the medium (i.e., print versus moving image) in capturing the fullness of the activities that transpired in the Loneliest Gallery that day.

These cross-references between the published documentation contained in the *Field Guide* catalog and the online documentation play out for many of the other events as well. The catalog text for a piece by performance artist Emily Lacy called "Please Don't Touch Anything! An Oratorio to the Sacred Precious" includes a description of the motivations and processes in creating the piece, alongside a photograph of Lacy singing

[163] Ibid., 156–157.

[164] lesupersteph, *Blindfolded Art Handle 1* digital video recording (Los Angeles: YouTube, 2008), http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ju-Zj2IqVDI&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

into a microphone.[165] On YouTube, a video contributed by a user named milothedj offers video documentation of the performance, the camera positioned above the crowd in attendance without Lacy in the frame. In substitution of a visual depiction of Lacy's performing body as in the case of the photograph printed in the catalog, the video offers only the sounds of her oratorio, lending the viewer of the documentation a different sense of her embodied presence, an aural representation rather than a visual one. Furthermore, milothedj's contributed video is focused on the audience, milling under and around Tony Smith's sculpture *Smoke* in the David Bohnett Foundation Atrium, where Lacy's performance took place.

Artist in Residence at the Hammer Museum

On the evening of November 9th, 2009, a friend and I snuck into a meeting at the Hammer Museum. Posing as undergraduate students from UCLA (for whom the meeting was purportedly geared) we casually walked in, flashed our student identification cards, and sat at the end of an empty row in Gallery 6 where the meeting was held. A few students had already arrived and were sitting in small cliques around the gallery, which was dark except for some track lighting directed at the podium. There, a man stood in a tee shirt and jeans, his stance loose and casual. He called for everyone's attention and began the meeting by describing his organization, Machine Project. Machine Project, it turns out, was invited to the Hammer Museum for a yearlong residency, and the purpose of this meeting was to solicit ideas for the residency from the students of UCLA, to workshop ideas for projects that they would like to see Machine Project plan and execute that year. At that point, I had no knowledge of Machine Project, and I had no idea what

[165] Allen, Brown, and Glynn, *Machine Project*, 38–39.

was to be the focus of the event. My interest in attending the meeting was based upon the trust I placed in my compatriots' opinions and descriptions of Machine Project and the organization's practices, rather than any of my own personal knowledge of the sorts of programming that Machine Project offers. What impressed me most about this conversation was the explicit orientation toward community engagement and participation, expressed in the attention given to the geographic and cultural proximity between the Hammer Museum and UCLA and the appeal to engage with UCLA's undergraduate students in soliciting ideas for residency.

The Hammer Museum is a peculiar institution, characterized by the stark cubed exterior of the building in which it resides and its institutional relationship with UCLA. The space always seemed empty and quiet whenever I had visited before, save for the hushed conversations of visitors and the padded footsteps of the roving security guards. Imagining Machine Project and its "loose confederacy of thirty or forty artists" taking over the museum for a year piqued my interest.

Walking into the lobby of the Hammer Museum on any given Saturday during the residency, visitors were invited into the Little William Theater for a two-minute concert, no more than three or four visitors at a time. Located under the stairs in the lobby of the museum, the Little William Theater was the museum's coat check closet before the residency, re-purposed for these micro-concerts. The Little William Theater series was curated by Chris Kallmyer, a sound artist and sound curator for Machine Project. In this capacity, Kallmyer acted as the primary organizer for the weekly performances, with the series operating as a mostly independent subsystem within Machine Project's programming for the residency. The participants in the Little William Theater

performances included four resident ensembles, ninety-five composers, over three hundred fifty new experimental works specifically commissioned for the series. Together, the collective efforts of this network of composers and performers culminated in over four hundred micro-concerts between February and September of 2010.[166] To document the performances in the Little William Theater, Machine Project installed a web cam in the corner of the coat closet to capture video of the performance, positioned to include both performers and audiences within the frame. However, the web cam was turned on only for about one of three hours each week, leaving most of the performances unrecorded. What was captured, however, is a series of (usually less than) two-minute video clips of performances in the Little William, many of which appear on YouTube as part of Machine Project's corpus of video documentation uploaded to the site. One video in particular, entitled "A Year in the Life of a Coatroom," provides an abbreviated visual history of the Little William Theater performances. The video is comprised of five-second extracts of the web cam footage for all performances in the coatroom, serialized in a derivative documentary object: a year in the life of a coatroom, narrated in two minutes and fifty-seven seconds.[167]

Another experiment in sound and performance was sound artist Emily Lacy's *Songs of Heartbreak/Triumph*, performed in the Billy Wilder Theater on Valentine's Day 2010. Visitors were invited into the theater one at a time for an intimate concert with Lacy, and were then asked to select either a song of love lost or of love obtained. While the day's performances are collectively referred to as *Songs of Heartbreak or Triumph*, it

[166] Chris Kallmyer and Andrew J Lau, "Interview with Chris Kallymer" digital audio recording, May 18, 2011.

[167] Machine Project, *A Year in the Life of a Coatroom* (Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 2010), http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k87-fFnl1fM&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

would be erroneous to refer to Lacy's performances as a singular event, since each successive performance was contingent on the selection of the audience member as to whether they wanted to hear a song of heartbreak or of triumph. Each individual performance thus carries its own specificity in the event: where it falls within the larger queue of performances, the individual experiences that lead an audience member to select either a song of heartbreak or triumph, the individual choice that Lacy makes in selecting a song in response to the prompt.

Themes of intimacy in performance were also exemplified by events such as the *Live Personal Soundtrack* in which visitors were invited to "check out" a guitarist as they perused the galleries of the Permanent Collection and Luisa Lambri's concurrent exhibition at the museum, *Being There*. The guitarists (either Eric Klerks or Dylan Mackenzie, depending on whose shift it was) would follow individual visitors and, with the aid of a miniature amplifier and headphones, improvise a soundtrack to accompany their meanderings through the galleries.

In contrast with the *Field Guide to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art* event was Machine Project's participation in the inaugural "artist" in the Hammer Museum's Artist in Residence (A.I.R.) program. As previously mentioned, this institutional collaboration departed significantly from the former, specifically in the temporal scale of the respective events. The LACMA exhibition was open to the public for a single day, whereas the events organized and implemented by Machine Project for the Hammer's A.I.R. program spanned an entire year (2009-2010). The temporal scale of Machine Project's residency at the Hammer was influential on the myriad projects that were planned and executed in the spaces of the museum. The residency marked a major shift

in the organization's documentation practices, and can be identified as a period in the organization's larger history in which documentation practices started to become institutionalized in the activities of the organization.

Shift in Documentation Practice

The general impulse to document events was long present in the organization's operations since its founding in 2003. Stored in the basement below the storefront gallery was a forgotten archive of raw footage held on DVDs of Machine Project events. Between 2005 and 2009, the organization had documented its storefront events using a stationary camera placed on a tripod. Some of this footage exists on the digital video tapes used to record the events, while others were transferred to DVDs with hand-written labels providing only partial and inconsistent reference to the event it represents. A number of the DVDs are also missing their sequential counterpart, with discs labeled "1 of 2" and missing their other halves, while others are inconsistently labeled, leading to confusion regarding their provenance.

Much of the video footage contained in this forgotten archive is itself unremarkable, not because the convivialities captured in the documentation are not compelling to watch. Rather, the fixed perspective of this mode of video documentation, the "camera-on-the-tripod" model, alludes to its motivation: to document the event, as evidence of the event, with the aesthetic qualities of the documentation bearing little to no influence on the practices of documenting the organization's events. The footage captured during this early phase of Machine Project's existence were perfunctory exercises in self-observation, an intentioned attempt to create a record for retrospective viewing in the future with little regard for how they appear. In other words, these early

examples of video documentation were created with the intention of collecting evidence of Machine Project events as they occurred, much like other forms of personal documentation like family photographs, or diaries and journals. While the impulse to create a record of Machine Project's events are clearly present in these early examples, the degree to which these videos appropriately represent the events was called into question by a number of members of group; these early examples were sometime regarded as "boring" to watch, or dismissed as objects of little value beyond the limited function of supplying the evidence of a past event.

Between December 2009 and January 2010 (coinciding with the inauguration of Machine Project's residency at the Hammer), sound artist, performer, and recurring Machine Project collaborator Emily Lacy was engaged with her own residency as a solo artist at LACMA. She had performed at the museum the year prior for the *Field Guide to LACMA* event and was invited back to stage her own project, *Temples of the Mind.* Lacy's residency included approximately 150 hours of performances at two primary locations of the museum. In the museum's Pavilion for Japanese Art designed by Bruce Goff, Lacy installed five "sound stations" on different floors throughout the building, each singularly emanating different acoustic and electronic sounds "connected only by the human ear" filtered through delay effect pedals.[168]

[168] Emily Lacy, "Temples of the Mind," *Emily Lacy*, 2010, http://emilylacy.net/appearing-projects/temples/.

Figure 4.3. *Temples of the Mind*, 2010.
Source: Marianne Williams

The second component of Lacy's performances was what she called the Hermit's Cabin, a wooden shack installed just outside of the Pentimento restaurant on the LACMA campus. In an interview with Amy Heibel, Manager of Public Programs and New Media at the museum, Lacy emphasized the intimacy of performing for audiences of one or two (or a few), thereby probing the parameters of a performance and the relation between audience and performer, however temporary such a relation might be (i.e., the duration of a performance). She traces the inspiration for the Hermit's Cabin to one of her previous performances with Machine Project in which she provided musical accompaniment for a dental cleaning awarded to the winner of a raffle drawing.[169] She describes:

> Mark [Allen] once raffled off an experience, where I would provide musical accompaniment for a dental cleaning that Machine Project paid for. It was an

[169] Machine Project, "Win a Musical Trip to the Dentist," February 28, 2009, http://machineproject.com/archive/events/2009/02/28/win-a-musical-trip-to-the-dentist/.

> amazing experience, and so strange. The first few moments were incredibly awkward. Then in about the fifth or sixth minute, it's like the most logical thing in the world. It got me thinking about the parameters for a one-on-one performance.[170]

Figure 4.4. The Hermit's Cabin, 2010.
Source: Jimmy Fusil

For both sets of performances comprising *Temples of the Mind*, Lacy enlisted the help of her friend and filmmaker Jimmy Fusil to create video documentation of and for the event. The result was two videos (from which the stills of the Hermit's Cabin above are culled): 1) a preview video advertising the opening performance of the residency and the book launch for the *Machine Project: Field Guide to LACMA* exhibition catalog and 2) a follow-up video advertising the closing concert that was held January 31, 2010. Of the two, the Preview video features Lacy's performances in the Pavilion, whereas the Closing video is focused primarily on the Hermit's Cabin. As bookends to the actual performances of her residency, the videos are charged with the impossible task of representing Lacy's residency, defining the beginning and the end. The designation of a "preview" and a "closing" video is noteworthy, for the implication of their different intended functions, as a projective communication or as a descriptive commemoration,

[170] Amy Heibel, "Emily Lacy: Temples of the Mind," *Unframed: The LACMA Bloa*, December 1, 2009, http://lacma.wordpress.com/2009/12/01/emily-lacy-temples-of-the-mind/.

respectively. Whereas the preview video was entirely staged for the purposes of constructing the video, the closing video was composed of footage captured by Fusil throughout the *Temples of the Mind*.

Temples of the Mind overlaps considerably with Lacy's involvement in Machine Project. Her first performances at LACMA were for the *Field Guide* the year prior (*Folk Songs for the Modernist Period* and *Please Don't Touch Anything!*). Her explicit reference to the musical dental cleaning performance also indicates the influence of her collaborations with Machine Project on her own practice as an individual artist. She attributes the cultivation of her interest in intimate performances for audiences of one (two, or a few) like the Hermit's Cabin to her involvement with Machine Project.

Using Lacy and Fusil's videos for Temples of the Mind as a blueprint for how Machine Project might document its events, Mark Allen enlisted their assistance in documenting events at the Hammer during the residency. With newly purchased Canon Mark II cameras and an invigorated interest in the possibilities for experimentation with the form of video for documenting events at the museum, the documentation practices of the group began to shift.

"I was dreaming about the Dream-In"

Lacy recalls the first event of the Hammer residency that she documented was the Nap-In, a sub-event of the Dream-In, a two-day event co-organized with artist Adam Overton's artSpa, "a sporadic public interface for art-and-then-somes - artists living double-lives as bodyworkers, yoga teachers, psychics, healers, and new age dabblers - involving artist-run walk-in clinics, workshops, experimental meditation groups, new age

aesthetics panels, touchy-feely music events, and more."[171] The Dream-In began on May 1st, 2010 and involved approximately 170 "dream-campers" spending the night in the Hammer Museum's courtyard who were treated to dream workshops, concerts, and bedtime stories. The focus of the Dream-In coincided with the concurrent Hammer exhibition featuring Carl Jung's *Red Book*, "a modern illuminated manuscript, containing 60-odd psychedelic paintings of Jung's visions of demons, mysterious figures, and strange landscapes."[172]

Between 6:00 and 7:30 AM on May 2nd, 2010, the morning of the second day of the Dream-In, dream-campers were awoken by the Hammer's new media associate Amanda Law and video artist Jason Fleming. In their hazy half-awoken states, dream-campers blearily recounted their dreams while Law and Fleming recorded them. The videos were then compiled into a nineteen-minute video, as a record of the dreams experienced during the event.[173] Some dream-campers simply giggle and say, "Sorry, I don't remember any of them." A man recalls a dream in which he was a contestant on the fashion competition television show Project Runway. A woman, wiping her eyes, recounts: "I was dreaming that other people were remembering their dreams and were

[171] See: Adam Overton, "artSpa," *...+1+1+...*, n.d., http://plus1plus1plus.org/artSpa/index; Machine Project, "A Hammer Dream-In | Machine Project," *Machine Project*, 2010, http://machineproject.com/archive/events/2010/05/01/a-hammer-dream-in/.

[172] The exhibition at the Hammer for Jung's *Red Book* was the second of a three-stop tour. The manuscript was first exhibited at New York's Rubin Gallery, followed by the Hammer exhibition between April 11 and June 6, 2010, then finally at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. before returning to Europe for further exhibition. See: Lily Simonson, "Jung's Red Book Begins a New Chapter at UCLA's Hammer Museum," *Art:21 Blog*, April 29, 2010, http://blog.art21.org/2010/04/29/jungs-red-book-begins-a-new-chapter-at-uclas-hammer-museum/.

[173] Notably, the impulse to document dreams is present in the popular practice of keeping a notebook to record one's dreams before its contents are lost to the immediate consciousness of waking life. There is also precedent in what art historian Sven Spieker refers to as Surrealism's charge as an "archive of the unconscious." The Office of Surrealist Research sought to "collect data that would help to elucidate the workings of the unconscious by collecting written transcripts of unconscious dreams and other material." Sven Spieker, *The Big Archive: Art From Bureaucracy* (MIT Press, 2008), 94.

upset by them," while another stated, "I was dreaming about the Dream-In." In addition to the dream interviews conducted by Law and Fleming, the dream-campers' dreams were also captured in "dream pads," or notebooks that were distributed to participants for them to write or draw their dreams. Dream-campers' notations and sketches were later scanned and compiled into a packet of documentation, with cover illustrations provided by artist Candice Lin, downloadable in portable document format (PDF) from Adam Overton/artSpa's website.[174]

At 11:00 AM, the Hammer Museum was reopened to the public. Between 11:00 am and 2:00 pm, three simultaneous events were taking place. In the South Courtyard of the museum, Clay Chaplin and Aaron Drake performed a live mash-up of sounds collected during the Dream-In, including the audio of the dream interviews. Throughout the space of the museum, the Gawdafful Theater, a "collective of psychonautic actors [Mariel Carranza, Claire Cronin, Simone Gad, Candice Lin, and Asher Hartman] who attempt to liberate emotion from language and perform this dislocation," performed reenactments of the dreams collected in the dream pads and interviews.[175]

In the Courtyard Terrace, rubberized mats interlocked like puzzle pieces were placed on the floor, and visitors were invited to take a nap with provided live musical accompaniment. A second Nap-In session was held 3:00 – 5:00 PM, after a one-hour "Nap Break" in which no music was performed. The video for the Nap-Ins featured snippets of performances by Jaeger Smith, Ryan Tanaka and Friends, and a Los Angeles-

[174] "a Hammer Dream-In / Dream Pads," *... + 1 + 1 + ...*, 2010, http://plus1plus1plus.org/dream-in/dreampads.

[175] Participants in the Dream Reenactments included Mariel Carranza, Claire Cronin, Simone Gad, Candice Lin, and Asher Hartman.See: "Gawdawful Theater at Dream \-In at The Hammer Museum Hosted by ArtSpa and Machine Project, 2010," *Asher Hartman*, 2011, http://www.asherhartman.com/perform4.html.

based supergroup of musicians and noisemakers known as Ambient Force 3000.[176] Noticeably absent from the video of the event was Emily Lacy, though she was included in the roster of performances.

While visibly absent from the frame of the video, Lacy's presence behind the camera was implicated in the slow pans across fuzzy poly-blend blankets, or in the extended moment in which the gaze of the camera pauses and focuses on a napper, with the rhythm of his breathing perceivable in the steady rise and fall of his belly. Some nappers read instead of slept, while others draped their hooded sweatshirts over their faces to block out the ambient light in the terrace. The camera, low to the ground, focuses on current Operations Manager David Eng (then in his capacity as a member of Ambient Force 3000), turning the dials on his MIDI controller. The camera turns sideways, capturing video of the curtains of the terrace rippling softly in the breeze. The video ends with the camera's view turned upward to the ceiling, slowly spinning counterclockwise, the view that nappers would have if they were laying where Lacy stood. While Lacy was documenting the Nap-In, filmmaker Jimmy Fusil was documenting Gawdafful Theater's Dream Reenactments in multiple locations throughout the space of the museum.

[176] Ambient Force 3000, "About" AMBIENT FORCE 3000, 2010, http://af3k.com/about/.

Figure 4.5. Still from Dream Reenactments by Gawdafful Theater, 2010
Source: Machine Project

For the Dream Enactments, the documentation of dream-campers' experiences in slumber (i.e., the Dream Interviews and dream-campers' dream pads) were used as the basis for derivative performances by Gawdafful Theater, much in the way that the recorded sounds of the Dream-In were mashed-up live by Chaplin and Drake in the South Courtyard. The video documentation of the Dream Reenactments highlights recursions of observation, or the manners in which records participate in such a recursion and effectively provide the basis for further observation, interpretation, and description by other systems. The following describes one path (of many) along which to trace the recursion of dream-campers' dreams as they are crystallized in the form of documents.

- First order observation: Dream-camper experiences and observes the dream(s).
- First order documents: Dream Interviews video documentation by Law and Fleming; narrative and/or renderings of dreams collected in the dream pads.
    - Second order observation: Gawdafful Theater's surveys documentation of collected dreams, interpreting them and using them as the foundation of the Dream Reenactments.
    - Second order documents: *Dream Reenactments by Gawdafful Theater* video documentation by Machine Project.
        - Third order observation: Viewing the *Dream Reenactments* video
        - Third order documents: This dissertation describing the *Dream Reenactments* video; web pages (such as those of individual artists involved with the Dream-In) that incorporate the *Dream Reenactments* video as a visual description of the event and/or evidence of participation.

Each observation subsequent to the first order observation may simultaneously serve as a first order observation, from the view of another system. While the Gawdafful Theater actors view the content of the dreams as mediated by the documentation at a remove from the campers' experiences of those dreams, they do so from the position of the first person view. Similarly, the Machine Project video documentation captures and frames the Dream Reenactments event as both a record of the Gawdafful Theater troupe's performance (i.e., a first order observation from the view of the documenter) as well as of the dream-campers' experiences at the Hammer during the Dream-In (i.e., an observation from the position of the second order).

Documenting the Hammer Residency

Much like the Field Guide to LACMA, Machine Project's residency at the Hammer was characterized by the diversity of the events comprising it, as a festival of sorts. The events were intended to reflect specifically on the physical and discursive space of the Hammer Museum as an institution, despite whatever differences in mode of delivery or execution of the event. The aforementioned *Live Museum Soundtrack*

performances, curated by sound curator and artist Chris Kallmyer, featured two guitarists performing improvisations through headphones for audiences of one as they strolled through the Hammer's galleries. The "event" of the *Live Museum Soundtrack*, like Lacy's *Temples of the Mind*, was actually a series of performances personalized for individual museum visitors, multiple events rather than a single one.

The videos that were ultimately crafted as documentation of the *Live Museum Soundtrack* and the *Songs of Heartbreak or Triumph* (and many of the other events that were programmed at the Hammer as part of the residency) are highly edited and were clearly shaped by the influence of Emily Lacy and Jimmy Fusil's backgrounds as filmmakers. The videos include high definition moving images, separately mixed audio tracks, and utilize a range of editing techniques, such as shifts in perspective from first to third-person views, multiple footages playing simultaneously within the frame, narrative voiceovers, and title cards. That Machine Project (with Lacy at the helm of the editing of the video documentation) would employ techniques of documentary film editing to project and shape the visuality of the documentation demonstrates an attention to the multiple ways in which the videos might be received as record of the events, but how they do so.

Machine Project's early documentation videos, in contrast with the Hammer videos (and those produced since), were created with observational intentions, to create a record of the event premised on the objective capture of that event and emerging out of the process of the event. Departing from this observational mode of documentation where the camera sits at a steady distance from the activity of the event, recording from the third person position, Machine Project sought to exploit video as a medium for the Hammer

documentation, as another possible avenue for the group's experimentations. These videos and the videos produced since are relieved of their responsibility to capture the event as it happened and instead expand the representational function of documentation to project to viewers of the video what experiencing the event could have been like. Reflecting on this shift, Mark Allen describes:

> An earlier strategy for documentation at Machine was like, okay there's an event, stick a camera on a tripod, record the whole event, and we'll worry about it later. So that's more like an archival impulse: we'll just capture it. But you start to realize that it's not very interesting, that thing that was there that made it interesting for the participants doesn't just automatically manifest on a camera that's just sitting there. So on one hand, you're moving towards this idea of trying, through editing and through planning your shots, to reconstruct, so that when you would watch this film, it's not the same as being there but it tries to create an analogous experience of it.[177]

The shift in video documentation practice for Machine Project corresponds with the organization's collective interests in experimenting with ways to facilitate new experiences for the public. The self-mythologizing function of documentation is thus highlighted in the ways that the documentary objects of Machine Project's operations have become progressively more mediated, more aestheticized, as objects that not only represent the event but also seek to convey the experience. Clearly, the video documentation cannot capture the totality of audience experience at Machine Project events; such a project would be impossible. Rather, these videos in seeking "to create an analogous experience" of the event are intended to prompt a different sort of engagement with the event, not as a retrospective observation but as an encoding of the experience of a Machine Project event. The significance of this documentary strategy lies in its attempt to provoke a sense of immediacy by eliding the position of the viewer of the video with

[177] Mark Allen et al., "Documentation Interview," December 30, 2010.

the position of the audience of the event. Whereas the previous forms of video documentation following the camera-on-a-tripod model relies on a certain temporal and observational distance from the event as evidence of past activity, these latter videos add to this retrospective function of documentation by underscoring its projective capacities.

It is important to note that this shift in video documentation practice has come to influence many of Machine Project's operational processes. The Hammer residency was a watershed of sorts for the organization's documentation practices, prompting a larger organizational evolution where documentation practices have become integral to Machine Project's program planning. But it is also important to note that the Hammer residency does not mark a clean break from past documentary strategies; instead, it provides a point of reference within the organizational and creative history of the group. Lacy, in reflecting on her involvement with documenting the Hammer residency, describes the process of documenting Machine Project events as "a process of choices" through a spectrum of possibilities.

In addition to the video documentation, Machine Project events were also documented through interviews with artists and collaborators. In November 2010, Mark Allen began interviewing artists about their participation in the Hammer residency events. Interviewees included composer Eric Avery, poet Joshua Beckman, Machine Project board member Jason Brown, Catherine Lamb and Laura Steenberge of the experimental women's choir Singing By Numbers, artist and curator Liz Glynn, Machine Project sound curator Chris Kallmyer, guitarist (for the Live Personal Soundtrack) Eric Klerks, artist Adam Overton, museum exhibition designer Maria Mortati, and sculptor Nate Page, among others. Allen's interviews were reminiscent of internationally renowned art critic

and curator Hans Ulrich Obrist's method of collecting interviews with major cultural figures for the "endless conversation" that is his ongoing Interview Project.[178]

The interviews were then edited and collected into a final report for the residency, co-authored and co-published by Machine Project and the Hammer Museum on February 20th, 2012.[179] The report contains interviews with Machine Project artists and collaborators, as well as Hammer Museum staff and administrators involved with the residency. Also included are descriptions of the individual projects and reflections on the institutional collaboration. The official announcement of the report that appears on the Machine Project website contextualizes the report:

> What seems most interesting about this project is not just what the public experienced, but everything that took place behind the scenes – the conversations with artists, the challenges inside and outside of the museum, the logistic and philosophical issues involved in attempting to suggest other uses for a major cultural institution. The report includes introductory essays by Machine Director Mark Allen and Hammer Director of Public Engagement Allison Agsten, a roadmap for how the projects were produced (in case you want to try this at your own museum) and extensive interviews with both the artists and museum staff.
>
> Highly recommended for anyone who wants to see how the public engagement sausage gets made.[180]

The report is available for download from the official announcement on Machine Project's website. In addition to the above description and a link to a PDF version of the report, the announcement also includes video documentation from the residency of selected events (including videos of their Plant Vacation; Fungi Fest; the Enormous

---

[178] Leon Neyfahk, "The Man Who Made Curating an Art," *The New York Observer* (New York, December 16, 2009), http://observer.com/2009/12/the-man-who-made-curating-an-art/.

[179] Machine Project, "Machine Project Hammer Museum Public Engagement Artist in Residence Report Released" Machine Project, February 20, 2012, http://machineproject.com/archive/news/2012/02/20/machine-project-hammer-museum-public-engagement-artist-in-residence-report-released/.

[180] Ibid.

Microscope Evening; Soundings, a participatory sound installation in which visitors were given bells to wear or hold as they explored the museum; and The Giant Hand, an experiment in museum way-finding in which visitors indicate where they would like to go in the museum, to which an oversized mechanical hand points and directs the visitor). These videos were uploaded to Vimeo, which hosts the videos embedded on the Machine Project website.

Conclusion

On July 12th, 2010, halfway through the Hammer residency, Mark Allen published an article on the Art21 blog about Machine Project's events and programming at the museum, describing the mission and goals of the institutional collaboration. In describing the events of the Hammer residency, Allen references Machine Project's previous collaborations with LACMA, the Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis, and the Pomona College Museum of Art. Each reference in Allen's post is hyperlinked to individual pages on the Machine Project where documents of the collaboration has been collected and grouped by project, many of which can be downloaded. The "Projects" section of the website also includes individual pages for their more recent collaborations with the Museum of Contemporary Art in Denver, Colorado (November 11, 2010); the SPACES Gallery in Cleveland, Ohio (February 11 – April 1, 2011), the L@TE program, a Friday night series of cultural programming at the Berkeley Art Museum in the Bay Area of Northern California; and in Minneapolis, Minnesota at the Walker Art Museum (July 2011).[181]

[181] Machine Project, "Institutional Collaborations," *Machine Project*, n.d., http://machineproject.com/projects/institutional-collaborations/.

Machine Project's website makes a distinction between the organization's institutional collaborations and events held in its storefront. The website contains a page devoted specifically to the institutional collaborations, collating and re-presenting the videos uploaded to Vimeo and YouTube, still images uploaded to Flickr, and textual reflections and descriptions of the collaborations.[182] As such, this segment of the official website serves as a running list of the various institutional collaborations that Machine Project has been involved with since its founding, which is referred to on the website as its "archive" of past events . Each individual section can be further divided into sub-events and associated individual acts of documentation, which cede to the larger organizational structuralizing of the institutional collaborations as unified and distinct meta-events, as an integral part of its organizational practice.

Similarly, the final report for the Hammer residency serves as an intentionally self-reflective record of the goings-on behind the scenes of the collaboration between Machine Project and the Hammer, and provides a glimpse into the conversations and curiosities leading up to the events of the residency. These activities and planning efforts, often hidden from the view of audiences, come to the fore with the publication of the report as a record of how the institutional collaboration unfolded. In publicizing the report's publication, both the Hammer Museum and Machine Project frame it as a record of the collaboration, in hopes of commemorating the residency while also providing a documentary proof of concept for similar institutional collaborations between arts institutions and artist-run organizations, and for other artists and museums that might also attempt to engage the public in similar ways.

