Constituting the Archives of Artist-Run Culture: A Self-Conscious Apparatus of History

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Abstract

This study investigates the production of knowledge through the archives of artist-run centres in Canada in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Archival scholars recognize that the ways materials are collected, presented, and controlled in an archive can impact the types of narratives that may be created from them. But how do such operations occur in artist-run centres, and what challenges might they pose to the construction of historical narratives? What can the ways in which centres define, organize, and provide access to their archival materials reveal about artist-run culture? More specifically, how do systems of ordering, acts of donation, archival architecture, and virtual archives of artist-run centres affect the potential use of these materials in future histories?

This contemporary art history thesis borrows literature and questions from cultural studies and archival science. I explore the multiple and fluid forms of archives claimed by each of these overlapping disciplines, and by artist-run centres themselves. To generate new information about artist-run centre archives, I employ a sociological-ethnographical approach, undertaking a broad survey of arts-related self-organized entities, and conducting interviews with selected representatives of artist-run centres. The assumption that informs these methods of investigation is that information about artistic, archival, and administrative practices can best be gathered from the practitioners themselves. Such an approach respects the knowledge and autonomy of the individual and organizational participants, and is in line with a general artist-run ethos, which calls for the recognition of the experience and expertise of artists and cultural producers.

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

Chapter Three: Where Are We Now? Surveying Artist-Run Centre Archives

Chapter Four: Taking Up Space for Women: MAWA and their Archive

Chapter Five: Living and Working in the Non-Panoptical Domestic Archive: The LIDS Residency

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

AAT: Art and Architecture Thesaurus

AAVAA: African and Asian Visual Artists' Archive

AM: Archives of Manitoba

ANNPAC/RACA: Association of National Non-Profit Artists Centres/Regroupement d'artistes des centres alternatifs

ARCA: Artist-Run Centres and Collectives Conference

ARCCO: Artist-Run Centres and Collectives of Ontario

CARFAC: Canadian Artists' Representation/Le Front des artistes canadiens

CLGA: Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives

JSH: John Snow House

LCSH: Library of Congress Subject Headings

LIDS: Ladies Invitational Deadbeat Society

LOI: Letter of Information

MAWA: Mentoring Artists for Women's Art

RCAAQ: Le Regroupement des centres d'artistes autogérés du Québec

TNG: The New Gallery

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Preamble: On Ordering and Artistic Practices

In October of 2012, artist Andrew James Paterson performed "Into the Vaults" at John Snow House (JSH), a once-private Calgary home now operated as a resource centre by The New Gallery (TNG). Dressed in a white lab coat, and taking on a persona that combined elements of an archivist, mad scientist, and perhaps a television show host, Paterson presented some 26 publications to the audience. These publications—hardcover books, exhibition catalogues, and the odd journal, all of which were related at least tangentially to art—were pulled from The New Gallery's library, a collection amassed by various means over the organization's nearly 40-year history. Paterson discussed these publications more or less alphabetically by title, starting at A and working through to Z. With each, he offered an opinion or anecdote, or read a short selection from the text. Witty and wry, Paterson's performance was a commentary upon the discipline of art history, on the state of art in Canada today, on the acts of archiving, and most importantly, on the myriad ways we can organize and use information.[1, 2]

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[1] Paterson's performance has a precedent in Robert Filliou's 1977 video, "Porta Filliou." Created with Clive Robertson and Marcella Bienvenue during a residency at Arton's (a now defunct artist-run centre in Calgary), this video is a supplement to Filliou's book, *Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts* (1970). In the video, Filliou discusses his artistic practices, and orders his exploration alphabetically, from A (Admiration) to Z (Zen). Both Filliou and Paterson seem to be pointing to the limits that organizational systems—such as alphabetizing—can impose upon the creation and circulation of written narratives.

[2] The word *vault* in the title of Paterson's performance should not be taken literally: neither TNG nor JSH have anything that might be described as a very secure storage location. The term's connotations, however, are still meaningful, and suggest Paterson's impression of the materials he used: they are of value and worthy of care, both in a physical sense, and in a broader sense, where care suggests their animation through a performative work.

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Paterson's performance resonates with Michel Foucault's oft-quoted passage in *The Order of Things*, where Foucault himself quotes Jorge Luis Borges' essay, *The Analytical Language of John Wilkins*:

> This book first arose out of a passage in Borges, out of the laughter that shattered, as I read the passage, all the familiar landmarks of my thought—*our* thought, the thought that bears the stamp of our age and our geography—breaking up all the ordered surfaces and all the planes with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things, and continuing long afterwards to disturb and threaten with collapse our age-old distinction between the Same and the Other. This passage quotes a 'certain Chinese encyclopaedia' in which it is written that 'animals are divided into: (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) *et cetera*, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies.' In the wonderment of this taxonomy, the thing that we apprehend in one great leap, the thing that, by means of the fable, is demonstrated as the exotic charm of another system of thought, is the limitation of our own, the stark impossibility thinking *that*.[3]

What Paterson and Borges-via-Foucault demonstrate is an awareness of the subjective nature of systems of ordering. While Paterson used a common method of ordering information, he applied it in an unconventional manner, using the letters as mnemonic devices for his personal anecdotes, rather than as a way to order author surnames or subject headings. Foucault's retelling of the Borges narrative used a different approach, employing humour to emphasize the notion that ordering is a human construct that does not operate according to some kind of universal logic. Indeed, as Borges later states in his essay, "obviously there is no classification of the universe that is not arbitrary and conjectural."[4]

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[3] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: an Archeology of the Human Sciences*, Vintage Books Edition (New York, Random House, 1973), xv.

[4] Jorge Luis Borges, "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins," in *Other Inquisitions, 1937-1952*, trans. Ruth L.C. Simms (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 104.

The ordering systems we encounter in everyday life, although widespread and naturalized, cannot be taken for granted, since they structure information in specific ways. This structuring, in turn, affects what might be done with the materials that often form the basis of written art historical narratives. This is an idea akin to that suggested by art historian Keith Moxey, who proposes, "If there is nothing necessary about the current shape of our knowledge, then the future will be determined on the basis of argument."[5] The arguments to which Moxey refers will be supported by materials from both virtual and physical libraries and archives that have been organized according to arbitrary—though apparently logical—systems. It is for this reason that systems of ordering in cultural repositories matter: they ultimately affect the production of knowledge.

1.2 Research Problématique

This project investigates the production of knowledge through the archives of artist-run centres in Canada in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. By examining why and how artist-run centres preserve and present their archival materials, I hope to address two key questions: first, what is an artist-run centre archive, and how does it work? Second, what challenges—if any—might these archives pose to existing archival and historical structures?

Each of these overarching questions leads to a series of sub-questions. In the case of the first question, these sub-questions address the relationship between centres and their archives, exploring how archives can reflect the particular identity and positioning of a centre in a larger

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[5] Keith Moxey, *The Practice of Persuasion: Paradox and Power in Art History* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 7.

artistic ecology. How do artist-run centres structure (and indeed, create) what is and can be known about them, now and in the future? What can artist-run archives reveal about artist-run centres?[6] And what do artist-run centres say about their archives? How do centres think about their archives in relation to their larger mandates? Does the existence of artist-run archives contribute to the legitimacy and/or power of centres, and if so, how? What counts as knowledge in these archives? Why do they contain some things and not other things, and how are the criteria for inclusion and exclusion established? Who can access these archives, and how?

The second overarching question explores the hypothesis that artist-run centre archives can be understood as an extension of what has been called the "artist-run centre movement," and considers whether the impact of these archives is as potentially productive as that of their parent organizations.[7] Taking the position that these archives, and the materials they hold, are "the result of specific political, social and cultural processes," and framing artist-run archives—or at least *some* artist-run archives—as analogous to the centres themselves, I seek to understand the ways in which these independent, community-based archives might impact exclusionary historical narratives.[8] How can the situation-specific structuring and use of both knowledge and power in and through artist-run archives affect what might be known and said about mainstream art history? What possibilities do such archives suggest for the specific kinds of histories written, constructed, or perhaps performed by artists themselves? Can the content, structuring, and use of such archives contribute to the broadening of dominant Canadian art histories? At the same time,

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[6] In this text, the terms *artist-run centre archive* and *artist-run archive* will be used interchangeably, with the latter being preferred for its brevity.

[7] Clive Robertson, *Policy Matters: Administrations of Art and Culture* (Toronto: YYZBOOKS, 2006), v.

[8] Francis X. Blouin and William G. Rosenberg, "Archives and Archiving," in *Archives, Documentation and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar*, eds. Francis X. Blouin and William G. Rosenberg (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2007), 1.

I seek to identify barriers that might restrict the influence of these archives, whether financial, philosophical, or otherwise.

This research is important because the system or apparatus that structures archival contents also structures the potential of what can be written. In the words of archivists Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg, what is at stake

> …is not only the political protection of knowledge… but its very production: the power of archives and archivists, in effect, to structure what is knowable and how it is known. And the issues at hand are not simply the obvious political problems of access or of the types of restrictions that limit 'freedom of information.' They have to do instead with how the archiving process works *to create* information, to produce not only social or historical understanding but the very elements of social and historical knowledge itself.[9]

The potential of artist-run archives, then, is not only to create new histories, identities, or to assert authority or legitimacy, but also to define the boundaries of what can be known about a particular subject—in this case, artist-run centres.

Complicating this potential, and distinguishing this research from studies of more traditional archives, is the fact that in many cases it is artists or arts administrators—and not formally trained archivists—who work at artist-run archives, and are working on materials they have generated themselves. How are the values of such people different from those of trained archivists, and how can these values (which may include things such as collaboration, a greater tolerance for disorder, and an embracing of the random) change how information is structured in an archive[10]—or even what an archive contains in the first place? What meanings can be created

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[9] Blouin and Rosenberg, "Archives in the Production of Knowledge," in *Archives*, 86. Emphasis original.

[10] Throughout this thesis, I generally use *archive* and *archives* as singular and plural nouns, respectively, even though *archives* can refer both to a single institution (an archives) and to many institutions (some archives). The Society of American Archivists states that the use of the same noun to indicate both the singular and the plural is a

when artists are archiving on their own terms, from materials they have created through their own actions? What happens when the buffers of time and distance are removed from archival processes? Paterson's performance offers just a glimpse of how different ways of thinking can produce unique narratives, and suggests some possibilities for artist-constructed archives and histories.

Although this thesis considers the processes involved in in constructing historical narratives, it should be noted that one of the areas that this research circumvents is that of artist-run centre histories. This project is not a history of the artist-run centres I examine, or of all artist-run centres in Canada. By its very nature, this project will have to discuss the history of the artist-run centres involved, but will do so only to provide contextual information and to better understand the circumstances through which the archival materials have been generated.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Interdisciplinary Positioning and Key Assumptions

Through its combination of *artist-run* and *archive*, this topic lends itself to the overlapping disciplines of art history, cultural studies, and archival science. Although these disciplines share multiple concerns, I depend upon the distinct constructs claimed by each field to provide points of comparison and contrast. From archival science, for instance, past and present versions of the

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North American characteristic that is not necessarily replicated in other English-speaking countries (see http://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/a/archive, accessed March 30, 2015). I choose to employ the singular and plural forms of the noun for several reasons, including to increase clarity for readers who may not be familiar with this linguistic practice. Additional reasons for this choice are explored in greater detail in Chapter Two.

primary construct—that is, the archive and its operations as defined by the discipline—gives this

research something to push against, or, as the case may be, to align with. Indeed, for the possibly

unique characteristics of artist-run archives to emerge, it must be assumed that archival science

carries with it a certain history and set of beliefs that allow the existence of "traditional" or

"official" archives, or what cultural theorist Raymond Williams would call an "institution," as

distinct from a "formation," which is a smaller, self-organized body.[11] It must be assumed that

such institutional archives are different from what might be produced from a less regulated and

codified archive—an archive where the *Rules of Archival Description*, though themselves subject

to alteration, have never been applied. Momentarily setting aside the great changes that have

occurred in archival practice in recent decades (and which are explored in Chapter Two), and

that blur differences that may once have been stark, I ask the reader to allow me the use of

"traditional archives"—state-run bodies that selectively collect records—as a foil. The goal with

this construct is not to argue for what might be good or bad, or to elevate artist-run archives at

the expense of other bodies, but to use these contrasts as a way to find potentially meaningful

differences between artist- and non-artist-run archives, between "standard" practices and those

that are less so.

Similarly, this project requires a number of assumptions about dominant practices within art

history. It will be assumed that art history is produced from multiple sources, including archives

and books, which in turn implicates artist-run centres—which themselves produce both archives

and books—as potential contributors to art histories. These histories, however, do not exist upon

a level playing field, so it must also be assumed that there are such things as mainstream

narratives about Canadian art history, and about art and history in general in the Western world.

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[11] Raymond Williams, *Culture* (Glasgow: Fontana Paperbacks, 1981), 57.

These narratives, although they can be challenging to define, have a few key characteristics: they operate chronologically, telling about how things have changed over time; they pick a few key figures, whether political or artistic, and use them as signposts in their stories; they exclude more than they include; they are based primarily on white, male characters; they repeatedly draw on the same set of sources (mainstream archives and publications, which themselves use dominant practices to structure and create information); and they gain authority through their constant repetition-with-variation in books, museum exhibitions, and classrooms.[12] While the validity of such narratives and the processes that produce them have been subject to multiple challenges, particularly from feminist art historians, they nevertheless tend to "stick." These are the narratives against which the stories of artist-run centre archives might be positioned—or, as the case may be, these are the narratives that artist-run archives might reinforce.

In other words, this research relies upon the existence of the mainstream and the alternative (or alternatives), two problematic terms that nevertheless act as shorthand for dominant and secondary, majority and minority, or default and "other." While such concepts are generalizations, and have had their utility questioned by many scholars, including those from within the artist-run centre community, I seek to use them as a tool through which to examine similarity and difference.[13] If artist-run centres are, or were once, alternative, they require something to push against, something to be an alternative *to*. Similarly, my arguments for alternative archives and alternative art histories need an "other" to act as a foil: not an exact and perfect opposite, but rather *an*other (that is, potentially one of many) that may highlight

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[12] Dana Arnold, "Art History: Contemporary Perspectives on Method," *Art History* 32, no. 4 (September 2009): 657-658.

[13] For a useful discussion of the term *alternative*, see Julie Ault, "Of Several Minds Over Time," in Playing by the Rules: Alternative Thinking/Alternative Spaces, ed. Steven Rand (New York, NY: Apexart, 2010): 94-105.

meaningful distinctions. In the case of artist-run centre archives, this institutional, state-run foil might be imagined as the Library and Archives at the National Gallery of Canada. With this comparison, I aim not to exaggerate differences, or to lose sight of commonalities, but rather to understand how particular practices may lead to substantial variations in how both archives and histories can be constructed.

While it is relatively easy to align this study with particular disciplines because of its subject matter, and to position the argument in relation to the ongoing tensions between mainstream and alternative, it is less simple to identify a dominant theory that guides this work. Instead, this study uses a variety of contemporary theories that have been explored in each of these disciplines, and which ultimately cannot be firmly claimed by any one area. Foucault's ideas around knowledge-power, for example, have applications in art history, cultural studies, and archival science, as do feminist notions about the mechanics of exclusion in the creation of dominant paradigms. For my study, I review applications of such theories from within the particular disciplines, and assess their potential utility for the hybrid topic of artist-run archives.

1.3.2 Relationship Between Researcher and Research

There is an additional assumption I need to point out: in mainstream histories, it is generally taken for granted that there is some distance between the people who write about the past (historians), the people who keep evidence of that past (archivists), and the people who lived the experience described. This suggested distance, whether in time or space, does not necessarily apply in the creation of alternative archives or histories. Nor does it apply in the case of this

project, given my own close relationship with artist-run centres. From 2008 until 2010, I was the Resource Centre Coordinator at The New Gallery, the aforementioned artist-run centre in Calgary. Responsible for the centre's library and archive, it was my job to find or impose order upon numerous boxes of material, some of which had already been meticulously organized, and some of which had been arranged hastily in preparation for a gallery relocation. I was also tasked with making a plan for these materials, including where they would be stored and how access to them could be provided. Outlining the "lives" of documents created in the future (that is, developing a records management plan), creating a digital presence for selected items, and ultimately facilitating a donation to an institutional archive rounded out my duties.

My immersion within an artist-run centre archive has affected my understanding of these organizations and their roles within the artist-run movement. Had I not spent months sorting through papers strewn upon the floor, culling duplicates and arranging seemingly unclassifiable artwork/documents in what I hoped would be a logical, "findable" manner, I would not fully understand the practical aspects of archiving in an artist-run centre—an ongoing endeavour often undertaken with limited time and funding. I equally would not have had the chance to consider the prospective power of these archives, and to engage with a question facing many centres: while the creation and management of an archive falls outside the mandate of most centres, they are nevertheless felt to be important, even if the reason for this potential importance is never fully articulated, and even if this general feeling never produces any action around the archive. There is, instead, a lingering tension around these archives. They can become trapped in a state of permanent possibility—recognized as valuable, but limited by mandates, and, in many cases, funding.

I disclose my investment within the artist-run community, and artist-run archives more specifically, in order to dispel any impression of neutrality or objectivity. Indeed, for this project, I am working within a situation that parallels that identified by Stuart Hall in his 2001 discussion of the formation of the African and Asian Visual Artists' Archive (AAVAA),[14] a collection not entirely dissimilar from an artist-run archive. Hall highlights the lack of distance between the people who create an archive, those who organize it, and those who use it:

> ...the very practice of putting the collection together is informed by practitioners who are themselves active participants in defining the archive. They may have contributed to it. They may have collected some of it. They have appreciated and helped to interpret it. They have learned from the work in their own practice: and this new work will, in turn, become candidates for inclusion. The archivist cannot bring to it principles from some abstract and disinterested aesthetic out there, from which a template of universal practice can be winnowed out and against which some criteria of inclusion and exclusion can be confidently applied... Archiving in this context is a practice which both has its limits and its disciplines yet has no definitive sense of origin, boundary or termination.[15]

As Hall points out, there is no objectivity in these archives—not in their formation or assembly, in their organization, nor in their use. They are constructed entities that have emerged in response to specific situations, and must be understood as non-neutral, political and strategic systems that exist within a network of power relations. Although people such as Brien Brothman, Joan Schwartz, and Terry Cook, among many others, also dismiss the idea of neutral archives, Hall makes clear that self-directed, community archives are doubly affected by the inability to

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[14] In 2005, the AAVAA became part of Diversity Arts Forum, an organization dedicated to supporting cultural production. The physical collection has been relocated from Bristol, England, to London's University of East London.

[15] Stuart Hall, "Constituting An Archive," *Third Text* 15, no. 54 (Spring 2001): 91.

practice self-disinterest.[16] This concept also applies to this project: while I will examine multiple facets of artist-run archives, and consider multiple points of view, the artist-run centre community is one with which I am involved as both a participant and as an observer, and one from which I cannot ultimately extract myself. I draw attention to this situation through my use of the first person in this text.

1.4 Artist-Run Centres and their Archives: A Brief Introduction

With this investment noted, I would like to flag another issue that affects this research: the nature of artist-run centres themselves. In Canada, these artist-organized, non-commercial arts-invested bodies are diverse, complex, and ever-adapting. They generally operate galleries where they exhibit works of art, although their activities extend into multiple areas, and can include facilitating the production of new works of art, providing services to artists, publishing, and other activities. They are not run by the state, although some do receive state financial support (and indeed, the history of artist-run centres in Canada is deeply intertwined with that of the Canada Council for the Arts, a major funding body). Although often discussed in generalizations, as though they exist as a single, unified, and internally consistent group, it is perhaps more useful— and more accurate—to understand them as a group of organizations that share a number of common traits, but that also have individual identities, which are themselves subject to change over time. They are, as Robertson states, "multiply-coded."[17] While there are boundaries around

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[16] See, for instance, Brien Brothman, "The Limits of Limits: Derridean Deconstruction and the Archival Institution," *Archivaria* 36 (Autumn 1993): 205-220; Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory," *Archival Science* 2, nos. 1-2 (March 2002): 1–19; and Schwartz and Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: From (Postmodern) Theory to (Archival) Performance," *Archival Science* 2, no. 3 (September 2002): 171–185.

[17] Robertson, *Policy Matters*, iv.

the definition of "artist-run centre," staking out (and guarding) the perimeter is not necessarily productive: for every defining characteristic that can be identified, it seems there is an artist-run centre that will operate outside of the defined territory.[18] Continually pursuing a perfect definition quickly becomes a Sisyphean task, as I explore in Chapter Three.

An awareness of the challenges of defining artist-run centres matters because of the links between identities and archives. As Foucault suggests when he defines an archive as "the first law of what can be said," an organization's identity, or the permissible information about that entity, is governed at least in part by its archives.[19] Other authors also point to this fact; as Blouin Jr. and Rosenberg have written, archives can be essential to the creation of particular identities.[20] Elisabeth Kaplan suggests the same in her article, "We Are What We Collect, We Collect What We Are: Archives and the Construction of Identity."[21] The point I would like to make is that just as artist-run centres have various characteristics, so too do their archives. The archives of one centre will not necessarily be the same as another, either in intent or composition. Both may have the potential to reveal something about those centres, and about artist-run centres more generally, although these general conclusions will not be universally applicable. While this project takes as its subject the archives of artist-run centres, its findings may be applicable in only some circumstances.

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[18] Even the three words that make up the term "artist-run centre" can be debated: what is an artist? How do we decide who is and who is not an artist? What level of artist involvement is required for an organization to count as artist-run? (Can it, for instance, be run by a curator?). If the word "centre" is taken to imply margins, then what (or where) is the centre, and how is such a thing defined?

[19] Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock Publications Limited, 2012), 128-129.

[20] Blouin and Rosenberg, "Preface and Acknowledgements," in *Archives*, vii.

[21] Elisabeth Kaplan, "We Are What We Collect, We Collect What We Are: Archives and the Construction of Identity," *The American Archivist* 63, no. 1 (Spring - Summer, 2000), 126-151.

Another feature to note about artist-run centres is that although most do not have mandates to collect works of art or books in the same ways that art museums or libraries do, many maintain collections of various things—publications, artworks, and audio-visual materials, in addition to the papers they produce through their own daily activities. These collections are generated through their own production and documentary efforts, or received as gifts or as part of catalogue exchanges. Collecting—which reflects the desire to create, maintain, and circulate the evidence of artistic practices, networks, and organizations—is common among centres, and can be understood as an important characteristic of artist-run culture. It is a longstanding phenomenon within artist-run centre practices that I take into account as I explore what counts as an archive for artist-run centres.

Some organizations, such as Toronto's Art Metropole, have engaged in archival/ documentary/ collecting practices since their inception. Indeed, Art Metropole was described in an early (c. 1974) grant application as a "collection agency devoted to the documentation, archiving and distribution of all the images."[22] Other centres have engaged in similar practices. In her 1977 essay, "Art Publications Archives," Marcella Bienvenue reports,

> A Space and C.E.A.C. in Toronto, Vehicule Art in Montreal and The Parachute Center in Calgary all have publicized archives. The Western Front, Vancouver, has an extensive collection of artists' original work, artists [sic] publications and a large video archive. Image Bank, forerunners in the 'art of image archiving' is located within The Western Front...Video Inn in Vancouver has, in a very real sense (numerically), a library of community tapes and art tapes.[23]

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[22] Art Metropole, "AM History up to 2000," accessed December 2, 2014, http://www.artmetropole.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=about.FA_dsp_about

[23] Marcella Bienvenue, "Art Publications Archives," in *Parallelogramme Retrospective, 1976-1977*, ed. Barbara Shapiro (Montréal: ANNPAC, 1977), 244. C.E.A.C. stands for Centre for Experimental Art and Communication.

Written in the early years of artist-run centre activity in Canada, Bienvenue's text offers evidence of the centres' desires to collect a variety of materials. What is equally telling is her use of the word *archive*, which she employs to indicate a wide variety of materials, and not just those that are unpublished. Indeed, within her essay, she speaks of an "artists-publication archive," comprised of "published artist-editions in the forms of post-documentation, book-as-art object, art magazines, art newspapers, music scores, manifestoes, tapes, posters, post-cards and other ephemera."[24] This fluidity around an artist-run centre definition of *archival*—this lack of recognition of the traditional boundaries of published/unpublished that generally separate libraries from archives—is essential to keep in mind, and is investigated further in Chapters Two and Three.

If centres have maintained some form of archive—potentially one that contains not only the "byproducts" of carrying out day-to-day operations, but publications and other multiples as well—since their inception, the passage of time, whether ten or 40 years, means that many—if not most—have developed holdings of such a size and/or perceived value that they have to be addressed. Space and storage limitations, concerns over physical preservation, or the inability to access records may spurn action.[25] Other motivating factors may be more conceptual, and can include the desire to consolidate and reflect upon an organization's history, or to position it in relation to an art historical narrative through a publication. Of course, a combination of these factors may play into a centre's choices around its archive.

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[24] Ibid.

[25] As indicated on the website of the Society of American Archivists, the term *record* has multiple, and at times very specific, meanings (see "Record," accessed May 19, 2015, http://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/r/record). In this thesis, however, I use it in the very broad manner defined in the Canadian *Rules for Archival Description*: a record is "A DOCUMENT made or received in the course of the conduct of affairs and preserved" (Glossary, D-7).

Artist-run centres have approached their growing archives in a variety of ways. Some have taken

routes that can be described as benign neglect, while others have pursued more assertive actions,

arranging their papers independently, producing a book that draws upon the archive, inviting an

artist to work with(in) the materials, or creating an online presence for digitized records. Some

have donated all or part of their records to archival institutions and others have taken an

approach combining all of these methods.[26] But at this point in time, and in spite of the artworks,

publications, and other programming produced from and around artist-run archives, there is

relatively little information about the archives themselves, and about the potential consequences

of how they are managed. As such, the knowledge that may be gained from them—not just as it

pertains to specific events or exhibitions, but as it pertains to the actual operations of a centre, to

its exercise of knowledge-power, and its creation of an identity—remains relatively unexplored.

Evidence of this gap can be found in *The Distinct Role of Artist-Run Centres in the Canadian

Visual Arts Ecology*, a 2011 report prepared by Marilyn Burgess and Maria De Rosa for the

Canada Council for the Arts. While the primary role of this report was "to document the role and

place of Artist-Run Centres (ARCs) in the larger ecology of the Visual Arts today," it also

includes basic information about artist-run centre archives, and in doing so, highlights just how

little is known about them.[27] Brief references to archives are made in portions of the report, but

the most important information is tucked away in a footnote. In it, Burgess and De Rosa state

that "[j]ust over half of survey respondents (55%) said they operate a library or archives. In

interviews with artist-run centres, many indicated the difficulty they have in accessing resources

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[26] Chapter Three provides more information about how centres have managed their archives.

[27] Marilyn Burgess and Maria De Rosa, *The Distinct Role of Artist-Run Centres in the Canadian Visual Arts Ecology* (Montréal: MDR Burgess Consultants, 2011), 4. Accessed June 7, 2013, via a PDF located at http://canadacouncil.ca/council/research/find-research/2012/artist-run-centres

to digitize their archives to make them available online."[28] Later in the report, they also note that some artist-run centres "expressed their challenge in digitizing their archives. One centre noted that it is using its archives to create new opportunities and new work, but funding online archives is a significant challenge."[29]

While useful, this information is limited, and in need of clarification: why do only 55% of respondents report operating a library or archive? This figure strikes me as low, and I wonder if participants interpreted "operating" a library and/or archive as different from "having" one.[30] Further, of those 55%, it is not clear if they operate a library, archive, or both, nor is it clear if they draw any distinction between the two. Like TNG, a centre could have a "resource centre" that combines the traditional functions of a library and archive, offering both published or unpublished material, or it could have what it deems an archive, but, as suggested by Bienvenue's text, it may not strictly adhere to more traditional ideas about what an archive should contain. An archive, like an artist-run centre, has multiple definitions, and can mean different things to different people.

Burgess and De Rosa's report suggests areas of further study. What exactly do these libraries and archives contain? How are these things collected and organized? How does their existence and operation relate to a centre's mandate? How are they used, and by whom? If a centre has donated its records to another institution, how was this choice made, and by whom? Were all materials

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[28] Ibid., 39, note 56.
[29] Ibid., 51.
[30] Note that this number, 55%, does not correspond with the results from my survey, which are explored in Chapter Three. While we had different survey participants, 100% of respondents to the French version of my survey, and 91% of the respondents to the English version, indicated that they had an archive.

donated, or just some?[31] And when it comes to digitization, there is no information about why

certain centres wish to digitize their materials in the first place. How does digitization help them

fulfill their mandate? What do they wish to achieve through digitization? Does it contribute to

the creation of a particular identity, and if so, how?

1.5 Research Methods

1.5.1 Survey and Interviews

While this project will not answer all of these questions, it will begin to address them through

both original research and the careful application of ideas outlined in other texts to the

phenomenon of artist-run archives. These texts provide the basis of this project's theoretical

engagements, and are outlined in greater detail in Chapter Two. The chapters that follow employ

a sociological-ethnographical approach to produce new information. Through both a survey and

in-depth personal interviews, I investigate cultural producers by collecting responses to questions

about various aspects of artist-run archives on both an organizational and individual level.

The survey is intended to generate broad, baseline information about artist-run archives—

whether they exist at a certain centre or not, what they contain, and how they are managed. Its

design and results are discussed in detail in Chapter Three. The interviews explore a number of

selected concerns in greater depth, focusing on specific centres and practices. Through these

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[31] Note that author Denis Lessard has asked similar questions of three centres in Montréal in his article, "Classification des documents et conservation des archives en arts visuels: la problématique des centres d'artistes autogérés," *Archives* 43, no. 1 (2011-12): 41-63. He focuses on Articule, Skol, and Optica, and the choices they have made around their archives. His article is useful and important, but, unlike this project, does not consider centres in other provinces.

interviews I am, in the words of Aeron Davis, "seeking to discover the practices, cognitive processes and social interactions of professionals involved in producing culture," and more specifically, the processes involved in producing archives and, ultimately, producing knowledge.[32]

A survey and interviews were deemed the most appropriate methods for gathering this information not only because they are relatively common techniques employed in both art history and cultural studies, but because they require direct engagement with cultural workers. The assumption is that information about artistic, archival, and administrative practices can best be gathered from the practitioners themselves. Such an approach respects the knowledge and autonomy of the individual and organizational participants, and is in line with a general artist-run ethos, which calls for the recognition of the experience and expertise of artists and cultural producers.

The survey was sent to participants across Canada. It sought to generate basic data from a wide geographical scope. The interviews operated the other way around: limited to western Canada, and to Winnipeg, Calgary, and Vancouver more specifically, they sought to collect in-depth information from a limited group of participants. Centres from these specific cities were purposely chosen because of their differences in age, geography, organizational structures, and approach to their archives. They have also been selected because they have been active in acts of self-historicization, including the publication of retrospectives or anthologies, the creation of online archives, and/or other forms of managing or animating their archives; in other words, they

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[32] Aeron Davis, "Investigating Cultural Producers," in *Research Methods for Cultural Studies*, ed. Michael Pickering (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2008), 58.

have generated enough material about themselves and the artists they exhibit to form the basis of a case study. At the same time, my choice to look to Winnipeg and Calgary in particular was a strategic attempt to bring attention to geographical areas that are sometimes overlooked and to mitigate the tendency to (re)investigate certain high-profile centres. While well known centres are important, as Thalia Gouma-Peterson and Patricia Mathews identify in "The Feminist Critique of Art History," continually discussing the same women artists—or artist-run centres, as is the case here—"come[s] dangerously close to creating its own canon of white female artists (primarily painters), a canon that is almost as restrictive and exclusionary as its male counterpart."[33] In writing about organizations that have sought to be different from mainstream institutions, it was important to attempt to avoid replicating traditional systems of canon formation and reproduction; by investigating centres that have received somewhat less attention than others, I hope to demonstrate the breadth of artist-run activity, question the qualities that make one centre worthy of consideration over another, and to create an initial record that could serve as the basis of future study.

The artist-run centres selected for this study are Mentoring Artists for Women's Art in Winnipeg, The New Gallery in Calgary, and grunt[34] in Vancouver, although other centres also appear throughout. Additional information about each centre appears below and in their respective chapters. Although they represent only a fraction of the artist-run centres in Canada, it is hoped that their differences will shed light on some of the practices common to artist-run

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[33] Thalia Gouma-Peterson and Patricia Mathews, "The Feminist Critique of Art History," *The Art Bulletin* 69, no. 3 (September 1987): 326-357.

[34] Note that grunt generally uses a lower case "g" when referring to itself in writing. I have followed that convention here, with the exception of when the name appears at the beginning of a sentence, since the lower case letter in that situation can appear quite jarring.

archives (as potentially suggested by the survey), as well as those that are unique to these particular organizations.

1.5.2 General Research Ethics Board Approval

Because both the survey and the interview required interactions with living subjects, this project required approval from the General Research Ethics Board at Queen's University. Following the submission of an application, which included a completed version of the survey and a sample of interview questions, approval was granted. The approval letter, as well as a number of approved amendment and renewal letters, can be found in Appendix I.