[182] Machine Project, "Institutional Collaborations" Machine Project, accessed May 24, 2012, http://machineproject.com/projects/institutional-collaborations/.

Chapter 5: Collaborations between Artists

Collaboration as Structural Coupling between Social and Psychic Systems

Although Machine Project is largely under the direction of Mark Allen (who describes Machine Project as his artistic practice), it is the collaborations among artists that ultimately form Machine Project as a community system. A central concept in Luhmann's social systems theory is what he terms "structural coupling," wherein the self-production of a system is intertwined with the self-production of another system. Borrowing from the work of Chilean biologist Humberto Maturana, Luhmann posits that structurally coupled systems are thus interdependent, albeit along different distinctions between what is included in the system and what is excluded as the environment of the system: "communication systems [i.e., social systems] are dependent on being structurally coupled with consciousness systems (minds), and these in turn are dependent on being structurally coupled with life systems (bodies)."[183]

The chapter describes some of the ways in which collaboration problematizes the general notion of authorship at the intersection of artistic production and documentation. Whereas the question of authorship in art is often bound up in notions of an individual expressive genius and the ability to attribute a work to that genius, authorship is also expressed in archival concerns over identifying creators and caretakers/custodians of records through their provenance. Authorship or creatorship in discussions in archival theory and practice is, arguably, a pragmatic directive for the control and management of records, based upon the value that the archival profession places on the authenticity and reliability of records and their provenance.

[183] Moeller, *Luhmann Explained*, l. 383.

Art historian Charles Green traces collaboration as an unconventional mode of authorship from Conceptualism in the 1970s through postmodernism, describing collaboration as "a special and obvious case of the manipulation of the figure of the artist, for at the very least collaboration involves a deliberately chosen alteration of artistic identity from individual to composite subjectivity."[184] From his analyses, Green extrapolates three types of collaboration. The first was an investigation into the early collaborations (1966-1975) of Conceptual artists Joseph Kosuth, Ian Burn, and Mel Ramsden, who would eventually become involved with the collaboration Art & Language. Burn and Ramsden sought to do away with the individual and self-expressive artist through their bureaucratic inventions, folding into their collaborative practice the metaphors of administrative hierarchy and teamwork. The second type of collaboration Green identified included art produced out of long-term or life-long collaborations, focusing on works of the Boyle Family, Anne and Patrick Poirer, and Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison. Whereas the metaphors of bureaucracy and administration supplied the frame for his discussion of Art & Language, Green describes in these examples a form of collaboration based on marriage and/or the family unit, as supplying the structure for collaborative agency. That is, the individual as an artistic identity cedes to a larger collective identity, by way of socio-cultural arrangement of the domestic sphere, in the form of familial configurations.[185] The third type of collaboration Green explored included those in which the collaboration becomes the art work itself. Reviewing the work of Christo and Jean-Claude, Gilbert & George, and Marina

[184] Charles Green, *The Third Hand: Collaboration in Art from Conceptualism to Postmodernism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), x.

[185] Ibid., xii.

Abramović and Ulay (Frank Uwe Layseipen), Green notes that the "third hand" of collaboration intervenes in the mythology of "the lonely individual artist" by outlining examples in which authorial identities are intentionally manipulated, constructed, and/or dispersed. Green reads collaboration in contemporary art since the 1960s as strategies of concealment, suppression, destabilization, or disappearance of a singular identity as author.[186] Although Green recognizes that his investigations fit within a longer genealogy of theories of authorship (particularly coming from studies of literary collaborations), his study viewed collaboration as a question of artistic intention and the delimitation of artistic identity, as self-conscious strategies used by artists to modify the figure of the artist as an individual author and shift it toward an understanding of composite subjectivity in artistic production.

In Chapter 4, I presented examples of institutional collaboration as the interpenetration of social systems. In these examples, the institutions' respective boundaries of operative closure are temporarily blurred and redefined. The planning and execution of events that emerge as the product of the collaborative endeavor (i.e., The Field Guide to LACMA event, the various events comprising the Hammer residency) require a temporary renegotiation of the system/environment distinction by both Machine Project and their institutional partners.

While analysis of Machine Project's institutional collaborations may be fruitful in describing some of the punctuated moments of Machine Project's larger evolution as an organization, such a macro-level perspective can only provide a partial view of the organization's practice at the level of collectivity. And while it may seem obvious that

[186] Ibid., xiii–xiv.

collective action is premised on the more granular actions of those that comprise that collective, this chapter seeks to describe how the collaborative endeavors between artists allow for Machine Project as an organization to evolve and grow, and how Machine Project as a social system is structurally coupled with its collaborating artists as individual psychic systems.

In archival terms, this chapter is concerned with records of collaboration between artists, and how and why such records are created, stored, and accessed. In particular, I describe the ways in which the artists included in this chapter referenced documentation practices in their own work, and the specific issues relating to documentation, records management, and archiving that emerge in their respective practices. This chapter supplements the comparatively higher level view of the previous chapter focused on collaboration between Machine Project and arts institutions by providing a more granular investigation into the artists and collaborators that comprise Machine Project, whose own individual backgrounds, experiences, interests, and observations are brought to bear on the activities and operations of the larger organization.

Emily Lacy

Emily Lacy is an artist whose interests span a range of disciplines and modes, but at the core identifies herself as "a folk singer doing a lot of other things…a folk singer who plays an electric guitar, a folk singer who does sound installations."[187] Emily Lacy's first exposure to Machine Project was as an audience member, attending a performance

[187] Emily Lacy, "Documentation and Artistic Practice" interview by Andrew Lau, digital audio recording, April 17, 2011, Los Angeles.

by drummer and performance artist Corey Fogel.[188] Her first impressions were positive and she continued attending events as an audience member. After some time had passed (between six months and a year, as she recalls), Lacy was personally introduced to Mark Allen and she volunteered to help construct the Mach Infinity, a geodesic dome installed in the Machine Project gallery by artist Holly Vesecky in 2006.[189] She recalls her involvement with Machine Project events increasing as Allen became aware of and interested in her musical work.

For the month of February 2009, Emily Lacy was an artist-in-residence at Machine Project. On Sunday, February 15th, she (along with fellow musicians Christian Cummings, Corey Fogel, and John Hogan) presented a post-Valentine's Day evening of songs centering on the topic of breakups, heartbreak, affliction, regret. Machine Project's website, in the announcement for the event states: "Crying encouraged. BYO [Bring Your Own] hanky."[190] This performance anticipated her later performances of the *Songs of Heartbreak and Triumph* at the Hammer Museum, the latter of which as a re-performance took the initial concept behind the performance (i.e., to highlight models of love in popular music) and refashioned it to incorporate elements of intimacy in and through performance. Whereas the initial performance was staged for an audience in the

[188] Fogel collaborates extensively with Machine Project, appearing in many of the videos and photographs captured and shared by Machine Project's documentation team. Although his face is hidden, Fogel appears on the cover of Machine Project's *Field Guide to LACMA* exhibition catalog.

[189] Inside the Mach Infinity, Vesecky and the army of volunteers aiding in the construction of the dome installed a floral planetarium composed of various flower petals and heads arranged to depict the Eagle Nebula, the 16th of French astronomer Charles Messier's catalog of 110 deep sky objects. On March 12th, 2006, the Mach Infinity served as the presentation space for a lecture on the representation of celestial bodies in astronomy, the lives of stars, and what the universe is made of. See: Machine Project, "Mach Infinity - Holly Vesecky," *Machine Project*, March 11, 2006, http://machineproject.com/archive/events/2006/03/11/mach-infinity-holly-vesecky/.

[190] Machine Project, "Breakups, Heartbreak, Affliction and Regret," *Machine Project*, February 25, 2009, http://machineproject.com/archive/events/2009/02/15/breakups-heartbreak-affliction-and-regret/.

Machine Project gallery, the *Songs of Heartbreak and Triumph* at the Hammer would attempt to shift the parameters of the performance, from performing for a captive audience at the storefront, to performing solo for an individual in the space of an empty theater.

As part of Lacy's 2008 residency, Machine Project announced a raffle drawing in which a Machine Project dues-paying member was gifted with a free dental cleaning by Dr. Perry T. Wong, DDS, with live musical accompaniment by Lacy. The announcement for the raffle drawing enumerates the terms of the award:

1. Door to door service from their place of residence (Los Angeles area only please) to the offices of Dr. Perry T. Wong, DDS. Transport will be in either Machine Project director's 1997 Honda Accord (If he has time to clear the books, papers, and power tools out of the back seat) or more likely an economy class rental car.
2. Soothing musical accompaniment during the ride to the offices of Dr. Perry T. Wong, DDS by Emily Lacy.
3. A free dental cleaning by Dr. Wong and simultaneous musical performance by Emily Lacy.
4. A ride home from the office of Dr. Perry T. Wong, DDS with more soothing musical accompaniment by Emily Lacy.[191]

Entrants were asked to email Mark Allen directly with their full name, phone number, the date of their last dental cleaning, and "CLEAN MY TEETH" as the email subject. The winner was announced at Lacy's post-Valentine's Day performance.

[191] Machine Project, "Win a Musical Trip to the Dentist."

Figure 5.1. Dental Cleaning Raffle Performance by Emily Lacy.
Source: Machine Project

Lacy acknowledges that her involvement with Machine Project has shaped her own practice as a sound artist. She identifies Machine Project as a core influence on her work, referencing events like the dental cleaning performance and her participation in the LACMA exhibition as formative to her own arc of development. On March 29th, 2011, she performed at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) in Chicago, along with seven other musicians/bands for the monthly music series *Face the Strange: New Music from Chicago and Beyond* (October 2010 – April 2011). The MCA's website announcing the event pairs her biographical note with Lacy's *Temples of the Mind* preview video, embedded in the page and linked from her Vimeo account. Reflecting on her performance, Lacy recounts:

> I was asked to play this show because of the albums that I make, and someone there had gotten to know my albums. The albums that I make, you can look at them completely separate from Machine Project because that's like Emily, the DIY musician making albums on her laptop for the last five years. But I think another reason I was asked to play that show in that space was because the people that curated that series were like, "Oh yeah, she plays in museums, she's familiar with that context." So [I was invited because of] the fact that I had played at the Walker [Art Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota], played at LACMA, played at the Hammer, in addition to some other museum stuff. It's almost like a context thing, where I was still just going to be doing music from the albums, but my being willing to place my work within the context of this broader ethos of music-as-art, I think, was really helpful for the people inviting me. And so I think at this point, the distinction between Emily and Emily-as-part-of-Machine becomes really unclear.

Lacy describes the value of press coverage, particularly interviews, as documentation of her work, as descriptions of her practice from an external source. Among contemporary artists, this is a common perspective. "What becomes valuable to me," Lacy describes, "is in that point in time, someone came to me and asked me all these questions and typed up all the answers and typed up all the questions, and it's located in time, published on such and such a date." In-depth interviews provide her with a "really crazy window" into her practice and her given interests at the time, as she acknowledges that her practice is far from static and constantly evolving.[192] As a function of the temporal specificity of their creation, published interviews act as markers in Lacy's history of practice, as well as indicators of the varied successes of her projects. Interviews are for her conversations that were "crystallized" on the date of publication, referencing both the time at which the interview took place, and its position in the history of her individual practice.

[192] Drew Denny, "Emily Lacy: Step Away From the Robe," *LA Record*, January 26, 2010.

Chris Kallmyer

Sound artist and curator Chris Kallmyer was first exposed to Machine Project while he was a student at the California Institute for the Arts (CalArts) in Valencia, a small suburban town north of Los Angeles. Having studied orchestral trumpet in his years as an undergraduate performing arts student at St. Mary's College in Maryland, Kallmyer pursued more experimental and contemporary forms of music in his studies at CalArts. He graduated with his Master of Fine Arts degree in music in 2009.

In 2008, Kallmyer enrolled in a class in Sound Art, co-taught by artist Sara Roberts (who is also member of the Machine Project Board of Directors) and Critical Studies faculty member David Earle. Kallmyer's final project for the class involved music composed and performed by the horns of several different cars (make and model unspecified), interspersed at different locations in a full parking lot. The composition involved the car horns sounding, much like a sonically-conveyed Morse code, supplying accompaniment to a trumpet melody also composed by Kallmyer.

Encouraged by Sara Roberts, Kallmyer proposed a project to Mark Allen for Machine Project's contribution to Santa Monica's inaugural Glow Festival (2008), an "all night cultural experience that imagines Santa Monica beach as a playground for thoughtful and participatory temporary artworks."[193] Glow was envisioned as a Southern Californian version of similar all-night arts festivals taking place around the world during the summer seasons, such as the *Nuit Blanche* festivals held in France annually since 2002, the White Night events in St. Petersburg, Russia, or the Night of the Arts festival in Finland.

[193] City of Santa Monica and Santa Monica Arts Foundation, "About," *Glow: Dusk and Beyond*, 2012, http://glowsantamonica.org/.

The piece proposed by Kallmyer for Machine Project's participation in the Glow Festival was built on the themes of spatiality and the perception of sound that he had explored while he was a student. His performance would have included large marine horns placed miles from the pier, a saxophone trio roving the Santa Monica Pier where many of the events of the festival were held, and trombonists and percussionists performing in the gondolas of the Pacific Wheel, the iconic ferris wheel towering over the beach. The proposal proved to be too unwieldy to be feasible, though Machine Project did use the Pacific Wheel as the stage for a gondola-riding orchestra performing composer and conductor David Corral's experimental piece, *Mandala Fanfare*.[194] Although Kallmyer's proposal was ultimately not accepted as part of Machine Project's contributions to the Glow event, Mark Allen later invited him to perform for the *Field Guide to LACMA* event in November 2008. As part of the Machine Project Musical Elevator Players, Kallmyer performed inside an elevator in a brass trio with fellow brass musicians Luke Storm and Shelley Suminski, while amused/unnerved visitors made their way up and down and in between the floors of the museum.

[194] City of Santa Monica and Santa Monica Arts Foundation, "Ferris Wheel Orchestra," *Glow: Dusk and Beyond*, 2012, http://glowsantamonica.org/gallery/ferris-wheel-orchestra/. In addition to the Ferris Wheel Orchestra, Machine Project also organized three other events: 1) performances in a greenhouse on the beach by artists Kamau Patton and Suzy Poling; 2) a "poetry boat" in which poets Joshua Beckman, Noelle Kocot, and Anthony McCann offered one-on-one poetry readings to Glow audiences via a phone call and binoculars; and 3) nine and a half hours' worth of "pirate lullabies" performed by a rotating roster of more than 30 musicians, in which the public was invited to listen/watch/moonbathe by a bonfire. See also: Machine Project, "GLOW Festival @ the Santa Monica Pier," *Machine Project*, 2008, http://machineproject.com/projects/glow/.

Figure 5.2. Chris Kallmyer performing in a LACMA elevator.
Source: Machine Project

Kallmyer describes himself as a "very curious artist who works with sound" whose interests include site-specific and ambulatory performances with trumpet, as well as experimenting with Max, a proprietary programming language developed by Cycling74 for musicians and multimedia artists. He was a steady presence throughout the events of Machine Project's residency at the Hammer, and was instrumental in curating and organizing the Little William Theater series of two-minute coatroom performances (in addition to other events). On April 3rd, 2010, Kallmyer previewed his project entitled *FERMENT[cheese]* in the Little William Theater, incorporating a live performance on his trumpet with field recordings of sounds from the Cowgirl Creamery facilities in Northern California and recordings from his oral history with John Taverna, a dairy farmer from Petaluma, California, who supplies for the Creamery. Audiences were also treated to

artisanal cheeses to enjoy during the coatroom performance. A subsequent *FERMENT[cheese]* event was held on May 16th, 2010 at Machine Project's storefront, with this iteration also featuring Sue Conley, cheese monger and co-founder of Cowgirl Creamery, speaking on the art of cheese-making, and sustainability in artisan and farmstead agriculture. A $5.00 "cheese fee" promised the opportunity to taste the flavors of fresh milk, young curd, and aged Mt. Tam, the Cowgirl Creamery's signature cheese. For musical accompaniment in this iteration of the event, Kallmyer reprised his use of the field recordings from John Taverna's oral history and from the Cowgirl Creamery, but with a harmonium and cowbells as additional instrumentation to the no-longer solitary trumpet of the Hammer performance.[195]

Many Machine Project events begin as questions. For *FERMENT[cheese]*, one of the initial driving questions inspiring the collaboration was how to make music for a cheese tasting. As he dialogued with Mark Allen about the inspiration for the event, Kallmyer answers this question simply:

> Well, of course you have to go to the farm. You have to go to the farm where the milk comes from, you have to record the milk. You have to record the cows and the rain there because that's where it starts. And then you have to record the curd draining…so you can taste John Taverna's milk, listen to John Taverna's cows, eat John Taverna's cheese that's made by the Cowgirl Creamery.

FERMENT[cheese] was the product of a collaboration between Kallmyer and Sue Conley, his aunt and co-founder of the Cowgirl Creamery. The immersive event debuted in its full three-hour form on April 9th, 2011 as part of the weekly series of art events, L@TE: Friday Nights@BAM/PFA (University of California, Berkeley Art Museum/Pacific Film Archives). For the event, the Cowgirl Creamery offered a curated

[195] Machine Project, "FERMENT[cheese]," *Machine Project*, May 16, 2010, http://machineproject.com/archive/events/2010/05/16/cheesefest-2010/.

tasting tour of the transformation of milk into cheese, while Sue Conley reprised her Machine Project discussion on cheese-making and sustainable agriculture. Experimental ensemble TempWerks performed on cow bells, harmonica, violin, saxophone, accordion, and various electronic instruments, alongside field recordings of cows eating grass, the sounds of curd draining and cheese aging, and John Taverna's dairy farm. Films by Emily Lacy and Chris Kallmyer of Taverna's farm were projected onto the walls of the gallery space as part of the constructed immersive environment for the multisensory engagement with audiences, through the vehicle of the fermented arts.

On the Machine Project website, the announcement for *FERMENT[cheese]* at the Berkeley Art Museum has embedded in it a two and a half minute excerpts from one of Kallmyer's trumpet performances featuring Taverna's jersey cows. The clip is linked to Kallmyer's profile on SoundCloud, a popular social media platform for sound creators to share their recordings. Two months after the BAM cheesefest, Machine Project announced its report for the event, consisting of a single video edited down from footage of the event. This video follows the form of the videos developed by Machine Project during and after the Hammer residency, and like those precedents, begins with a blank white background and text in warm red hues announcing "Machine Project" and the date of the event. As the video proceeds, the viewer sees high-definition footage of TempWorks musicians playing their various instruments, intermittent frames of cows, footage of visitors tasting and listening to the processes of cheese production, all overlaid with Kallmyer's voiceover narrative.

The *FERMENT[cheese]* video illustrates the shifting relationships between an event and its documentation, much like the videos of the Hammer coatroom closet

performances. Each iteration of the *FERMENT[cheese]* event was distinct and became increasingly layered, from the intimate setting of the preview performance with Kallmyer, his trumpet, a laptop and a plate of cheese, to the event held at Machine Project's storefront and the debut of Sue Conley's discussion on cheese-making to the program of the event, to the immersive environment constructed for the event at BAM with multiple performers and collaborators.

As a sound artist and trained trumpet performer, Kallmyer is acutely aware of the representational limits of documentation of a live performance, and the insistence that documentation cannot substitute for a live performance. There is a loss when a live performance is translated into a recording, such as the way in which the perception of two tones might subtly shift with the turning of one's head. Kallmyer was featured in the 2010 issue of the *Experimental Music Yearbook*, an online publication, repository, and performance series that features the work of a selection of artists working in the tradition of experimental music. Established in 2009, the Yearbook was intended to serve as a living repository of experimental music, accumulating scores, descriptions, and recordings of works selected for the annual issue. The public presentation of the journal's contents is crucial to its mission, to the extent that such the works featured in the Yearbook come to their fullness and exist in the moment of their performance.[196] Accompanying each issue's publication is an annual concert at CalArts to have the pieces performed as they were intended to be experienced by audiences and to create and gather supplementary media for each issue's contents. In the online record for *Winter Strengthens*, Kallmyer's contribution for the 2010 issue, visitors can download a scanned

[196] The Experimental Music Yearbook, "Issue 2010," *The Experimental Music Yearbook*, 2011, http://www.experimentalmusicyearbook.com/issue-2010/.

PDF of the score for the piece, which is also embedded in the record itself and hosted by the document-sharing platform Scribd. Visitors can also stream a recording of Kallmyer's October 24th, 2010 performance at CalArts with accompaniment by Brendan Carn and James Klopfleisch, or they may download audio of the performance directly as a WAV or MP3 file.

Kallmyer distinguishes between a recording of a live performance as a record of the performance, such as the recording of the Yearbook festival performance of *Winter Strengthens*, and with a recording intended to serve as the authoritative record of the work. The latter, he describes, would require a great deal more planning and mediation:

> Ultimately, I need to get [the accompanists] in a room, and it needs to be really dry or it needs to be a really good room [acoustically]. Maybe something with really high ceilings. And then we have $3,000 microphones that you get really close to the instruments, and with $8,000 microphones really far from the instruments. Then, you make this plan with…your recording engineers…It's like this thing that's not necessarily the event always. The project becomes this other thing when you make a record, and a lot of it depends on context.

His views of documentation were also shaped in part by his involvement with Machine Project, his own experiments with sound influenced in part by his involvement in planning Machine Project events. Machine Project has "cradled" him into the artist he has become, which he attributes to the sense of camaraderie established with other Machine Project artists. He also recognizes the importance of maintaining a performance practice outside of his roles at Machine Project, at venues where he might perform a more traditional trumpet piece, or an austere experimental composition that would be out of place in the context of Machine Project's programming.

Sam Meister

In 2007, Machine Project published the *Machine Project Almanac*, a record of its events between November 15, 2003 through 2007. In the following year, the Almanac was revised and reedited to include events through March 8, 2008 (for a total of 237 events and projects represented by the time the fifth version [*Machine Project Almanac v1.5*] was published). The *Almanac* was essentially a repackaging in book form of the running archive of past events of the Machine Project website, reproducing the text of event announcements and descriptions as they appeared on the website. Many of the photographs included in the *Almanac*, however, were culled from community-captured photographs of Flickr of Machine Project events, because of the fact that event announcements and descriptions were in their original form on the website were projective and in anticipation of the event, rather than descriptions of the events as they as they were observed. More than a keepsake to be given out or sold to Machine Project audiences, the *Almanac* was intended to serve as a record for the organization's activities to date. The primary purpose of the *Almanac* was organizational, as an instrument of self-reflection for Machine Project to make sense of its past programs, events, and operations.

The *Almanac* was edited by Mark Allen and Jason Brown (assistant director and board member of Machine Project), designed by the Department of Graphic Sciences, and was produced by Michele Yu (former Operations Manager, currently Grants Manager and Special Projects Producer), recurring collaborator and workshop facilitator Annie O'Malley, and archivist Sam Meister. The *Almanac* exists in multiple versions. Versions 1.2, 1.4, and 1.5 are currently available through the print-on-demand service

Lulu; Version 1.2 is only available as a print publication, while versions 1.4 and 1.5 are available as both print and PDF documents.

Meister's volunteer assistance in the production of the *Almanac* would later inform the topic of his Master's thesis, which attempted to apply the Developing and Implementing a Recordkeeping System (DIRKS) methodology in Machine Project's organizational environment.[197] Developed out of the Australian Standard for Records Management (AS ISO 15489), the DIRKS methodology enumerates eight steps involved in the design and development of information systems with adequate recordkeeping functionalities to ensure the reliable capture, storage, and accessibility of an organization's records. Of the eight steps, Meister concentrated on the first three steps: a preliminary investigation of Machine Project's organizational context, followed by an analysis of it its business activities, and concluding with the identification of Machine Project's primary recordkeeping requirements as a legally accountable not-for-profit corporate entity (i.e., regulatory requirements); for its business operations and activities (i.e., business requirements); and the requirements of its community stakeholders.

Despite his efforts, Meister encountered difficulty in applying the DIRKS methodology in the context of Machine Project's operations, due to incommensurabilities between Machine Project's informal and collaborative organizational culture, and the DIRKS methodology's formulation and development for the contexts of Australian government agencies.[198] He ultimately concluded that the list of recordkeeping

[197] Sam Meister, "Recordkeeping in a Small Nonprofit Organization" (Master's Thesis, San Jose State University, 2009).

[198] While the State Records Authority of New South Wales in Australia continues to provide access to the DIRKS manual and associated resources through its website, the National Archives Australia has removed its resources relating to DIRKS from its own website, stating: "DIRKS has not been recommended for use

requirements he derived from his analyses comprised but one way of viewing Machine Project and its documentation practices, and that perspective was "not necessarily how Machine looks at itself or is the most beneficial to them."[199] The DIRKS methodology assumes the existence of codified policies and procedures for the organization in formal and authoritative documents. In the absence of such documents, as was the case in Meister's investigations into Machine Project's recordkeeping practices, the onus is placed on the individual to create such documents to implement the record-keeping system. And while Meister's findings revealed the limited applicability of the DIRKS methodology for the operations of a small not-for-profit organization, perhaps the larger significance of his thesis research was how it serves as a record of Machine Project's nascent documentation practices at that point in the organization's history. Meister's thesis can be viewed as an initial attempt to reformulate the issues of documentation faced by Machine Project into the terminology of archival science and records management.

On September 2nd, 2010, I met Meister for the first time at Café de Leche in Highland Park, a neighborhood in the northeastern part of the City of Los Angeles. That day, we discussed Machine Project over coffee and compared observations, and found that we had similar predilections in terms of the archival scholarship coming out of

---

by agencies since 2007 and has been superseded by other advice on the National Archives website. It has been removed from the website to avoid confusion." Little information regarding this divesting of DIRKS at the level of the National Archives of Australia is provided beyond this statement. See: National Archives of Australia, "Publications and Tools," *National Archives of Australia: Your Story, Our History*, 2012, http://www.naa.gov.au/records-management/publications/DIRKS-manual.aspx; The State Records Authority of New South Wales, "DIRKS Manual," *The State Records Authority of New South Wales*, 2003, http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/recordkeeping/dirks-manual.

[199] Sam Alan Meister and Andrew J Lau, "Interview on Machine Project's Documentation Practices with the Author," April 13, 2011.

Canada and Australia. Meister had previously worked in a library at the University of California, San Diego, while he was an undergraduate student in the visual arts. This prior work experience encouraged his burgeoning interests in working with cultural heritage material as an information professional. His specific interests in archives began to surface while he completed his basic coursework for his degree program when he realized the differences among the work of librarians, archivists, and museum professionals. He enrolled in an introductory course on Archives and Manuscripts, and was drawn to the archival literature overlaying postmodern theory on the theory and practice of archives. This was a revelation that allowed him to connect the postmodern and cultural theory that he was exposed to as an undergraduate student at UCSD to his postgraduate archival training. He supplemented his online coursework with internships with the Outfest Legacy Project for LGBT Film Preservation and in the Archives and Special Collections of the California State University, Dominguez Hills, and has worked with the UCLA Film and Television Archive. Meister graduated with his Master's degree in Library and Information Science with a concentration in Archival Studies in 2009, and is currently digital archivist and assistant professor at the University of Montana in Missoula.

Meister first became involved with Machine Project in 2006, during the second semester of his master's program. Having relocated from San Diego to Los Angeles, he felt compelled to bring the knowledge and skillset he acquired into Machine Project, as his own contribution to the organization in the spirit of community engagement and participation. His first project as a volunteer involved him in the production of the *Machine Project Almanac*, his primary role to compile existing images of Machine

Project events and associated source text in preparation for the design and layout of the *Almanac* by the Kimberly Varella and Liz Anderson of the Department of Graphic Sciences. He recalled spending "a good chunk of time" searching for the scattered documentation of Machine Project events in his attempts to aggregate a non-existent archive, ultimately finding little. Faced with the lack of documentation by the organization, Meister turned to Flickr. He found it to be an effective source for documentation to include in the Almanac, with images captured by people in attendance of the events. Reflecting on this discovery, he describes:

> That's where I ended up finding most of the images that were of good quality and could stand up to being printed. Although, that was also an interesting conversation that we had, about how even if something wasn't the best quality standards-wise [for digital and/or print reproduction], it was still enough to convey something about the experience. And there's actually something kind of nice about the fact that obviously this was some image that was taken by someone [in the audience] who was there.[200]

Department of Graphic Sciences (Kimberly Varella and Liz Anderson)

At the base of a hill in Chinatown sits a two-story shopping center, behind the massive brick building housing the Morgan Laundry service. I am familiar with the neighborhood: I used to attend the First Chinese Baptist Church of Los Angeles in the heart of Chinatown with my family from when I was three years old until my teenage years, from the mid-1980s through 1999. In my hazy recollection of all those Sundays, that shopping center was always part of the local landscape, though I had never ventured into any of its shops. I would occasionally walk by the mall when walking around the neighborhood with friends from my Sunday school, and I would find my olfactory senses assaulted by the pungent odor of a Chinese apothecary with its wide open door facing out

[200] Ibid.

onto College Street. I never had a reason to venture into that shopping center, until Mark Allen informed me of the Department of Graphic Sciences, the design duo Kimberly Varella and Liz Anderson, responsible for co-designing Machine Project's logo and visual identity (Warm Red, in the Pantone Matching System for color reproduction, and in the font Officina Sans) and its print materials (business cards, brochures, the Machine Project Almanac and the Field Guide catalog).