Appendix II contains information that was integral to approval. It is important to note that the risks of participating in the survey and interviews were minimal, and that there were no direct benefits for participants. Participants were able to skip any question, quit the survey or interview at any time, or withdraw their contribution, all without penalty. The survey was made available in both English and French, while the interviews were conducted in English only.

1.6 Description of the Thesis: Chapters

1.6.1 Chapter Two: Theoretical Engagements: *Archive*, *An Archives*, **and** *An Archive*

Before turning to the analysis of newly generated information about artist-run archives, this project first surveys writing about the various and dynamic facets of archive—or rather, *archive*, *an archives*, and *an archive*. The three variations of the term are paired with three overlapping bodies of literature, produced by theorists, archivists, and the artist-run centre movement. This organizational structure attempts to account for the various approaches and understandings of *archive*, as informed by different disciplinary practices. Acknowledging the similarities in these bodies of knowledge, while simultaneously respecting their differences, this chapter surveys the understandings and assumptions that emerge when archives are conceptualized as metaphors, as physical places, and as both at once. It also takes into account some of the ways in which artist-run centres are engaging with their archival materials.

The first of the three general categories, *archive*, takes the broadest approach, and considers archive as a metaphorical concept. Temporarily setting aside the physicality of archives, this section seeks to understand the idea of archive from a theoretical viewpoint, beginning with the work of Foucault and Derrida, both of whom propose important and influential ideas about archives and their implications. Also considered in this section are the writings of Hall and Ketelaar, both of whom have been inspired by Foucault, and who bring to his ideas concerns borne of practice.

The second section of Chapter Two focuses less on particular thinkers, and draws instead on a broader body of literature that takes into account the physical nature of archives. Generally produced by practicing archivists, this section considers how the materiality of archives—their physical or digital forms—affects the construction of knowledge. This is an aspect of archives that cannot be overlooked, not only because archives need some kind of physical or digital form, but because these forms affect the creation of knowledge. How things—papers, photographs, artworks and so on, both hard copy and electronic—are classified and structured in a repository affects what is and can be known about a certain topic. In the case of artist-run archives, issues of classification become particularly important, both because works of art raise questions about what kind of things count as records, and because the categorical structures in play in traditional or mainstream archives are not necessarily at work here. Artist-run archives, as distinct from institutional archives, hold the potential to create new and different knowledge through the choice of things included in their archives and through their organizational structures.

In acknowledgement of the particular ways of knowing that emerge from working in an archive, the second section of this chapter is associated with *an archives*, a correct pairing of an indefinite article and a noun that nevertheless seems strange on account of the *s*. It is trained archivists that most often use this particular phrasing. Its vernacular counterpart, *an archive*, is given to the third and final section of the first chapter. This section considers some of the writing that has emerged from and around artist-run centre archives. It also looks at a number of artworks produced from them. In doing so, this section aims to begin to understand archives from the point of view of both artists and artist-run centres, and to establish a foundation for further investigation.

1.6.2 Chapter Three: Where Are We Now? Surveying Artist-Run Centre Archives

The third chapter builds upon the ideas established in the second, and, more specifically, seeks to find out some basic information about artist-run archives, a topic not well addressed in existing literature. It begins to address some of the gaps suggested by the Burgess and De Rosa report, while also analyzing survey responses for commonalities and avenues for further research. In addition, this chapter grapples with some of challenges that occur when seeking to define which organizations count as artist-run centres in Canada; after all, in order to survey all centres in this country, a list of them is a primary requirement. But rather like a digital image, when examined too closely, the elements of an apparently unified concept start to break apart, leaving a collection of pixels, or, in this case, a series of organizations that are not as clearly definable as initially thought. Assembling a list held more challenges than anticipated.

As such, the beginning of Chapter Three works through the challenges posed by shifting identities and complex histories. I consider the advantages and limits of a number of definitions of artist-run centres, including those provided by the Canada Council for the Arts and Artist-Run Centres and Collectives of Ontario (ARCCO), a federal funder of the arts and a provincial service organization, respectively. I detail my attempt to create an inclusive, but not exhaustive, list of artist-run centres in Canada, and discuss my eventual surrender to a definition primarily informed by self-selection—an organization that calls itself an artist-run centre, or largely identifies with the artist-run movement, would count for the purposes of this research.

Survey design and execution are also considered in this chapter. Just as the selection of potential participants has shaped the results of this survey, so too has its composition. I discuss the goals of each question, and the assumptions behind each, before turning to an analysis of the results. Some 69 organizations from across the country completed the survey in either English or French. Their answers and comments provide valuable insight into what constitutes an archive for an artist-run centre, how they are understood in relation to the centre's mandate, and how archival materials are used. Other, more pragmatic concerns are also addressed: the existence of a policy about the archive, information on the format and content of its materials, the location of the archive, and the source(s) of its funding. Combined, this information starts to coalesce into an image of artist-run archives in Canada, although numerous blank areas remain. Indeed, one of the main conclusions to emerge from the survey is the need to conduct another survey, building upon the gains of the first and clarifying areas of uncertainty.

1.6.3 Chapter Four: Taking Up Space for Women: MAWA and their Archive

The next three chapters edge towards this clarity, although on a much smaller scale: each of these chapters considers specific centres, and produces findings that are not necessarily applicable to others. In the case of Winnipeg's Mentoring Artists for Women's Art (MAWA), for example, the specific nature of its programming means that its records are somewhat dissimilar from those of other centres. As an organization that has mentoring women artists at its core, it differs from centres that seek to exhibit or produce new works of art; rather than having records comprised primarily of photos and evidence of exhibitions (among other things), MAWA has records that focus on processes and relationships that develop through the mentoring program.

Although mentoring relies on the status and position of the mentor, and thus (partially) aligns with existent art historical structures, I suggest that the records produced from such a program hold potential as source material for non-traditional art histories—that is, narratives written from the perspectives of women, about women artists, and with a focus on growth and development. This potential results not only from MAWA's mandate, and from the production of records in relation to that mandate, but also from the way they have been organized within MAWA. As artist and MAWA archivist Bev Pike discusses, some of the choices she made with the records specifically reflected MAWA's mandate, and may not have been the same choices she would have made were she arranging the records of a different organization. She appraised and ordered according to MAWA's principles, and in doing so, created records predisposed to a telling of history from MAWA's point of view.

While the physical ordering of MAWA's records suggests the organization's deliberate difference, their physical location suggests a desire for accessibility. The records, as arranged by Pike, were donated to the Archives of Manitoba (AM). This choice was primarily practical: MAWA needed the space. At the same time, the AM could offer stability for the records: they would be kept in a climate-controlled, pest-free environment, and made available to researchers on a regular basis. While this donation meant that MAWA relinquished physical control of the records, the increased accessibility provided by the AM also increased the chances of the records being consulted. I suggest that these two activities—ordering materials according to their own principles, then donating them to a larger institution—put MAWA's records in a favourable position: through the AM, they are available to researchers, but through their shape and structure, they influence what can be known and written about MAWA and its past. This approach, it

seems, strikes a balance between the alternative and the mainstream, while also taking up a physical and conceptual place for women artists.

1.6.4 Chapter Five: Living and Working in the Non-Panoptical Domestic Archive: The LIDS Residency

Chapter Five considers some physical aspects of archival records: the spaces in which they are stored, the order in which they are placed in a box or cabinet, and the ways they may or may not be handled. Using a residency as a case study, this chapter discusses how the physical situation of archival materials can affect their use and the type of work that can be created from them. More specifically, this chapter looks at how the Ladies Invitational Deadbeat Society (LIDS) was able to use the records of The New Gallery while living and working in Calgary's John Snow House. The influence of architecture on behaviour plays a significant role here as I consider how the house, a domestic space, varies from institutional archives, and, along with TNG's permissive attitude, grants researchers a degree of freedom and comfort they may not encounter elsewhere. What can happen when surveillance, access restrictions, or other forms of control are removed from the archival environment? What can happen when you create work and live in the same space?

The non-institutional setting of JSH was not necessarily a utopia. Interviews with the LIDS— Anthea Black, Nicole Burisch, and Wednesday Lupypciw—reveal the challenges of living and creating in the same space, and of working with records that do not necessarily conform to expected standards. While the work of Paterson and Borges may point to the exciting potential of

different, or even arbitrary, systems of organization, such disarray can be problematic, depending on one's goals and plans for research. While the LIDS were ultimately able to produce work from this environment—and indeed, work that was specific *to* the environment—the broader utility of such an arrangement must be critically considered. Records and spaces that are different by design, accident, or neglect can have both advantages and disadvantages.

1.6.5 Chapter Six: Shaping Future Histories and Identities: Artist-Run Centres and Digital Archives

While the fifth chapter thinks through some issues surrounding archives in real spaces, the sixth and final chapter considers archives in virtual spaces. Taking the viewpoint that a digital archive can be a cultural strategy, I attempt to understand how certain practices may predetermine the histories that can be written from digital archives. I examine how the selection and presentation of archival material in digital form reflects a centre's values and suggests the ways in which a centre would like to be known.

This exploration begins by considering the archival content itself, both in physical and digital form. Interviews with artist-run centre employees and explorations of existing websites reveal a hierarchy of value that exists around content. Records relating to exhibitions are considered of great importance, while those that pertain to "everything else"—governance, administrative, and financial documents, for instance—are assigned less value. I seek to understand the implications of valuing materials in this way. What does it mean that (some) artist-run centres replicate these divisions and valuations online, focusing their digital archives on the work of artists, while

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downplaying the materials that might be useful in understanding centres in a broader sense, or as a sociological phenomenon? Does it matter that centres seem to be predisposing the future to narratives that can only be written through the work of artists, rather than through the work of groups? Does such an approach ultimately match the larger goals of artist-run centres?

I also consider the opportunities and challenges online archives hold for artist-run centres. Although many centres have some kind of an online archival presence, the example I consider in most detail is grunt, a Vancouver artist-run centre that was able to develop a relatively extensive digital archive as a result of a grant. Grunt has been able to present its materials online in a variety of ways: in the form of a database, as "curated archive sites," and as a blog. Much of this chapter is dedicated to thinking through the implications of using the database. I consider the subjectivity of keywords and other methods employed to make records accessible, and question whether such the use of such technologies is aligned with some of the broader ideas associated with artist-run culture.

Together, Chapters Three through Six begin to create an image of artist-run centre archives in Canada. Addressing a gap in the scholarship that exists around this phenomenon, it is hoped that this project will provide some useful insights to centres contemplating (further) action around their archives, as well as to people who study artistic ecologies in Canada. What is at stake is no less than the remembered futures of artist-run centres.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Engagements: *Archive*, *An Archives*, **and** *An Archive*

2.1 Introduction: The Multiple and Fluid Forms of Archive(s)

What is archive? What is an archives? What is an archive?

These questions are not just grammatical exercises, but rather attempts to distinguish and make

sense of a multiplexed idea that exists in various, shifting forms—forms that can be either or

both physical and conceptual. Flexible and fluid, the literal and symbolic meanings of archive

and archives change depending upon who is speaking, when they are speaking, and the position

from which they do so. While this flexibility gives great richness to the concept, it also means

that care must be taken when discussing the subject: in which sense (or in which senses) is the

word being used in a given instance? How does the intended meaning of the word shape the

discussions that can occur around it?

This chapter seeks to explore the various definitions assigned to archive (and archives—the

plural form matters, as will be discussed below), while also highlighting the key texts that have

broad utility in this discussion. It is, following Foucault, an examination of "the system of

discursivity" that surrounds archive; it is—adopting Foucault's definition of archive as a system

of enuncibility—an examination of the archive of *archive*.[1] This chapter looks at what can be

(and has been) said about archives in order to better understand the values and ideas the word

carries, and, moreover, to establish the background required to understand what happens to these

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[1] Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock Publications
Limited, 2012), 128-129.

values and ideas when they are combined with the equally flexible term "artist-run"—a term immersed in its own system of discursivity. What challenges do these fluid concepts pose to each other?

The initial questions of *archive/ an archives/ an archive* roughly parallel the three distinct but overlapping areas of literature that ultimately support this research: archive as metaphor, an area claimed by theorists, historians, and other writers; archive as physical institution, which is the realm of archivists; and archive as an aspect of artist-run activities, an area belonging to artists, arts administrators, and related cultural workers. Of these three areas, the first two have the greatest resources, with numerous texts dedicated to different facets of metaphorical and physical archives. The third category remains underdeveloped. While there is what can be considered a "Foucauldian-style archive" that surrounds artist-run centres (that is, a system that defines and ranks permissible topics and approaches in artist-run culture, and in doing so, produces a body of literature by and about them), there is minimal writing specifically about the unpublished records and associated materials—the "traditional" archives—of artist-run centres. As such, not only is the concept of an artist-run centre archive hazy, the theoretical and practical knowledge that emerges from the first two groups is not being fully exploited to better understand the identity, operations, and potential of these archives. Additionally, little consideration has been given to how artist-run archives might be an extension of the "artist-run centre movement," a phenomenon described by author Clive Robertson as "a hybrid model of aesthetic and social organization."[2] I hope to begin to address these disconnections through this project.

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[2] Clive Robertson, *Policy Matters: Administrations of Art and Culture* (Toronto: YYZBOOKS, 2006), v.

This chapter is divided into three main sections based on various forms of the word archive. In the first section, *archive*, I investigate the work of theorists who generally engage with archives as sites of power, including Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Stuart Hall, and Eric Ketelaar. In the next section, *an archives*, I consider the work of multiple authors who speak from positions that have in most cases been shaped by experiences as practicing archivists. The writings of Terry Cook, Joan Schwartz, Brien Brothman, Ann Butler, Julia Pelta Feldman, and many others are discussed as I consider the connections between theory and practice. Cultural Studies theorist Raymond Williams appears in this section too. Although his inclusion here, rather than in the first section, is perhaps surprising, he offers ideas that allow me to link the phenomenon of community archives and community archiving with artist-run culture. The third and final section, *an archive*, is a fast-paced survey of materials produced by both artists and artist-run centres. These materials offer insight into two important areas: how artist-run centres define themselves and create their own histories through literature and exhibitions, and how artists work with the resources of artist-run centres as a way of investigating archives.

2.2 Critical Positionings: *Archive/ An Archives/ An Archive*

Before turning to the texts themselves, I want to briefly elaborate on the three bodies of literature that support this investigation. The first area is represented by *archive*, a noun with its article deliberately excluded. Following the ideas offered by Canadian archivist and academic Terry Cook, in this category, the archive (singular) functions as a metaphor; it takes on a symbolic role where it represents power, memory, or identity.[3] This is an understanding of the archive that

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[3] Terry Cook, "The Archive(s) Is a Foreign Country: Historians, Archivists, and the Changing Archival Landscape," *The Canadian Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (September 2009): 497.

Cook aligns with historians, although for this discussion, which uses resources beyond those produced by historians, I would argue that it is more appropriate to expand the boundaries to include researchers and writers who think about or use the archive in some manner; rather than associating this category solely with historians, it should include people who are involved with archives in a capacity other than as an archivist. This categorization is not to imply that other groups do not think about archives, for they certainly do. Instead, it is to suggest that the group represented by *archive* often relates to the idea on a broad level, where the archive is seen as a resource supporting something else, be it an historical narrative, evidence of a particular group's existence or identity, or a display of state power. Operating in tandem with this understanding is a position outside of the archives—not literally outside, since historians and other academics often work inside an archives, but outside in the sense that these writers are not acquiring, arranging, destroying, and providing access to archival records—the (generally unpublished) documents produced through the day-to-day activities of an individual or other entity, and collected and selected for preservation. Such people tend not to be involved in the quotidian aspects of the profession. They are, instead, using (or perhaps just thinking about) archival materials in the manner in which they are presented by archivists, figures who emerge as the "honest broker[s], or informed tour guide[s]" of the archives, rather than its "ongoing co-creators."[4] In this case, the defining and powerful role of the archivist may be taken for granted, or perhaps even entirely overlooked.

In contrast to the first category of "archive-metaphor-outside," there is the second category, represented here by *an archives*, the plural form of archive modified by an indefinite article. Although *an archives* is a correct grammatical form, it rarely rolls smoothly off the tongues of

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[4] Ibid., 505.

people without formal archival training.[5] The phrase, appearing to be an inappropriate pairing of the singular and plural, signals a different kind of knowledge, one likely informed by professional instruction and honed through practice. This practice, in turn, is related to the "inside" aspects of the category. While archives can certainly take on a metaphorical dimension for archivists, and while archivists are responsible for generating a great deal of text relating to the theories of archival practice, there is an ultimate grounding in the physical aspects of the work: acquiring materials from a source, processing them through pest control, assessing their physical states, determining appropriate conservation treatments, assessing their value, arranging the material, destroying those parts deemed unnecessary, creating a finding aid, and so on. Working with physical documents, and carrying out the processes demanded by the profession and its institutional trappings, creates a different kind of archival knowledge than that generated by people on the outside.