On May 17, 2011, I went to Chinatown, to that small shopping center on College Street, to visit the Department of Graphic Sciences. The studio was located on the second floor of the building; children were playing in the parking lot, shaded from the afternoon sun by the height of the mall and I caught a whiff of that familiar odor of the Chinese herbal shop.

Prior to establishing the Department of Graphic Sciences, Kimberly Varella and Liz Anderson were students at CalArts, studying performance, and painting and print-making, respectively. Varella, in fact, had been classmates with Mark Allen while she was at CalArts. Neither found that their education as art students included discussions about the pragmatics of documentation. Varella recalled having to read the work of Jacques Derrida, and in her studies, having been immersed in art school discussions about "archiving and creating history and the grand narrative, and the flaws or imperfections of archiving, the desire to hold on and the inability to hold on to histories."[201] However, such discussions rarely crossed over into the realm of discussing the practical aspects of archiving and the actual operations of creating, selecting, filing, organizing, and storing documentation.

[201] Kimberly Varella and Liz Anderson, "Interview with the Author" digital audio recording, May 17, 2011.

Varella had previously worked with the *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*, a Los Angeles-based editorial collective and artist-run organization that publishes a bi-annual magazine featuring articles on topics at the discursive intersection of fine art, media theory, and anti-authoritarian activism.[202] She was the designer for issues 2, 3, and 4, published in 2002, 2004, and 2006, respectively. Prior to co-founding the Department of Graphic Sciences with Varella in 2003 (the same year Machine Project began its activities), Liz Anderson had worked with the independent arts publication *WhiteWalls* in Chicago and the now-defunct but still influential *New Art Examiner*, a Chicago-based art magazine that was founded in October 1974 , and ceased its operations in May 2002.[203]

The relationship between the Department of Graphic Sciences and Machine Project was an organic growth, beginning with what they described as "*a la carte*" jobs (e.g., business cards, stationery, membership brochure, then "a membership brochure that is really a brochure more about the project and not just about membership").[204] These

[202] See: Journal of Aesthetics & Protest, "Journal of Aesthetics & Protest," *Journal of Aesthetics & Protest*, accessed May 21, 2012, http://www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org/; Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, "Journal of Aesthetics and Protest," *Civic Matters*, 2005, http://www.artleak.org/civicmatters/bio_aestheticsandprotest.html.

[203] Victor M. Cassidy, "New Art Examiner, R.I.P?," *ArtNet Magazine*, July 5, 2002, http://www.artnet.com/magazine/news/cassidy/cassidy7-5-02.asp.

[204] Varella and Anderson, "Interview with the Author." Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* has enjoyed a measure of popularity among archival scholars, with references appearances to Derrida's lecture appearing in the work of archival scholars such as South African archivist Verne Harris; former National Archivist of the Netherlands Eric Ketelaar; Australian records continuum thinkers Sue McKemmish, Frank Upward, and Chris Hurley, among others. Perhaps unsurprisingly, these scholars and practitioners have implicitly or explicitly identified with ideas and concepts from postmodern theory. See: Verne Harris, "Claiming Less, Delivering More: A Critique of Positivist Formulations on Archives in South Africa," *Archivaria* 44 (1997): 132–141; Verne Harris, "The Archival Sliver: Power, Memory, and Archives in South Africa," *Archival Science* 2, no. 1 (2002): 63–86; Eric Ketelaar, "Archival Temples, Archival Prisons: Modes of Power and Protection," *Archival Science* 2, no. 3 (2002): 221–238; Eric Ketelaar, "Tacit Narratives: The Meanings of Archives," *Archival Science* 1 (2001): 131–141; Sue McKemmish and Michael Piggott, "Are Records Ever Actual?," in *The Records Continuum: Ian MacLean and Australia Archives First Fifty Years* (Canberra, Australia: Ancora Press, 1994), 187–203; Frank Upward, "In Search of the Continuum: Ian MacLean's 'Australian Experience' Essays on Recordkeeping," in *The Records Continuum: Ian MacLean and Australia Archives First Fifty Years*, ed. Sue McKemmish

one-off jobs later developed into what Varella and Anderson characterize as a collaborative relationship with Machine Project; as Machine Project's programming expanded, so too did the Department of Graphic Sciences' involvement in the design processes of Machine Project's visual identity. Varella and Anderson also described this relationship more as one of mutualism than a typical client-vendor relationship, and likened their work with Machine Project to their projects with other smaller non-traditional organizations (e.g., Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, Center for Cultural Inquiry, the Institute for Figuring). Design work with community organizations contrasts with their services provided to larger institutions like the Getty Research Institute, the Hammer Museum, and the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles, the latter often involving comparatively more bureaucratic constraints imposed on the creative process. The Department may be contracted to work with a particular department of the institution and only interface with that department as the client, occluding any sight of the larger project beyond the products to be delivered. Consequently, projects for larger institutions entail certain blindness to the institutions' larger goals and purposes for the design services contracted to the Department.

In contrast, Varella and Anderson's work with smaller organizations tends to be more conducive to collaboration and developing

> … longer term projects and [being] able to see things through, whether it's building an identity, and then doing publications or doing their website or something. And then when we end up working with larger institutions like the Autry, Natural History Museum, GRI [Getty Research Institute], usually they're just one-offs. And so it's a really fun experience, but when you work on a longer term project, you can really understand an organization and how it works, and

---

and Michael Piggott (Canberra, Australia: Ancora Press, 1994); Frank Upward and Sue McKemmish, "In Search of the Lost Tiger, by Way of Sainte-Beauve: Reconstructing the Possibilities in Evidence of Me," *Archives and Manuscripts* 29, no. 1 (2001): 22–43.

> what that organization's mission is in a way that we can be really true to the translation of it.[205]

2010 marked the 25th anniversary of the founding of Lamp Community, a not-for-profit community organization based in Downtown Los Angeles working to eradicate homelessness by providing access to permanent housing and various supportive services and working to build self-sufficiency among the homeless and former-homeless living with mental illness. To commemorate their anniversary, the organization decided for the first time in its history to produce a printed annual report, and solicited the Department of Graphic Sciences to design the document. Charged with building an identity for Lamp Community in the form of the annual report, Varella and Anderson were faced with the challenge of constructing the organizational narrative from scant and scattered resources. The construction of the narrative that was to be included in the annual report was an iterative process, beginning with a design, followed by the story of the organization built around the design. Varella and Anderson then interviewed staff at the organization and solicited them for photographs that could serve as visual aids to specific aspects of the design narrative.

For Lamp Community, their 2010 annual report is a record that the organization did not have prior to the design services performed by the Department. The report included an organizational timeline that extends back to 1900, eighty-five years before Lamp Community was established, in order to situate the organization within the urban context that is Los Angeles. It also includes insets and graphics depicting statistics on homelessness and the efficacy of the organization's programs, and quotes from community members attesting to how they have benefited from Lamp Community's

[205] Varella and Anderson, "Interview with the Author."

services.[206] Community service organizations like Lamp Community often face difficulty in maintaining archives, even if infrastructure (e.g., staffing, budget, technology, space, etc.) has been established for them. Archival initiatives are often a cost too heavy to bear for small organizations such as these. This challenge was identified by the Department of Graphic Sciences, becoming clear in the process of designing the Lamp Community annual report.

In the history of the design practice of the Department of Graphic Sciences, Machine Project's *Field Guide to LACMA* exhibition catalog was a significant event, with the primary documents of the catalog's planning, design, and execution winning the distinction of "the record for the fattest file." Machine Project's desire to create a publication for the LACMA event was present since the earliest conversations to discuss the possibilities of taking over the museum for a day, and Varella and Anderson's involvement in those early planning stages was instrumental for when it came time to design and layout the exhibition catalog. The event had become as much their story as it was Machine Project's and LACMA's story. In addition to the catalog, the Department also designed other materials for event, including the official visitor guide for the *Field Guide to LACMA*. In its twenty pages, Varella and Anderson rendered maps of the locations around the campus at which Machine Project events were occurring. This was no easy task; the museum had no comprehensive map of its buildings and galleries, only a map depicting a birds-eye view of the campus. In light of this, the duo set about constructing the gallery maps to be included in the guide from the museum's computer-aided design (CAD) renderings (Figure 5.3).

[206] *Lamp Community: 2010 Annual Report* (Los Angeles: Lamp Community, 2010), http://www.lampcommunity.org/docs/2010_annual_report.pdf.

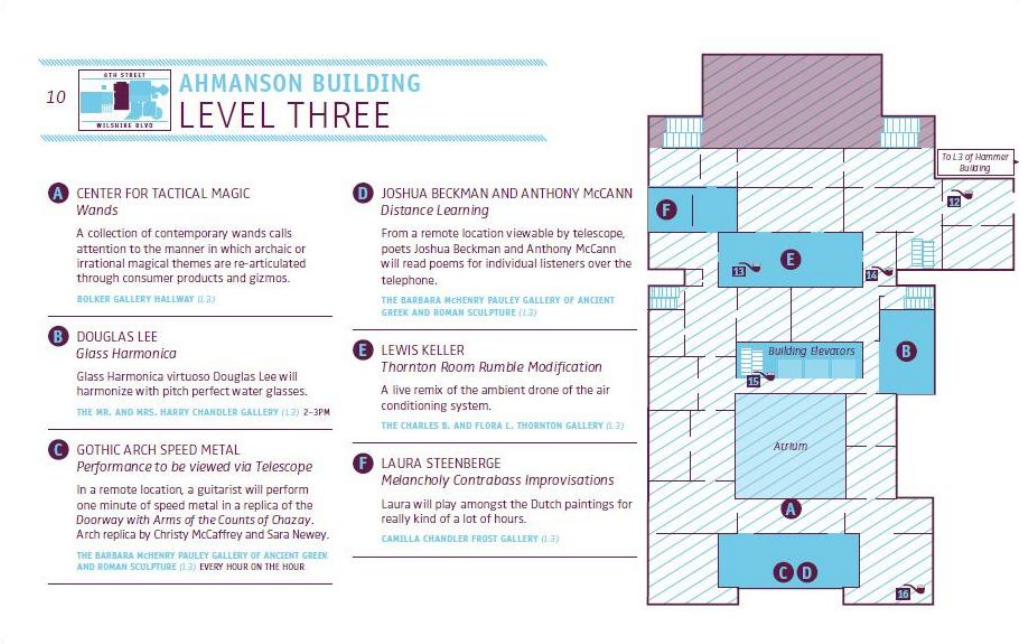


Figure 5.3. Sample from *A Machine Project Field Guide to LACMA* exhibition guide. Source: Machine Project and the Department of Graphic Sciences

As a result of their design efforts, Varella and Anderson have become accutely aware of the challenges of documenting an event, but perhaps more significantly, the implications of a lack of documentation, as they discovered in their work with community organizations. They are both also aware of the interplay between records of the past and the writing of history, with the caveat that such records can only supply a partial view of the event. In light of this, Varella and Anderson reflect on their work with community organizations in terms of a larger mission, in terms of making and preserving histories, and preserving moments in time for them.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to provide a description of some of the artists and collaborators of Machine Project, some of whom have been alluded to in previous chapters, but with more focused attention to their individual interests and motivations.

Although the stories contained in this chapter are but a sample of the larger activities of the organization, they describe Machine Project events from the position of the individual artists and collaborators, whose own practices as individuals both converge and diverge from the organization's events. The narrative descriptions in this chapter sought to elucidate some of the events from the perspective of the individual artists and collaborators who have influenced Machine Project's programming, and who have in turn been influenced by their involvement of the organization.

Continuing this line of inquiry, the following chapter describes how audiences at Machine Project events might document their experiences in attendance and share these documentary objects with others using social media. The chapter also describes how such examples of "crowd-sourced" documentation serve as descriptions of the event that function alongside Machine Project's own documentation of its events, as multiple perspectives on a common object of observation.

Chapter 6: Community Documentation

In her book *Video Green: Los Angeles Art and the Triumph of Nothingness*, art critic and writer Chris Kraus observes and describes the Los Angeles art world laced with politics and the art market, intertwined with the city's art schools and the Masters of Fine Art that they produce.[207] She identifies the late 1990s to be an era in which obtaining an MFA became an important criterion in determining who of a select few of art school graduates would catapult to stardom. Interspersed throughout the essays comprising *Video Green* are anecdotes that Kraus has compiled from her own personal experiences as she ponders the relationship between arts educational institutions, pedagogies of artistic professionalization, and the seemingly inescapable economic gravity of the commercial art world. Comparing New York to LA, Kraus draws a sharp contrast. "New York," Kraus describes, "has always had multiplicity of art worlds, each with its own stars and punishments and rewards. The game there has traditionally revolved around watching who from the alternative/experimental gallery scenes will succeed in 'crossing over' from Williamsburg to Chelsea and beyond. In LA, alternative spaces like Hollywood's Zero One Gallery, Highways, the Santa Monica performance venue and even the more upscale but non-profit LACE (Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions) have been dead end ghettoes where no one, least of all ambitious students, from the art world goes."[208]

In 2011, Kraus' collection of essays *Where Art Belongs* was published by the Los Angeles-based independent press Semiotext(e). Often credited as responsible for

[207] Chris Kraus, *Video Green: Los Angeles Art and the Triumph of Nothingness* (Semiotext(e), 2004).

[208] Ibid., 24–25.

introducing French Theory to an American academic context, Semiotext(e) began as a journal created in 1973 by philosopher Sylvère Lotringer, Wlad Godzich, Denis Hollier, Peter Caws, and John Rajchman.[209] Since its inception, Semiotext(e) has undergone numerous changes in terms of its publications, later offering titles such as Kraus' *Video Green* in the "Active Agents" series and *Where Art Belongs* in the more recent "Interventions" series.

In "You Are Invited to be the Last Tiny Creature," the first essay of her most recent collection of essays, Kraus narrates the life (and ultimate demise) of Tiny Creatures, a store front project of Janet Kim. Kraus opens her essay with a quote from the Tiny Creatures Manifesto 2007:

> Tiny Creatures is not a gallery. It is Tiny Creatures.
> Tiny Creatures is not a venue. It is Tiny Creatures.[210]

Or rather, Tiny Creatures was Tiny Creatures. I wonder, though, if the idea of Tiny Creatures as a communal space of sorts is less a question about the uniqueness of what Tiny Creatures was, and more a question of its specificity through its refusal to identify with pre-established forms of what Tiny Creatures could have been: a gallery, a performance venue, a community space, an artist-run space, a "feral institution" of Los Angeles. Despite these possibilities, Tiny Creatures was just Tiny Creatures.

Tiny Creatures closed its doors in 2010, when Kraus wrote "You Are Invited to be the Last Tiny Creature." But more than an essay of criticism, her essay was a deliberative act of documentation. At one level, the essay documents Tiny Creatures as a

---

[209] François Cusset, *French Theory: How Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, & Co. Transformed the Intellectual Life of the United States*, trans. Jeff Fort (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 71–75.

[210] Janet Kim, 2007, as cited in Chris Kraus, "You Are Invited to Be the Last Tiny Creature," in *Where Art Belongs*, Intervention Series 8 (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2011), 9.

site of cultural production that dissolved almost as quickly as it emerged, and the persons, activities, and expressions of community that made it what it was. At another level, the essay is documentation of a particular moment in the history of Los Angeles art, where an alternative space like Tiny Creatures could thrive, if even for a couple of years.

When I first read "You are Invited to be the Last Tiny Creature" in the autumn of 2011, I found myself continually surprised as I made my way through the text. My affinity for the short essay was based in a sense of odd discomfort. Kraus' descriptions of Tiny Creatures and the artists in and around its orbit also described my own experiences with Machine Project, in ways that seemed familiar but foreign at the same time. I was struck by the parallels between Kraus' observations and my own observations, and the fact that Tiny Creatures was located at 628 Alvarado Street, a few blocks south and just on the other side of the 101freeway from where the Machine Project storefront is located. Perhaps the most surprising aspect of reading Kraus' account was how in and through her essay – a narrative record of her experiences with the alternative space once known as Tiny Creatures – I saw a Los Angeles that was different than the city in which I was born and raised, and the city in which I currently reside.

A "Community of Records" Revisited

Archival scholar Jeannette Bastian can be credited for coining the phrase "community of records" to refer to "the community both as a record-creating entity and as a memory frame that contextualizes the records it creates."[211] She elaborates:

[211] Jeannette Allis Bastian, *Owning Memory: How a Caribbean Community Lost Its Archives and Found Its History* (Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2003), 3–4.

> A community of records may be further imagined as the aggregate of records in all forms generated by multiple layers of actions and interactions between and among the people and institutions within a community. Layers of records parallel the active life of the community itself…The records of a community not only are the evidence of the actions and transactions of the individuals within the community but also define the public consciousness of the community itself.[212]

The "community of records" was formulated by Bastian as a revision of the archival principle of provenance, based on her previous professional experience as the director of the Territorial Libraries and Archives of the United States Virgin Islands between 1987 and 1998. At the focus of her investigation into "how a Caribbean community lost its archives and found its history" was the institution under her direction, and the larger national postcolonial context of what is now the US Virgin Islands. From that position of observation, in her capacity as the former director-cum-scholar of the Territorial Libraries and Archives of the US Virgin Islands, she identifies a range of concerns that emerge out of Danish and American imperialism and its aftereffects. She also described the context of Danish colonization in the US Virgin Islands (or the Danish West Indies under colonial rule) as it relates to archival concepts, such as ownership, custody, provenance, authenticity, evidence, the concept of the record, and values placed in notions of collective memory, access to the materials contained in the archives of colonization, and the "indivisible bonds" that tie communities to the records they create.[213] "The action of communities," Bastian describes, "expressed in a wide variety of prescribed ways, both written and oral, creates a mirror in which records and actions

[212] Ibid., 5.

[213] Bastian, *Owning Memory*; Jeannette A. Bastian, "Reading Colonial Records Through an Archival Lens: The Provenance of Place, Space and Creation," *Archival Science* 6, no. 3 (2006): 267–284.

reflect one another in documenting the activities and forming the memory of the community."[214]

In an attempt to extend the applicability of Bastian's work, Elizabeth Yakel and Deborah A. Torres analyzed professional genealogists as an example of a community of records. Through interviews with twenty-nine genealogists from southeastern Michigan, Yakel and Torres identified the following as salient characteristics of a community of records: 1) participation in activities surrounding access to records, 2) the interactions among community members over records and the creation of a memory frame or shared meaning, 3) shared traditions of recordkeeping, 4) the interface between the oral and the written, and 5) the interplay among records, meaning, and truth.[215] They confirm that the genealogical profession can be described and construed as a community of records, thereby extending Bastian's concept to a professional realm.

Both Bastian's initial formulation and Yakel and Torres' application touch upon some crucial insights regarding notions of community in the archival field, and how they might be brought to bear on archival theory and practice. However, the concept has its limitations, namely its reliance on an essentialist understanding of community. Both studies conflate conceptions of "community" with other forms of social grouping and unquestioningly treat community and identity as interchangeable. In *Owning Memory*, Bastian elides community with nationality or a "nation's psyche," referring to "the Virgin Islands community" rather than a specific community of Virgin Islanders or communities of the Virgin Islands. Elsewhere in her text, community stands in for "society."

[214] Bastian, *Owning Memory*, 5.

[215] Elizabeth Yakel and Deborah A. Torres, "Genealogists as a' Community of Records'," *American Archivist* 70, no. 1 (2007): 97.

Establishing collective memory as the foundation upon which the community of records is built, Bastian argues "…the records of a community become the products of a multi-tiered process of creation that begins with the individual creator but can be fully realized only within the expanse of this creator's entire society. The records of individuals become part of an entire community of records."[216]

For Yakel and Torres, community is subordinated to the terms of professional identity. Although the stated objective of their study was to explore the applications of the community of records to genealogists, Yakel and Torres concede that because their findings were culled from interviews with twenty-nine white participants, all residing at the time of writing in southeastern Michigan, the generalizability of their findings were limited by the racial and ethnic homogeneity of their sample. This raises the question of what community is actually the focus of Yakel and Torres' study: a community comprised of professionals who are observed as a community because of the simple fact that they are genealogists, or white genealogists from southeastern Michigan who are operationalized by the researchers as a prior-existing community, then used as the basis for extrapolating generalized findings to a profession construed as a community.

Despite their respective concessions that communities themselves are dynamic, changing, organic, and evolving, both studies treat community as an entity, as coherent, and stable as an already constituted frame of reference that contextualizes records. This is expressed in how both ascribe community membership status on the basis of pre-existing social categories, inevitably reinscribing such categories from outside the community in question while simultaneously smoothing over the intra-social differences within

[216] Bastian, *Owning Memory*, 3.

Bastian's vision of "the Virgin Islands community", or Yakel and Torres' descriptions of "genealogists as a community of records." Moreover, the presumption that records reflect community action (i.e., the metaphor of records as a mirror of community's actions leading to their creation) is invested in a definition of records as indexical to the actions that predicated them, that there is indeed a direct representational correspondence between record and action, like smoke indicates fire.

These criticisms of the fundamental definitions informing the idea of communities of records are not meant to discount or dismiss the work performed to build it. Instead, they are intentioned to be a means for critical reformulations of community, for visions and speculations of a community's becoming, rather than assuming its coherent and persistent being. Building on insights in the previous chapter on collaborations among artists, this chapter makes a case for an expanded perspective of community that shifts from viewing community as an entity to understanding community as a set of relational events. Such a shift would provide for more dynamic expressions of community that are premised not on assumptions of stability, coherence, and persistence and continuity through time, but on chance situations, differences in perspective and observation, and self-selected participation.

Rather than assume that communities necessarily coalesce around already given social categories like ethnicity or professional affiliation, or that communities must be continuous through time, this chapter seeks to highlight instances of community that emerge out of the course of an event and are bounded by that event. In such instances, such as in the case of Machine Project events, community is expressed in terms of relationality in the context of the event, which offers no guarantee or promise that the

community will necessarily persist after the event has ended and the participants have dispersed. If the limits of the community of records are based in its assumptions of a self-identical appearance of community in each invocation, how might a community of records as a theoretical construct be refigured to account for expressions of community and collectivity that are marked by contingency, performativity, and limited duration? What are the implications for documentation and recordkeeping if community exists only for the duration of an event?

French philosopher Maurice Blanchot offers a distinction between traditional notions of community and what he refers to as elective communities, and identifies the stakes in conflating the two. The former

> is imposed on us without our having the liberty of choice in the matter: it is *de facto* sociality, or the glorification of the earth, of blood, or even of race. But what of the other? One calls it elective in the sense that it exists only through a decision that gathers its members around a choice without which it could not have taken place; is that choice free? or, at least, does that freedom suffice to express, to affirm the sharing that is the truth of this community?[217]

Community and Alternative Spaces

Alternative and artist-run spaces have long been instrumental in serving as staging grounds for community projects. In Los Angeles, these "scrappy, sometimes controversial places" have a rich history that dates back to the 1960s, emerging out of feminist and queer agendas and viewing collaborative practices as "laboratories" to experiment with the intersection between art, politics, and social action at the level of grassroots community-building. Some were bricks-and-mortar galleries and venues, while others were itinerant, existing in and through the social networks that comprise the

[217] Maurice Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community* (Midpoint Trade Books, 2006), 46–47.

local community without necessarily being tied to a physical headquarters or primary designated space of operations.

In 2011, the 18th Street Arts Center in Santa Monica, California published the catalog *Collaboration Labs: Southern California Artists and the Artist Space Movement* to coincide with its eponymous exhibition.[218] As part of the massive Pacific Standard Time initiative of the Getty (October 2011 – April 2012), *Collaboration Labs* presents case studies of the work and practices of artists and collectives, including Rachel Rosenthal, Barbara T. Smith, Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Labowitz-Starus, collaborations between Kit Galloway and Sherrie Rabinowitz, and the alternative media organization EZTV.[219]

Notably, the efforts in collecting and organizing the *Collaboration Labs* exhibition contrast with Group Material's Julie Ault's experiences in organizing *Cultural Economies: Histories from the Alternative Arts Movement, NYC*, a similar survey exhibition in 1996 for the New York alternative art scene between 1965-1985. Whereas Ault bemoaned the lack of documentation for the activities of the organizations at the focus of her project, art historian Julia Bryan-Wilson calls attention to the wealth of documentation of the Los Angeles-based artists and collectives at the focus of the *Collaboration Labs* exhibition.[220] Despite the differences in volume of source material for their respective exhibitions of the history of Los Angeles and New York alternative

[218] "Pacific Standard Time - Collaboration Labs: Southern California Artists and the Artist Space Movement," 2011, http://www.pacificstandardtime.org/exhibitions?id=collaboration-labs-southern-california-artists-and-the-artist-space-movement.

[219] 18th Street Arts Center et al., *Collaboration Labs: Southern California Artists and the Artist Space Movement* (Santa Monica, CA: 18th Street Arts Center, 2011), 7.

[220] Ibid.

art spaces, the motivations of the curatorial efforts behind them converge in a number of ways. The catalogs themselves function as records, as documentation that attests to the event of exhibition. But more specifically, the catalogs function as documentation of a sphere of activity that operates primarily outside of the gaze of the mainstream, at the level of community participation and engagement.

Miwon Kwon articulates her discontent with definitions of community that are based on essentialist assumptions of community framed by shared identities, histories, and other affiliative ties, especially in the history of community-based art projects. She distinguishes between the movement of community-based art of previous decades, and what she terms "collective artistic praxis." The former, Kwon asserts, finds its limits in the very impossibility of the assumption of a community's "total consolidation, wholeness, and unity," as well as its perceived coherence. She states that community-based art "is typically understood as a *descriptive* practice in which the community functions as a referential social entity. It is an other to the artist and the art world, and its identity is understood to be immanent to itself, thus available to (self-)expression."[221] Instead, collective artistic praxis proposes the "interruption of singularities" and "being-with" as the basis for collaboration between artist(s), institutions, and the group of reception.[222]

Collective artistic praxis, in contrast with community-based art, recognizes the impossibility of a coherent group identity, and instead argues for a projective exercise in which the actors involved (e.g., the artist(s), the cultural institution, a provisional group

[221] Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, 154.

[222] See: Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991); Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* (Stanford University Press, 2000).

of viewer-participants) are aware of the circumstances of the immediate interaction, and come together and come apart as a necessary part of the collective social process.[223] Collective artistic praxis signals a shift from the citing of community by way of its "affirmational siting" to its "critical unsiting", resisting the assumption of an existing community as the site of an artist's intervention. Collective artistic praxis as a concept revises the practice and function of community-based art in a way that challenges the formulation of the artist working on or in a community; collective artistic practice describes the dispersal of authorship from an artist to a collective that does not presuppose a community identity as its basis for existence. Collective artistic praxis instead focuses on the work born out of an immediate engagement with the collective in the art work that hinges on the participation of the audience as much as the artist. Kwon's theorization of collective artistic praxis is premised on philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy's theory of the inoperative community, which posits that a community cannot be based on some essential quality or set of essential qualities of common singular beings. Rather, Nancy asserts "community is made of the interruption of singularities, or the suspension that singular beings are." What Kwon identifies here with the notion of collective artistic praxis is a shift in focus from the relationship between artist and community, to the relationship between community members as they coalesce and interact around the work, which art critic Nicolas Bourriaud also described as "relational aesthetics."[224]

The vision of community offered by Kwon alludes to other discursive currents in contemporary art, namely around participation and social engagement. Frieling notes that

[223] Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, 154.

[224] Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*.

the participatory turn of the 1990s attempted to update earlier art practices of the 1960s, engaging audiences as actors in open and contingent relational systems. Frieling's construal of participatory art in terms of openness and relationality at once recalls Kwon's appropriation of Nancy's inoperative community, while also seemingly guarding against apparent notions of unfettered egalitarianism between artist and audience. This contrasts with an understanding of participation in art in terms of egalitarianism or "co-authorship" of the work, which is to submit the work to an idea of a horizontal relation between artist(s) and community, even if the artist(s) fulfills the primary role of orchestrating the situation of the participatory event in order to activate that contingent community.

Art and media critic Boris Groys, seeking to provide a genealogical account of the emergence and rise of collaborative and participatory artistic production, argues that this turn in artistic practice sought to question and transform the "radical separation of artists and their public," instead positing a relation where "events, projects, political interventions, social analyses, or independent educational institutions…are initiated, in many cases, by individual artists, but…can ultimately be realized only the involvement of many."[225] Art historian Claire Bishop adds that such experiments are characterized by an interest in turning "viewers into producers," a turn that has precedents in Dada, Fluxus, and Conceptualism.[226]

Art historian Dave Beech offers what he terms "the art of encounter" in the search for a social ontology of contemporary art, present in "the rise of the concept of

[225] Boris Groys, "A Genealogy of Participatory Art," in *The Art of Participation* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2008), 19.

[226] Bishop, "Introduction: Viewers as Producers"; Frieling, "Toward Participation in Art."

relationality and practices of participation, collaboration, and performativity."[227] He presents a useful model for envisioning this movement away from the singular experience of the artwork at the site of viewing:

> An art not to be looked at is an art that proposes a thorough reconfiguration of art's materiality, agents and agencies: the art object is no longer necessarily the primary focus of the encounter with art; the white box institutions in which we encounter art adapt by mimicking libraries, cafes, and other social spaces; the artist himself turns to unfamiliar skills to produce the new art; and art's addressee, no longer necessarily even a gallery-goer, is not a view, but is a subject expanded with a range of new activities and new styles of engagement.[228]

Pablo Helguera, opting to use the term "socially engaged art," focuses primarily on the educational and pedagogical aspects of social practices in contemporary art, based on his own experiences having worked as a museum educator since the 1990s. He recognized the parallel processes of art and education, each with similar investments in engagement with audiences, inquiry-based methods, collaborative dialogue, and hands-on activities.[229] Art historian Grant H. Kester describes such projects as illustrations of a "dialogical aesthetic," which shifts the conventional view of aesthetics based on some appeal to a transcendent authority (whether God, reason, or otherwise) and is "based on the generation of a local consensual knowledge that is only provisionally binding and that is grounded instead at the level of collective interaction."[230] A dialogical aesthetic, Kester further describes, also contrasts with the conventional model of aesthetics in how it understands subjectivity and aesthetic experience. The conventional model presumes that

---

[227] Beech, "Don't Look Now! Art After the Viewer and Beyond Participation," 21.

[228] Ibid., 20–21.

[229] Pablo Helguera, *Education for Socially Engaged Art*, Kindle (NY: Jorge Pinto Books, 2011).

[230] Grant H. Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (University of California Press, 2004), 112.

the subject's capacity for dialogue about a work of art is the product of "liking" the work, perceptually apprehending the aesethetic of the work, and then finding his or her capacity for discourse on the work increased or enhanced as a result of that process of individual and physical interface. In contrast, Kester's dialogical aesthetics asserts that "subjectivity is formed through discourse and intersubjective exchange itself," and that "discourse is not simply a tool to be used to communicate an *a priori* 'content' with other already formed subjects but is itself intended to model subjectivity."[231]

Participatory modes in contemporary art can be extended into discussions of collective memory by looking to the creation of documentation at the time of the collective artistic endeavor. That is to say that for these instances of collective artistic activities, individuals of the community take up the task of documenting their experiences in viewing the work. In doing so, they extend the dispersal of the works' authorship in acts of "co-producing" the work through participation, toward the dispersal of the authorship of the works' memory by way of their participation in acts of documentation. Participation as a form of community-building can thus be extended to discussions centered on how such interactions might be translated into terms of collective documentation, and how a community together documents the event that brought them together in the first place. What are the implications for collective and cultural memory if the dispersal of the work's authorship is decentered from the artist and extended to the community that the artist interacts with, charged with the responsibility of creating and sharing the work's documentation, and thus, the production of the collective memory of the work?

[231] Ibid.

The following section describes how these expanded definitions of community in contemporary art might be brought to bear on analyzing how Machine Project audiences, as a necessary and integral part of the organization's community, document their experiences of attending and./or participating in Machine Project's events. In these examples, community is not stable nor based on some shared identity, but is elective, and assembles for an event and then disperses after the event has concluded. What documentary objects are created by an elective community that emerges and dissolves in the duration of the interaction? How are such objects used by members of the Machine Project community?

Documenting Community

The expansive lawn of Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is referred to as the Open Field, and is literally a large open field used as the staging grounds for a series of community-sourced events during the summer months. Between July 19th and 31st, 2011, Machine Project was in residency at the Walker Art Center Open Field for their Summer Jubilee, which featured a variety of workshops, performances, and participatory events in the spirit of exploring what happens "when people get together to share and exchange skills and interests, to create something new, or delve into the unknown."[232] On January 22nd and 23rd, 2011, five months prior to the Summer Jubilee, sound artists Chris Kallmyer and Emily Lacy, and poet Joshua Beckman traveled to Minneapolis to stage "preview" events. The Open Field is typically closed during the

[232] Walker Art Center, "About Open Field," 2011, http://blogs.walkerart.org/openfield2011/about-open-field/.

winter, but was open for the week and a half of programming that Machine Project offered there in anticipation of their residency six months later.

In the middle of the field was an igloo built from packed snow – a "Bigloo" – constructed by artist Sean Connaughty.[233] An artist, Connaughty has accumulated multiple videos documenting the various locations where his Bigloos have been built. A video of Bigloo v[ersion]21, the specific iteration of Connaughty's Bigloos at the Walker that winter, features a performance by Lacy of her song "Man on the Mountain" and appears on both Vimeo and YouTube. On Vimeo, the video was uploaded under the name, Vortex Navigation Company (a pseudonym for Connaughty) and on YouTube, under the name "seanconnaughty."[234] This video is a clear example of "the coterminous generation of the same thing at the same time," or parallel provenance. Though simple provenance would attribute the video to its documenter, Sean Connaughty/Vortex Navigation Company, the parallel provenance of the video would also include Emily Lacy, as well as Machine Project as collaborators of the event.

Visitors to the Walker that weekend were invited into the Bigloo to share tea with Kallmyer and experience a sound installation in which the very kettles used to prepare the tea simultaneously served as the amplifiers for the installation. Poet Joshua Beckman offered readings of poems about summertime for one or two audience members at a time. Audiences were encouraged to partake in an intimate performance in the Bigloo, by Emily Lacy dressed as a snowbound brown bear playing her guitar and loop pedals. In

[233] Scott Stulen, "Bigloos, Amplified Tea Kettles, and Other Activities for a Frozen Minnesota Weekend," *Walker Blogd*, January 19, 2011, http://blogs.walkerart.org/mnartists/2011/01/19/bigloos-amplified-tea-kettles-and-other-activites-for-a-frozen-minnesota-weekend/.

[234] *Emily Lacy Bigloo V21*, 2011, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sS1cIXhXnmc&feature=youtube_gdata_player; Vortex Navigation Company, "Emily Lacy," *Vimeo*, January 23, 2011, https://vimeo.com/23756388.

reflecting on the events of the Walker residency, Lacy recalled a visitor who had entered the Bigloo with his parents.

> This guy came in with his parents, and he was about my age and his parents were kind of elderly, and they all crawled in together to get into the igloo. I noticed he was filming me with his phone when the performance was happening, but I didn't think anything of it. Then on YouTube, someone sent me something else related to the igloo, and that showed up as a related [video]. And for me, it was just like, I think I like that better than maybe any of the produced documentation that came out of the project because the desire to come there and make that little artifact was really nice.[235]

After my conversation with Lacy, I set about ascertaining whether this visitor to the Walker Art Center that day had uploaded his video to YouTube. In the early stages of my research, much of what I initially learned about Machine Project and its events were through similar meanderings through the scattered documentation of the organization in social media spaces: the videos on YouTube and Vimeo, and photos on Flickr uploaded by people attending the events. I searched for the video referenced by Lacy, partially out of curiosity, but primarily because the video serves as documentation of her experience as the performer in the event with those specific visitors that day and that time, albeit captured from the side of the event by the visitor holding his mobile phone. On January 22, 2011, a user by the name of "notstephenhero" uploaded a video entitled "Inside the bigloo." Below the video frame is a caption that reads "My parents being entertained by LA artist Emily Lacy inside the igloo in the Walker's backyard."[236] In this scenario, the camera phone video of Lacy's performance is positioned in a shared space between performer and audience, as a record of the shared experiences of Lacy's performance.

[235] Lacy, "Documentation and Artistic Practice."

[236] *Inside the Bigloo* digital video recording (Minneapolis, 2011), http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qg6UPAJsqlA&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

Similar examples of community documentation in the form of still photographs appear on Flickr, a popular social media website owned and operated by Yahoo. Flickr offers users the ability to contextualize their images through social tagging, geo-reference (or "geotagging" in which geographic coordinates are applied to the image to indicate the location at which the photograph was taken), and other forms of automatically-derived and manually inputted metadata for the documentary objects.

For the month of August in 2010, the Hammer residency, Machine Project invited the public to drop off their houseplants for its Cultural Retreat for Plants. Machine Project installed the plants in the light-filled atrium of the Lindbrook Terrace, then provided services and programming tailored for the plants, such as poetry and dramatic readings, plant portraiture by photographer Lisa Anne Auerbach, and a plants-only screening of Jonathon Keats' *Cinema Botanica*, a pornographic film for plants featuring uncensored scenes of explicit cross-pollination, among other events.

A Flickr user named Alex de Cordoba captured a series of photographs documenting the experience of his participation. The photographs depict his houseplants (affectionately named the Woolly Vagabond and Tilly the Tillandsia) at various points along the journey to the Hammer Museum: in the front passenger seat in the car during the trip over to the museum; checking in at the registration desk for the Vacation; surveying the grounds of the Hammer; meeting new plant "friends" that have also been dropped off for the Vacation. Accompanying each photograph is a caption describing the action being depicted: "The Hammer is a big museum!", or "The courtyard is a great

place to hang out!" to accompany an image of the Woolly Vagabond and Tilly the Tillandsia sitting atop a table in the courtyard of the museum.[237]

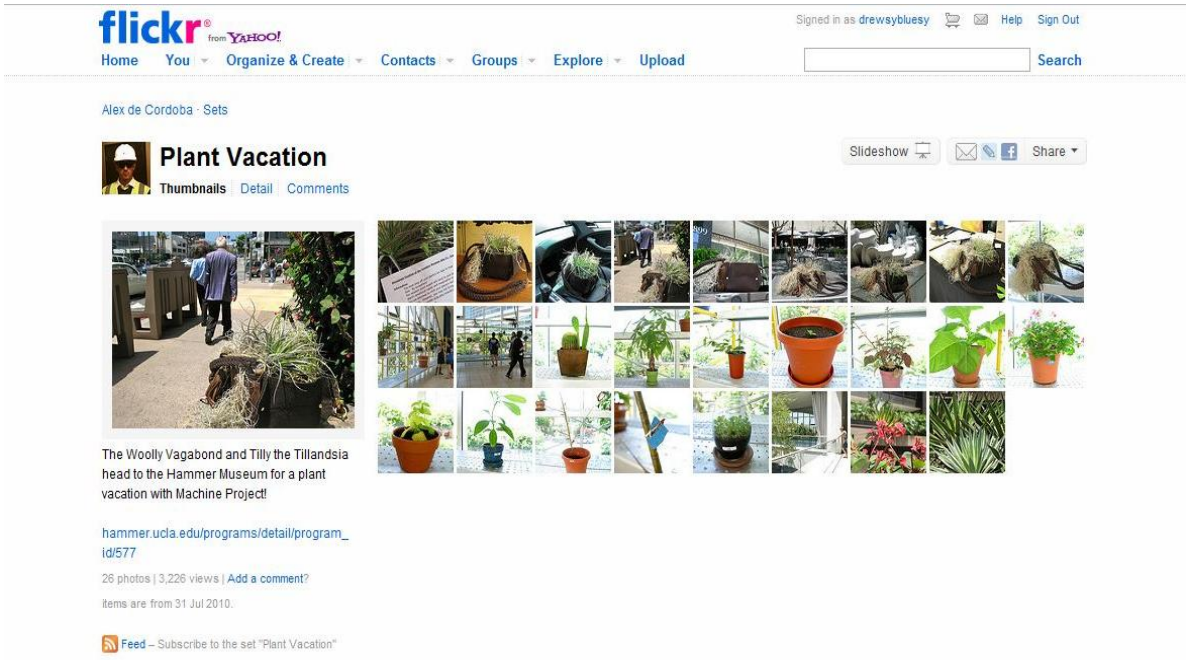


Figure 6.1. Screenshot of Alex de Cordoba's Plant Vacation Photo Set
Source: Alex de Cordoba

This set of images illustrates the specificity of the event experienced by Alex de Cordoba, captured in his documentation. It also illustrates how documentation performs in the context of the space of sharing that is Flickr. Viewing the images on Flickr engenders a different experience than viewing the same image as a printed photograph, or viewing a video rather than a set of still images. The ability for users to interact with the image through mechanisms of annotation (e.g., captions, user comments, etc.), organization (e.g., tagging, favoriting, liking, etc.) frames the image differently than if they were shown in isolation without the expectation of sharing. Flickr allows users to

[237] Alex de Cordoba, *IMG_0944*, July 31, 2010, http://www.flickr.com/photos/20990388@N04/4879937318/.

interact in ways that are specific to that website, though other photo-sharing websites (such as Google's Picasa) and social media platforms might possess similar mechanisms for interaction among its users.

The accompanying captions narrate Alex de Cordoba's experience in participating in the Plant Vacation. The captions cast the plants as the subjects of the documentation (i.e., by identifying them by name and wording the captions as if they were the ones who had written them), and project onto the plants human feelings, emotions, and perceptions. Through this anthropomorphic conceit, de Cordoba documents his participation via his plants in a manner consonant with the premise of the Plant Vacation, as an event in which participation occurs through a proxy object.

Perhaps the most striking aspects of these images are their temporal dimensions, in their creation as documentary objects and their relation to the "event" of the Plant Vacation at the Hammer. Of the twenty-six images included in de Cordoba's set of images, six depict the Woolly Vagabond and Tilly the Tillandsia on the way to the museum that morning, prior to registration at the front desk. This suggests that for de Cordoba, the experience of the Plant Vacation commenced *before* arriving at the museum; the set includes images depicting the Woolly Vagabond and Tilly the Tillandsia "posing" (posed) next to the Plant Release Waiver that human participants were required to sign, or posing before the entrance of the museum, much like tourists snapping photos of themselves in front of a building façade to commemorative having visited a significant site. The set also includes images captured after the plants had been dropped off for the vacation, one caption lamenting that "Saying goodbye is hard to do." Another image included in the set depicts a flowering plant (with both Woolly Vagabond and Tilly

Tillandsia noticeably absent from the frame), with the caption reading "Plants look different to me now."

The Plant Vacation well-illustrates Machine Project's interests in prompting and provoking new experiences among its audiences. Although the event was a community event, it was also a personal event for each of the participants. Not only had Machine Project engaged participants in a collective project, they were engaging the personal relationships that participants have with their plants. For a Plant Vacationer like Alex de Cordoba and his plants, the event began with personal experience.

"People Doing Strange Things with Electricity" (in Southern California): Documenting Documentation

In 2000, Douglas Irving Repetto, artist and Director of Research at the Columbia University Computer Music Center, founded Dorkbot in New York City. The meeting brought "people doing strange things with electricity" together, to dialogue with others sharing similar interests, and receive feedback on projects that they were currently developing. Conceived as a show-and-tell of sorts, Dorkbot's mission was (and is) to provide a friendly forum for anyone interested in making electronic/digital "things" to submit their project(s) for informal peer review and community feedback through periodic face-to-face meetings. Since the first Dorkbot in New York, local versions of Dorkbot have proliferated around the world. As of 2012, meetings are held in North and South America, Europe, Asia, South Africa, and Australia, with even more planned for the future.[238] As Dorkbot meetings began to crop up in other cities, Repetto realized the need to relinquish control over administering them and any subsequently organized

[238] Dorkbot, "Dorkbot: People Doing Strange Things with Electricity," *Dorkbot*, 2012, http://dorkbot.org/.

Dorkbot meetings, and decided to allow them to develop around the broad common theme of people doing strange things with electricity, but in the style, substance, and interests of local communities.

> Each dorkbot is more or less completely autonomous. Very early on when there were just three or four dorkbots I decided that the best thing to do would be to give up any control I might have over the other organizations. At first I was worried about other people using the name in ways I didn't like, or organizing meetings in ways I didn't agree with, but I quickly realized that if I really wanted to be inclusive I would have to let go and let other people find their own way. We have a dorkbot-overlords mailing list, and we exchange occasional messages between the various people who run all the different dorkbots around the world. But even that is very low volume. I think that the main thing that has given dorkbot an identity of sorts is the website and the motto. People see that it is not super self-serious, that it is informal and friendly. That it is about creativity. I think that is enough.[239]

The official Dorkbot website acts as a locational hub that directs site-users/dorkbotters to city- or region-specific Dorkbot webpages with information about local meetings and projects.

Dorkbot SoCal (the local meeting for dorkbotters in Los Angeles, Pasadena, Orange County and San Diego) has held its meetings at Machine Project since December 2005, commencing with Dorkbot SoCal (meeting number) 8. By the time the *Machine Project Almanac* was published in 2007, Machine Project's storefront had served as the staging ground for fourteen Dorkbot SoCal meetings. Dorkbot SoCal was initiated and is organized by artist and media scholar Garnet Hertz.

On Garnet Hertz's Flickr page is a set of 17 photographs, collectively titled "Book: Machine Project Almanac." The photographs are simply snapshots of the book itself: the front and back covers, and pages of the Almanac that reference Dorkbot SoCal meetings

[239] Douglas Repetto, "Questions About Self-Organization: Dorkbot," *Pixelache University '08*, June 3, 2008, http://university.pixelache.ac/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=114&Itemid=43.

(e.g., photographs and event descriptions for Dorkbot SoCal meetings 8 – 21). Also included in the set is an photograph of a page featuring his 2005 demonstration at Machine Project, entitled "Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine: Cockroach-controlled Mobile Robot," which features a prototype of a Madagascan hissing cockroach running over a modified trackball outfitted with infrared sensors. The semi-intelligent robot was "framed within the contexts of intelligence, embodiment, artificial life, the history [of] robotics, and Michael Jackson."[240]

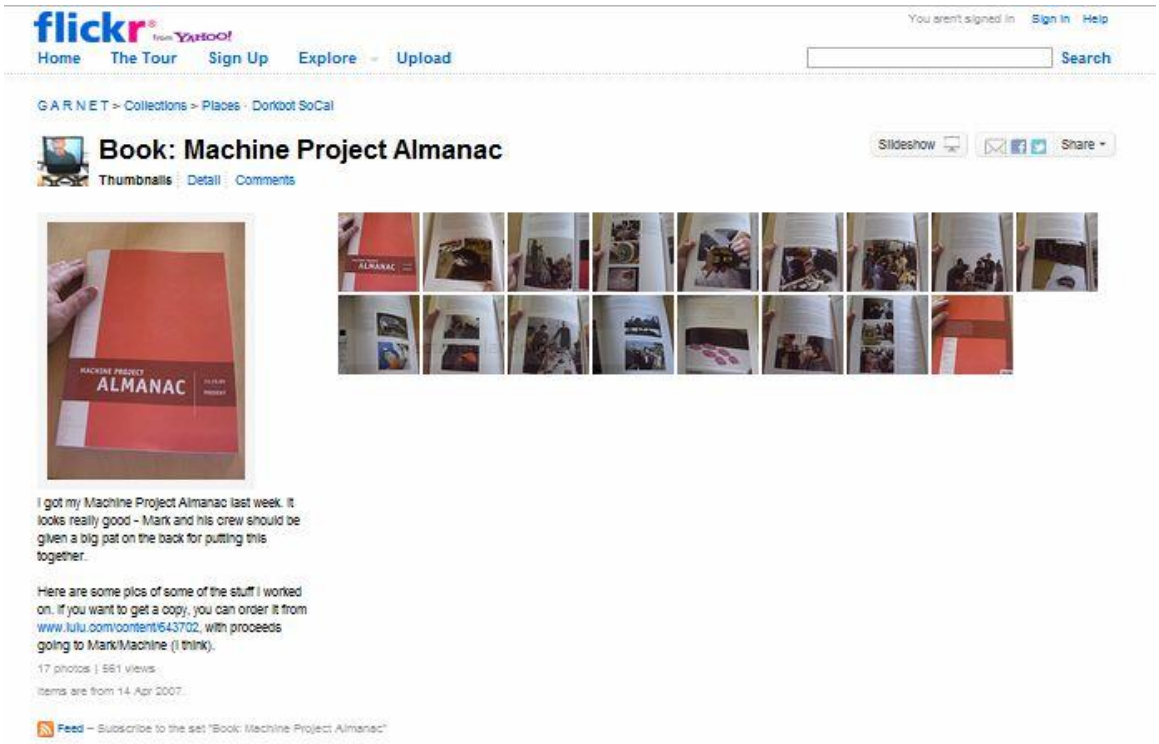


Figure 6.2. Screenshot of "Book: Machine Project Almanac" Flickr set. Source: Garnet Hertz

[240] Mark Allen and Jason Brown, eds., *Machine Project Almanac*, 1.5 ed. (Los Angeles: Machine Project, 2008), 22; Garnet Hertz, "Cockroach Controlled Mobile Robot," *Garnet Hertz - Http://conceptlabcom*, December 23, 2008, http://www.conceptlab.com/roachbot/.

The significance of these photos lies in their relation to their respective originary events, and the photos suggest oscillations in observational position. The photographs of the *Almanac*'s pages featuring Dorkbot events and the cockroach-controlled mobile robot embody first a distinction along the lines of Hertz's involvement with Machine Project, as coordinator of Dorkbot SoCal and as a featured presenter. The very operation of creating, collecting, and describing the photographs of the *Almanac* pages illustrate the system/environment distinction between Dorkbot SoCal and Machine Project.

The photographs are also indication of what is selected as pertinent to the operations of the system (Garnet Hertz, both as an individual psychic system as well as a communicative individual within the social system of Dorkbot, and its subsystem of Dorkbot SoCal), evidenced by the fact that the only photographs captured and included in the Flickr set are events in which Hertz has participated, simultaneously excluding all other events represented in the Almanac not pertaining to Hertz or Dorkbot. These other events constitute the environment of Dorkbot SoCal. Through this process of selection along the system/environment distinction, Dorkbot SoCal/Garnet Hertz delineates its/his boundaries through the creation and selection of self-referential records, while "deselecting" documents that are not directly related to Dorkbot or Hertz's individual practices. The inclusion of photographs of the front and back covers in the Flickr set suggest the importance of underscoring the bibliographic context of the photos in the Almanac, as denotative of Machine Project's position of observation external to Dorkbot, and the context of presentation that the documentation of Hertz/Dorkbot initially appeared.

Chapter 7: Implications for Archival Science

In Chapter 2, I described two divergent schools of thought within archival science, diplomatics and the Australian records continuum theory, to provide a conceptual foundation for this study on diffused forms of records, documentation, and contemporary documentation practices. Informed by the insights collected in my observations of Machine Project and how it creates and keeps records, this chapter returns to that earlier foundation and reads the organization's documentation practices through archival concepts, particularly through the records continuum. Following this reading, I present a critique of the records continuum and evaluate the framework for its merits and limitations, focusing on its claim to supply an explanatory and descriptive framework for the totality of society's recordkeeping. The purpose of this critical reading of the records continuum is to call attention to its sociological assumptions in focusing on society's recordkeeping as itself an all-encompassing totality. Suffused throughout texts on the records continuum from the mid-1990s through the present are references to the "complexity" of societal recordkeeping, and I aim to interrogate the limits of how complexity is understood in records continuum terms. I identify three primary conceptual issues with the records continuum as a model for reading recordkeeping: 1) its claim to total inclusivity as a model for societal recordkeeping, 2) its ontological privileging of modern bureaucratic corporate/business evidence and record-keeping processes, and 3) its own status as metanarrative and what might be referred to as its "god trick." Following this theoretical critique, I turn more specifically to the implications of social media and social networking sites as community spaces for the uploading, sharing, and collective organizing of records. This discussion takes the abstracted concepts in my theoretical

critique of the records continuum and relates them to the empirical observations of the present study. I identify a number of issues that emerge in documentation practices that rely on or use social media and social networking sites – namely around problems with platforms – and illustrate the difficulties they pose for the records continuum model. This chapter concludes with a retooling of Jeannette Bastian's "community of records" as a concept and attempts to diversify definitions of the concept by drawing in the insights collected throughout this study. I argue that the community of records as described by Bastian is premised on an identity-based model of community and that it may be enriched by alternative models of community that focus on its emergence, effervescence, and dynamism.

Reading Machine Project through the Records Continuum

The records continuum theory and the continuum model supply a framework for "reading" recordkeeping. Continuum writers, namely those involved in the Records Continuum Research Group (RCRG), have aspired to extend the model from merely supplying a way to read records within immediate organizational or institutional contexts to articulating a theory that could ostensibly be universally applied.[241] This is evident in how the term "recordkeeping" has been used to refer to the whole of a society's regimes of keeping records, as opposed to "record-keeping" as specific local practices of literally keeping, preserving, and of course destroying records. Continuum writers position the theory and model as transcendent – "rippling outward or pressuring inward" – with the

[241] The Records Continuum Research Group is primarily comprised of faculty from Monash University and practicing archivists, whose collective efforts include theoretical expositions on the records continuum as well as revisions to the records continuum model initially proposed by Frank Upward. In addition to Upward, other scholars and practitioners frequently group under the RCRG include Glenda Acland, Chris Hurley, Livia Iacovino, Sue McKemmish, Michael Piggott, and Barbara Reed.

dimension of creation at the center (the "bullseye") and the multiple uses of a record (for multiple purposes) in the dimension of pluralization.[242] They are careful to note that the model's concentric circles, which on the surface seems to depict developmental stages of a records' plural lives, are rather depictions of dimensions that are permeable and dynamic, and shifting and changing as "ever-broadening layers" of contextual metadata are accrued around the record. Records are always in the process of becoming rather than staticized as actual objects.[243] The records continuum model is reproduced below to aid in the following reading of Machine Project's records through the records continuum.

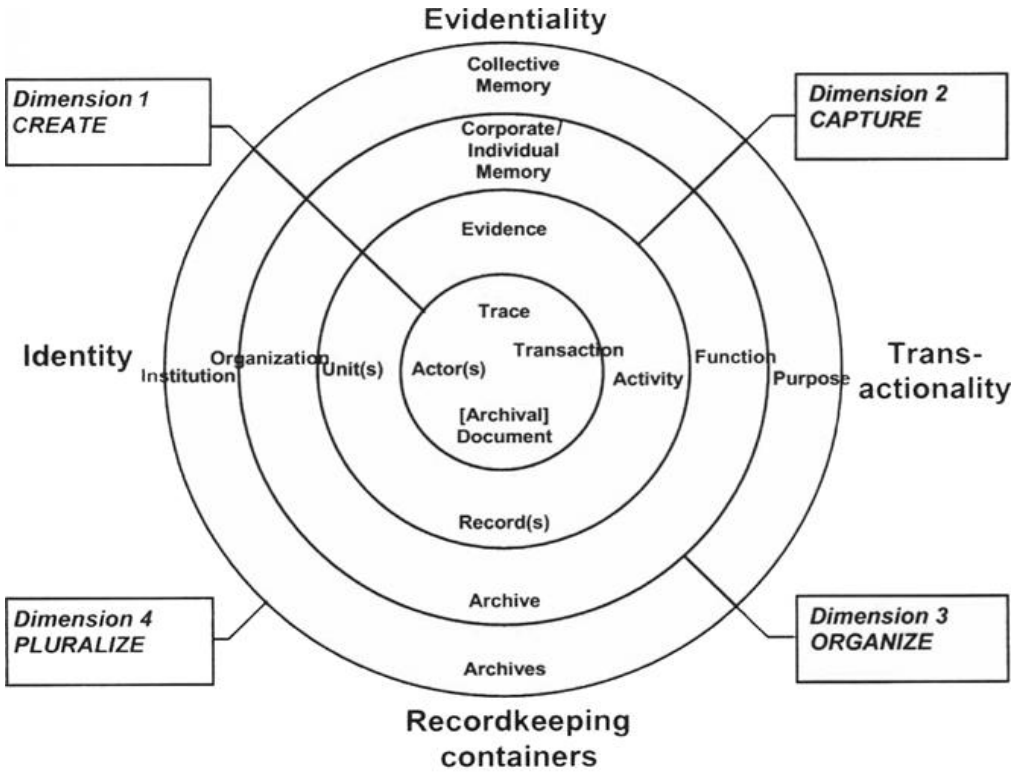


Figure 7.1. The Records Continuum Model.
Source: Frank Upward

[242] Frank Upward, "Modelling the Continuum as Paradigm Shift in Recordkeeping and Archiving Processes, and Beyond: A Personal Reflection," *Records Management Journal* 10, no. 3 (January 12, 2000): 115–139, doi:10.1108/EUM0000000007259.