Much of the literature around archives falls within these two categories, although there is certainly a great deal of overlap between them. Authors such as Cook or Joan Schwartz, for example, are experienced archivists and academics, and are writing from a position that takes into account the loose designations of both "inside" and "outside." And indeed, "inside" and "outside" should not be taken as fixed boundaries: while these words are handy for organizational reasons, their easy dichotomy also obscures the complex interrelations that

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[5] In their online glossary, The Society of American Archivists identifies the use of archives (with an "s") as a North American phenomenon, noting that the singular version is accepted in other English-speaking countries (see http://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/a/archive, accessed July 25, 2013). In their discussion of the term, they also quote a 1998 article by William J. Maher in *American Archivist* 61 (no. 2 (Fall 1998): 252–265). Titled "Archives, Archivists, and Society," Maher—the past president of the Society of American Archivists—uses the opportunity to suggest that "the nonprofessional appropriation of the term 'archives' appears to be part of an attempt by the scholar or database builder to lend panache or cachet and an air of respectability to what otherwise might be little more than a personal hobby or collecting fetish" (254). This statement offers evidence of the use of language to preserve and defend professional boundaries (and indeed, to ensure that non-professional activities are viewed as "lesser than").

produce knowledge about archives from any number of positions and locations. Nevertheless, having these porous categories provides a useful organizational framework that allows me to account for literature as diverse as Derrida's 1996 book, *Archive Fever*, wherein the author uses psychoanalysis as a starting point to investigate Freud's own archive, and an item such as Erin Murphy's "Artful Arrangement: The Unique Challenge of Processing Artists' Papers in Archives," an essay that considers the practical issues of imposing order upon and making accessible a materially diverse collection of items.[6] While both authors are working with(in) archives, they are ultimately doing so in different ways.

The third and final category of literature that supports my current research is that which is by and about artist-run centres. This category and its conceptual associations will be represented by the term *an archive* (singular, and with an indefinite article). While convenience has certainly played a role in the choice of this title—it fits well with the organizational structure of *archive/ an archives/ an archive*—there are factors that connect this particular phrasing to artist-run centres. Most importantly, it suggests the ways that artist-run centres think about their own archives.

While tracking the use of *an archive* versus *an archives* has not been a formal part of this research, my experience with people who work in centres suggests that it is archive, not archives, that is the most commonly used term to describe their collections of unpublished papers, photographs, and other documentary materials, as well as books, journals, audio-visual materials, and various forms of multiples. More than a grammatical quirk, the use of *archive* seems to match the position from which artist-run centres approach their archives: the focus here is on

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[6] Erin Murphy, "Artful Arrangement: The Unique Challenge of Processing Artists'Papers in Archives," in *Artists' Records in the Archives: Symposium Proceedings*, ed. Rachel Chatalbash et al. (New York: Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York, Inc., 2013): 35-37.

contemporary art, and keeping and organizing records in a manner consistent with principles

drawn from archival science is not a priority, even though the importance of such acts is

recognized by many centres.[7] Indeed, the defined rules that denote professional archival

practices, as well as those that mark the boundaries between traditional libraries and archives, are

not necessarily in play in artist-run archives, although some centres have been forced to adopt

them—or a reasonable facsimile thereof—in an effort to manage ever-growing collections. In

other words, the grammatical logic of *an archive* is matched by an artist-run sensibility, where

instinct and the necessity of "doing it yourself" may play a more important role than existing

conventions.[8]

For the purposes of this chapter, *an archive* is a series of resources made by artists and guided by

systems of enuncibility defined by artists. (Note that in subsequent chapters, *an archive* is

generally a literal place or thing). Consequently, the body of materials associated with this

category is diverse, and includes publications, works of art and exhibitions, and even a

specialized artist-run library. Together, these things offer examples of how artist-run culture has

engaged not only with archives, but has participated in larger projects of self-definition and

community-building: by creating publications and resources specifically by, about, and for

artists, artist-run centres present a version of themselves to each other and to broader

communities. These presentations can take the form of organizational histories, written from

self-generated archival records, or they can be works of art inspired by or physically made from

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[7] Artist-run centre attitudes towards their archives were gauged via a survey that is discussed in the next chapter. For more information, see Chapter Three, section 3.4.7, "Attitudes Towards Archives."

[8] I am tempted to call the archives of artist-run centres *anarchives*, a portmanteau of anarchy and archive, in a nod to the alternative—and sometimes anarchistic—past, present and future of some centres, but to do so would probably be misleading: while the non-hierarchical structures associated with some forms of anarchy are found in some artist-run centres (and arguably, within the organization of their records, although here, non-hierarchical structures are more likely the result of neglect than of deliberate choice), blending the terms probably mischaracterizes both.

archival materials. Other works that help define the community deal less directly with archives, instead addressing issues of relevance to artist-run centres more generally. These works become part of the artist-run archive in a metaphorical sense, and are useful in defining what it might mean to be artist-run. Examples of all these kinds of work are considered in the third section of this chapter.

2.3 *Archive*

2.3.1 Foucault: Archive as a System of Discursivity

Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, first published in French in 1969 and translated into English in 1972, provides a good starting point for thinking about archive as metaphor.[9] In the chapter, "The Historical *a priori* and The Archive," Foucault dismisses the common understanding of archives as physical spaces containing sets of documents made available to the public. For him, archives are *not* "the sum of all the texts that a culture has kept upon its person as documents attesting to its own past, or as evidence of a continuing identity," nor are they "the institutions, which, in a given society, make it possible to record and preserve those discourses that one wishes to remember and keep in circulation." For Foucault, archives are instead a "system of discursivity." He continues,

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[9] The date of this text roughly corresponds to the rise of artist-run centres in Canada, which is one of the reasons I have selected it as a starting point in this exploration. It should be noted that there are extensive writings about archives prior to this date, from a variety of authors. Terry Cook provides a useful overview of some key ideas and figures in archival practices over the last 150 years in his article, "Evidence, memory, identity, and community: four shifting archival paradigms," *Archival Science* 13, nos. 1-2 (June 2013): 95-120.

The archive is the first law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events. But the archive is also that which determines that all these things said do not accumulate endlessly in an amorphous mass, nor are they inscribed in an unbroken linearity, nor do they disappear at the mercy of chance external accidents; but they are grouped together in distinct figures, composed together in accordance with multiple relations, maintained or blurred in accordance with specific regularities; that which determines that they do not withdraw at the same pace in time, but shine, as it were, like stars, some that seem close to us shining brightly from afar off, while others that are in fact close to us already growing pale.[10]

The archive is, in other words, a complex system of relations—an apparatus—that controls, orders, and validates knowledge; it is a framework that expresses power by determining what is and is not allowable within a particular discourse, while simultaneously giving order and rank to these enunciated things.[11] While I find it strange that Foucault downplays the roles of archivists—for me, it is archivists and the institutions to which they are attached that prevent the accumulation of an "amorphous mass" and allow certain forms of information to "shin[e] brightly from afar off"—, doing so reinforces the concept of archive as metaphor, as system, and as "the first law of what can be said." And it remains that it is this ability to define—whether done by humans acting on behalf of the archive or simply by the archive as system-metaphor—that makes it a source of power.

While Foucault's definition of an archive is unconventional (and is perhaps a better definition of an archivist than an archive), applying this concept—that archives ultimately create and order both knowledge and power—to artist-run centre archives leads to some important questions:

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[10] Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, 128-129.

[11] I use the term *apparatus* here in the sense defined by Foucault. In "The Confession of the Flesh," a chapter in Foucault's book, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), he describes the concept of the apparatus (*dispositif*) as "a thoroughly heterogenous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions–in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements" (194).

what is the "system of discursivity" that surrounds artist-run centre archives? If the archive is "the first law of what can be said," what do artist-run archives say about artist-run centres? What do they allow to be said? What is the organizational system that operates within artist-run archives, and how does it work?

2.3.2 Derrida: Safe, in a Safe

Writing approximately 25 years after Foucault in *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (first published 1995, translated into English in 1996), French theorist Jacques Derrida also addresses the issue of power in the archive, pointing out that the source of this power is not just the structuring structure of the archive, and not just "*the system of its enunciability*,"[12] although this ability is certainly essential. Addressing Foucault's neglect of human agency, Derrida points out that power within the archive is also dependent on who controls it, and indeed, who works within it and from it. Connecting access to the archive to processes of democracy, he states, "There is no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory. Effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation in and access to the archive, its constitution, and it interpretation."[13] With this statement, he makes clear the political dimensions of archives: they are not simply repositories of "history" (itself a problematic term, and one sometimes cloaked in a veneer of neutrality), but rather contested sites of power where meanings and identities can be established, embellished, debated, erased or denied. Power is expressed through inclusion, exclusion, and access to the archive. When considering marginalized groups or communities operating outside of the mainstream, such as artist-run

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[12] Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, 129. Emphasis original.

[13] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 4, footnote 1.

centres, the power of archives as validating or legitimating entities is thrown into sharp light:

they operate to determine who and what is legitimate, and who and what is not, with little regard

for how these communities wish to consider themselves.

Archive Fever, first delivered as a lecture but later published as a book (or rather, an extended

essay), is a wide-ranging and complex text that takes as its topic the relationship between

psychoanalysis and the archive. While there are a number of important ideas that Derrida

proposes and explores in the book, it is the paradoxical nature and function of the archive that is

perhaps the most important in bringing together archive-as-metaphor and artist-run archive.

According to Derrida, the archive has an identity that is at once "[r]evolutionary and

traditional."[14] Further, it is a device that we can use to simultaneously remember and forget.

While this is an idea that first appears in *Archive Fever,* it is one that—for me at least—is

articulated more clearly some two years later, in 1998. At that time, Derrida gave a seminar at

Refiguring the Archive, a series of scholarly events hosted by the University of the

Witwatersrand in South Africa. An exploration of how the official end of apartheid and the

subsequent Truth and Reconciliation Commission would affect archives, the conference gave

Derrida the opportunity to revisit *Archive Fever*, although by this point, the author claimed to

have "totally forgotten the book!"[15] Fortunately, this was not the case, and the seminar appears to

have given Derrida the opportunity to explain the ideas first outlined in the book in a different

way. In discussing the contradictory nature of the archive, he states,

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[14] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 7.

[15] Jacques Derrida, "Archive Fever in South Africa," in *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton et al. (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), 38. Derrida's comment was perhaps made in jest, given that he had put *Archive Fever* on paper and it was therefore now "safe, in a safe."

> ...the work of the archivist is not simply a work of memory. It's a work of mourning. And a work of mourning, as everyone knows, is a work of memory but also the best way just to forget the other, to keep the other in oneself, to keep it safe, in a safe—but when you put something in a safe it's just in order to be able to forget it, okay? When I handwrite something on a piece of paper, I put it in my pocket or in the safe, it's just in order to forget it, to know that I can find it again while in the meantime having forgotten it.[16]

This is a statement with significant implications for artist-run centres: if, as Derrida argues, the archive is just as much about forgetting as it is about remembering, could it be that artist-run centres archive to forget, and in doing so, allow themselves to be permanently in the present? By this I mean to interrogate the contemporaneity of artist-run archives: does putting material somewhere safe, keeping it safe in a safe, allow them to have a more current existence? Does this forgetting through the archive allow them to be contemporary? Does having—but not necessarily using—an archive allow for permanent present-ness, and allow the organization to focus on its current activities, secure in the knowledge that its past is safe/in a safe?

This act, it seems to me, is forgetting without forgetting. Not a malicious act, it is instead one of contemporaneity, and indeed one that forces us to ask whether it is the use of the archive, or simply its mere existence, that counts for an artist-run centre, or indeed for any other non-institutional organization (that is, not a "traditional" archive, like a public, university, or government archive) that keeps an archive. Does its existence increase both legitimacy and power, regardless of its use? If this is the case, what are the consequences of using the archive, of taking its documents and writing histories out of them? Does it result in a change in power? Does it result in a change in contemporaneity, ultimately affecting the nature of the artist-run centre itself? And to what degree—if any—does an artist-run centre acknowledge its archive as a

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[16] Derrida, "Archive Fever in South Africa," 54.

source of power? While these questions are difficult to answer, and would likely have varying responses depending on the artist-run centre in consideration, they raise some important issues that resonate with Derrida's writing and his acute observation about the paradoxical nature of archives.

2.3.3 Hall: The Significance of Constituting an Archive

While the texts of Derrida and Foucault are significant landmarks in thinking about the symbolic and metaphorical functions of archives, so too are the texts of people such as Stuart Hall and Eric Ketelaar, among many others. Hall's main contribution to this discussion was published in 2001, although it was first presented in 1997 at "The Living Archive" Conference, an event organized by the African and Asian Visual Artists' Archive (AAVAA). In "Constituting an Archive," Hall presents a number of ideas that are relevant not only to the AAVAA, but to any group not previously (or not meaningfully) represented in institutional archives. Many of his thoughts are pertinent here, but because of its particular relevance to artist-run centre archives, I will focus on Hall's important observation about the change that occurs when a collection of materials is formally recognized as an archive. In a paragraph that inspired the title of this thesis, Hall writes,

> Constituting an archive represents a significant moment, on which we need to reflect with care. It occurs at that moment when a relatively random collection of works, whose movement appears simply to be propelled from one creative production to the next, is at the point of becoming something more ordered and considered: an object of reflection and debate. The moment of the archive represents the end of a certain kind of creative innocence, and the beginning of a new stage of self-consciousness, of self-reflexivity in an artistic movement. Here the whole apparatus of 'a history'—periods, key figures and works, tendencies, shifts, breaks, ruptures—slips silently into place.[17]

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[17] Stuart Hall, "Constituting an Archive," *Third Text* 15, no. 54 (Spring 2001): 89.

For Hall, constituting the archive is an important moment of self-consciousness that allows an organization to more easily become part of an historical narrative; it is the imposition of a structure or mindset that begins to formalize and codify perhaps not just an historical collection, but the organization itself. It is a moment when the potential power of the archive is recognized, a realization that happens in part because what was the pre-archive can now be understood as archive, and more specifically, as archive-as-metaphor, where it is a thing that can define, exert power, and participate in "a history," whether alternative or mainstream.

The implications of this moment of recognition for artist-run centres are significant: if (some) artist-run centres sought to be alternative, to operate and exhibit differently than other arts spaces, (how) does recognizing their archive affect this desire? Robertson suggests that "the phenomenon of artist-run culture cannot adequately be explained by art historical accounts of social formations of artists where the task remains focused upon enhancing the biographies of selected important artists or associated art movements."[18] If this is the case—and I believe it is— then it would seem that formally recognizing an archive could be a move towards enhancing biographies and promoting vested interests. This risk is also identified by authors Lorna Brown and Vincent Bonin. Brown, citing the work of Bonin, points out that "the act of naming an accumulation of objects—whether as fonds or archive—that is, to insert parentheses around a set of practices and activities that are poly-vocal, collaborative and on-going can potentially render it static, artificially complete, and relegate it to the past."[19]

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[18] Robertson, *Policy Matters*, 3.
[19] Lorna Brown, "Category Drift," accessed March 31, 2014, http://gruntarchives.org/essay-category-drift-lorna-brown.html#fn:275.archivists. See also Vincent Bonin, ed., *Documentary Protocols/ Protocoles Documentaires (1967-1975)* (Montréal: Galerie Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Université Concordia University, 2010), 28.

Is it possible to acknowledge and maintain an archive without evoking closure and becoming part of the mainstream? Alternatively, could the recognition of an archive be an attempt to influence or address the mainstream on its own terms, in which case a formal archive might be a step in the right direction? These are questions that artist-run centres, many of which are now in their third or fourth decade of existence—and thus have enough material to be more than Hall's "relatively random collection of works"—must answer for themselves. And they must do so with the knowledge that both courses of action—constituting (naming) the archive, or not—have potential drawbacks.