[243] McKemmish and Piggott, "Are Records Ever Actual?".

According to the records continuum, a record begins in the dimension of "Create" in the most immediate context of a situated act or action. The records continuum model understands the"[archival] document"[244] to be created in this dimension as proto-records. For Machine Project, this dimension includes the raw video footage as documentation of the organization's events, whether as a product of the camera-on-a-tripod model (described in chapter 4), or as raw material for the assembling and construction of what would eventually become an edited video to be circulated among the public as event records (i.e., as documentation of the event) through social media channels. This stage also includes individuals engaged in specific acts within the operational context of Machine Project such as grant-writing and development, budgetary accounting, events management and planning, etc. For Machine Project, the Creation dimension includes the range of collaborations with artists, organizational staff, and/or staff from partnering institutions and organizations, in the locus of immediate action and communication and in the event of the transaction.

The second dimension of the continuum is "Capture," wherein the document created in the first dimension is placed within a broader group context (or in the terms of the continuum, organizational "unit[s]"). The continuum would thus see this dimension to include Machine Project's documentation team(s), formalized teams or units within the organization performing routine administrative tasks associated with operating a non-profit organization (e.g., the board of directors, the advisory board, teams of collaborators constituted for the purposes of developing an event or series of events). This dimension

[244] The term "[archival] document" is stylistically reproduced here to indicate the particular usage of the term by Continuum writers, in that all documents are potentially archival, or in the words of Frank Upward, "all is archive." See: Frank Upward, Sue McKemmish, and Barbara Reed, "Archivists and Changing Social and Information Space: A Continuum Approach to Recordkeeping and Archiving in Online Cultures," *Archivaria* 72 (2011): 197–237.

would also include the records and documents generated out of collaborations between artists within the larger organizational context.

"Captured" records are located in the context of group interaction and activities within organizational units, as opposed to the individual acts of records creation, but are still subordinate to the level of the whole organization. Upward notes that a characteristic of this dimension is the *routinization of record-keeping processes*, but this emphasis on the routine record-keeping among organizational units assumes that such routines have been established and agreed upon. Machine Project's current documentation practices are certainly not routinized, and have been the result of an evolution that has taken place since the organization was started by Mark Allen in 2003. Retrospectively, one can identify punctuated moments of organizational self-reflection on Machine Project's documentation practices, such as the early attempts to document events using a camera and tripod to the shift in documentation practice in 2010 prompted by artist and documentary filmmaker Emily Lacy's solo art practice and its influence on the group's larger organizational practice of video documentation for their events. Framing this evolution in terms of routinization, however, does little to explain how such routines emerge in the absence of a mandated protocol or program for record-keeping. The records continuum model ultimately begs the question of the necessity of routine – unsurprising given its primary interests in corporate and business environments – and in doing so, glosses over organizational contexts in which strict bureaucratic structures are *not* the norm. In other words, the records continuum model (less so the records continuum theory itself) assumes first and foremost a basis in a modern bureaucratic context.

In the course of my observations, the routinization of record-keeping practices had yet to be implemented by Machine Project due to its shifting boundaries of community membership, its oftentimes methods and modes of working with collaborators, and the value the group places in the facilitation of dialogical processes and ephemeral practices over the production of tangible art objects. And indeed, record-keeping in Machine Project is more *ad hoc* than prescribed, stemming from the organization's limited resources and staff in addition to the organization's permeable and often-shifting boundaries. The rotating roster of artists do not supply the continuity or persistence of Machine Project, nor does the yearly turnover of art school interns interested in social practices in contemporary art. Consequently, the very possibility of record-keeping is ultimately contingent upon whom in the organization, if anyone, is up to the task. But this is not a precarious state for the organization. As a community of Do-It-Yourselfers and esoterica enthusiasts, their documentation practices have grown and evolved and can be at least partially attributed to its uncanny ability to attract volunteers and develop collaborations with individuals who have either personal or professional interests in documentation. In the decade-long history of the organization, some of these collaborations have included filmmakers and artists, video editing interns, and at least two professional archivists.

The third dimension of the records continuum model is "Organize," in which records through processes of aggregation are structured for the purposes of "marshal[ling] information across a range of participants who do not share the same frameworks of the

group interaction" as in the Capture dimension.[245] This dimension, Upward emphasizes, is the prime locus of "time-space distanciation" from the immediate context of records creation, and thus requires "common navigable structures and understandings" in order for an organization to structure and organize its memory.[246] But this formulation of the Organize dimension presupposes the stability of organizations and institutions, glossing over the fact that they themselves are always changing and evolving. Despite the records continuum model's understanding that records are "always in the process is becoming," as described by Sue McKemmish, it is unclear how this insight addresses the fact that the organizational and institutional contexts of records creation are concurrently "always in the process of becoming."

For Machine Project, examples of the "Organize" dimension include the organization's wiki as an evolving and living record of the discussions and planning efforts of collaborators, as well as the more recent attempts by Machine Project to gather and organize the corpus of organizational documents such as past grant applications, Machine Project's Vision and Values statement, interviews with artists, video files, etc. The Organize dimension also includes the descriptive metadata that accompany Machine Project's videos when they have been uploaded to social media and social networking websites. These videos as they appear on these sites often supply a description of the event depicted, names the collaborators/artists involved, and/or links to other related videos or documentary resources (e.g., event descriptions on the official website). Since 2011, Machine Project has been developing an archive of raw footage of its event

[245] Upward, "Modelling the Continuum as Paradigm Shift in Recordkeeping and Archiving Processes, and Beyond: A Personal Reflection."

[246] Ibid.

documentation, which will be made available as a resource accessibly by past, current, and future Machine Project collaborators as well as the public. Hosted on a server owned by Pomona College (where Mark Allen teaches), the videos included in this archive are distinct from the edited videos uploaded to social media sites, precisely because they will be unedited and made accessible as raw resources.

Finally, the "Pluralize" dimension is situated at the level of the totality of a society's collective memory, beyond institutions, organizations, communities, and individuals. At the furthest distance from the context of records creation, records in this dimension are understood as "wild" and can be used for multiple purposes and held in multiple views that might (and often do) depart from the original view of the creator or might conflict with each other.[247] The Pluralize dimension would include Machine Project's videos that have been uploaded to social media websites for circulation among interested publics, who might then re-use/re-post/re-tweet or otherwise re-purpose the videos for other contexts of presentation and sharing. This can be seen in cases in which a Machine Project artists or collaborator has embedded or linked to a video or photograph on their own websites or social media accounts from Machine Project's Vimeo or Flickr accounts. In such cases, the plural uses of records might also simultaneously engender the creation of a new record.

In 2009, artist Jim Fetterley and Machine Project created a video entitled *Glass Eater & Fire Walker,* initially presented as a single-screen video installation for the exhibition *LA 2019: Cults, Collectives &Cocooning* at the 18th St. Arts Center in Santa

[247] See: Verne Harris, "Concerned with the Writings of Others: Archival Canons, Discourses and Voices," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 25, no. 2 (2004): 211–220, doi:10.1080/0037981042000271529; McKemmish, "Evidence of Me..."; Verne Harris, "On the Back of a Tiger: Deconstructive Possibilities in 'Evidence of Me'," *Archives and Manuscripts* 19, no. 1 (2001): 8; Upward and McKemmish, "In Search of the Lost Tiger, by Way of Sainte-Beauve."

Monica, California (May 2 – June 27, 2009). To create the video, Fetterley combed through Machine Project's video archive (five years' worth of footage collected at that point), mashing up, combining, and interspersing the organization's videos of their "audience sing-alongs and robotic disco poetry" with videos of uncertain provenance found in Machine Project's gallery basement. The *Glass Eater & Fire Walker* video depicts a man demonstrating his ability to walk on hot coals, eating the shattered remnants of a light bulb, and placing leeches on the belly of another man reclining on a table. The clips of Machine Project footage interpolated with footage of the unnamed Glass Eater/Fire Walker are given no description in the video frame: there are no event titles, no dates, no names.

In 2011, the video was uploaded to Machine Project's Vimeo page under the title *Fire Eater, Glass Walker* (note the differences in title between the Vimeo version and the original installation version: a comma instead of the ampersand, the inversion of terms) with the following description, reproduced here verbatim:

> Jim Fetterley performs psychic surgery to the video archive of Machine Projects [*sic*]. Captured over the last 5 years, these tapes document the various processes, objects, and presentations that have taken place in this lecture hall of mirrors situated at the borders of contemporary art, DIY culture, and the sublime of the internet. Conceptual in nature, and often meant to be experienced in person as a participant, the events time capsuled in these videos were plundered by chance operations and ritual collaging in order to best represent the cryptic essence of this early 21st century computer cargo cult. Codes are taught, broken and rewritten as audience sing alongs [*sic*] and robotic disco poetry readings collide amongst the curious artifacts left on mini DV tapes in the basement of this storefront that is only spitting distance from Hollywood.

exhibited at 18th St. Arts Center May 2- June 27, 2009
LA 2019: CULTS, COLLECTIVES & COCOONING
curated by Ciarra Ennis[248]

This example illustrates the pluralization of a record, and its circling back into the creative dimension as separate but clearly related record. After Machine Project's initial creation of the documentary videos, the videos were used as resources for the creation of a second-order record created out of Fetterley's imaginative process of "psychic surgery" on Machine Project documentation. The video's later upload to Machine Project's Vimeo account as a publicly shared record, two years after the video's installation for *LA 2019*, demonstrates a re-entry into Machine Project's archive, re-captured as both supplementary to the videos used to create *Fire Eater, Glass Walker* as well as a record in its own right within the larger corpus of Machine Project's documentation. It is also important to note Machine Project and Fetterley's intentions for the video as a document meant to "perform," that *Fire Eater, Glass Walker* was initially created as a video installation in a group show and would later be placed on Vimeo after the fact as a re-presented record. In other words, this example underscores the importance of considering how a record is presented as a record – or how, where, and why a document *performs* as a record – as a key aspect of the record's constitution.

With regard to the records continuum model, there is a paradox in the relation between the Organize and Pluralize dimension in that the latter clearly demonstrates an inherent contradiction to the former. How, if at all, are the "commonly navigable structures" of the creating organization extended to the vast, unforeseeable plural uses of records? Some may view the standardization of archival protocols as a means to facilitate

[248] Machine Project and Jim Fetterley, "'Fire Eater, Glass Walker' Machine Project with Jim Fetterley, 2009 Single Screen Video Installation," *Vimeo*, 2009, https://vimeo.com/18757276.

discovery and access to archival records at the plural level (such as Encoded Archival Description for the encoding of finding aids, and Describing Archives: A Content Standard or the International Standard for Archival Description for descriptive metadata). However, the implementation of such standards often poses difficulties for smaller organizations like Machine Project that may not have the budget, staffing, or professional knowledge to do so. Furthermore, alternative and artist-run organizations, as I have described in previous chapters, may demonstrate a certain level of skepticism about institutionality, and the assumption that records are necessarily objective, neutral, "truthful" representations of past events.

"Context" is a word used frequently by archivists, often with the understanding that context refers first and foremost to the context of records creation. To invoke context in this regard is to refer to the transactions that precipitate records, with the assumption that to understand the context in which records are created is to understand the meaning of the records themselves. Yet the conceptual aligning of "context" primarily with the context of records creation leaves aside contexts in which records are perceived, observed, or used as records, or what may be referred to as their "performatic" contexts.

The Performatic Context of Records

This conceptualization of the performatic context of records is different from how performance (and its associated terms "performative" and "performativity") have already been used and/or appropriated in the archival literature. "Performance" in the archival literature has been typically used to refer to the location and transfer of collective memory in and through embodied rituals and practices, such as storytelling, folk traditions, and participation in cultural events. Often, the deployment of

performance/performativity in these modes are used to signal the opposition between written text and oral traditions and the tensions and discrepancies that archivists perceive between the two. As Bastian writes, "folktales and folksongs may be considered as much repositories of historical and cultural evidence as more formal records."[249] Similarly, Gilliland et al. argue:

> Much of what we believe about the nature of archives is based upon Western ideas about the kinds of objects that a record can comprise, and the characteristics and circumstances that make that record either reliable or authentic, or, preferably, both. Little or no space exists within this paradigm for cultures with nontextual mechanisms for recording decisions, actions, relationships, or memory, such as those embodied in oral, aural, or kinetic traditions.[250]

In addition to these uses of "performance" in the archival literature, Terry Cook and Joan M. Schwartz describe professional archival work as a sort of performance, framed in terms of a professional script that archivists as actors play out. In describing the professional identity of archivists, Cook and Schwartz appropriate Judith Butler's theory of performativity and impose a dramaturgical spin on the professional identity of archivists: "the practice of archives is the ritualized implementation of theory, the acting out of the script that archivists have set for themselves."[251]

---

[249] Bastian, *Owning Memory*, 11.

[250] Anne Gilliland et al., "Pluralizing the Archival Paradigm: Can Archival Education in Pacific Rim Communities Address the Challenge?," *American Archivist* 71, no. 1 (April 1, 2008): 90.

[251] Though their use of Butler's work is a welcomed attempt at interdisciplinary thinking, Cook and Schwartz's analysis is ultimately unconvincing and demonstrate some of the caveats of interdisciplinarity: unintentional false equivalencies and oversimplification of an appropriated theory. For example, in drawing equivalence between the performativity of gender and the performativity of the professional identity of archivists, they attempt to locate parallel trajectories of "transgressive performances" that subvert normative codes and scripts. The result is a curious parallel drawn between drag, intersexuality, and other forms of defiance against a culturally sexed and gendered "matrix of intelligibility" on the one hand, and the diversification of scholarly perspectives on archives as "transgressions" of accepted archival scripts on the other. Whereas this cultural matrix of intelligibility is crucial for Butler's reading of gender performativity, it is largely left out of Cook and Schwartz's essay which instead relies on tropes of theater and dramaturgy. They simplistically attribute the transgression of pre-scripted identities to the agency of actors while leaving aside the more important aspects of how that professional script is structurally

In contrast with these varying uses of "performance" as they appear in the archival literature, the performatic context of the record I am describing here is the context in which a document performs as a record. The document is simultaneously observed as a record (by an observer, or in the terminology of archival science, "users"), as a specific type of document with memorial or evidentiary purpose. A derivation of *performático*, the Spanish term for "performance," the term "performatic" was first articulated in the field of performance studies by Diana Taylor. It is redeployed here as a way to problematize the elision of performance events under a larger heading of non-textual cultural traditions of embodied memory (e.g., Bastian's carnival-as-performed-archive, or the "oral, aural, or kinetic traditions" referred to by Gilliland et al.), as well as the symbolic interactionist mode of "archival performance" described by Cook and Schwartz. The intervention here is a turn toward how, what, and why records are created of some performance or event (or in terms of the records continuum, a "transaction"), to how a document performs as a record (i.e., the "performatics" of a document), is observed as a record, and used as a record (e.g., as an object of reference, as evidence, etc.).

Context has long been upheld as a significant if not necessary property of records, in conjunction with the content and structure of record.[252] The Society of American Archivists' Glossary of Archival Terminology identifies two aspects of context. First, context refers to "the organizational, functional, and operational circumstances

---

determined and how the audience conditions or constrains that professional performance. See: Terry Cook and Joan M. Schwartz, "Archives, Records, and Power: From (postmodern) Theory to (archival) Performance," *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 173; Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 24.

[252] Pearce-Moses, "Context"; Pearce-Moses, "Record."

surrounding materials' creation, receipt, storage, or use, and its relationship to other materials." The second and less common use of context when discussing records includes "the circumstances that a user may bring to a document that influences that user's understanding of the document."

Though subordinated to the former as a secondary definition of context, the latter definition is closer in line with how I am describing the performatics of a record, though not entirely synonymous. The second definition stresses the contingency of a user's understanding of a record, a notion of context that is premised on a user's interpretation of that document as a record. But despite this welcomed expansion of context to include the interpretation of a document as a record, the secondary definition ultimately locates this context *within* the user as a relativistic frame that mediates the user's understanding of the record. There are two major shortcomings with this position. First is the assumption that records exist as informational and evidential objects that appear self-identical to users that view them. The plural uses of the record then are contingent on the relative motivations and purposes for viewing or accessing the document by the user, and this version of context thus becomes a matter of subjective interpretation embodied in the user. Secondly, the user-centric definition of context fails to account for the context in which the document is presented, or in line with my argument, the immediate context in which the document performs.

Judith Butler touched on the importance of considering a record's context of performance in her 1993 essay on the well-publicized trial the year prior of the four Los

Angeles Police Department officers accused of beating Rodney King in 1991.[253] Reviewing the proceedings of the trial in order, Butler describes the tenuous link between evidence of the event (in this case, video footage captured by civilian bystander George Holliday of white officers of the Los Angeles Police Department beating King) and the event that it was purported to represent as incontrovertible proof of King's obstinacy that prompted the beating. In the introduction of her essay, Butler questions how Holliday's video footage was displayed in the Simi Valley courtroom during the trial: while the video was exhibited for the jurors, the defense team for the police officers simultaneously provided narrated commentary on the event depicted in the video. "We are left to presume," Butler states, "that some convergence of word and picture produced the 'evidence' for the jurors in the case." While some regarded the video as depicting a seemingly obvious case of police brutality, the manner in which the video was presented by the defense in court was meant to highlight the vulnerability of the police officers at the hands of a supposedly crazed black man with a prior criminal record, believed to be under the influence of drugs and alcohol. The defense was ultimately successful in convincing the jury and all four police officers were acquitted on April 29th, 1992.

In this example, neither definition of context included in the SAA Glossary of Terminology can account for the malleability and interpretability of the video as a piece of evidence reliant on the context in which it is presented, i.e., in the courtroom with running commentary by the defense team intended to emphasize the culpability of King in the act of his own beating. To the aforementioned two definitions of context and in light of the insights provided by Butler's example, I propose a revision that focuses on

[253] Judith Butler, "Endangered/Endangering: Schematic Racism and White Paranoia," in *Reading Rodney King: Reading Urban Uprising*, ed. Robert Gooding-Williams (Chicago: Routledge, 1993), 15–22.

the context in which a record performs. This includes the "circumstances that a user may bring to a document," but instead emphasizes each instance of viewing of a document as a singular event unto itself. In this revised definition, the user does not "bring" circumstances to the document so much as the user participates in those circumstances. The record appears anew each time it is called up, accessed, viewed, or observed because each appearance is a performance in new archival event. This is well-illustrated by the difficulties to archival practice posed by participatory documentation in social media spaces, which will be explored more fully in the following section.

Eric Ketelaar has alluded to the performatic contexts of records in his references to a record's "activation." He writes:

> The record is a "mediated and ever-changing construction"; records are "constantly evolving, ever mutating", over time and space infusing and exhaling what I have called "tacit narratives." These are embedded in the activations of the record. Every interaction, intervention, interrogation, and interpretation by creator, user, and archivist activates the record. These activations may happen consecutively or simultaneously, at different times, in different places and contexts. Moreover, as I argued before, any activation is distributed between texts and other agents in a network. The record, "always in a state of becoming", has therefore many creators and, consequently, many who may claim the record's authorship and ownership.[254]

Each activation of a record is a singular event which occurs in a performatic context. But this context requires more than a creator, user, and archivist to activate the record. In the event of a record's activation, the record itself simultaneously exercises its capacities as a document of reference or recall when it is interpellated or hailed as a record of some past

[254] Eric Ketelaar, "Sharing: Collected Memories in Communities of Records," *Archives and Manuscripts* 33, no. 1 (2005): 44.

event. Users do not merely act on records, nor is the user the sole agent that activates records. Users act in conjunction *with* records in the event of records activation.[255]

Educational technologist Susan Yee emphasizes the importance of considering the performatic space of observing a record in her meditation on viewing the drawings of famed modernist architect Le Corbusier. She recounts the thrill of discovery and wonder in viewing a hand-drafted architectural plan, "…stored separately, carefully rolled, that it was dirty with smudges and fingerprints." One day, an archivist informs Yee of the archive's initiative to scan the records and states, "Oh, you'll love what we're doing now. You won't ever have to come here! You won't ever have to look at these drawings anymore! We're putting them all in a digital database!" This prompts Yee to consider the loss engendered by the digitization of physical objects, a loss that includes archival rituals of touch, of seeing with unmediated vision the scale of an architectural drawing, of the tactile and affective feeling of touching the physical drawing as an "evocative object."[256] The distinction she sees is not only between the analog and the digital, but in the differences between spaces of viewing: whether before a physical artifact in the reading room of an archive, or sitting at a computer screen, zooming, clicking, dragging and scrolling a digitized plan to inspect the detail that might otherwise require her to place her

[255]This line of argument follows Kaptelnin and Nardi's use of activity theory's contributions in the field of human-computer interaction, and their studies on "acting with technology." Activity theory's social constructivist underpinnings can be traced to the writings of Russian developmental psychologist Aleksei N. Leont'ev and Lev Vygotsky. See: Victor Kaptelinin and Bonnie A. Nardi, *Acting with Technology: Activity Theory and Interaction Design* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006).

[256] Susan Yee, "The Archive," in *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With*, ed. Sherry Turkle (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 31–37.

face to the paper, close enough to smell its scent and see the fingerprints and smudges that will be cleared away in the process of digitization.[257]

The insight offered by Yee in calling out the performatic context of viewing a record, whether in paper or digital form, is precisely the reason underpinning Machine Project's decisions to document and share videos of their events via social media platforms like YouTube, Vimeo, and Ustream and through social networking sites like Twitter and Facebook. The use of these channels is made all the more crucial for the fact that the socially-attuned artworks and projects showcased by Machine Project rely on audience participation, conversation, and dialogue, located in the specific time and place of the event.

Level5: Documentation Practices Co-constituting the Event

On September 4th and 5th, 2010, artist Brody Condon debuted his participatory performance project entitled *Level5* at the Hammer Museum, as part of Machine Project's year-long residency. Enlisting the participation of 75 performers, *Level5* was based on the self-actualization seminars of Werner Erhard (previously known as Jack Rosenberg before he changed his name), whose live action role playing (LARP) exercises were intended to facilitate the self-actualization of its participants and their transformations of self. For *Level5*, Condon appropriated Erhard's LARP exercises in order to emphasize their performative qualities. Over the course of the weekend, participants performed as

[257] Ibid.

characters in the piece, embodying the space between a reflective self and the projected fantastic self of fictionalized characters.[258]

Reflecting on the strategies he used for documenting *Level5* and other events that he designed, Condon notes (emphasis added):

> I don't start performative projects with a clear understanding of what form that documentation will take of or if there will be any, usually. *The project itself determines the form that the documentation will take in the end.* Of course, at this point there are so many different strategies that can be used in relationship to documentation of performative work. I just try to pick and choose the one that best fits the context where it's shown and the pieces themselves, because some of the pieces are out in the middle of the woods, and then some of them are in galleries.

In designing the documentary strategies for *Level5*, Condon was inspired by issues that emerged out of his previous performative works, namely the difficulty in translating a live role-playing event into a video or photograph: "You start [the performances] up and they just run, and you can only run around with the camera and catch so much, and I don't have complete control over them." Choreographing *Level5* required Condon to balance between making the event publicly accessible (since it was part of Machine Project's public engagement program for the Hammer residency), while also ensuring that the event took place in private so that viewers of the event could not enter the performance space itself. The solution was to situate three cameras in the performance space and live stream the activities into the Hammer Museum's Billy Wilder Theater, where the public could unintrusively view the *Level5* performances. The result was the capture of two days' worth of raw video footage, with segments of the footage later used

[258] For a fuller self-reflective account of Condon's *Level5* and its historical genealogy, see Jennifer Krasinski's description of her involvement in the performance. Jennifer Krasinski, "Character Development: Brody Condon's Level5 and the Avant-LARP of Becoming Self," *East of Borneo* (December 9, 2010), http://www.eastofborneo.org/articles/27.

in the production of a short video of the event for the purposes of advertising *Level5* to virtual audiences.

This example illustrates how viewing a record of an event becomes an event itself. What is at stake here is the notion that the documents that are treated as records of an event are not merely representations of those events but are active agents in second-order events. The event occurs in the manners that it did precisely because of the specificity of how that event was constructed: the individuals who participated, the artist(s) facilitating the interactions, the space and time in which the event occurred, the technologies used to document the event, and the motivations for documenting the event in the first place. More importantly, the example of Condon's *Level5* illustrates the constitutive role that documentation plays in the event itself. The documentation of the event – the placement of the cameras, live mixing of sound, streaming to the adjacent theater so that the audience was removed from the immediate performance space – played a pivotal role in how *Level5* at the Hammer Museum unfolded as a performative event. In other words, the documentation of the event co-constitutes the event and cannot be understood as a by-product of the event extricable from the event.

A Critique of the Records Continuum Model

Informed by this notion of the performatic context of records and documents and the insight that documents co-constitute the events that they record, this section returns to the previous exploration into the records continuum in order to develop a critique of the theory. As previously mentioned, the records continuum model is heavily influenced by the sociology of Anthony Giddens and his structuration theory, which sits somewhere in between macro- and micro-sociological theories (such as a structural-functionalism and

symbolic interactionism, respectively). Giddens' "meso-sociological" orientation appears in the records continuum model as an aspiration toward analytic flexibility in accounting for the immediate locus of records' creative contexts up and through society as a total and all-encompassing context for societal recordkeeping. As such, an archivist might use the records continuum model as a tool for way-finding through the complex multiple and parallel provenances of records through its visual depiction of the societal processes in which records may take part.

The records continuum model has been presented as an alternative to the life-cycle model of records and archives management, as well as one example of the so-called postmodern paradigm shift within the archival discourse at the end of the twentieth century. Furthermore, the model and the theory that informs it have been presented, particularly by Australian continuum writers, as a modeling of complexity for archival science, stressing multiple relationships between records creators, records, and the metadata that contextualize them. However, like any model, the records continuum model falls short of achieving its explanatory and descriptive aspirations in a number of ways.

Some of these criticisms have been previously articulated by archival scholars in the extant literature. In his keynote address to the Australian Society of Archivists in 2001, Terry Cook took issue with the privileging of evidence in the model (in the "Evidentiality" axis), stating, "evidence and memory sit uneasily together: evidence in the inner core, memory in the outer rings, as if the latter is only a subset of the former rather than memory needs often having a determining influence on the nature and kind of

evidence created."[259] In light of this, he suggests a revision to the model in which evidence and memory are separated into their own respective axes, or the interdependence of evidence and memory clarified on a single axis. Cook also suggests that the model include a fifth dimension (in addition to the Create, Capture, Organize and Pluralize dimensions) to account for private records (e.g., personal, family, and other groups), since such records are inevitably a part of the records of a whole society.[260]

South African archivist Verne Harris' criticisms of the model are more explicitly oppositional than Cook's suggestions for enhancement and are rooted in deeper philosophical differences. Critically reading Sue McKemmish's attempts to "place records continuum theory and practice" under the rubric of "post-modern philosophy," he states,

> The model, whatever else its articulators attempt to do with it, is a totalising conceptual container – in the words of McKemmish, the model issues from a 'worldview' providing a framework that is 'inclusive' and 'unifying'. To my ear the readers of the continuum are constructing a metanarrative at the same time as denying its 'meta' attributes. I would suggest that a truly 'postmodern' analysis would want to rip the continuum to shreds.[261]

In his opposition to the totalizing impulses of continuum writers, Harris refers to the continuum with a range of less-than-flattering adjectives: to him, the continuum is "co-opting" and "colonizing" with "imperial aspirations".[262]

---

[259] Terry Cook, "Beyond the Screen: The Records Continuum and Archival Cultural Heritage," in *Beyond the Screen: Capturing Corporate and Social Memory* (presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Society of Archivists, Melbourne, Australia: Australian Society of Archivists, 2000), 8–21.

[260] A recurring theme in Cook's work has been the Canadian "total archives" approach to recordkeeping at the level of governance, which, like the continuum, is concerned with the whole of a society's records, both private and public and regardless of the media on which such records are inscribed. Cook himself has acknowledged the consonance and indeed, the cross-fertilization between his own theoretical writings on the total archives approach and the records continuum.

[261] Harris, "Concerned with the Writings of Others," 216.

Phrased another way, the records continuum model in its bid for a totalizing worldview of recordkeeping ultimately smoothes over differences across record-keeping environments and subsumes them under a teleological conceptualization of recordkeeping at the societal level. As an attempt to model a pluralist approach to archives, the records continuum model is particularly invested in this orientation toward society as totality because it serves as a basis for the model's claims to social inclusivity. Social inclusivity and pluralism as investments of the model and theory are intended to account for the complexity of records creation in recognizing that there may be multiple individuals might "co-create" records that consequently carry multiple or parallel provenances.[263] What is unclear, however, is the very notion of complexity as refracted through the continuum. On the face, calls for attention to the complex relations that records participate in resemble network models, and since at least the mid-1990s, continuum writers have sought to incorporate complexity as a major theme of the records continuum.[264] For example, Eric Ketelaar has used actor network theory as an interpretive

---

[262] Ibid., 215–216.

[263] Hurley, "Parallel Provenance"; Hurley, "Parallel Provenance (2): When Something Is Not Related to Everything Else."

[264] See: Hurley, "Parallel Provenance"; Hurley, "Parallel Provenance (2): When Something Is Not Related to Everything Else"; Frank Upward, "Structuring the Records Continuum (Part One): Postcustodial Principles and Properties," *Archives and Manuscripts* 24, no. 2 (1996), http://infotech.monash.edu/research/groups/rcrg/publications/recordscontinuum-fupp1.html; Frank Upward, "Structuring the Records Continuum (Part Two): Structuration Theory and Recordkeeping," *Archives and Manuscripts* 25, no. 1 (1997), http://infotech.monash.edu/research/groups/rcrg/publications/recordscontinuum-fupp2.html; and most recently: Frank Upward, Sue McKemmish, and Barbara Reed, "Archivists and Changing Social and Information Space: A Continuum Approach to Recordkeeping and Archiving in Online Cultures," *Archivaria* 72 (2011): 197–237.

framework for reading the intersection of Bastian's communities of records and the records continuum model.[265]

Many of the insights contained in the writings of the Records Continuum Research Group explicitly or implicitly advocate for an additive view of society as a whole comprised of constitutive parts. This view of society through the lens of archival theory and practice is reminiscent of sociological metaphors that construe society as a "body," and its organizations, communities, individuals, etc. as "organs," or the constituent parts of the whole. As such, the records continuum model is centrally focused on the relations between actors that ultimately constitute society, or stated another way, the relations of interiority of society.

Philosopher Manuel DeLanda argues for an alternate view of totality, one that does not consist of viewing society as a "seamless web" or "mere aggregation of the properties of its components."[266] Drawing on Gilles Deleuze's assemblage theory, DeLanda describes totalities as wholes characterized not by their relations of interiority (i.e., the organs of a body) but by their *relations of exteriority*. He states, "The reason why the properties of a whole cannot be reduced to those of its parts is that they are the result not of an aggregation of the components' own properties, but *of the actual exercise of their capacities*. These capacities do depend on a component's properties but cannot be reduced to them since they involve reference to the properties of other interacting entities (emphasis added)."[267]

---

[265] Ketelaar, "Sharing."

[266] Manuel DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 10.

[267] Ibid., 11.

The records continuum model has been lauded by archivists as among the more inclusive models, specifically for its attention to the pluralization of records. And yet, the paradox of the records continuum model is its particular brand of reductionism that views social complexity as mechanistic and reducible to stabilized identities of record-creating entities. This reductionism indicates another paradox of the records continuum: the form of objectivity that it suggests, communicated through the rendering of the model itself in terms of space-time distanciation. In tracing the movement of records using the records continuum model, from the immediate act of their creation through their eventual plural uses, the archivist must engage in a process of speculative self-transposition. This entails recognizing that archivists play a crucial role in the record-keeping of society through professional practice while simultaneously transcending those situated acts of record-keeping to view society's recordkeeping from above, in total. Society is viewed from a privileged transcendent vantage point in which the archivist using the records continuum can "see" all of society and speculate how records move from immediate contexts of creation through capture, organization, and the ultimate plural view of societal recordkeeping.

Following Donna Haraway's feminist critique of objectivity in science, we might refer to these omniscient impulses of the records continuum as its "god trick", or as a means to view the entirety society's recordkeeping from the position of nowhere. Metaphors of sight are central to the records continuum, such that the archivist armed with the clarity of vision afforded by the records continuum can view record-keeping from a situated position (e.g., in the immediate contexts of creation, capture, and organization), as well as a non-situated or disembodied position (i.e., the position of a

hypothetical deity that can stand outside of society and view its recordkeeping in sum at the level of plurality). It is the grand claims of the latter in which Haraway's description of the "privilege of partial perspective" can intervene. She argues for "politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality – not universality – is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims. These are claims on peoples' lives." She further argues "for a view from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring, and structured body, versus the view from above, from nowhere, from simplicity. Only the god trick is forbidden."[268]

The argument for partial perspective and situated knowledge is not a reprise of the objectivity/relativity dichotomy but rather the recognition of the importance of radical difference. That is to say that though we may exist in a common external reality, the understanding of that reality is mediated by the limits of perspective and embodied knowledge. This bears resemblance to the Luhmannian systems theoretical insight that every act of observation is first and foremost the marking of a distinction between the interior of the system and the environment beyond the system. And as noted in Chapter 3, every act of observation requires a situated observer to mark that distinction, who observes (and not merely sees) difference not as after-effect of identity but as constitutive force from which identity may be potentially observed. Every observer's perspective also carries blind spots with it, and the allure of documents as informational, communicational, and memorial objects may be partially rooted in the allure of wanting to see with our eyes what we have not or cannot see.

[268] Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 589.

One area of contemporary significance where this can be seen is the explosive growth of social media as a means for individuals to connect and interact with one another, to share documentation of their individual lives with others, and to form communities around documentation of significant events. For archives, social media presents challenges to the extent that provenance becomes increasingly difficult to establish as still or moving images captured on a mobile phone may go viral and be circulated without regard to its veracity and/or authoritativeness as a "record" of some event. One might even go so far as to say that the ability for the archival profession to be able to understand social media as a documentary phenomenon requires attention to the reconfigurations of sociality engendered by social media, such as telepresence and dynamic community formations and re-formations in online realms. The following section describes some of these issues and surfaces some of the questions when considering archival perspectives in relation to social media documentation. However, it is important to note that this section is not intended to signal a break between technological landscapes of the past and present, but rather to call attention to social media as a contemporary example of the flux of documentation practices and archivalization in conjunction with how information and communications technologies evolve.

Platform as [Performatic] Context:
Archives, Social Media, and Problems with Platforms

In 2010, the Library of Congress announced on its institutional blog a new partnership with Twitter to digitally archive every public "tweet" (or microblog post of 140 characters or less on the Twitter social media platform) posted since March 2006. At the time of the announcement, the utility of such a project was framed in terms of

anticipation for future research; the assumption was that the mass ingestion of tweets into the state custody of the Library would ultimately yield an enormous dataset for future researchers to understand the everyday lives of Twitter's user-base. The announcement posted to the Library of Congress blog is accompanied by a section for readers to offer up their comments but opinions on the utility of the project were largely mixed. Some commenters praised the project as a progressive attempt by the Library of Congress to grapple with the larger socio-cultural significance of how we document our daily lives using social media. Others are less than enthusiastic, some displaying outright hostility to the project. One commenter by the username "Borges Would Be Proud / Astounded" states:

> Archiving the ephemeral, the meaningless and the lulzy. Strange project – doesn't this seem to be an overly commercial endeavor? If tweets™ are in, how about craigslist.org postings? Spam bot postings? are you all keeping up with the google buzz™ feeds or my facebook updates? (you see my point, I hope) because all of that information is just as culturally vacant to be archiving in the LOC.
>
> This is making a meaningless library indexing ephemeral nothings. Thanks for contributing to our literary and cultural heritage with this.[269]

Despite the flippant tone, this particular comment touches on a crucial point: the larger sociocultural anxieties surrounding social media as a recent development of digital culture, and the yet unanswered questions regarding the utility of archiving social media as part of a larger collective memory. Though comments like the one above indicate the varied opinions over why we should be concerned with archiving social media or if it is a

[269] Matt Raymond, "How Tweet It Is!: Library Acquires Entire Twitter Archive," *Library of Congress Blog*, April 14, 2010, http://blogs.loc.gov/loc/2010/04/how-tweet-it-is-library-acquires-entire-twitter-archive/.

worthwhile endeavor at all, there are also questions about what such strategies would look like.[270]

The explosive popularity of social media and social networking sites in recent years has had profound implications for how we connect and share with one another, prompting large-scale shifts in the conduct of our daily affairs and interactions. In its infancy, social media offered the promise of the democratization of information, flattening social relations so that everyone seemingly had a voice. Businesses began to see and realize the commercial opportunities that such technologies engender, especially the possibility of reaching new consumer audiences, reconfiguring labor through strategies of "crowd-sourcing," and data mining user-generated content to benefit commercial enterprise. But beneath the rhetoric of democratization and populism are a host of issues and unintended consequences that have only recently inspired critiques of social media. Such critiques might offer dystopian views to counter the glut of utopian dreams of large-scale participation in digital culture, while others foreground the emancipatory potential of these platforms and technologies that might enable the formation and organization of emergent communities online. One need only turn to the newspaper (or current events blogs, even) to see how social media has impacted social interactions and communications.

Archival discourse has largely ignored the significance of social media though recent studies and initiatives have sought to incorporate interactive functions as a means

[270] In January 2013, the Library of Congress published an update on the Twitter Archive project. In December 2010, Twitter began a partnership with the Colorado-based private company Gnip to organize and deliver the data for the Twitter archive to the Library of Congress. At the time of this update, the Library has received approximately 133.2 terabytes of tweets from Twitter/Gnip (the total amount of data includes two uncompressed copies of the tweets).See: Library of Congress, *Update on the Twitter Archive at the Library of Congress* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, January 2013), http://www.loc.gov/today/pr/2013/files/twitter_report_2013jan.pdf.

facilitate public engagement with archival collections, including online interactive exhibits and finding aids, wikis for the public to offer personal accounts demonstrating how the National Archives of the US functions as "Our Archives", among others.[271] While archivists ponder how to jump on the proverbial bandwagon and scramble to figure out how to use social media as tools to reach potential users, there exists a fact largely unacknowledged by archivists that the questions around notions of evidence, documentation, authenticity, reliability, storage, control and management, and authorship of records that have dogged us since the early formative years of the profession. The fact is that such questions are also realized and confronted by non-archivists, or those who might adopt the title of "archivist" in a non-professional capacity. Archivists can emphasize the exceptionalism of professional knowledge over lay strategies for grappling with such issues (which would be an attempt to preserve the rarefied interests and expertise of archivists). Or, archivists can view the present digital age as a particularly fortuitous time when the public that we so desperately seek to engage in and through archives might already see archival work as a necessity.

The intersection of archives, documentation practices, and social media is an area ripe for investigation. Cultural historian William Uricchio attributes inattention to social media in the extant literature to the persistence of media ontologies that rely on traditional archival concepts and precepts of practice.[272] He sees the proliferation of new and emerging media forms as a call to action for rethinking cultural heritage work and as

[271] Kate Theimer, "What Is the Meaning of Archives 2.0?," *American Archivist* 74, no. 1 (April 1, 2011): 58–68.

[272] William Uricchio, "Moving Beyond the Artefact: Lessons from Participatory Culture," in *Digital Material: Tracing New Media in Everyday Life and Technology*, ed. Marianne van den Boomen et al. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 131–141.

an opportunity for archives and other memory institutions to incorporate new understandings of what constitutes the artifacts of cultural heritage. Social media presents us with texts that are dynamic, participatory, dialogical, and collaborative, and these characteristics call into question the fundamental assumptions that undergird archival concepts. Who are the authors of a record if, by design, the record is multiply authored? At what point does a record become fixed if, by design, it is meant to be ever-evolving? How might archival concepts of records be reconceptualized to also include emergent forms of networked sociality in digital culture and contemporary forms of participatory documentation?

One way that this may be achieved is attending to the material specificity of platforms and their respective affordances and constraints on users. While a wide range of such platforms are often subsumed under social media or social networking, each carries with it specific potentialities for how individuals might connect and share with one another. For example, Twitter imposes a 140-character limit on tweets, but also allows for its users to "re-tweet" or repost others' tweets as well as the ability to tweet truncated internet URLs to conform to the character limit. The result is a form of communication specific to the Twitter platform, which ultimately pervades the "look and feel" of all content generated on that platform.

In recent years, social media and social networking platforms have evolved to offer users the option to link social media and networking services accounts to others, thereby reducing the number of username and password combinations that users need to remember. But the larger effect has been that content may be posted to one social media platform can be automatically posted to another, widening bases of potential audiences of

that content onto other platforms. Some may argue that this indication that the specificity of platforms do not matter, that these punctuated developments and evolutions toward platform interoperability are clear indicators of platform convergence. While there may be examples that can be used to bolster this claim (such as in cases where one social media services acquires another, Facebook's acquisition of the Instagram social media service and platform in April 2012 or Google's acquisition of YouTube in 2006),[273] the realities are much more complicated.

Communications scholar Tarleton Gillespie has noted that the term "platform" has gained purchase in the early twenty-first century as a technology industry term, but also as a way to connote – in contrast with traditional mass media - openness, neutrality, egalitarianism, and progressiveness among users.[274] Focusing specifically on YouTube and its 2006 acquisition by Google, Tarleton Gillespie provides an analysis of the discursive work around the term "platform" and the tensions around the different usages of the term. He argues that digital intermediaries, like YouTube at the focus of his own study, rely on four semantic definitions for platforms – computational, political, figurative, and architectural – and these definitions rely on a common set of assumptions that a platform exists as:

> A "raised-level surface" designed to facilitate some activity that will subsequently take place. It is anticipatory, not causal. ["Platform"] implies a neutrality with regards to the activity, though less so in the as the term gets specifically matched to specific functions (like a subway platform), and even less so in the political variation. A computing platform may be agnostic about what you might want to do with it, but either neutral (cross-platform) or very much not neutral (platform-dependent), according to which provider's application you would like to use.[275]

[273] Evelyn M. Rusli, "Facebook Buys Instagram for $1 Billion - NYTimes.com," *Dealbook - New York Times*, April 9, 2012, http://dealbook.nytimes.com/2012/04/09/facebook-buys-instagram-for-1-billion/.

[274] Gillespie, "The Politics of 'Platforms'," 352.

Media critic Geert Lovink similarly underscores the problems of platforms, particularly in relation to online video. He asks, "How can we anticipate new forms of moving image production that will emerge under the 'network condition'? What are the unique characteristics of online video? Are we open to the unforeseen and the unexpected, or do we simply bet on the safe remediation thesis that claims that content always remain the same and simply migrates from one platform to the next?"[276]

Archivists have long stressed the importance of context, though context itself, as noted previously in this chapter, has been largely undertheorized. What this notion of platform-specificity offers is a way to observe social media as a documentary phenomenon predicated on specific technological contexts of user-generated and shared content. Attending to the specificity of platforms foregrounds the performatic contexts of social media, as no two platforms carry precisely the same affordances and constraints for what content may be uploaded and shared. Social media platforms influence how its users might interact with one another and these may be contingent upon myriad factors such as the aesthetics and functions of the social media platform. Is the application programming interface is open and thus configurable? Is it entirely closed to limit customizability? What user base or demographic does that platform appeal to and why?

Foregrounding the specificity of social media platforms can also elucidate the dynamics of how communities are formed, and perhaps deformed and reformed, as individual users connect and interact with one another and share their content with their

---

[275] Ibid., 350.

[276] Geert Lovink, *Networks Without a Cause: A Critique of Social Media*, 1st ed. (Polity, 2012), 144. The "safe remediation hypothesis" referenced in Lovink's critique refers to Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin's important studies on new media. See: Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (MIT Press, 2000).

social networks. It is unsurprising that social networking and social media have offered scholars sites for investigation into community formation, specifically around the socio-technical facets of "community." For the archival profession, "community" has emerged as a salient contemporary theme, arguably as a result of the recent technological developments like social media and social networking. But how have archivists attempted to grapple with this? The following section reprises Chapter 6's discussion on community documentation and attempts to problematize Jeannette Bastian's concept of a "community of records" in hopes of enriching it, but also to envision new arenas of possibility for applying the concept.

Redescribing a Community of Records

This dissertation was first and foremost an inquiry into community documentation, and explored the multiple forms of community as they coalesce in and through Machine Project as incubator for ideas at the intersection of art, technology, and community education. In my descriptions of Machine Project's community documentation in Chapter 6, I invoked Jeannette Bastian's notion of the community of records in order to demonstrate a dominant perspective on community archives developed from within archival science. Conceptually, her community of records appropriates anthropologist Benedict Anderson's work on imagined communities and foregrounds the persistence of collective identity as the basis for how a community serves as a contextualizing frame for a corpus of records.

In a recent article, Terry Cook described the history of archival discourse in four paradigms: evidence, memory, identity, and community. While careful to emphasize the permeability of these paradigms – that one paradigm does not necessarily sequentially

replace another – Cook identifies the emergence of a "community turn" in the archival discourse. This shift is unsurprising, given the increased volume of research on community archives within the past decade. As I described in Chapter 2, community has been a central concern in the work of Jeanette Bastian, Andrew Flinn, Eric Ketelaar, and a growing number of archival scholars. While Bastian's "community of records" remains as one of the clearer theoretical articulations of the intersection between community and record-keeping in archival science, the concept is limited by its adherence to an identity-based model of community. The focus on identity as a cohering substance for a community leaves out other forms of community that do not assume a transcendent belongingness (being-common), but instead find togetherness in being-in-common.

What is needed now is a critique of how "community" has been deployed in archival discourse. This would entail problematizing the dominant identity-based models of community that presume persistence as a necessary quality or outcome of community. For example, such a critique would highlight Bastian's community of records unwitting reinscription of the historical subjectivation of Virgin Islanders in her redeployment the language of the Danish colonizers. Behind her descriptions of a community of records is an unfortunate essentializing of community that views the records of colonialism as memory to be "owned," as if there could be some larger cultural truth to be uncovered in the quest for an indigenous purity *a priori* to its colonial past.[277]

As remedy - or perhaps retort - we might identify alternative models of community. One might look to Miwon Kwon's collective artistic praxis and its

[277] For an incisive critique of similar positions that claim to restore the purity of pre-colonialism in the history of India, see Sandhya Shetty and Elizabeth Jane Bellamy, "Postcolonialism's Archive Fever," *Diacritics* 30, no. 1 (2000): 25–48.

appropriation of Jean-Luc Nancy's *Inoperative Community*, which offers a model of non-identitarian community and collectivism characterized by the choreography and machinations of an artistic event, and comes together and apart in the time and space of the event. Perhaps we might consider Maurice Blanchot's elective communities, of which its members self-determine belongingness based not on essential common qualities or presumptions of identity, but through self-selection (for Blanchot, the example of two lovers in communion illustrate this form of elective community).[278] Yet another model for community would be philosopher Jacques Rancière's concept of an aesthetic community, or "community of sense." For Rancière, "the 'community of sense' woven together by artistic practice is a new set of vibrations of the human community in the present; on the other hand, it is a monument that stands as a mediation or substitute for people to come…the artwork is the people to come and it is a monument to its expectation, a monument to its absence."[279]

These models pluralize of the concept of community can extend the explanatory and descriptive reach of Bastian's "community of records" by specifying the parameters of a community's capacity to serve as, in Bastian's words, a contextualizing frame. Attending to the specificity of a record's activation as a specific event provides alternate paths toward observing communities of records. In other words, the act of a document's creation is an event of its "binding." The appraisal of a document as archivable (as a representation of some past transaction) is an event in which the document is accorded status as a record (i.e., as authoritative, authentic, and reliable evidence set aside for

[278] Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community*; Stella Gaon, "Communities in Question: Sociality and Solidarity in Nancy and Blanchot," *Journal for Cultural Research* 9, no. 4 (October 1, 2005): 387–403.

[279] Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator* (Verso, 2011), 57, 59.

future reference). The appearance of the record through its retrieval and its subsequent activation and performance as a record are, too, events that supply contextual frames for the record.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

At the beginning of this study, I set out to explore the documentation practices of Machine Project and to investigate the ways in which the organization documents its events. I was interested in answering the following questions: What are the processes leading to the creation of documents? How might documentary artifacts come into existence as records? What is involved in the processes of creating and constructing records as objects of reference to an event, and how might an event transcend its temporal and spatial boundaries through new and emergent contexts for the sharing of arts documentation? These questions were rooted in problems of documentary representation, and I was interested in investigating how an event might be translated into material instantiations of a community's memory through documentation practice and record-keeping.

I used ethnographic methods to guide my search for answers to these questions and accumulated a corpus of observations describing the formation of Machine Project's archive of event records. The descriptions collected in the previous three chapters illustrate the complexity of disentangling an organization's documentation practices, especially in an organizational context characterized by permeable boundaries and shifting memberships. Further complicating these documentation practices are Machine Project's decentralized experiments in community-building through orchestrated educational and artistic events that aim to prompt dialogue among audiences. For Machine Project, the art work is the social interaction and the cultivating of relationships among a broad spectrum of audiences, whether comprised of seasoned artists, the

occasional museum visitor, or individuals who may have never attended a contemporary art event.

In my research with Machine Project, I observed how the seemingly simple act of creating a record in an organizational context includes iterative conversations about how events should be documented, contingent on the expertise and interests of the community as well as what technologies are available to enact these strategies. This resulting dissertation traced the evolution of Machine Project's documentation practices, from early practices yielding one-take video footage as records of events, to current practices that take the raw footage to be used as the basis for derivative and intentionally designed edited videos produced for public viewing on the social web. The latter videos demonstrate an authenticity that the cameras on their tripods lacked, through the reflexivity afforded by digital video as a specific media technology of records creation. That is, this shift coincides with a shift in the motivations for documenting a Machine Project event: from wanting to capture as evidence what happened at a Machine Project event, to wanting to capture and display an approximation of the experience for an undefined virtual audience in hopes of catalyzing new experiences among online viewers of the videos.

In this regard, the significance of Machine Project's documentation practices lies in how the organization understands the processes and products of documentation, not for the sole purpose of accumulating evidence of past art events and programs but as means to reach and communicate with audiences through the creation and public circulation of documentary objects as records of the organization's events and programs.

Reflections on Changes to the Research Questions and Method

This research was conducted over the course of approximately three years, a duration in which the research questions posed at the onset of the study (unsurprisingly) morphed and evolved. In my own practices of observing, documenting, analyzing, and interpreting the data, the initial questions that I posed needed to be reoriented in order to produce a narrative account that viewed record-keeping as a complex social practice. I began my study with the broad-based question, "what is a record?" but where I sought definitive answers, I found more questions. My initial focus on the "what" of the record is a question of the criteria against which a document is judged to be authentic evidence of some fact or event, and the motivations for such question, I conclude, stem from recent trends in archival science that seek conceptual bases for the field of archival practice. Perhaps there is a kind of solace in the standardization of archival concepts, whether as a means to settle fuzzy definitions or to see more clearly how to problematize them.

But it is important to note that there is also solace in the destabilization of the fundamental concepts of the profession that archivists might take for granted, or consolation in the promise of progress for the archival profession. I would suggest that the moments in which our fundamental concepts (like the concepts of the record, the document, the archive) are questioned are ultimately opportunities for the discourse to become enriched. For archival scholars, enrichment of the discourse might come from the broadening of our collective methodological tool kit. In this regard, this dissertation aimed to contribute to archival science by not only utilizing ethnographic methods, but critically reflecting on them and their utility for archival scholarship.

Reflections on Method: Archival Ethnography

In June 2012, I was invited to participate in a collaboration between Machine Project and the San Francisco-based alternative space Southern Exposure. The *Southern Machine Exposure Project* (SMEP), as it came to be called, was a series of events held from June 11 – 30, 2012, in homes throughout San Francisco, California:

> (Announcing) 20 events
> (Featuring) 20 combinations of artists and performers from LA and SF
> (Inside of) 20 homes in the Bay Area
> (Commemorated by) 20 posters
> (Designed by) 20 designers from SF and LA
> (Documented by) 20 videos[280]

For the SMEP series, Machine Project and Southern Exposure produced documentation in tandem, with Emily Lacy at the helm directing the documentation processes for the events. For the duration of the event, the Southern Exposure gallery space became headquarters for the artists, designers, videographers and photographers, and staff from both organizations.

The event that I participated in was held in the home of San Francisco-based sculptor Gay Outlaw and her husband Bob Schmitz, and also involved the newly established San Francisco-based collaborative project Will Brown (comprised of three artists, Lindsey White, Jordan Stein, and David Kazprzak).[281] My contribution, entitled

[280] Machine Project, "Southern Machine Exposure Project," *Machine Project*, June 11, 2012, http://machineproject.com/projects/southern-machine-exposure-project/.

[281] Gay Outlaw, "GayOUTLAW," *Official Website*, n.d., http://www.gayoutlaw.com/Outlaw/Outlaw_Home.html; Lindsey White, Jordan Stein, and David Kazprzak, "Will Brown," accessed November 27, 2012, http://www.wearewillbrown.com/. Will Brown's contribution to the event was organized separately by the artists, and involved utilizing their production budget for the SMEP event to hire window painter John Seastrunk for the day. Known for his seasonal holiday designs, Seastrunk painted the windows of the house to reflect different American holidays throughout the year, "condensing time and space of a calendar year into one installation…advertising nothing but his work and celebrating a full year of special occasions." See: "John Seastrunk : Will Brown," accessed November 27, 2012, http://wearewillbrown.com/offsite/smep/.

Tea Time with an Archivist, involved two parts. The first aspect of the project was a seven-hour "archival performance": In consultation with Gay and Bob, I organized their vast collection of recipe clippings and print-outs, developed a rudimentary database to facilitate searchability of the recipes by ingredient(s) and meals, and physically arranged and rehoused the recipes in document boxes. The recipes, database, and document boxes were then used for the second aspect of the event, which was literally tea time with a professional archivist.

After having spent the majority of the day organizing Gay and Bob's recipe archive, I stationed myself at the dining room table with a pot of tea, the recipe boxes, and my computer with the recipe database open. Guests began arriving in droves by 6:30 pm (when the event was scheduled to begin) and trickled in steadily until the event concluded three hours later. In those three hours, I held personal and group consultations with guests about their own archives using Gay and Bob's recipe boxes as a case example of what an archive might look like at the scale of a personal or topical collection of materials. Prior to the event, guests were invited to bring their own objects as conversation pieces; some preferred to speak one-on-one about their personal collections and their strategies (or lack thereof) for organizing those materials while others were interested in larger group conversations about the archival issues that they have encountered in their daily lives. Some were interested in deep metaphysical questions about archives and memory while others simply wanted to know, what is an archive? What does an archivist do?

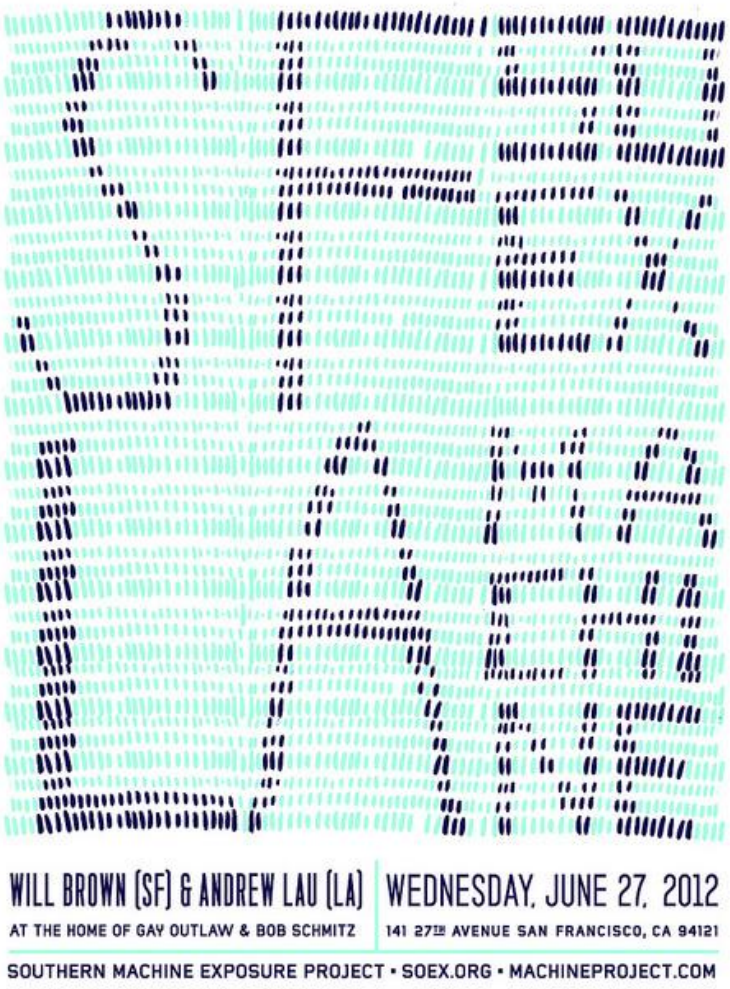


Figure 8.1. Southern Machine Exposure Project Event 17 of 20
Poster designed by Shannon Losorelli
Source: Southern Exposure

Until then, I had strived to maintain a certain level of critical distance from Machine Project; this was the result of my own training as a social scientist. Though I had been involved with Machine Project since the summer of 2010, the SMEP project threw into sharp relief just how deeply integrated I became in working with Machine Project as a member of the community. This realization allowed me to see Machine Project and its

documentation practices from not only the perspective of a researcher, contemporary art enthusiast, or archivist, but as a full-fledged collaborator with Machine Project.