2.3.4 Ketelaar: Knowledge-Power in the Panoptical Archive

While I have grouped Hall into the archive-as-metaphor category, it is important to recognize that he is speaking of a real and specific archive, and of the very real consequences of its acknowledgement, as are Brown and Bonin. Author and archivist Eric Ketelaar writes with a similar grounding in the real, and acts as a bridge between the metaphorical and literal archive—although it should be kept in mind that the archive, in any form, always and simultaneously has symbolic and literal meanings. Trained as a lawyer and historian, later appointed State Archivist of The Netherlands, and then a Professor of Archivistics, Ketelaar combines the theoretical and practical in his extensive writings. Of particular relevance here is "The Panoptical Archive," an essay where he applies Foucault's ideas around panopticism—a power imbalance created through the knowledge that a subject is being watched—to archives. He considers how knowledge-power is expressed through the physical organization of archival resources and through surveillance in the archival reading room. He states,

The panoptical archive disciplines and controls through knowledge-power. This knowledge is embedded in the records—their content, form, structure and context. Moreover the physical ordering of archives in the paper world and the logical ordering of digital archives expresses knowledge-power.[20]

He adds that the security rituals performed in some archives—registering, leaving personal belongings in outside lockers, and working under the watchful eye of archives personnel—serve to exercise power through surveillance, although he also notes that most archivists would argue that these rituals are primarily, if not exclusively, for protecting archival documents.[21]

Ketelaar's panoptical archive is a traditional one, with an actual physical expression, where power comes through control, and knowledge through structuring. But what happens if the physical archive in question is less traditional? What if, as in the case of some artist-run archives (or of web archives), access occurs without surveillance?[22] What if physical archival materials are without order, or ordered differently? What happens to the knowledge-power relationship in these non-panoptical archives? While there are some obvious problems here, ranging from theft to the inability to make meaning from random bits of information—not to mention the difficulty researchers would have in finding things and following each other's paths—I suspect that such archives may present great opportunities. They offer the chance to create new and different knowledge through unconventional organizational and access systems. Indeed, if operated in a way that was deliberately different, a non-panoptical archive could be a way for artist-run centres to manifest their own alternative mandates; it could be a chance to extend artist-run notions to

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[20] Eric Ketelaar, "The Panoptical Archive," in *Archives, Documentation and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar*, eds. Francis X. Blouin and William G. Rosenberg (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2007), 147.
[21] Ibid.
[22] See Chapters Five and Six for more discussion of unsurveilled and online archives.

the history of contemporary art. Since the aforementioned idea of ignoring the archive to remain rooted firmly in the present is not necessarily practical—neglect is not always an option, especially when paperwork threatens to overtake an exhibition space—perhaps ordering differently, and/or providing unsurveilled access, are ways to reconcile the desire to remain contemporary with the need to address evidence of past activities. Since making an archive is really about the future—about the future histories that will be written from materials collected and organized today—perhaps such an approach could allow artist-run centres to retain their contemporaneity while also managing their archival materials.

2.4 *An Archives*

2.4.1 Archives and Postmodernism

I have referred to Ketelaar's work as bridge between the theoretical and the real; I have suggested that his work brings us from a position outside the archives to one inside. I would like to primarily frame this shift as a narrowing from the general to the specific, rather than a jump to an opposing camp. It is not a question of opposites, but rather an acknowledgement of the different types of knowledge that can emerge from actually carrying out archival work. Understanding the archive in a symbolic way, of course, can enhance this knowledge, and vice versa—the archive-as-physical-institution may offer insight into the archive-as-metaphor.

The flow of ideas between theory and practice, and across the disciplines of philosophy and archival science, has not always been smooth, and indeed there was a time when the work of

theorists such as Foucault and Derrida was neglected or dismissed by the archival community. In the late 1990s, for example, Canadian archivist Brien Brothman pointed out that "archivists have so far largely ignored the French philosopher's works," an occurrence the author attributes to a number of factors: a general lack of interest in philosophy from the archival community, the challenging nature of Derrida's writing style, and an apparent incompatibility between how archivists think about documents and how they are understood by Derrida. It was, Brothman asserted, a difference "between the postmodern concept of 'textuality,' which interests Derrida, and the qualities of 'recordness,' which concern archivists."[23] Similarly, in 2001, Cook could write an article titled "Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives," wherein he discusses the usefulness of postmodern concepts to contemporary archival practices—an article that might seem a decade or two late if written for other disciplines, where postmodern notions of pluralism and subjectivity were by this time almost taken for granted.[24] And just one year later, the pages of *Archival Science* were where the notions of cultural theorists were brought to bear upon the archival profession. In this case, in 2002, two full issues of the journal were dedicated to "archives, records, and power," a theme indebted at least in part to the work of Derrida and Foucault.[25]

While there are multiple reasons for avoiding or resisting the application of postmodern notions to traditional archival practices, perhaps the most important was the need to maintain an illusion of neutrality in the archive. This illusion, in turn, allows archive users to claim impartiality—and thus a degree of authority—for their own work. Schwartz and Cook sum up the issue as follows:

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[23] Brien Brothman, "Declining Derrida: Integrity, Tensegrity, and the Preservation of Archives from Deconstruction," *Archivaria* 48 (Fall 1999): 64.

[24] Terry Cook, "Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives," *Archivaria* 51 (Spring 2001): 14-35.

[25] *Archival Science* 2, nos. 1-2 (January 2002), and *Archival Science* 2, no. 3 (September 2002).

Archives as institutions and records as documents are generally seen by academic and other users, and by society generally, as passive resources to be exploited for various historical and cultural purposes. Historians since the mid-nineteenth century, in pursuing the new scientific history, needed an archive that was a neutral repositories [sic] of facts. Until very recently, archivists obliged by extolling their own professional myth of impartiality, neutrality, and objectivity. Yet archives are established by the powerful to protect or enhance their position in society. Through archives, the past is controlled. Certain stories are privileged and others marginalized.[26]

The open acknowledgement of power relations within archives marks an important shift in the archival profession. While small factions of the archival community likely still cling to the notion of neutrality, now, more than a decade after Brothman, Schwartz, Cook and many others were arguing for the abandonment of the myth of objectivity, archives are understood by archivists (and by at least some users) as more than carefully organized "raw materials" awaiting interpretation and dissemination by historians and researchers.[27] Consider, for example, this recent definition of an archives, which comes from the Preface of *Archives, Documentation and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar*:

Our point of departure [for the seminar] was a conception of archives not simply as historical repositories but as a complex of structures, processes, and epistemologies situated at a critical point of intersection between scholarship, cultural practices, politics and technologies. As sites of documentary preservation rooted in various national and social contexts, archives help define for individuals, communities and states what is both knowable and known about their pasts. As places of uncovering, archives help create and re-create social memory. By assigning the prerogatives of record keeper to the archivist, whose acquisition policies, finding aids, and various institutionalized predilections mediate between scholarship and information, archives produce knowledge, legitimize political systems, and construct identities.[28]

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[26] Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory," *Archival Science* 2, nos. 1-2 (March 2002): 1.

[27] The term "raw materials" appears in scare quotes here because there is nothing "raw" or "untouched" about the records found in an archive. Not only are the records the product of intent (that is, they have been created in order to capture specific information), the ways in which they are ordered in the archive reflect archival ideologies. For more, see Ciaran Trace, "What is Recorded is Never Simply 'What Happened': Record Keeping in Modern Organizational Culture," *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 137–159.

[28] Blouin and Rosenberg, "Preface and Acknowledgements," in *Archives,* vii.

Here, the influence of postmodern thought is evident in the acknowledgement of the multiple and powerful roles of archives. The notion of neutrality is fully rejected, and is instead replaced with an understanding of an archives as an influential process and a system that has implications for a wide variety of groups.

This rapid and very much abbreviated tour through changing archival ideas demonstrates the deep interconnections between theory and practice that inform contemporary archival work. It also provides a brief overview of the environment in which mainstream and non-dominant archives are operating today. This context is particularly important in understanding the rise of community archiving, the branch of archival interest most closely aligned with the concerns of artist-run archives.

2.4.2 Cook, Williams, and Autonomous Community Archiving

In his article "Evidence, memory, identity, and community: four shifting archival paradigms," Cook outlines four major trends within the archival profession. The most recent of these trends is community archiving, a sharing of expertise between archivists and community organizations. This emerging area of interest has become increasingly important in light of digital technologies that make possible the creation and retention of unprecedented quantities of potential archival material. As Cook states, "With the Internet, every person can become his or her own publisher, author, photographer, film-maker, music-recording artist, and archivist. Each is building an online archive."[29] Of course, these abilities extend beyond individuals, and can include many

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[29] Terry Cook, "Evidence, memory, identity, and community: four shifting archival paradigms," *Archival Science* 13, nos. 1-2 (June 2013): 113. I thank Clive Robertson for bringing to my attention the idea that photocopiers played

different types of organizations, among them artist-run centres. While such quantities give

archivists the opportunity to create collections with great breadth and depth, this potential is

limited by their inability to manage it all: there is simply too much stuff for archivists and their

institutions to acquire and organize.[30]

In light of such abundance, there are calls for archivists to fundamentally revise their roles,

shifting from professional gatekeepers and judges to facilitators and coaches who help

organizations manage their records through participatory processes ultimately controlled by the

organizations themselves.[31] This redirection not only helps archivists address questions of

quantity and necessary exclusion, it also places organizations in a position of power. Rather than

handing their documents over to state-run archives—institutions which may not be interested in

such papers, or with which an organization may not wish to associate—organizations can keep

their own records, and manage them as they see fit, potentially avoiding the systemic

discrimination embedded within existent archival institutions.[32] Such autonomy allows

organizations to construct their identities and narratives in the manner they deem most

appropriate, and to define for themselves what will be knowable and known about them.

Community archiving, then, can be defined as a type of archival practice that acknowledges the

lack of neutrality in archival work, questions and restructures existent power relations, and

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a role similar to the Internet prior to its widespread availability. Indeed, reproductive technologies—whether the Internet, photocopiers, or personal cameras—mean that self-produced publications and works of art can be made and circulated at speeds and in quantities that were previously not possible.

[30] While archivists have always had to deal with abundance, and ultimately only preserve, as Verne Harris notes, "a sliver of a sliver," the amount of materials generated and preserved via digital technologies exacerbates this problem (Harris, "The Archival Sliver: Power, Memory, and Archives in South Africa," *Archival Science* 2, nos. 1-2 (March 2002): 65).

[31] Cook, "Evidence," 113-114.

[32] Ibid.

encourages organizational agency. And while it is becoming increasingly prominent in light of digital technologies, it should be noted that non-dominant organizations have long kept and arranged their own documentation. What the editors of *Refiguring the Archive* call "marginal archives" have intentionally constructed collections from materials excluded from mainstream archives, sometimes as a deliberate form of protest against dominant discourses.[33] Various gay and lesbian archives offer a good example of this phenomenon, as does the AAVAA, as discussed by Hall. The archives of artist-run centres, some of which date to the late 1960s, are another example. What is perhaps new, however, is the sharing of expertise, with archivists offering guidance to organizations, and, equally as important, incorporating an organization's values into archival structures.[34]

As a relatively new—or perhaps just recently recognized—phenomenon, community archiving is a term that is open to interpretation, and one that can have varying degrees of political import. As Shaunna Moore and Susan Pell point out, and as the marginal archives named above suggest, community archives can be viewed "as methods of political contestation and resistance against dominant social and cultural narratives." But they may equally emerge as a result of a shared interest or geography, and have less of an overt political orientation. They may also have varying degrees of public recognition, with, as Moore and Pell state, "some hav[ing] gained legitimacy as producers of historical, cultural and political narratives within their society, while others remain

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[33] Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris, and Graeme Reid, "Introduction," in *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton et al. (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), 11-12.

[34] It should be noted that traditional forms of organization, or even "best practices," as represented by the archivist-facilitator, can be problematic. These practices are defined as "best" by dominant archives, and to simply replicate them in marginal organizations can be seen as yet another form of domination or control; applying the thinking that has shaped traditional institutions to non-traditional institutions minimizes the potential distinctions between the two, even though the materials they contain might be different. As such, community archivists need to take into account the particular structures of any marginal or community archive with which they work. For more, see Shaunna Moore and Susan Pell, "Autonomous Archives," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 16, nos. 4–5 (July–September 2010): 255-268.

on the margins of public knowledge of the past."[35] In other words, they fall along the spectrum

of *specializing*, *alternative*, and *oppositional*, as defined by cultural theorist Raymond Williams.

Within this review of archival praxis, it is worth pausing momentarily to consider the work of

Williams, who discusses several ideas relevant not only to community archives, but to artist-run

centres themselves. In his 1981 book *Culture*, Williams considers formations, institutions, and

their roles in relation to the society in which they operate. He defines formations as "forms of

organization and self-organization which seem much closer to cultural production," and contrasts

them with institutions, which are further removed from the processes of cultural production.[36] He

then suggests three basic classifications for formations: *specializing*, *alternative*, and

oppositional. Specializing formations exist for the purpose of "sustaining or promoting work in a

particular medium or branch of an art, and in some circumstances a particular style." According

to Williams, these groups "fit easily into the familiar category of an open or plural society. Such

groups can properly be described in terms of free association within a generally accepted cultural

diversity…" The alternative group provides "alternative facilities for the production, exhibition

or publication for certain kinds of work, where it is believed that existing institutions exclude or

tend to exclude these." The third and final group is oppositional, which occurs when "the cases

represented by [the alternative group] are raised to active opposition to the established

institutions, or more generally to the conditions within which these exist." Williams notes that

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[35] Shaunna Moore and Susan Pell, "Autonomous Archives," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 16, nos. 4–5 (July–September 2010): 257.
[36] Raymond Williams, *Culture* (Glasgow: Fontana Paperbacks, 1981), 57. See also 35.

there are "complex problems of interpretation, in specific cases, within these general terms," but

maintains that the distinctions are important for understanding the social relationships of cultural

production.[37]

If Williams' use of the term "art" is broadened to include all forms of cultural activity, then

community archives, like artist-run centres, can be considered formations. Such a classification

allows them to be thought about as specializing, alternative, or oppositional, and also

distinguishes them from institutions. (What I have referred to earlier as traditional or mainstream

archives would be synonymous with Williams' institutions). Common concerns over power,

autonomy, and proximity to cultural production allow artist-run archives to easily fit into the

framework of community archiving, and allow community archiving to fit into a slightly

modified version of Williams' system of classification. As such, texts written about community

archives, such as the aforementioned "Autonomous Archives" by Moore and Pell, and "Whose

Memories, Whose Archives?" by Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, and Elizabeth Shepherd, among

others, can be viewed as offering transferable insights into artist-run archives.[38]

2.4.3 Art versus Document, and Everything in Between

There are numerous other texts written by practicing archivists that are equally applicable to the

archives of artist-run centres. Notable among these are the increasingly specialized texts that

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[37] Williams, *Culture*, 70.

[38] Moore and Pell, "Autonomous Archives," and Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, and Elizabeth Shepherd, "Whose Memories, Whose Archives?" *Archival Science* 9, nos. 1-2 (June 2009): 71-86. See also Lyndon Ormond-Parker and Robyn Sloggett, "Local archives and community collecting in the digital age," *Archival Science* 12, no. 2 (June 2012): 191-212.

focus on the practical aspects of managing archives, and artist archives in particular. The nature of the materials housed in artist archives (and, similarly, artist-run archives) can be diverse: sketchbooks, paintings, sculptures and other three-dimensional objects might form an artist's "papers." In artist-run archives, videos, exhibition documentation, invitations, posters, and other artistic ephemera can be added to the list.

While housing and caring for these materials is sometimes glossed over as a pragmatic concern best left to archival technicians, there is more at stake than preservation and access (although they too are essential considerations): the physicality of artist-generated materials blurs the dividing line between "art" and "documentation"—a line that is fuzzy to begin with. The physical forms of such materials require a reexamination not only of institutional and organizational boundaries, but of what we consider valid materials for conveying specific types of information. What types of objects, what types of physical evidence, are archival? What will be admitted as evidence of the past, and what will be fetishized as "art"? How do these categorizations affect our understanding of archives? How do they affect ways of knowing?

As Ann Butler points out, "The premise that the categories of 'art' and 'documentation' are based on a mutually exclusive 'either/or' construct, rather than 'and' – reflects a dualism that is no longer valid as a working assumption."[39] In other words, archival materials produced by artists (and sometimes by artist-run centres) need the flexibility to be simultaneously considered works of art and documentation; they have a multifaceted identity that can change depending on the work itself, the context of its presentation, the person considering it, and the position from

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[39] Ann Butler, "Artwork or Documentation: Artists' Records as an Extension of the Artwork," in *Artists' Records in the Archives: Symposium Proceedings*, ed. Rachel Chatalbash et al. (New York: Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York, Inc., 2013): 9.

which they do so. While this perception can be messy and complex, insisting upon firm divisions may result in overly simplistic categories that ultimately obscure meaning.[40]

Curator Lorna Brown describes this fluidity as a "process of categorical mobility." As she points out, works found in artist-run archives—things that might be considered in-between, liminal, or not "art proper"—can be difficult to classify: "Images of exhibitions, ephemera such as invitations, and miscellany such as personal notes and institutional correspondence, when collaboratively created by artists exhibiting in and artists running centres, all fidget uncomfortably in established categories of value."[41] And while this fidgeting is not entirely unexpected in a postmodern environment, it is not sufficient to unquestioningly accept it. Just as enforcing strict divisions brings with it a number of problems, so too does understanding archival materials as potential works of art, and vice versa. (Understanding individual works of art *as* archives, a position Sven Spieker seems to take in his 2008 book, *The Big Archive: Art from Bureaucracy*, also raises a number of concerns, especially around the already complex meaning of the word archive. Fully considering this view, however, is beyond the scope of this project).

If the distinction between artwork and archival material is fully eliminated, records can become an extension of an artwork, or an artwork in and of themselves. Viewing them in this manner has serious implications: understanding them as art, rather than as evidence of it, means that they can be subject to the same treatment as other works of art, and are therefore potentially available to be bought, sold, collected, or exhibited.[42] This commodification of documents, this

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[40] Julia Pelta Feldman, "Perpetual Fluxfest, in Artwork or Documentation: Artists' Records as an Extension of the Artwork," in *Artists' Records*, ed. Rachel Chatalbash et al., 34.
[41] Brown, "Category Drift."
[42] Butler, "Artwork or Documentation," 12.

transformation of records into art, is entirely opposite to what some artists, especially those

involved in early iterations of some artist-run centres, intended for their work. Some forms of

conceptual art, including time-based or ephemeral performances and installations, for example,

were generally not intended as salable items, nor was their documentation (there were, of course

exceptions, and today, the situation is different: the sale of the documentation of some

contemporary works can be a source of income for artists). Photographs and audio and/or video

recordings of an event/action/performance—if they were created at all—were evidence of the

occurrence, and, as artist and administrator Sara Diamond points out, "did not necessarily

represent the creation of an autonomous work."[43] Archivist Julia Pelta Feldman, in writing about

Fluxus—"a movement (or network, tendency, or attitude)"[44] sometimes viewed as a precursor or

inspiration to artist-run culture—describes some of the thinking behind these choices:

> Ephemeral, interactive, and sometimes disposable, many of the artistic formats associated
> with Fluxus were designed to resist traditional mechanisms of art display and commerce, as
> well as to undermine their own status as artworks. Similarly, the line between a record and
> an art object can be intentionally obfuscated. For precisely these reasons, the physical
> vestiges of Fluxus are supremely resistant to categorization and cataloguing.[45]

Even if the line between a record and an artwork was not deliberately made unclear, it remains

that the transformation of documentation into art does not necessarily honour an artist's

intentions. Moreover, this post-creation shift raises a number of questions about the nature of

artist-run archives: do we need to keep (potentially artificial) divisions between art and document

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[43] Sara Diamond, "Daring Documents: The Practical Aesthetics of Early Vancouver Video," in *Vancouver Anthology*, 2nd edition, ed. Stan Douglas (Vancouver: Talonbooks and Or Gallery, 2011), 79. Again, it should also be noted that in today's art markets, evidence of artistic actions are now considered salable items by some artists, or may even constitute the work itself.
[44] Pelta Feldman, "Perpetual Fluxfest," 31.
[45] Ibid., 32.

in order to maintain our understanding of archives? How would eliminating the division between art and document ultimately affect the nature of the archive? Would artist-run archives suddenly find themselves in possession of art collections? (Some are already in possession of such collections anyway: the exchange of mail art, facilitated by some centres, has resulted in pieces being left in archival collections. Similarly, exhibition proposals and various forms of correspondence sometimes include works of art, such as sketches or collages. Oversights and (unexpected) donations can also help build such a collection). And what types of knowledge do we stand to gain or lose through the way in which we classify archival materials?

These questions remain largely unexplored in artist-run centres, and even bring up concerns that centres many never actually face. It seems unlikely that centres will suddenly be understood as having collections in the same way museums have collections. It seems equally implausible that legions of artists will return to centres and attempt to retrieve documentation that has, through changing perceptions, suddenly gained monetary value. But it is still worth considering the relationship between art and documentation, since these categories ultimately affect how archives are defined, organized, and used—and how knowledge is created from them. In the case of artist-run archives, the identities assigned (or perhaps not assigned) to art and documentation may show a connection to a centre's historical (and future) political stance, and may act as a way to exist differently from traditional archives.

Defining what constitutes art and what constitutes documentation is a process of ongoing negotiation, and one with political consequences. But while these debates continue, questions of how to physically organize piles of stuff, whether generated by artists or artist-run centres,

remain. In both cases, methods of organization ultimately need to respect the specific nature of the collections. As Butler asks, "how do we ensure that the collection management methods utilized do not diminish and disable the material through adherence to rigid, simplistic, and outmoded definitions and archival practices?"[46] Records created by artists, arts administrators, and the organizations that support them ultimately demand a thoughtful approach to arrangement that not only respects the physicality of the objects, but the particular circumstances through which they were produced. Just what such a system of organization might look like remains open to interpretation.

A number of authors, and especially those included in 2011's *Artists' Records in the Archives: Symposium Proceedings*, explore potential ways of arranging artist and artist-run centre materials. While fixed "best practices" remain elusive (and most likely always will, given changing archival thinking and the variations that exist even among Canadian artist-run centres), a number of options are explored, many of which involve joint efforts between artists and archivists.[47] Perhaps most useful, however, is the attitude put forth by Pelta Feldman. Speaking again about her experience working with a Fluxus collection, she writes,

> ... the varied manifestations of Fluxus cannot be divided into simplistic categories without losing some of their meaning. Even as I process the Silverman Collection, the identities, auras, and meanings of the artworks and artifacts that comprise it will continue to shift, while remaining true to their origins... My task is to dedicate myself to the concrete, creating a framework that might support the inevitable fluctuations of art history. The ontologizing will continue. The Fluxfest is perpetual.[48]

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[46] Butler, "Artwork or Documentation," 10.
[47] See, for example, Andra Darlington, "Winnowing with George Herms: Lessons for Collaboration Between Archivists and Artists," and Marilyn Nazar, "Archiving the Artist-run Movement in Canada," both in *Artists' Records in the Archives: Symposium Proceedings*, ed. Rachel Chatalbash et al. (New York: Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York, Inc., 2013).
[48] Pelta Feldman, "Perpetual Fluxfest," 33.

For Pelta Feldman, it is the creation of a flexible framework, tempered by the knowledge that

"our decisions are not final," that allows her to move forward in her work. As she points out,

"just as an artifact of performance may today be recontextualized as an autonomous artwork,

future generations of scholars, curators, and archivists will surely draw their own ontological

conclusions."[49]

The process of recontextualization is already underway in some artist-run archives, as Marilyn

Nazar notes in her brief but useful article, "Archiving the Artist-run Movement in Canada:"

"Given the conceptual nature of the art practices of most artist-run ventures, what is more apt to

happen is the reconstituting of archival records into art projects..." [50] This reconstitution or

recontextualization is not the permanent reclassification of documents as works of art. Instead, it

is in many cases the use of documentary materials in an artistic way; it is the presentation of

representation for creative ends. It is an example of the "categorical mobility" that characterizes

the archival materials—or perhaps, more accurately, the sets of collected or compiled

materials—of artist-run archives.[51] Simultaneously art and document, but neither fully one nor

the other, these materials can be imagined as points to be plotted along a circular path. "Art" and

"document" might be placed 180º apart, but they are ultimately part of the same, continuous

system.

The fluidity that surrounds the things housed in artist-run centre archives seems to echo the

nature of artist-run centres themselves: as Robertson has stated in his Hall-inspired definition,

[49] Pelta Feldman, "Perpetual Fluxfest," 31.
[50] Marilyn Nazar, "Archiving the Artist-run Movement in Canada," 50.
[51] Brown, "Category Drift."

they are and have been "many things over three decades, [but they are not] any one thing."[52] The same thinking can be applied to the materials of artist-run centre archives: they are many things, but not just one thing. Viewed in this light, the ways in which artist-run archive material is categorized and used can be seen as an extension of artist-run culture. Although the use of archival material in a traditional manner (e.g., as evidence to support a particular historical narrative) is not prohibited, it is not required by the artist-run archive, either. In other words, the materials of artist-run archives can be used in any number of ways, including those that are artistic and/or ahistorical. By avoiding distinctions, or rather, by allowing for ontological fluidity, artist-run centre archives can, if they so desire, establish or maintain their alterity and difference from the mainstream.

Denis Lessard's article, "The Art of the Possible: Processing an Artist-Run Center's Archives," published in the same symposium proceedings as Nazar and Pelta Feldman's articles, offers a more concrete example of this line of thinking. Here, Lessard recounts his relatively recent experience with Centre des arts actuels Skol, an artist-run centre in Montréal. Lessard, an artist, art historian, and formally trained archivist, was hired by Skol to process their records within the gallery space. Given a small and publicly accessible exhibition space as a processing room, Lessard worked for several months to organize the centre's records. While he minimizes the performative aspect of this work in his article, perhaps to better align with his intended audience of traditionally trained archivists, it remains that he was ultimately straddling the line between performance art and traditional archival practice. The materials with which he was working were equally straddling that line, acting as both artworks and archival records. Lessard describes this as their "double nature," and points out that "[s]ome situations defy the art historical

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[52] Robertson, *Policy Matters*, 14.

categorization that, in turn, has to be translated into archival description... [T]his neuralgic 'hinge' between art history and archival science is a major aspect of our challenge with artists' records."[53]

Working within the community archiving paradigm, and adding an artistic twist to it, Lessard's experience offers evidence of how "the processing becomes a partnership," with the archivist learning from gallery staff and visitors, just as they were able to learn from him.[54] His work offers a practical example of how artist-run centres are making use of their archival material, and doing so in a way that is different from what might happen in mainstream institutions. Motivated by the challenges posed by the physicality of art/documents that refuse neat categorization, projects such as the Lessard-Skol collaboration demonstrate the reconstitutions and recontextualizations that are animating artist-run archives today, and forcing the reconsideration of archival ontology.

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[53] Denis Lessard, "The Art of the Possible: Processing an Artist-Run Center's Archives," in *Artists' Records in the Archives: Symposium Proceedings*, ed. Rachel Chatalbash et al. (New York: Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York, Inc., 2013): 39.
[54] Ibid., 38.

2.5 *An Archive*

2.5.1 An Artist-Run "Publications Archive:" Writing Oneself into Being[55]

Lessard's work with Skol was preceded by the efforts of Le Bureau d'investigation d'archives/The Office for Archival Review (OAR), a group of artist-researchers invited to interrogate Skol's archive. As Lessard describes them, they were "a creative response to the archives on the part of an artists' collective." He continues: "if [OAR] didn't exactly follow the norms of archival science, it did express a genuine interest and concern for archives at Skol, coming from its staff and members."[56] Combining artistic concerns with an interest in archives—and thus an interest in self-definition and identity—leads to the third and final body of literature that supports this research: materials produced by artist-run centres and the people closely involved with them, and forming what I have called *an archive*. Indefinite and singular, this form of the word refers to a body of published materials that collectively creates an idea about what it might mean to be artist-run. But I also include within this category a number of works—artistic and literary—that directly engage with artist-run archives in the literal sense (that is, archives as a collection of unpublished documents). Thus this section considers archives as a collection of works that outlines a body of knowledge and offers evidence of Foucault's "first law of what can be said," while also thinking about them as physical entities that can be critically evaluated, and, as is more often the case, be the inspiration or source of artistic activity.

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[55] The term "publications archive" is drawn from Marcella Bienvenue's article, "Art Publications Archives," which appeared in the 1977 publication, *Parallelogramme Retrospective 1976-1977* (Montréal: ANNPAC, 1977). I have chosen this particular phrase because it emphasizes the idea that some artist-run centres interpret the concept of archives broadly, and do not make distinctions around the types of materials their archives contain. The term also permits me to point to the connections between artist-run histories and artist-created publications; as discussed in this chapter, publishing is a key aspect of artist-run production.
[56] Lessard, "The Art of the Possible," 38.

Artist-run centres have written extensively about themselves and their practices. Creating and

circulating publications—whether books, magazines, exhibition catalogues, text-based multiples,

or any other form—has been important in defining artist-run culture, and is closely tied to the

history of many centres. Gabriele Detterer, in her essay, "The Spirit and Culture of Artist-Run

Spaces," links the production of artist-initiated publications to the emergence of centres

themselves, describing "collective publishing" as "the germ" of artist-run spaces:

> In the context of the avant-garde, the broad concept of community defines an enduring
> international web of relationships among a group of avant-garde artists, relationships that
> collaborate and reinforce one another and fulfill commitment to a particular culture of
> shared values, ways of thinking, and attitudes in the visual arts. Correspondence art and
> collective publishing were therefore not only instrumentally exploited means of
> communication between the communities, but formed key features of a number of artistic
> campaigns and local initiatives that led to the foundation of community centers.[57]

Detterer supports her argument by pointing to several figures whose interests in publication and

circulation overlapped with their involvement in early artist-run centres, including artists

Michael Morris and Vincent Trasov. Morris and Trasov were the creators of Image Bank (a

networked, mail-based system for the exchange of ideas and images), and were among the

multiple founding members of Western Front, a Vancouver artist-run centre. Since its beginning,

Western Front has had an active literary program, and, from 1985-2009, published the magazine

Front.[58] She also points to the activities of the collective General Idea (AA Bronson, Felix Partz,

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[57] Gabriele Detterer, "The Spirit and Culture of Artist-Run Spaces," in *Artist-Run Spaces: Nonprofit Collective Organizations in the 1960s and 1970s*, eds. Gabriele Detterer and Maurizio Nannucci (Florence [?]: JRP Ringier & Les Presses du Réel, & Zona Archives, c. 2012), 14-15.

[58] For more on the history of Western Front, see Keith Wallace, ed., *Whispered Art History: Twenty Years at the Western Front* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1993), as well as "Front Magazine," Western Front, accessed April 17, 2015, http://front.bc.ca/wwwf-collection/front-magazine/

and Jorge Zontal), who produced *FILE* Magazine, and also founded Toronto's Art Metropole.[59]

Today, Art Metropole describes itself as an artist-run centre concerned with "the production, dissemination and contextualisation of artist-initiated publication in any media, especially those formats and practices predisposed to sharing and circulation."[60]

Both Image Bank/Western Front and General Idea/Art Metropole are important, high profile groups whose narratives illustrate the deep connections between publishing and artist-run activity. There are, however, many other publications and exchange-based projects that also point to this vital relationship. Some of these are identified in *From Sea to Shining Sea: Artist-Initiated Activity in Canada, 1939-1987*, an exhibition catalogue and key text that illustrates the diversity of artist-run activity in this country, while also reevaluating the "start date" of artist-run culture: while many of the organizations recognized today as artist-run centres were founded in the early 1970s, they have numerous historical precedents. Listed in the book's annotated chronology are, for example, *p.m.* magazine (1951), which included inserts of silkscreen prints by artists such as Jack Shadbolt and Harry Webb.[61] Also included are other serials, such as *Region* magazine, founded by artist Greg Curnoe in 1961, and the Toronto magazine, *Evidence*, produced at approximately the same time.[62] The book also identifies several artist-founded or arts-related publishers that began production in the 1960s and early 1970s (including blew ointment press, Coach House Press, and the Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and

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[59] Detterer, "The Spirit and Culture," 15. Detterer also supports her argument by pointing to a number of international artist-run spaces that produced, collected, or circulated publications by artists: *La Mamelle Magazine* (San Francisco), Printed Matter (New York), and Zona (Florence).

[60] Art Metropole, "About Art Metropole," accessed April 17, 2015, http://artmetropole.com/about

[61] AA Bronson, ed., *From Sea to Shining Sea: artist-initiated activity in Canada, 1939-1987* (Toronto: Power Plant, 1987), 21.

[62] Ibid., 25.

Design).[63] While these efforts may not have been labeled as "artist-run" at the time, they

nevertheless suggest the importance of information exchange among artists.

From Sea to Shining Sea's editor, AA Bronson, addressed the connections between publications

and carving out an identity in his later writings. In 2002, he wrote,

> Publishing was a primary means of building a connective tissue with the rest of the world,
> and also of acknowledging our own existence as artists (since we were not being
> acknowledged by the art world). We were not looking for legitimization from the art world,
> and we thought of ourselves as infiltrating the museums and galleries, rather than working
> with them. But we were very aware of our peers—locally, nationally and internationally—
> and it was to them we looked for acknowledgement. And I suppose something like the
> Decca Dance performance (as an awards ceremony) demonstrated that we all wanted a
> form of alternative legitimization.[64]

Although Bronson's experience is informed by his involvement in General Idea and Art

Metropole, his words have broader applications across artist-run culture. His characterization of

publishing (and other activities) as a form of "alternative legitimization"—one that comes from

within a group, as opposed to from the outside—is useful in thinking about the body of materials

that comprise a metaphorical artist-run archive: these publications help to define and validate

what "artist-run" has meant and will mean. In this sense, the "publications archive" takes on

qualities that are also associated with physical archives, the unpublished materials that also shape

an organization's identity. I am curious whether the shaping properties that both published and

unpublished documents share contributes to the expansive use of terminology that appears

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[63] Ibid., 26, 32, and 52. Space prohibits the reproduction of the numerous other events and publications listed in *From Sea to Shining Sea*. The reader is directed to that resource to learn more about the emergence of artist-run activity in Canada.