In recent years, archival scholars have become increasingly aware of ethnography as an empirical and interpretative method for research into record-keeping environments. From exploring middle school students' development and internalization of record-keeping practices, to investigating scientists' lab notebook as records in the context of scientific production and research, to documenting the domains of knowledge of film preservationists in the setting of professional practice, ethnography has proven useful in archival science as a methodology for the collection and analysis of empirical observations of complex record-keeping processes and practices. While individual ethnographic studies might adopt different epistemological positions (e.g., grounded theory or the extended case method) and/or adopt varying ontological assumptions about the "nature" of the social phenomena being studied, ethnographic research places the researcher in the field and privileges her participation and observation *in situ*, thereby allowing for the construction of focused narratives intended to engage the community in the course of the research. The ethnographic perspective is thus characterized by an intertwining of empirical observations with interpretive analysis and narrative-construction about some social phenomenon, a perspective that within the archival field is sorely needed.

When this study was designed, I initially viewed the social media and social networking websites used by Machine Project as multiple individual sites for ethnographic observation. Informed by George Marcus' description of "multi-sited ethnography," the design of the study assumed that each website might be considered

analogous to a physical site that an ethnographer might visit and interact with members of the community.[282] The idea behind this methodological move was to recognize the specific construction of each website as unique spaces of social interaction and for the sharing of documentary objects about Machine Project's events.

In the course of the research, however, it soon became clear that the central assumption of this virtual multi-sitedness needed to be revised in order to account for the error in dichotomizing physical sites for ethnographic observation on the one hand (e.g., the Machine Project storefront, the various galleries, museums, or public spaces where events are held) and digital online (web)sites for the circulation of their documentary objects on the other (e.g., YouTube, Vimeo, Ustream, Facebook, Twitter, etc.). This dichotomy is similar to other binaries that view an online/offline, real/virtual, or material/immaterial distinction when describing networked sociality or digital culture. Against this "digital dualist" fallacy, technology critic Nathan Jurgenson posits a perspective rooted in "augmented reality" which is a conceptual perspective appropriated from the discourse on virtual worlds/gaming that "views our reality as the byproduct of the enmeshing of the on and offline."[283] The online and the offline are not separate realms, but rather inflect one another in a reality that *blends atoms and bits*, rather than presuming their inherent separation.[284]

---

[282] Marcus, "Ethnography In/of the World System"; George E. Marcus, "What Is at Stake - and Is Not - in the Idea and Practice of Multi-Sited Ethnography," *Canberra Anthropology* 22, no. 2 (1999): 6–14.

[283] Nathan Jurgenson, "When Atoms Meet Bits: Social Media, the Mobile Web and Augmented Revolution," *Future Internet* 4, no. 1 (January 23, 2012): 4, doi:10.3390/fi4010083. Prior to publishing this article, Jurgenson's digital dualism vs. augmented reality thesis initially appeared as a posting on the academic critical theory technology blog *Cyborgology*. See: Nathan Jurgenson, "Digital Dualism Versus Augmented Reality," *Cyborgology*, February 24, 2011, http://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2011/02/24/digital-dualism-versus-augmented-reality/#more-1347.

Although studies of online social interactions have been taken up by ethnographers in the form of internet ethnography, netnography, cyberanthropology, or a bevy of similar terms denoting the performance of ethnography in networked digital spaces, this study departed from these predecessors in that it did not view the online replacing the offline, or digital records supplanting physical records. Rather, it became clear that a more comprehensive account of Machine Project's documentation practices would require a more holistic ontological approach to observing records. Such an approach would view records not as simply atomic units comprising an archival collection, but in terms of documents' capacities to act or perform as records within networks of social interaction, whether in synchronous face-to-face contexts or in virtual contexts that may be comparatively more asynchronous. By using understanding contemporary forms of documentation practices as exercises in "augmented reality," an ethnographer may be positioned to understand the very human intentions and motivations for documentation and how and why information and communications technologies may be integrated into documentation practices.

Directions for Future Research

When I began this research project, I held the assumption that Machine Project was a unique site for investigation, for all of its particularities as an artist-run organization. However, I soon realized that the insights and findings emerging out of this research had wider applicability beyond Machine Project as an organization, and indeed,

---

[284] Though they describe augmented reality in terms of a "blended reality, a similar argument is made in Sally A. Applin and Michael Fischer, "A Cultural Perspective on Mixed, Dual and Blended Reality" (presented at the IUI Workshop on Location-Based Services in Smart Environments (LAMDa), Palo Alto, CA, 2011), http://www.anthropunk.com/xwiki/wiki/anthropunk/download/Main/WebHome/AculturalPerspectiveApplinFischer.pdf.

even beyond the documentation practices of artist-run and alternative spaces of contemporary art in general. That is, the conceptualization of the performatic context of records may be applied to other organizational, institutional, and personal contexts in which documentation and record-keeping are distributed and may draw in the use of a wide variety of information and communications technologies that may be popularly available, such as social media and social networking services.

Future researchers may use these concepts as warrant for extended inquiry into the documentation practices of other kinds of contemporary organizational and personal practices of documentation and record-keeping. The pervasive use of social media and social networking platforms provide the opportunity for future researchers to explore how these technologies might enable shifts and evolutions in documentation practice among organizations as well as individuals seeking to create records of their lives, however personal or seemingly mundane. To a certain extent, extending this line of inquiry into performatic contexts may help to establish the broader significance of archival principles beyond the boundaries of professional discourse and traditional contexts of archival practice.

Another area for future research relates to how this dissertation has attempted to problematize how events are understood in archival science. Whereas the current literature understands events primarily as significant occurrences in history, this dissertation sought to highlight how the concept of the event may be expanded to include the aforementioned performatic context of records as a significant kind of archival event that archival scholars might interrogate. This may be of particular utility to archival scholars interested in the area of inquiry known as user studies or more broadly, how

documents are observed, activated, or used as records within a multiplicity of contexts. Along another line of inquiry into archival events, future researchers may choose to explore how the design and methods of documentation practices exist as necessary and significant dimensions of how the event may be eventually "accessed" (or more accurately, constructed from the position of observation) through records, or how strategies for documentation co-constitute the event and its capture in records.

A third direction for future research involves critiquing current models of community as deployed in archival research. This nascent area of inquiry is currently ripe for further investigation, as Terry Cook has noted, and what is needed are challenges to dominant strains of how communities are operationalized within studies on community archiving. In other words, future research on community archives may begin first with a rejection of the notion of "community" as a self-evident term, and use this skepticism as the basis for exploring other models of community as this dissertation has sought to do by drawing in insights from community-based art, philosophy, and social systems theory. This requires recognition that models of community may conflict with one another, but out of these conflicts may emerge a fuller and enriched discourse on the plurality of communities and archival strategies for scaffolding projects in participatory documentation.

The Itinerant Archivist

In 1959, Ernst Posner presented to the Society of American Archivists his "impressions of an itinerant archivist in Europe," his focus set on Rome, the "cradle of

archival administration," as well as other locations around the Mediterranean Sea.[285] He describes himself and couches his itinerancy in terms of tourism and sightseeing. For Posner, the itinerant archivist is a wanderer and a traveler, seeing with a focused gaze where the quest for the roots of archival history might direct him.

It is perhaps unsurprising that Posner's archival tourism would lead him to, in, and around secular and religious archives around the Mediterranean, in light of his expressed theoretical interests in a general history of archives and his interests in the public good present throughout his scholarly *oeuvre*. And like many progenitors of modern archival science in the late 19th century through the mid-20th century, he was deeply engaged in the intellectual work of analyzing and comparing state archival institutions and the movement of ideas across national boundaries and across time, shifting his view from archives in the ancient world to modern manifestations of "archives in the public interest."[286] While Posner's impressions were gleaned from his own literal tourism, they might be read as an implicit methodology for "reading" archival theory and the diffusion of archival ideas as they have been taken up by archival institutions. In his essay, he ponders and reflects on the "cradle of archival administration," simultaneously referencing his own interests in comparing archival institutions and the apparent similarities and differences that he observes across them. He

[285] Ernst Posner, "Impressions of an Itinerant Archivist in Europe," in *Archives and the Public Interest: Selected Essays by Ernst Posner*, ed. Kenneth White Munden (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1967), 78–86.

[286] See: Ernst Posner, *Archives in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972); Ernst Posner, *American State Archives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964); Ernst Posner, "Some Aspects of Archival Development Since the French Revolution," *American Archivist* 3, no. 3 (1940): 159–172.

locates the Mediterranean region as a specific geographic region in which archival ideas have circulated, taken hold, and have become crystallized in institutional form.

When I discovered Posner's essay, I was struck by the continuities between his project and my own, despite the differences in scale and geographic locations of our respective observations. I was struck by how his impressions of the "cradle of administration" in the Mediterranean seemed to parallel my own impressions as I, too, wandered, traced, plotted, and followed the documentation practices of Machine Project. My own "itinerancy" as an archivist would lead me to various locations throughout the City of Los Angeles: to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Hammer Museum, CalArts, a small storefront gallery in Echo Park. It would lead me to San Francisco where I would spend seven hours organizing recipe clippings and another three hours casually conversing with individuals about their own varied documentation and record-keeping practices and describing archival principles and professional best practices.

At the most superficial level, itinerancy represents wandering, traveling, or a sense of "homelessness." But at a deeper level, itinerancy might be viewed as metaphor for how archivists might engage and take part in communities of records, to observe them as social systems of documentation, to expand the scope of archival knowledge to include the multiple ways of knowing and to account for multiple realities of record-keeping. Itinerancy affords an archivist the ability to see reflexively how the work we perform as professionals might be carried over into non-professional realms and how our body of professional knowledge is itself sometimes contentious, but always tenuous and tentative, always evolving, changing, and indeed, never settled. Itinerancy is not just a way of

seeing recordkeeping in plurality, but a way of observing record-keeping marked by differences, multiplicity, and complexity.

Epilogue: Impressions of an Itinerant Archivist in Los Angeles

The Casbah Café sits on Sunset Boulevard, not far from the famed Sunset Junction in Silver Lake. The early afternoon is dry and uncomfortably warm, as summers in Los Angeles frequently are. Some of the patrons are either hunched over their tables in a bid to spend the day productively, while others laugh and catch up with friends over organic baked goods and coffee. I ordered my coffee and found a seat in the middle of the café. It was the only table that was not occupied, and I was successful in commandeering it because of the skills that I have acquired in driving in Los Angeles through the years.

Finding a table in an overcrowded coffee shop is like finding a parking spot; one must strategically circle and hover while watching closely for signs and indications that a spot will free up: left-turn signals and white reverse lights. Or, in the café, laptop lids latching shut, pens being capped, loud proclamations that "It's been amazing to catch up with you, and I'm glad to hear that you're doing so well! Let's do this again soon!" Finding a spot to park can sometimes mean that you will have a few extra minutes to browse the shelves of a nearby bookstore, or have a leisurely chat with a friend at comfortable pace. Not finding a space to park can sometimes mean the deferral to an alternate plan or an *ad hoc* strategy like putting on your emergency lights and parking in a loading zone (because you just want to grab a coffee – it won't be but five minutes and everyone does it). Or it could mean standing by the window with a mug of coffee while you for a table to vacate, as you shift your hot cup from hand to hand.

Parking is a premium in Los Angeles.

My mobile phone buzzes. I received a text message from Ronni, letting me know that she was running late and was looking for parking. I sigh knowingly, that such

occurrences – like being late for a meeting – are often due to forces outside of our control, namely L.A. traffic. I switch seats to face the door to catch her as she enters.

Fifteen minutes later, a young woman, slightly out of breath, suddenly appears at my table. I was preoccupied with writing in my notebook while I was waiting for Ronni to arrive, and did not even notice when she came into the café. She apologized profusely for being late before she sat down in the seat beside me. We conversed for about an hour and a half, about alternative spaces, the idea of alternativity itself, and implications for the documentation of these organizations. I was impressed: she was aware of the complexities and nuances of documentation, and having identified this need for documentation, set out in collaboration with Jesse Aaron Greene to publish *Dispatches and Directions: On Artist-Run and Alternative Spaces in Los Angeles* in 2010.

During my interview with Ronni Kimm, she asked me what I speculated the future would hold for documentation practices in contemporary art, particularly in and around artist communities and organizations. There have been previous avant-gardes; what makes our time and our place right now so special or remarkable? What tools and methods are available to best suit the varied documentation practices of artists and their organizations, as well as their interests? Or are we thinking about it completely backward and should instead be removing the gloss of "alternative and artist-run spaces" in favor of specific interventions for specific organizations working in specific modes? Should we taxonomize documentation practices or thickly describe them?

I stammered half of a thought, something laden with the jargon of archival discourse, about how "artists might partner with collecting institutions and develop long-term mutually beneficial relationships to ensure proper care and access of the materials."

A look of slight confusion spread across Kimm's face as I let my statement dribble from my lips, and I become immediately aware of the contradictions of my project, of my own disciplinary training as an archivist – my having been disciplined as an archivist with institutional archives as my primary frame of reference. It must have sounded strange to someone whose own frame of reference tended to eschew institutionality.

Kimm, who teaches at Cal Arts and Otis College of Art and Science in addition to her previous work with ART2102, seized the teachable moment to momentarily loosen my moorings and proposed the figure of the "itinerant archivist." Modeled after Baudelaire's flâneur, the itinerant archivist would stroll the walkways of the world out there or the streets of the community here, looking for experiences to collect. The itinerant archivist recognizes that there is an experience to be had in each appearance of documentation, each performance, such that the document that one person beholds is not and cannot be identical to another's view of that object, or another's caress, or another's derivation, or another's dismissal. Just as the itinerant archivist acknowledges the event of the document as a singular experience, she also recognizes its pluralities: the radiance and unfolding of the event, how it is observed, and how it is captured and described in documentation. And I too recognize these pluralities, but only because my own itinerancy as an archivist had led me to this moment at this café with an artist who likely will never know just how much she has taught me about archives.

Appendix 1. Machine Project Vision and Values Statement

MACHINE PROJECT Vision & Values 2011

Vision

WHAT IS MACHINE PROJECT?
Machine Project is both a storefront space and an energetic and constantly shifting constellation of particular interests and subjectivities. Through Machine Project, a loose collective of Los Angeles-based artists, musicians, performers, designers, poets, and others collaborate to produce engaged experimental artwork.

WHY DO WE DO WHAT WE DO?
We believe that most exciting and original ideas come out of conversations and processes of making or doing that are exploratory rather than goal-oriented in nature. Machine Project exists to make art that injects a sense of genuine and invested curiosity, intellectual engagement, and permissibility into daily social life.

HOW DO WE DO IT?
Machine Project temporarily transforms and repurposes our storefront gallery and other public spaces for creative use and civic discourse. In these spaces we foster cross-disciplinary collaborative exploration and support experimental forms of cultural production that don't fit within established structures.

Values

Openness – An open mind is both necessary and sufficient for anyone to participate in a discussion on the nature of reality and the purpose of human existence. It is also essential to relate to others with different life experiences and interests, and to create or consider truly inventive work. There is a need for non-commodified public space for such exchanges to take place. Machine Project is dedicated to temporarily opening such spaces at different points in the social field, simultaneously manifesting them and indicating their continuous future potentiality.

Relational Learning and Growth – We believe that great ideas most often develop in conversation with others, whether this ultimately takes the form of collaborative production, or just having others' attention serve as a sounding board and source of energy. At the same time, we try never to merely instrumentalize people – as participants or collaborators. As a result, Machine Project's growth model is non-hierarchical and

based on the formation of mutually beneficial relationships with artists and other institutions. As we continue to expand, we apply this commitment to relationality to new geographic locations and communities, approaching them as sites rather than platforms. Finally, our work is distinct from relational aesthetics because the relation is not treated as an end product in itself, but as a means of exploring or creating something together.

Active Engagement – We believe that for learning, understanding, or appreciating art (or anything) active engagement is extremely useful. This engagement may be material participation in a class or performance piece. It may also be mental engagement, as an audience member or even as someone who hears about a piece later. Machine Project is interested in folkloric transmission and in the imagination as a performance space. As distinct from the purely conceptual, however, we believe that for a piece to really engage people, it must actually take place in the world; that is, after all, where the contingent results occurs. Propositions get really interesting when they enter different subjectivities and become experiences. This also speaks to the value of the public to Machine Project: people's attention is the currency our work requires to be meaningfully actualized.

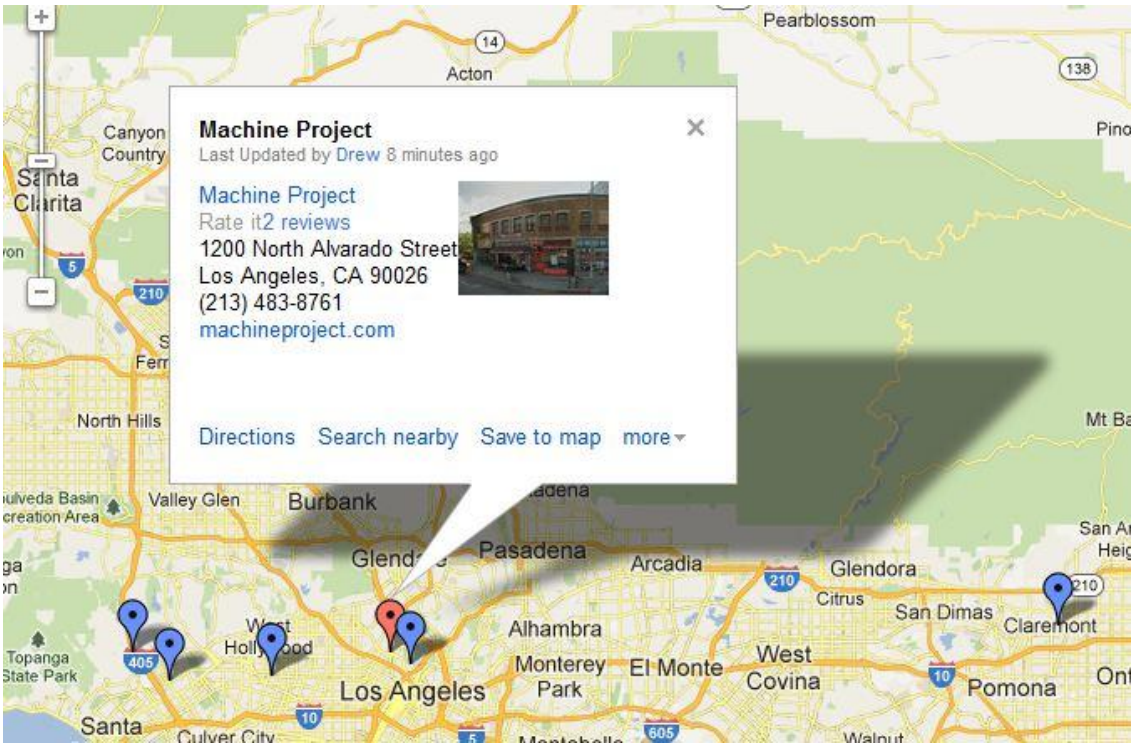
Specificity – Machine Project seeks to work with a broad range of ideas, fields of knowledge, and materials. While wide in its total scope, our programming is also very focused. This is because we are interested in real engagement with other people and their interests. Specific nodes offer a way to access another subjectivity in its particularity, rather than as a type or in vague terms of "the human." People who are categorically different along prescribed demographic lines can have much in common at a more granular level. At the same time, where people's interests do not align is often an equally productive site for connection. Energy and enthusiasm is deeply contagious. We are pretty sure this is why our most esoteric events are so popular; who doesn't want a sneak peek into someone else's deep and abiding fascination with fungi or the history of conspiracy theories in Los Angeles?

Potential and Emergent Forms – Machine Project aims to foster the production of work that does not already have a venue or place within established institutions and structures. Generally, such work proceeds from a "what if…?" spirit of curiosity and is interdisciplinary in nature or uses materials (including new technologies) in novel ways. As a result, it is often hard to pre-conceptualize or commodify. Institutions and markets invested in maintaining their cultural capital or in making a profit are often unwilling to risk investing in unknown qualities. Machine Project wants to take that risk.

Experimentation – We value true experimentation – not limited by pre-determined goals, needs, or ideological pressures – as the way to discover and create new forms. This doesn't mean we have no ideas about what might happen or that our interest is detached

or frivolous. It does mean that we are excited when something unexpected results from a performance or work and that it is okay if things occasionally fail to have the impact we had hoped. We tend to provide opportunities for the artists we work with to try things they don't have the freedom to try elsewhere. The resulting work is sometimes raw or rough, but often the freshest and most exciting. We ask our institutional partners to embrace experimentation – not as a label for a type of avant-garde practice or product – but in a real way, as a method of working.

Appendix 2. Maps of Machine Project Institutional Collaborations



Note: Locations represented by aqua markers refer to alternative/artist-run spaces with which Machine Project has collaborated (i.e., SPACES in Cleveland, OH, and Southern Exposure in San Francisco, CA).

Machine Project Institutional Collaborations

January 22 – April 6, 2006: *Machine Project Guide to Cultural History & the Natural Sciences* at the Pomona College Museum of Art, California.

November 15, 2008: *Machine Project Field Guide to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art*, California.

December 2009 – December 2010: Artist in Residence at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, California.

March 31 – April 18, 2010: Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri.

November 11, 2010: Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver, Colorado.

January 22 – 23, 2011: *Summer Jubilee* Preview (featuring Sean Connaughty's Bigloo) at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

January 31, 2011: *Machine Project* film (directed by Chris Wilcha) screened as part of the exhibition, *The Artist's Museum* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

February 11 – April, 2011: SPACES, Cleveland, Ohio.

February 25, 2011: Confuse-a-Tron Workshop at L@TE: Friday Night at BAM/PFA (Berkeley Art Museum/Pacific Film Archive)

April 29, 2011: *FERMENT[cheese]* at L@TE: Friday Night at BAM/PFA.

May 6, 2011: Triway Hyperlecture Cage Match at L@TE: Friday Nights at BAM/PFA.

July 19 – 31, 2011: *Summer Jubilee* at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

June 11 – 31, 2012: *Southern Machine Exposure Project*, in collaboration with Southern Exposure gallery, San Francisco, California.

References

18th Street Arts Center, Clayton Campbell, Alex Donis, Julia Bryan-Wilson, Liinda Frye Burnham, and Dorit Cypis. *Collaboration Labs: Southern California Artists and the Artist Space Movement*. Santa Monica, CA: 18th Street Arts Center, 2011.

Abukhanfusa, Kerstin, and Jan Sydbeck. *The Principle of Provenance: Report from the First Stockholm Conference on Archival Theory and the Principle of Provenance 2-3 September 1993*. Stockholm, Sweden: Swedish National Archives, 1994.

Ahlmark, Mark. *Stelarc: The Man with Three Ears*. Motherboard. VBS IPTV, 2009. http://www.vice.com/motherboard/stelarc-the-man-with-three-ears--2.

Alberro, Alexander. "Institutions, Critique, and Institutional Critique." In *Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists' Writings*, 2–19. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009. http://mitpress.mit.edu/catalog/item/default.asp?ttype=2&tid=11854.

Alimurung, Gendy. "The Collector of Experiences: Mark Allen and His Machine Project." *LA Weekly*, December 27, 2006. http://www.laweekly.com/2006-12-28/news/the-collector-of-experiences/.

Allen, Mark. "DIY Art Space Workshop or Whatever." *Machine Project*, 2011. http://machineproject.com/archive/classwork/2011/08/06/diy-art-space/.

———. "Machine Project: A.I.R. at the Hammer." *Art:21 Blog*, July 12, 2010. http://blog.art21.org/2010/07/12/machine-project-a-i-r-at-the-hammer/.

Allen, Mark, and Jason Brown, eds. *Machine Project Almanac*. 1.5 ed. Los Angeles: Machine Project, 2008.

Allen, Mark, Jason Brown, and Liz Glynn, eds. *Machine Project: A Field Guide to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art*. Los Angeles: Machine Project Press and the

Wallis Annenberg Photography Department at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2009.

Allen, Mark, Jimmy Fusil, Emily Lacy, Andrew Lau, and Sam Meister. "Documentation Interview," December 30, 2010.

Allen, Mark, and Kirsty Singer. "Machine Project Vision and Values." unpublished document, 2011.

Ambient Force 3000. "About" AMBIENT FORCE 3000, 2010. http://af3k.com/about/.

Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions. "Journal of Aesthetics and Protest." *Civic Matters*, 2005. http://www.artleak.org/civicmatters/bio_aestheticsandprotest.html.

Applin, Sally A., and Michael Fischer. "A Cultural Perspective on Mixed, Dual and Blended Reality." Palo Alto, CA, 2011. http://www.anthropunk.com/xwiki/wiki/anthropunk/download/Main/WebHome/ACulturalPerspectiveApplinFischer.pdf.

Atherton, Jay. "From Life Cycle to Continuum: Some Thoughts on the Records Management-Archives Relationship." *Archivaria* 21 (1985).

Ault, Julie. "For the Record." In *Alternative Art New York 1965-1985*, edited by Julie Ault, 1–16. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

Authenticity Task Force. *Lineage of Elements Included in the Template for Analysis (pre-InterPARES): From Tradition Diplomatics to Contemporary Archival Diplomatics*. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia, June 2000. http://www.interpares.org/display_file.cfm?doc=ip1_lineage_of_elements.pdf.

Baraibar, Aitor. “Stelarc’s Post-Evolutionary Performance Art: Exposing Collisions Between the Body and Technology.” *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 11, no. 1 (1999): 157–168. doi:10.1080/07407709908571320.

Barrett, Mrs Violet. “Country Life in Jamaica.” *Moving Here | Stories*. Accessed February 15, 2012. http://www.movinghere.org.uk/stories/story_WMMHJamaican07/story_WMMHJamaican07.htm?identifier=stories/story_WMMHJamaican07/story_WMMHJamaican07.htm.

Bastian, Jeannette A. “Reading Colonial Records Through an Archival Lens: The Provenance of Place, Space and Creation.” *Archival Science* 6, no. 3 (2006): 267–284.

Bastian, Jeannette Allis. *Owning Memory: How a Caribbean Community Lost Its Archives and Found Its History*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2003.

Bastian, Jeannette Allis, and Ben Alexander. *Community Archives: The Shaping of Memory*. Facet, 2009.

Beech, Dave. “Don’t Look Now! Art After the Viewer and Beyond Participation.” In *Searching for Art’s New Publics*, edited by Jeni Walwin, 15–29. Chicago: Intellect, 2010.

Bishop, Claire. “Introduction: Viewers as Producers.” In *Participation*, 10–17. Documents of Contemporary Art. London and Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel Press and the MIT Press, 2006.

Blanchot, Maurice. *The Unavowable Community*. Midpoint Trade Books, 2006.

Block, Summer. “Literary Los Angeles: Machine Project.” *PANK Blog*, June 18, 2010. http://www.pankmagazine.com/pankblog/?p=4789.

Bolter, Jay David, and Richard Grusin. *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. MIT Press, 2000.

Bourriaud, Nicolas. *Relational Aesthetics*. Translated by Simon Pleasance, Fronza Woods, and Mathieu Copeland. Les Presses du Réel, 2002.

Brothman, Brien. “Afterglow: Conceptions of Record and Evidence in Archival Discourse.” *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 311–342.

Buskirk, Martha. *The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005.