[64] AA Bronson, as reproduced in Luis Jacob, *Golden Streams: Artists' Collaboration and Exchange in the 1970s* (catalogue published in conjunction with the exhibition "Golden Streams"). As accessed March 31, 2014 at http://ccca.concordia.ca/c/writing/j/jacob/jac001t.html

around "artist-run archives." While this fluidity is explored more in the next chapter, it should be noted that for many centres, their "collection"—whether best classified as an archive, library, or something in between—includes artist-produced publications.

Evidence of this elasticity, this use of "archive" to describe diverse collections, can also be found in the language used in early artist-run centre publications. As mentioned in Chapter One, Marcella Bienvenue titles her essay in the *Parallelogramme Retrospective 1976-1977*, "Art Publications Archives." She describes these archives as containing "art literature," but also "artist-editions in the forms of post-documentation, book-as-art object, art magazines, art newspapers, music scores, manifestoes, tapes, posters, postcards and other ephemera."[65] While it seems that all of these materials would exist as multiples, and would thus potentially be counted among the materials collected by a library (potentially an artist-run library), Bienvenue avoids the term. The reason for this avoidance is unclear. It may be because the materials were not necessarily books, or because they were not available to be checked out (that is, they were non-circulating). Perhaps *library* carried with it a number of formal practices and ideas that did not apply to emergent centres. Whatever the case, the main point remains: the collection of materials produced by artists was a recognized need among early centres, and indeed remains today.

The importance of a library-archive of one's own—a dedicated resource aligned with a group's particular principles—is evidenced not only by the number of centres that have such a collection, but by the existence of Artexte and the Women's Art Resource Centre (WARC), two organizations that provide access to resources potentially overlooked by other institutions. Since WARC, which operates a curatorial research library, as well as a gallery, is considered in

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[65] Bienvenue, "Art Publications Archives," 244.

Chapter Four, I will focus here on Artexte. This Montréal-based organization has had several roles since its foundation in 1980, but could be described as an artist-run bookstore turned library, or, as Danielle Léger describes it in its current form, "an atypical art library."[66] Founded by artists Angela Grauerholz and Anne Ramsden, and art historian Francine Périnet, Artexte began as a bookstore specializing in arts-related publications, then shifted over time, expanding its roles to become both a distributor and publisher. It eventually ceased its operations as a bookseller, and is now a research centre that includes books, serial publications, artist and organizational files, and special collections, all focused on the visual arts in Canada from 1965 to the present. It also has an exhibition space, where it features programming that is "linked to print culture and addresses issues pertaining to visual arts documents."[67]

While Artexte is very much aligned with artist-run culture, and was indeed a member of the now-defunct Association of National Non-Profit Artists Centres/Regroupement d'artistes des centres alternatifs (ANNPAC/RACA), its focus on collecting and providing access to materials related to the visual arts sets it apart from some other centres.[68] Indeed, Artexte itself reinforces this perception. John Latour, Information Specialist at Artexte, participated in the survey discussed in Chapter Three, but also followed up with me via e-mail. He wrote, "Artexte is a member of the RCAAQ (Regroupement des centres d'artistes autogérés du Québec), although we enjoy more of an honorary status with them. We are primarily a national, information service provider."[69] As such, Artexte is perhaps better understood as a specialized library and research

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[66] Danielle Léger, "The Artexte Information Centre: an atypical mandate and history," accessed April 7, 2015, http://artexte.ca/wp-content/uploads/The-Artexte-Information-Centre.pdf

[67] Artexte, "Collection," accessed April 7, 2015, http://artexte.ca/research/collection/, and Artexte, "About Us," accessed April 7, 2015, http://artexte.ca/information/about/

[68] Léger, "The Artexte Information Centre."

[69] John Latour, Information Specialist at Artexte, e-mail message to the author, August 1, 2013.

centre, rather than an artist-run centre, although such a status could certainly be debated. But instead of engaging in such a debate, the point I would like to make is that publications are, and have been, an essential component of artist-run activity, to the extent that there was a perceived need for a specialized, contemporary arts-focused library to fulfill a role left vacant by other institutions, similar to how artists perceived a need for spaces to accommodate types of work neglected by other museums and galleries, and thus worked to create artist-run centres. Through this alignment, Artexte becomes an element within the larger artist-run archive, contributing to the types of knowledge that will count for defining "artist-run."[70, 71]

2.5.2 Selections from the "Publications Archive"

The publications that have emerged from the artist-run movement are diverse and take many forms. For the purposes of this research, I focus on three main categories that address the output of the centres themselves, as opposed to the output of the artists they support. These categories can be loosely described as follows: "anniversary-inspired" publications; anthologies; and serial

[70] It should be noted that while Artexte is no longer a bookseller, there are a number of organizations in Canada that continue to carry out this important work. Examples include Art Metropole (Toronto) and the Or Bookstore (Vancouver). Le Regroupement des centres d'artistes autogérés du Québec (RCAAQ, a network of artist-run centres and related organizations in Québec), operates Formats, a web-based bookstore specializing in contemporary art literature, theory, and critique. In addition, most artist-run centres have a small selection of publications for sale, usually comprised mostly of the books or catalogues they have produced.

[71] Artexte is but one of several examples of artist-run booksellers/libraries in North America. Although this study restricts itself to organizations in Canada, geopolitical borders do no limit artist-run activity. Printed Matter (New York) is a good example of an analogous body, although it is a specialized, non-profit bookseller rather than a library. Franklin Furnace, another New York organization, is also a useful example. It has a broad mandate to "make the world safe for avant-garde art." In fulfilling this mandate, it amassed a significant collection of artists' books, but in 1993 sold them to the Museum of Modern Art. The provenance of these books, however, remains within MoMA's records: it is possible to search for records from the "Franklin Furnace Collection." A third example is one that is based on the Internet, and thus knows no borders. AAAARG is a website that provides access to arts-related literary materials. Although not strictly legal—AAARG is posting copyrighted material without permission or payment—its existence points to the strong desire to provide free and convenient access to the literary materials that inform understandings of the arts. (As of April 17, 2015, AAAARG was located at http://aaaaarg.org. This URL is subject to change due to threats of legal action. More about AAARG can be found here: http://fillip.ca/content/browsing-the-aaaarg-library). Together, these organizations suggest the importance of publications to artist-run activity on an international level.

publications. For now, I deliberately exclude exhibition catalogues, since they are considered in the next section, alongside their related exhibitions.

"Anniversary-inspired" publications, as the name implies, are often written to coincide with what is viewed as a significant anniversary (ten or 20 years in existence, etc.). These organizational retrospectives summarize and illustrate a centre's past activities, showing connections between the centre and existent historical narratives, or attempting to place the centre in a narrative of its own creation. Although there is variation within these texts, they usually include a story of the organization's founding, as well as lists or illustrations of all or some past exhibitions, much of which would have been compiled from the centre's archive. Commissioned essays offer further insight into the centre's role, sometimes with a focus that expands upon a centre's mandate— Mentoring Artists for Women's Art's *Culture of Community*, for example, is strongly informed by feminist practices. Other examples of these anniversary-inspired works include publications such as YYZ's *Decalog*, The New Gallery's *The First Ten*[72] and *Silver*, Truck's *Resonant Dialogues: 25 Years of the Second Story Art Society in Calgary*, VIVO's *Making Video "In,"* grunt's *Live at the End of the Century*, Western Front's *Whispered Art History: Twenty Years at the Western Front*, Optica's *Décades, 1972-1992: Chronologie des expositions, index des artistes*, La Centrale Galerie Powerhouse's *L'impact féministe sur l'art actuel, La Centrale à 40 ans*, Skol's *Historique de Skol commenté*,[73] and Struts' *A Struts Scrapbook*. ANNPAC/RACA— what Bronson calls "a union of museums by artists"— also produced a series of retrospectives in

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[72] *The First Ten* was created when the gallery was still known as Off Centre Centre.
[73] Skol's *Historique de Skol commenté* is accompanied by an interesting story. It was drafted in 1995 by Yves Théoret as part of his Master's Degree in Museology. Théoret was also a board member of Skol at the time. Although the book was to be published in 1996 as part of Skol's tenth anniversary celebrations, it was not actually published until 2011. The 2011 book is accompanied by marginalia by Sabrina Russo and Anne-Marie Proulx (thus "commenté" in the title). This creative approach suggests how artist-run centre histories are never fixed or static, and can indeed be part of an ongoing dialogue.

its early years: *Parallelogramme Retrospective 1976-1977*; *Parallelogramme Retrospective 2, 1977-1978*; *Spaces by Artists: Parallelogramme Retrospective 3*; and *Documents of Artist-Run Centres in Canada, 1980-81*.[74] Such publications are similar to those produced by local centres, although they are national in scope and mark collective—rather than individual—achievement, and offer evidence of a broad and productive artist-run centre movement.

Other publications that can be grouped into this category are annual reviews, which are generally less extensive versions of anniversary-inspired books. Centres that have produced yearly reviews relatively regularly include Stride (Calgary), Skol (Montréal), and Articule (Montréal); other centres may be more irregular in their publishing, or may count upon a newsletter or a website organized by year to provide a similar presence. Although such publications usually take the form of a booklet or pamphlet, Artspeak (Vancouver) produced at least five "Image Archive" CDs in the early-to-mid 2000s that acted as annual reviews. While narrower in scope, such records equally become an important part of a larger artist-run literary archive.

These texts, whether produced to celebrate an anniversary or as part of an annual review, neatly compile and present artist-run centre histories. In some ways, they can be viewed as the products of Freud's concept of retrospective causality, whereby, as Derrida states, "archivization produces as much as it records the event."[75] ("Archivization," in this sense, refers to the construction of a history based on collected materials, and takes a broad view of the archive "as printing, writing,

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[74] AA Bronson, "The Humiliation of the Bureaucrat: Artist-run Spaces as Museums by Artists," in *From Sea to Shining Sea*, 168. Note that the ANNPAC publications are bilingual and have equivalent French titles: *Rétrospective Parallélogramme 1976-1977*; *Rétrospective Parallélogramme 2, 1977-1978*; and *Places des Artistes: 3e Rétrospective Parallélogramme*. The French titles were excluded from the main text for clarity.

[75] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 17. See also Susan van Zyl, "Psychoanalysis and the Archive," in *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton et al. (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), 53.

prosthesis...").[76] This is the creation of the past in the present, with an eye on the future. These works are a consolidation of events, ideas and perceptions that will become a centre's history of record (although room for debate and alternate versions remain). Simultaneously addressing the community's need to reflect, recollect, validate, and celebrate, these retrospective books (and, in some cases, their accompanying web presences) are in a format conducive to future use: they exist in multiple copies, are easy to disseminate, and possess an air of authority. Suitable for inclusion in local, regional, and national libraries, such publications have the potential to influence the construction of future histories, including those written on a national scale (for example, a history of art in Canada). They are a way to begin to remedy what Keith Wallace identified as artist-run centres' lack of "visibility within the official construction of art history, especially in terms of its dissemination to the general public."[77] At the same time, they give artist-run centres control over their own histories; they give them the chance to present the past as they understand it. These texts are, as Brown observes, "a legacy of the artist-run movement's desire to have a hand in determining the conditions and definition of art practice."[78]

In addition to the anniversary-inspired publications, there are numerous serial publications and anthologies that take a more critical approach to the analysis of artist-run culture. Generally not focused on a single centre, such publications offer broad insight into artist-run culture and engage with concerns relevant to artistic and organizational practices, such as feminism, post colonialism, and alternative or marginalized art histories. *Vancouver Anthology*, first published in 1991 and reissued in 2011, is a good example of this type of publication. Providing a mix of historical and critical analysis, it has been a landmark in this environment for some 20 years.

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[76] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 16.
[77] Wallace, "Foreword," in *Whispered Art History*, n.p.
[78] Brown, "Category Drift."

decentre, published by YYZBOOKS in 2008, is another example, although one that is slightly more uneven in tone—a result of it being made from submissions garnered from centres across the country.[79] Robertson's *Policy Matters: Administrations of Art and Culture* (2006), also published by YYZBOOKS—the imprint of Toronto-based artist-run centre YYZ—and *Institutions by Artists* (2012), published by Fillip Editions/Pacific Association of Artist-Run Centres, equally belong in this category. They too are examples of retrospective causality, and participate in a larger economy of self-realization and validation.

Serial publications that have emerged from the artist-run centre movement include *Parallelogramme* (later *Mix*), the now-defunct journal published by ANNPAC/RACA, as well as the also now-defunct *Fuse* (formerly *Centrefold*). *Fillip*, a magazine whose continued existence seems to hang in the balance at the time of writing, rounds out this trio. All are resources that critically analyze larger concerns affecting artist-run centres and less mainstream culture more generally, and allow for the regular (that is, monthly or quarterly) exchange of ideas through both articles and letters to the editors. These publications have also been involved with more social forms of exchange, especially through the organization of conferences. *Fillip*, to give just one example, organized *Institutions by Artists*, a 2012 conference held in Vancouver. These serials, like other artist-produced publications, contribute to the definition of artist-run culture by carving out an intellectual territory for exploration and setting fluid boundaries around what will and will not be considered suitable topics within discussions of artist-run culture.

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[79] It should be noted that *decentre's* publication in 2008 was intended to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Canada Council for the Arts, the federal funding body that has sustained artist-run centres since the mid-1970s. As such, it equally belongs to the genre of anniversary publications.

2.5.3 Artists Investigating Archives: Publications, Exhibitions, and Artworks

Together, these books and serials form an archive in the metaphorical sense. They help negotiate and disseminate key concepts around both individual centres and artist-run culture more generally, and simultaneously act as a network of peer validation and exchange. Yet these artist-run publications consider artist-run (physical) archives relatively infrequently. Instead, the archive is largely taken as a thing to investigate in order to create histories and narratives, rather than a system in itself. Certainly, artist-run archives have played a role in the creation of many, if not all, of the publications considered above. But their roles and operations have only occasionally been subject to critical analysis in writing (their analysis through artistic processes, as discussed below, is more frequent). Why have centres largely shied away from writing about the inner workings of their archives?

Topics such as the arrangement and organization of a particular archive might be too specific for some of these publications; the technical nature of such things may not make them appropriate for some journals or books. A paper such as Lessard's "The Art of the Possible: Processing an Artist-Run Center's Archives" might be more fitting for the symposium at which it was presented. Then again, if self-determination is a key aspect of the artist-run movement, then surely it is worth considering archives, and the administrative and policy acts that make them function, within artist-run publications? Moreover, how information is organized (and collected, presented, excluded, disseminated, etc.), and by whom, matters greatly: what is at stake is the construction of knowledge.

There are, however, an increasing number of occasions where the archive is viewed as both a source of content and structuring system. One (relatively early) example is William Wood's essay, "This is Free Money? The Western Front as Facility, Institution and Image," in *Whispered Art History* (1993). Although *Whispered Art History* is an anniversary-inspired publication, the essays that it includes are not all celebratory; Alexander Varty's "New Musica: A History of Discord," for example, is a tale of failure. Wood's essay is a critical analysis of Western Front that is, as he writes, "based on a reading of the Front's administrative archives." Although Wood is writing "through" the archive, rather than about the archive, his essay is of note for two reasons: first, he clearly acknowledges the role the archive has played in his writing, and even points out that he "could find no good scandal in the files."[80] Second, he is using the "administrative"—as opposed to "documentary"—archive to understand the "facility, institution, and image" that is recognized as Western Front. As explored in greater detail in Chapters Three and Six, this division of material within an archive ultimately affects the ways in which artist-run centres can be known as organizations: they can be known through the artists and types of work they exhibit (their "documentary" material), but also through the oft-neglected administrative records they generate.

Another example of a text that addresses artist-run archives qua archives is Detterer's aforementioned essay, "The Spirit and Culture of Artist-Run Spaces." This relatively recent (c. 2012) essay includes an approximately four-page section titled "Archives" (35-39). In it, Detterer seems to follow the lead of artist-run organizations, conflating libraries and archives, such that both published and unpublished materials are described as an archive or archival. She speaks of

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[80] William Wood, "This is Free Money? The Western Front as Facility, Institution and Image," in *Whispered Art History*, 180.