Butler, Judith. “Endangered/Endangering: Schematic Racism and White Paranoia.” In *Reading Rodney King: Reading Urban Uprising*, edited by Robert Gooding-Williams, 15–22. Chicago: Routledge, 1993.

———. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Cassidy, Victor M. “New Art Examiner, R.I.P?” *ArtNet Magazine*, July 5, 2002. http://www.artnet.com/magazine/news/cassidy/cassidy7-5-02.asp.

Castells, Manuel. *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture*. John Wiley & Sons, 2011.

City of Santa Monica, and Santa Monica Arts Foundation. “About.” *Glow: Dusk and Beyond*, 2012. http://glowsantamonica.org/.

———. “Ferris Wheel Orchestra.” *Glow: Dusk and Beyond*, 2012. http://glowsantamonica.org/gallery/ferris-wheel-orchestra/.

Clarke, Bruce. *Posthuman Metamorphosis: Narrative and Systems*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2008.

Cook, Terry. "Archival Science and Postmodernism: New Formulations for Old Concepts." *Archival Science* 1, no. 1 (1987): 3–24.

———. "Beyond the Screen: The Records Continuum and Archival Cultural Heritage." In *Beyond the Screen: Capturing Corporate and Social Memory*, 8–21. Melbourne, Australia: Australian Society of Archivists, 2000.

———. "The Concept of the Archival Fonds in the Post-Custodial Era: Theory, Problems and Solutions." *Archivaria* 35 (1993): 24–37.

———. "What Is Past Is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift." *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997): 17–61.

Cook, Terry, and Joan M. Schwartz. "Archives, Records, and Power: From (postmodern) Theory to (archival) Performance." *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 171–185.

Cordoba, Alex de. *IMG_0944*, July 31, 2010. http://www.flickr.com/photos/20990388@N04/4879937318/.

Cumming, Kate. "Ways of Seeing: Contextualizing the Continuum." *Records Management Journal* 20, no. 1 (March 30, 2010): 41–52. doi:10.1108/09565691011036224.

Curran, Megan. "Ill-Gotten Brains: The Grisly History of Sourcing Bodies for Anatomical Learning." *Machine Project*, 2011. http://machineproject.com/archive/events/2011/04/15/morbidanatomy/.

Cusset, François. *French Theory: How Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, & Co. Transformed the Intellectual Life of the United States*. Translated by Jeff Fort. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.

Daniel, Henry, and Cara Payne. *Case Study 02 Final Report: Performance Artist Stelarc*. InterPARES 2 Project: International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia, September 2007. http://www.interpares.org/display_file.cfm?doc=ip2_cs02_final_report.pdf.

DeLanda, Manuel. *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity*. New York: Continuum, 2006.

Denny, Drew. "Emily Lacy: Step Away From the Robe." *LA Record*, January 26, 2010.

Dorkbot. "Dorkbot: People Doing Strange Things with Electricity." *Dorkbot*, 2012. http://dorkbot.org/.

Duranti, Luciana. *Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science*. Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 1998.

———. "The Archival Bond." *Archives and Museum Informatics* 11, no. 3 (1997): 213–218.

Duranti, Luciana, and Kenneth Thibodeau. "The Concept of Record in Interactive, Experiential and Dynamic Environments: The View of InterPARES." *Archival Science* 6, no. 1 (October 18, 2006): 13–68. doi:10.1007/s10502-006-9021-7.

Fernandes, Mark. "The Body Without Memory: An Interview with Stelarc." *CTheory* (November 13, 2002). http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=354.

Flinn, Andrew. “Community Histories, Community Archives: Some Opportunities and Challenges.” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 28, no. 2 (2007): 151–176. doi:10.1080/00379810701611936.

———. “Independent Community Archives and Community-Generated Content ‘Writing, Saving and Sharing Our Histories’.” *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* 16, no. 1 (2010): 39–51.

———. “Other Ways of Thinking, Other Ways of Being. Documenting the Margins and the Transitory: What to Preserve, How to Collect.” In *What Are Archives? Cultural and Theoretical Perspectives: A Reader*, edited by Louise Craven, 109–128. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008.

Flynn, Sarah J. A. “The Records Continuum Mode in Context and Its Implications for Archival Practice.” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 22, no. 1 (2001): 79–93.

Fried, Laura. “Some Alternatives to Institutional Critique” Blog. *Art21 Blog*, April 30, 2010. http://blog.art21.org/2010/04/30/some-alternatives-to-institutional-critique-2/.

Frieling, Rudolf. “Toward Participation in Art.” In *The Art of Participation*, 32–49. San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2008.

Gaon, Stella. “Communities in Question: Sociality and Solidarity in Nancy and Blanchot.” *Journal for Cultural Research* 9, no. 4 (October 1, 2005): 387–403.

Gillespie, Tarleton. “The Politics of ‘platforms’.” *New Media & Society* 12, no. 3 (May 1, 2010): 347–364.

Gilliland, Anne. “Neutrality, Social Justice and the Obligations of Archival Education and Educators in the Twenty-first Century.” *Archival Science* 11, no. 3–4 (November 1, 2011): 193–209. doi:10.1007/s10502-011-9147-0.

Gilliland, Anne, Sue McKemmish, Kelvin White, Yang Lu, and Andrew Lau. “Pluralizing the Archival Paradigm: Can Archival Education in Pacific Rim Communities Address the Challenge?” *American Archivist* 71, no. 1 (April 1, 2008): 87–117.

Gilliland-Swetland, Anne J. *Enduring Paradigm, New Opportunities: The Value of the Archival Perspective in Digital Environments*. Washington, D.C.: Council on Library and Information Resources, 2000.

Goldbard, Arlene. “When (Art) Worlds Collide: Institutionalizing the Alternatives.” In *Alternative Art New York, 1965-1985*, edited by Julie Ault, 183–200. New York and Minneapolis: The Drawing Center and University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

Gracy, David B. “Is There a Future in the Use of Archives?” *Archivaria* 24 (1987): 3–9.

Gracy, Karen F. “Documenting Communities of Practice: Making the Case for Archival Ethnography.” *Archival Science* 4, no. 3–4 (February 2006): 335–365. doi:10.1007/s10502-005-2599-3.

Green, Charles. *The Third Hand: Collaboration in Art from Conceptualism to Postmodernism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

Groys, Boris. “A Genealogy of Participatory Art.” In *The Art of Participation*, 18–31. San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2008.

Hancock, Roland. “Implanting Organs in the Name of Art.” *The Telegraph*. UK, February 4, 2011, sec. How About That?

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/howaboutthat/8303322/Implanting-organs-in-the-name-of-art.html.

Haraway, Donna. “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective.” *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 575–599.

Harris, Verne. “Claiming Less, Delivering More: A Critique of Positivist Formulations on Archives in South Africa.” *Archivaria* 44 (1997): 132–141.

———. “Concerned with the Writings of Others: Archival Canons, Discourses and Voices.” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 25, no. 2 (2004): 211–220. doi:10.1080/0037981042000271529.

———. “On the Back of a Tiger: Deconstructive Possibilities in ‘Evidence of Me’.” *Archives and Manuscripts* 19, no. 1 (2001): 8.

———. “The Archival Sliver: Power, Memory, and Archives in South Africa.” *Archival Science* 2, no. 1 (2002): 63–86.

Hayles, N. Katherine. *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. University of Chicago Press, 1999.

———. “Making the Cut: The Interplay of Narrative and System, or What Systems Theory Can’t See.” *Cultural Critique* no. 30 (1995): 71–100.

Heibel, Amy. “Emily Lacy: Temples of the Mind.” *Unframed: The LACMA Bloa*, December 1, 2009. http://lacma.wordpress.com/2009/12/01/emily-lacy-temples-of-the-mind/.

Helguera, Pablo. “Alternative Time and Instant Audience (The Public Program as an Alternative Space).” In *Playing by the Rules: Alternative Thinking / Alternative Spaces*, 22–31. New York: apexart, 2010.

———. *Education for Socially Engaged Art*. Kindle. NY: Jorge Pinto Books, 2011.

Hertz, Garnet. "Cockroach Controlled Mobile Robot." *Garnet Hertz - Http://conceptlabcom*, December 23, 2008. http://www.conceptlab.com/roachbot/.

Hurewitz, Daniel. *Bohemian Los Angeles: And the Making of Modern Politics*. University of California Press, 2008.

Hurley, Chris. "Parallel Provenance (1): What, If Anything, Is Archival Description?" *Archives and Manuscripts* 33, no. 1 (2005): 110.

———. "Parallel Provenance (2): When Something Is Not Related to Everything Else." *Archives and Manuscripts* 33, no. 2 (2006): 52–63.

———. "Parallel Provenance: If These Are Your Records, Where Are Your Stories?" *Archives and Manuscripts* 33, no. 1 & 2 (2005). http://infotech.monash.edu/research/groups/rcrg/publications/parallel-provenance-combined.pdf.

Jenkinson, Hilary. *A Manual of Archive Administration Including the Problems of War Archives and Archive Making*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922.

Johnston, Harry H. *Sugar Cane in Flower* Photograph, 1909 1908. Royal Geographic Society. http://www.movinghere.org.uk/search/catalogue.asp?sequence=75&resourcetypeID=2&recordID=75.

Journal of Aesthetics & Protest. "Journal of Aesthetics & Protest." *Journal of Aesthetics & Protest*. Accessed May 21, 2012. http://www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org/.

Jurgenson, Nathan. “Digital Dualism Versus Augmented Reality.” *Cyborgology*, February 24, 2011. http://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2011/02/24/digital-dualism-versus-augmented-reality/#more-1347.

———. “When Atoms Meet Bits: Social Media, the Mobile Web and Augmented Revolution.” *Future Internet* 4, no. 1 (January 23, 2012): 83–91. doi:10.3390/fi4010083.

Kallmyer, Chris, and Andrew J Lau. “Interview with Chris Kallymer” Digital audio recording, May 18, 2011.

Kaptelinin, Victor, and Bonnie A. Nardi. *Acting with Technology: Activity Theory and Interaction Design*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006.

Kaye, Nick. *Site-Specific Art: Performance, Place and Documentation*. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Keiding, Tina Bering. “Observing Participating Observation: A Re-description Based on Systems Theory.” *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 11, no. 3 (2010).

Kester, Grant H. *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*. University of California Press, 2004.

Ketelaar, Eric. “Archival Temples, Archival Prisons: Modes of Power and Protection.” *Archival Science* 2, no. 3 (2002): 221–238.

———. “Sharing: Collected Memories in Communities of Records.” *Archives and Manuscripts* 33, no. 1 (2005): 44.

———. “Tacit Narratives: The Meanings of Archives.” *Archival Science* 1 (2001): 131–141.

Kimm, Ronni, and Jesse Aron Green, eds. *Dispatches and Directions: On Artist-Run Organizations in Los Angeles*. Los Angeles: Art2102, 2010.

Krasinski, Jennifer. "Character Development: Brody Condon's Level5 and the Avant-LARP of Becoming Self." *East of Borneo* (December 9, 2010). http://www.eastofborneo.org/articles/27.

Kraus, Chris. *Video Green: Los Angeles Art and the Triumph of Nothingness*. Semiotext(e), 2004.

———. "You Are Invited to Be the Last Tiny Creature." In *Where Art Belongs*, 9–43. Intervention Series 8. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2011.

Kwon, Miwon. *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002.

Lacy, Emily. "Documentation and Artistic Practice" Interview by Andrew Lau. Digital audio recording, April 17, 2011. Los Angeles.

———. "Temples of the Mind." *Emily Lacy*, 2010. http://emilylacy.net/appearing-projects/temples/.

Lai, Linda, and Efraim Turban. "Groups Formation and Operations in the Web 2.0 Environment and Social Networks." *Group Decision and Negotiation* 17, no. 5 (2008): 387–402. doi:10.1007/s10726-008-9113-2.

Lane, Victoria, and Jennie Hill. "Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going? Situating the Archive and Archivists." In *The Future of Archives and Recordkeeping: A Reader*, 3–22. London: Facet, 2011.

Lee, Daniel. "Observing Communication: Niklas Luhmann and the Problem of Ethnography." *Soziale Systeme* 13, no. 1–2 (2007): 454–465.

———. “Observing Communication: Niklas Luhmann and the Problem of Ethnography.” *Soziale Systeme* 13, no. 1 & 2 (2007): 454–465.

lesupersteph. *Blindfolded Art Handle 1* Digital video recording. Los Angeles: YouTube, 2008. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ju-Zj2IqVDI&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

Library of Congress. *Update on the Twitter Archive at the Library of Congress*. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, January 2013. http://www.loc.gov/today/pr/2013/files/twitter_report_2013jan.pdf.

Lippard, Lucy. *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973.

Lovink, Geert. *Networks Without a Cause: A Critique of Social Media*. 1st ed. Polity, 2012.

Luhmann, Niklas. *Social Systems*. Stanford University Press, 1995.

———. *The Reality of the Mass Media*. Stanford University Press, 2000.

Machine Project. “A Hammer Dream-In | Machine Project.” *Machine Project*, 2010. http://machineproject.com/archive/events/2010/05/01/a-hammer-dream-in/.

———. *A Year in the Life of a Coatroom*. Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 2010. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k87-fFnl1fM&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

———. “Breakups, Heartbreak, Affliction and Regret.” *Machine Project*, February 25, 2009. http://machineproject.com/archive/events/2009/02/15/breakups-heartbreak-affliction-and-regret/.

———. “FAQ and Other Information.” *Machine Project*, n.d. http://machineproject.com/faq/.

———. “FERMENT[cheese].” *Machine Project*, May 16, 2010. http://machineproject.com/archive/events/2010/05/16/cheesefest-2010/.

———. “GLOW Festival @ the Santa Monica Pier.” *Machine Project*, 2008. http://machineproject.com/projects/glow/.

———. “Institutional Collaborations” Machine Project. Accessed May 24, 2012. http://machineproject.com/projects/institutional-collaborations/.

———. “Institutional Collaborations.” *Machine Project*, n.d. http://machineproject.com/projects/institutional-collaborations/.

———. “Josh Beckman’s Sea Nymph: A Shipwrecked Boat Inside Machine.” *Machine Project*, September 5, 2010. http://machineproject.com/archive/events/2010/09/05/shipwrecked-boat/.

———. “Mach Infinity - Holly Vesecky.” *Machine Project*, March 11, 2006. http://machineproject.com/archive/events/2006/03/11/mach-infinity-holly-vesecky/.

———. “Machine Project Benefit 2011.” *Machine Project*, 2011. http://machineproject.com/archive/events/2011/11/05/machine-project-benefit-2011/.

———. “Machine Project Hammer Museum Public Engagement Artist in Residence Report Released” Machine Project, February 20, 2012. http://machineproject.com/archive/news/2012/02/20/machine-project-hammer-museum-public-engagement-artist-in-residence-report-released/.

———. “Southern Machine Exposure Project.” *Machine Project*, June 11, 2012. http://machineproject.com/projects/southern-machine-exposure-project/.

———. “Win a Musical Trip to the Dentist,” February 28, 2009. http://machineproject.com/archive/events/2009/02/28/win-a-musical-trip-to-the-dentist/.

Machine Project, and Hammer Museum. *Public Engagement Artist in Residence*. Los Angeles: Machine Project and the Hammer Museum, 2012. http://machineproject.com/files/pdf/Machine_Project_Public_Engagement_Artist_in_Residence_Report_compressed.pdf.

Machine Project, and Jim Fetterley. “‘Fire Eater, Glass Walker’ Machine Project with Jim Fetterley, 2009 Single Screen Video Installation.” *Vimeo*, 2009. https://vimeo.com/18757276.

Machine Project, and Pomona College Museum of Art. *Machine Project Guide to Cultural History & the Natural Sciences*. Project Series 29. Claremont, CA: Pomona College Museum of Art, 2006.

Machine Project, and Marianne Williams. *Ako and Friend Aboard Sea Nymph* Digital photograph, September 13, 2010. http://www.flickr.com/photos/machineproject/4987660761/.

MacNeil, Heather. “Contemporary Archival Diplomatics as a Method of Inquiry: Lessons Learned from Two Research Projects.” *Archival Science* 4, no. 3 (2004): 199–232.

MacNeil, Heather, and Bonnie Mak. “Constructions of Authenticity.” *Library Trends* 56, no. 1 (2007): 26–52.

Marcus, George E. “Ethnography In/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography.” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995): 95–117. doi:10.1146/annurev.an.24.100195.000523.

———. “What Is at Stake - and Is Not - in the Idea and Practice of Multi-Sited Ethnography.” *Canberra Anthropology* 22, no. 2 (1999): 6–14.

Marsden, Paul. “When Is the Future? Comparative Notes on the Electronic Record-Keeping Projects of the University of Pittsburgh and the University of British Columbia.” *Archivaria* 1, no. 43 (December 2, 1997): 158–173.

Martin, Stewart. “Critique of Relational Aesthetics.” *Third Text* 21, no. 4 (2007): 369–386.

McKemmish, Sue. “Evidence of Me...” *Archives and Manuscripts* 24, no. 1 (May 1996): 28–45.

———. “Placing Records Continuum Theory and Practice.” *Archival Science* 1 (2001): 333–359.

McKemmish, Sue, and Michael Piggott. “Are Records Ever Actual?” In *The Records Continuum: Ian MacLean and Australia Archives First Fifty Years*, 187–203. Canberra, Australia: Ancora Press, 1994.

McKemmish, Sue, and Michael Piggott, eds. *The Records Continuum: Ian Maclean and Australian Archives - First Fifty Years*. Canberra, Australia: Ancora Press, 1994.

McWilliams, Chandler B. “Intro to Processing.” *Machine Project*, 2011. http://machineproject.com/archive/classwork/2011/02/22/processing/.

Meister, Sam. “Recordkeeping in a Small Nonprofit Organization.” Master’s Thesis, San Jose State University, 2009.

Meister, Sam Alan, and Andrew J Lau. “Interview on Machine Project’s Documentation Practices with the Author,” April 13, 2011.

Millar, Laura. “The Death of the Fonds and the Resurrection of Provenance: Archival Context in Space and Time.” *Archivaria* 53 (2002): 1–15.

Mingers, John C. “Can Social Systems Be Autopoietic? Assessing Luhmann’s Social Theory.” *The Sociological Review* 52, no. 2 (2002): 278–299.

Moeller, Hans-Georg. *Luhmann Explained: From Souls to Systems*. Kindle edition. Petersborough, NH: Open Court Publishing, 2006.

Muller, Samuel, Johan Adriaan Feith, and Robert Fruin. *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*. Society of American Archivists, 2003.

Myers, Holly. “Machine Project.” *Art Review* (September 2010): 80–83.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Being Singular Plural*. Stanford University Press, 2000.

———. *The Inoperative Community*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.

National Archives of Australia. “Ian Maclean,” 2012. http://www.naa.gov.au/about-us/grants/ian-maclean/bio.aspx.

———. “Publications and Tools.” *National Archives of Australia: Your Story, Our History*, 2012. http://www.naa.gov.au/records-management/publications/DIRKS-manual.aspx.

Nesmith, Tom. “The Principle of Provenance: Report from the First Stockholm Conference on Archival Theory and the Principle of Provenance 2-3 September 1993 (Book Review).” *Archivaria* 41 (1996): 249–251.

Neyfahk, Leon. “The Man Who Made Curating an Art.” *The New York Observer*. New York, December 16, 2009. http://observer.com/2009/12/the-man-who-made-curating-an-art/.

Outlaw, Gay. “GayOUTLAW.” *Official Website*, n.d. http://www.gayoutlaw.com/Outlaw/Outlaw_Home.html.

Overton, Adam. “artSpa.” *...+1+1+...*, n.d. http://plus1plus1plus.org/artSpa/index.

Pearce-Moses, Richard. “Context.” *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*, 2005. http://www.archivists.org/glossary/term_details.asp?DefinitionKey=103.

———. “Record.” *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*. The Society of American Archivists, 2005. http://www.archivists.org/glossary/term_details.asp?DefinitionKey=54.

Peltomäki, Kirsi. *Situation Aesthetics: The Work of Michael Asher*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010.

Posner, Ernst. *American State Archives*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.

———. *Archives in the Ancient World*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972.

———. “Impressions of an Itinerant Archivist in Europe.” In *Archives and the Public Interest: Selected Essays by Ernst Posner*, edited by Kenneth White Munden, 78–86. Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1967.

———. “Some Aspects of Archival Development Since the French Revolution.” *American Archivist* 3, no. 3 (1940): 159–172.

Poster, Mark. “High-Tech Frankenstein, or Heidegger Meets Stelarc.” In *The Cyborg Experiments: The Extensions of the Body in the Media Age*, edited by Joanna Zylinska, 15–32. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2002.

Rancière, Jacques. *The Emancipated Spectator*. Verso, 2011.

Raymond, Matt. “How Tweet It Is!: Library Acquires Entire Twitter Archive.” *Library of Congress Blog*, April 14, 2010. http://blogs.loc.gov/loc/2010/04/how-tweet-it-is-library-acquires-entire-twitter-archive/.

Reill, Peter Hanns. “History and Hermeneutics in the Aufklärung: The Thought of Johann Christoph Gatterer.” *The Journal of Modern History* 45, no. 1 (March 1, 1973): 24–51.

Repetto, Douglas. “Questions About Self-Organization: Dorkbot.” *Pixelache University ’08*, June 3, 2008. http://university.pixelache.ac/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=114&Itemid=43.

Ridener, John. *From Polders to Postmodernism: A Concise History of Archival Theory*. Duluth, MN: Litwin Books, 2009.

Rusli, Evelyn M. “Facebook Buys Instagram for $1 Billion - NYTimes.com.” *Dealbook - New York Times*, April 9, 2012. http://dealbook.nytimes.com/2012/04/09/facebook-buys-instagram-for-1-billion/.

Schechner, Richard. *Performance Theory*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

———. “Rasaesthetics.” *TDR/The Drama Review* 45, no. 3 (2001): 27–50. doi:10.1162/10542040152587105.

Schellenberg, Theodore R. *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques*. Archival Classics Reprints. Topeka, KS and Chicago, IL: Kansas State Historical Society and the Society of American Archivists, 1996.

Shankar, Kalpana. “Scientists, Records, and the Practical Politics of Infrastructure.” Doctoral Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2002.

Shetty, Sandhya, and Elizabeth Jane Bellamy. “Postcolonialism’s Archive Fever.” *Diacritics* 30, no. 1 (2000): 25–48.

Simonson, Lily. “Jung’s Red Book Begins a New Chapter at UCLA’s Hammer Museum.” *Art:21 Blog*, April 29, 2010. http://blog.art21.org/2010/04/29/jungs-red-book-begins-a-new-chapter-at-uclas-hammer-museum/.

Spieker, Sven. *The Big Archive: Art From Bureaucracy*. MIT Press, 2008.

Stimson, Blake. “What Was Institutional Critique?” In *Institutional Critique*, 20–42. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009.

Stoler, Ann Laura. *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008.

———. “Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance.” *Archival Science* 2, no. 1 (2002): 87–109.

Stulen, Scott. “Bigloos, Amplified Tea Kettles, and Other Activities for a Frozen Minnesota Weekend.” *Walker Blogd*, January 19, 2011. http://blogs.walkerart.org/mnartists/2011/01/19/bigloos-amplified-tea-kettles-and-other-activites-for-a-frozen-minnesota-weekend/.

Taylor, Diana. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003.

The Experimental Music Yearbook. “Issue 2010.” *The Experimental Music Yearbook*, 2011. http://www.experimentalmusicyearbook.com/issue-2010/.

The State Records Authority of New South Wales. “DIRKS Manual.” *The State Records Authority of New South Wales*, 2003. http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/recordkeeping/dirks-manual.

Theimer, Kate. “What Is the Meaning of Archives 2.0?” *American Archivist* 74, no. 1 (April 1, 2011): 58–68.

Thornton, Sarah. *Seven Days in the Art World*. 1ST ed. W. W. Norton & Company, 2008.

Trace, Ciaran B. “Documenting School Life: Formal and Informal Imprints of a Fifth Grade Classroom.” Doctoral Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2004.

Upward, Frank. “In Search of the Continuum: Ian MacLean’s ‘Australian Experience’ Essays on Recordkeeping.” In *The Records Continuum: Ian MacLean and Australia Archives First Fifty Years*, edited by Sue McKemmish and Michael Piggott. Canberra, Australia: Ancora Press, 1994.

———. “Modelling the Continuum as Paradigm Shift in Recordkeeping and Archiving Processes, and Beyond: A Personal Reflection.” *Records Management Journal* 10, no. 3 (January 12, 2000): 115–139. doi:10.1108/EUM0000000007259.

———. “Structuring the Records Continuum (Part One): Postcustodial Principles and Properties.” *Archives and Manuscripts* 24, no. 2 (1996). http://infotech.monash.edu/research/groups/rcrg/publications/recordscontinuum-fupp1.html.

———. “Structuring the Records Continuum (Part Two): Structuration Theory and Recordkeeping.” *Archives and Manuscripts* 25, no. 1 (1997). http://infotech.monash.edu/research/groups/rcrg/publications/recordscontinuum-fupp2.html.

Upward, Frank, and Sue McKemmish. “In Search of the Lost Tiger, by Way of Sainte-Beauve: Reconstructing the Possibilities in Evidence of Me.” *Archives and Manuscripts* 29, no. 1 (2001): 22–43.

Upward, Frank, Sue McKemmish, and Barbara Reed. “Archivists and Changing Social and Information Space: A Continuum Approach to Recordkeeping and Archiving in Online Cultures.” *Archivaria* 72 (2011): 197–237.

Uricchio, William. “Moving Beyond the Artefact: Lessons from Participatory Culture.” In *Digital Material: Tracing New Media in Everyday Life and Technology*, edited by Marianne van den Boomen, Sybille Lammes, Ann-Sophie Lehmann, Joost Raessens, and Mirko Tobias Schafer, 131–141. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009.

Varella, Kimberly, and Liz Anderson. “Interview with the Author” Digital audio recording, May 17, 2011.

Vortex Navigation Company. “Emily Lacy.” *Vimeo*, January 23, 2011. https://vimeo.com/23756388.

Walker Art Center. “About Open Field,” 2011. http://blogs.walkerart.org/openfield2011/about-open-field/.

Wallenstein, Sven-Olov. “Institutional Desires.” In *Art and Its Institutions: Current Conflicts, Critique and Collaborations*, edited by Nina Möntmann, 114–122. London: Black Dog Publishing, 2006.

Wallis, Brian. “Public Funding and Alternative Spaces.” In *Alternative Art New York, 1965-1985*, 161–181. Minneapolis and New York: University of Minnesota Press and The Drawing Center, 2002.

White, Lindsey, Jordan Stein, and David Kazprzak. “Will Brown.” Accessed November 27, 2012. http://www.wearewillbrown.com/.

Wilson, William Julius, and Anmol Chaddha. “The Role of Theory in Ethnographic Research.” *Ethnography* 10, no. 4 (2009): 549–564.

Yakel, Elizabeth, and Deborah A. Torres. “Genealogists as a‘ Community of Records’.” *American Archivist* 70, no. 1 (2007): 93–113.

Yee, Susan. “The Archive.” In *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With*, edited by Sherry Turkle, 31–37. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007.

“About.” *C-level*. Accessed January 12, 2012. http://c-level.org/about.html.

Emily Lacy Bigloo V21, 2011. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sS1cIXhXnmc&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

“Gawdawful Theater at Dream \-In at The Hammer Museum Hosted by ArtSpa and Machine Project, 2010.” *Asher Hartman*, 2011. http://www.asherhartman.com/perform4.html.

“a Hammer Dream-In / Dream Pads.” ... + *1* + *1* + ..., 2010. http://plus1plus1plus.org/dream-in/dreampads.

Inside the Bigloo Digital video recording. Minneapolis, 2011. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qg6UPAJsqlA&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

“John Seastrunk : Will Brown.” Accessed November 27, 2012. http://wearewillbrown.com/offsite/smep/.

LA's Feral Institutions. College Art Association Annual Conference, 2009. http://www.archive.org/download/AfterallLAsFeralInstitutions/LAsFeralInstitutions022709.mp3.

Lamp Community: 2010 Annual Report. Los Angeles: Lamp Community, 2010. http://www.lampcommunity.org/docs/2010_annual_report.pdf.

"Moving Here: 200 Years of Migration to England," October 14, 2009. http://www.movinghere.org.uk/.

"Pacific Standard Time - Collaboration Labs: Southern California Artists and the Artist Space Movement," 2011. http://www.pacificstandardtime.org/exhibitions?id=collaboration-labs-southern-california-artists-and-the-artist-space-movement.