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archives containing "a huge quantity of printed materials being collected in the artist-run spaces over the course of the years—catalogues, artists' books, small press items, flyers, folders, posters, manifestos, ephemera, and memorabilia, as well as audio-visual material, films, videos, and sound works."[81] Most of these materials might find a home in a library. Yet in the next sentence, she states, "Collections of documents increasingly expanded into archives that not only recorded a crucial phase of new developments in the art world of the 20th century, but also preserved collective memory and identity." Here, although there is some ambiguity around the term "documents," she seems to be speaking of "archival materials proper." She does so again later on the same page, when she identifies why such archives matter: "Unlike mainstream 20th-century art history and culture, archives of collective self-management highlight paths of recollection of an alternative memory."[82] She seems to be pointing to the administrative and governance papers—the minutes and mandates and policies and so on—that hold potential for "alternative memory." In identifying these materials, she also identifies the possibilities of writing histories differently, of writing them according to the specific logic that might be found in artist-run archives.

One final example of artists and authors engaging with archives on an ontological level in texts is *Anamnesia: Unforgetting: Polytemporality, implacement and possession in The Crista Dahl Media Library & Archive*, a 2012 book produced by VIVO, a Vancouver-based media arts centre. While it too includes a narrative about the centre's early years, it focuses more on the organization's combined library and archive, which includes media works (primarily videos) as well as books, images, and written records. With essays by artist-curators who have worked in

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[81] Detterer, "The Spirit and Culture," 36.
[82] Ibid.

and with The Crista Dahl Media Library & Archive, *Anamnesia* takes the archive as its topic, and investigates it in greater depth than other artist-run centre produced works. For example, Donato Mancini, in his essay, "In the Present as Well: Polytemporality and Archival Anamnesia," points to the potential value and role of artist-run archives, noting that video materials, and video materials in an archive, can be and have been used "to work for alternative, even oppositional cultural values."[83] In Cecily Nicholson's essay in the same book, "Dispatches: of Wrested Resumption, in Time and Area," she acknowledges that her curatorial work is dependent upon both archival structures and archival content: "Curation in the archive relies on the intelligent and organized care, and storage of the documents, as well as their content; thus, it is a collaborative process."[84] Both Mancini and Nicholson acknowledge the power structures within an archive, and suggest the larger roles an archive might play.

Together, these essays show a growing awareness of the artist-run archive as a system and source of power. This awareness can also be seen in a number of recent exhibitions produced by centres and by people closely associated with them. Included among these is *Documentary Protocols (1967-1975)*, created by author, curator, and former archivist Vincent Bonin. Consisting of two exhibitions at the Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery at Concordia University in 2007 and 2008, and accompanied by a publication of the same name (2010), this exhibition was not, strictly speaking, created by an artist-run centre. It did, however, rely heavily upon the documents produced both by centres and by selected artist collectives during the seminal period of 1967 to 1975. The documents that comprised the exhibitions—minutes, correspondence, notices, a few photographs, etc.—were generated by artist-run centres, but subsequently donated larger

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[83] Donato Mancini, "In the Present as Well: Polytemporality and Archival Anamnesia," in Amy Kazymerchyk, ed., *Anamnesia: Unforgetting* (Vancouver: VIVO Media Arts Centre, 2012), 80.
[84] Cecily Nicholson, "Dispatches: of Wrested Resumption, in Time and Area," in *Anamnesia*, 178.

galleries or museums, a transformative act that forced Bonin to grapple with the now-familiar and problematic distinctions between art and document.[85] The exhibitions and publication, which were ultimately a multi-pronged exploration of artist-run centres and their bureaucratic transformations, of archival institutions, and of research/curation-as-exhibition, marks one of the largest and most focused investigations of artist-run centre archival material to date.

Documentary Protocols is distinct from this research in its necessarily limited temporal period, in its inclusion of and focus on artist collectives, and in its focus on materials now existing outside the centres that generated them. But it remains important because it reproduces key documents related to some aspects of the artist-run centre movement, draws attention to artist-run archives (regardless of their current location), and offers an example of the categorical mobility of artist-generated archival materials. It is also part of a larger interest in the intersection between art and archives, as expressed through exhibitions or artistic works. Artist and curator Luis Jacob pointed to this interest in *Golden Streams: Artists' Collaboration and Exchange in the 1970s*, the catalogue of his exhibition of the same name held in 2002 at the Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto at Mississauga. Jacob writes,

> The aesthetics of administration and bureaucracy has long roots in twentieth-century art, especially in conceptual art from the English-speaking world... There exists as well a noteworthy impulse among artists to form archives-as-artworks, or museums-as-artworks, where the collection, cataloguing, and display of collections itself constitutes the work of art.[86]

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[85] Vincent Bonin, *Documentary Protocols/ Protocoles Documentaires (1967-1975)* (Montréal: Galerie Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Université Concordia University, 2010): 20 – 25.

[86] Luis Jacob, *Golden Streams: Artists' Collaboration and Exchange in the 1970s*. Like *Documentary Protocols*, this exhibition focused on early artist-run centre and artist-collective activity in Canada.

Art historian Hal Foster also noted this turn or resurgence in his 2004 article, "An Archival Impulse." He notes that "the figure of the artist-as-archivist follows that of the artist-as-curator," although maintains that institutional critique is not necessarily the foremost goal of the type of work he defines as archival art.[87] And indeed, what Foster calls "archival art" seems somewhat different from not only Jacob's definition of "archives-as-artworks," but from the document-as-(temporary)-artwork model found in *Documentary Protocols*. (And different yet again from Spieker's aforementioned "artwork as archive"). Foster speaks instead of works built upon found objects drawn from "informal archives," and identifies the desire "to make historical information, often lost or displaced, physically present" as a characteristic of this type of work.[88] While it would seem that the desire to make the previously invisible visible is a common thread, the way in which this occurs seems to vary, as does the definition of archive, which is fairly consistently—and perhaps necessarily—left vague.

The pairing of archive (however it may be defined) and art is not new. Approaches and scales change, as do perspectives—the focus may shift from archive to artwork, from artwork to archive, and from process to product. These varied approaches are evident in other exhibitions and events, including those produced by centres themselves. Recent examples include Optica's two-part exhibition, *Archi-féministes!: Archiver le corps* (2011), and *Archi-féministes!: Performer l'archive* (2012). Optica describes these shows as "an archival feminism proposing a retrospective and updated perspective concerned, among other things, with performativity in artistic practices and strategies deployed through photography, video, and the document."[89] Both

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[87] Hal Foster, "An Archival Impulse," *October* 110 (Autumn, 2004): 5.
[88] Ibid., 4-5
[89] Optica, "Archi-féministes!: Archiver le corps (1st part)," accessed April 22, 2015, http://www.optica.ca/archifeministes/archi_fem_01_en.html

Archi-féministes! shows drew upon the resources within Optica's archive, and demonstrated larger concerns with the constructions of history. Another example can be found in La Centrale's *Archives Cannibales* (2014), described as "a collective project of reflection on the La Centrale archives" that also celebrated the centre's 40th anniversary.[90] In this "multidisciplinary installative exhibition," artists produced and exhibited works "inspired by the invitation flyers of the exhibitions of La Centrale's fourth last decades."[91] Also in 2014, Art Metropole marked its 40th anniversary with *Then Again: A Celebration of Art Metropole's 40th Anniversary*, an exhibition held at the National Gallery of Canada's Library, the institution to which Art Metropole's collection of books and papers was donated in 1999.[92] This exhibition came some eight years after *Witness to the passing time: The Art Metropole Collection*, a 2006 exhibition of selected pieces from the archive, accompanied by a catalogue titled, *Art Metropole: The Top 100*.[93]

Skol has also been active in producing archive-inspired exhibitions. In 2011, it featured *Sortons les archives/Embracing the Archives*. Accompanied by the launch of the book, *Historique de Skol commenté*, this exhibition involved some 13 artists who used Skol's archives to produce works. Mark Clintberg, for example, produced a work where he located within Skol's files the names of artists, curators, and institutions to whom he felt indebted. He wrote letters to these entities, then inserted them into or next to their archival files at Skol. Another artist in the

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[90] La Centrale Galerie Powerhouse, "40 Years of La Centrale Programming Series: Archives Cannibales," accessed April 22, 2015, http://www.lacentrale.org/en/programmation/archival-residency-gallery-space-0
[91] La Centrale Galerie Powerhouse, "40 Years of La Centrale Programming Series," accessed April 22, 2015, http://www.lacentrale.org/en/40-years-of-la-centrale
[92] For more, see Peter Trepanier, "Then Again: A Celebration of Art Metropole's 40th Anniversary," in *Ngcmagazine.ca*, published October 2, 2014, and accessed April 22, 2015, http://www.ngcmagazine.ca/exhibitions/then-again-celebrating-art-metropole-s-40th-anniversary
[93] "Witness to the passing time: The Art Metropole Collection," National Gallery of Canada Press Release, accessed April 22, 2015, http://www.gallery.ca/en/about/377.php

exhibition, Kandis Friesen, made a drawing based on the doodles and marginalia found within

Skol's files. Artist Adriana Disman created a performative work in response to a particular Skol

file: *Correspondence Dossier GAYER, JOHN 1985-89.*[94]

Other artists who have worked with and within artist-run archives include Craig Leonard, Clive

Robertson, and The Ladies Invitational Deadbeat Society (LIDS), comprised of Anthea Black,

Nicole Burisch, and Wednesday Lupypciw. In 2006, Leonard created an exhibition, *ARC/HIVES*,

at Artcite Inc. in Windsor, Ontario, to mark its 24th anniversary. The exhibition involved the

display of materials from Artcite's archive, including posters, slides, and other ephemera, as well

as publications. Leonard also compiled a list of all artists who had exhibited in artist-run centres

in Ontario from 1971 to 2006, and invited viewers to send him postcards with information

concerning any artists he may have missed. The final component of the exhibition was

comprised of excerpts from a number of videos related to "Six Days of Resistance Against the

Censor Board," which was a 1985 event held in protest of proposed changes to Ontario's

censorship laws.[95] Together, these elements provide insight into the past of a specific gallery, as

well as to a larger artist-run culture. Leonard's list, in particular, is a provocative work that raises

important questions: who is exhibited in artist-run centres, and why? What patterns exist? Who

might be missing from the archives?

Another example of a retrospective/archive-inspired project can be found in Clive Robertson's

Then + Then Again, a travelling exhibition comprised of selections from the artist-author's

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[94] Skol, "Embracing the Archive," accessed April 22, 2015, http://skol.ca/en/programming/embracing-the-archive/.
See this website for a description of all the works that appeared in this exhibition.
[95] Artcite Inc., "2006," accessed April 22, 2015, http://www.artcite.ca/history/2006.html, and Andrew Lochhead,
"Craig Leonard," *Canadian Art* 23 no. 3 (Fall 2006): 153.

personal collection of publications, papers, and artworks. First exhibited in 2007, and

subsequently touring to a number of artist-run centres across Canada, the show demonstrated the

close connections between artists and the artist-run movement. While risking accusations of self-

historicization and self-promotion, shows such as *Then + Then Again* reveal the messiness of

artist-run histories while pointing to the necessity of doing it yourself. For marginalized or non-

dominant groups, "Other people just aren't going to do this work," states Robertson.[96, 97]

A final example of how archival materials can be used or repurposed in an artistic way can be

found in the work of LIDS. Although I look at the LIDS's archival experiences in greater depth

in Chapter Five, it is also worth mentioning them here as an example of artists exploring artist-

run centre histories. During a month long residency in 2012 at John Snow House (JSH), the

LIDS investigated a number of records produced by The New Gallery—the artist-run centre that

operates the house—and stored at JSH.[98] Culminating in an interactive exhibition where

participant-viewers were invited to contribute their own memories and knowledge to archival

images, correspondence, and promotional materials, the LIDS highlighted historical feminist

practices in the gallery, while also drawing attention to the archive itself. And, like Robertson

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[96] Clive Robertson, in discussion with the author, December 7, 2010.

[97] *Then + Then Again* was not Robertson's first foray into exhibitions inspired by archival explorations. In 1997, he produced *Speaking Volumes*, an exhibition held at the Montréal artist-run centre Oboro, and inspired by his research at the National Gallery. The exhibition, which featured some 16 hours of videotape available for watching at four viewing stations, drew upon videos made between 1954 and 1996. In creating the exhibition, Robertson's goal was "to compare how documentary and documentation forms have been used to externally speak about, or internally speak for, local contemporary art production..." (Robertson, *Policy Matters*, 154). Although he was working with videos, which are perhaps more akin to published books than to the documents produced in the course of carrying out an organization's mandate (that is, he was working with materials intended for exhibition, whereas archival documents are not necessarily produced with that specific intention), the exhibition sought to understand how knowledge is produced from and circulated by institutions, and in doing so, shares concerns with this research. As Robertson writes, "*Speaking Volumes* further draws attention to what has and has not been documented, what purposes that such texts that have survived might serve, and how artists and others might further be encouraged to make (or re-make) similar works" (Robertson, *Policy Matters*, 160).

[98] A number of TNG's records were stored at JSH, although as mentioned in Chapter One, and explored more in Chapter Five, many others were donated earlier to Glenbow, a combined museum and archives with greater capacity to provide physical care for archival materials.

earlier, Black, Burisch, and Lupypciw—all former or current employees of various artist-run centres—eschewed strict divisions of time or space between art, archive, and history. In at least some artist-run archives, artist, archivist, and historian are one and the same.

Along with OAR's activities, these exhibitions are a small sample of the ways in which artists are working with(in) artist-generated archives to produce exhibitions that are both artistic and historic. Such exhibitions are poised at the intersection of art and history, and unconstrained by the expectations of either area. They offer evidence of how some centres approach their archives as a body of materials available to meet the changing needs of both artists and centres, rather than as strictly artistic or historical material that must be used in a certain way. The creation of these exhibitions is conducted according to the rules established by artists and centres, and can be understood as congruent with artist-run culture more generally. In using their archives in these flexible and fluid ways, artist-run centres are extending their mandates to another area of their operations, and shaping this self-generated resource to best meet their needs.

The exhibitions produced from the archives of artist-run centres ultimately become just one element of what I have referred to here as *an archive*. This archive is a diverse body of work, united simply by the theme of being artist-generated. It is not only a physical place, and not only a set of documents and publications, but also a series of practices that produce these things and ultimately aim to recognize and make legitimate a particular way of acting and existing. Combining elements of Foucault's system of enuncibility with elements of more traditional definitions of archives, the *an archive* of artist-run centres provides the foundation for further investigation into the definition and role of artist-run archives.

2.6 Summary

Pairing *archive*, *an archives*, and *an archive* with three overlapping bodies of literature, I have attempted to outline—as well as complicate and expand—a number of loose definitions for archive(s), while also highlighting ideas useful in thinking about archives in relation to artist-run centres. Elastic and shifting, these definitions of archive vary depending on one's position in time and in relation to the archive as a physical place. I argued that the first two groups, represented by *archive* and *an archives*, aligned with positions outside and inside the physical archive, and allowed for thinking dominated by either the archive-as-metaphor or by the archives-as-physical-entity, respectively. Although I considered the distinctions between these groups, my aim was not to frame them as mutually exclusive, especially since ideas have shifted from one group to the other over time. Instead, I sought to use these groups as each other's foils, revealing and highlighting their distinguishing characteristics without pitting one group against each other.

These two definitions of archive, as metaphor and as physical entity, need to sit side-by-side: neither is complete without the other. Both understandings are equally valid at the same time, and both offer differing insights into a very complex idea. Perhaps the best way to think about them is as increasingly specific examinations of the same topic—a macro to micro approach. Into this macro category I have grouped a number of thinkers, including Foucault, Derrida, Hall, and Ketelaar. All are concerned with notions of power in the archive: its source and its use. For Foucault, archival power comes from its "system of discursivity," which not only defines what will be allowable within a discipline or field, but organizes it as well, pushing some events to

83

prominence while letting others fall away. For Derrida, power within the archive comes from access and privilege: controlling who can enter, use, and contribute to the archive is a way of exerting power. Derrida also moves us towards ideas around symbolic power, suggesting that knowledge of the archive might matter more than what it actually contains. Hall, who, like Ketelaar, takes an approach informed by some of Foucault's other work, argues that power is manifest in the archive when it is officially recognized. The act of constituting an archive is ultimately a move towards participating in—or at least existing in contrast to—mainstream historical narratives. While this act risks the loss of innocence associated with the pre-archive, it is a required move if the group to which it belongs wishes to exert power through it. Ketelaar considered power—or rather, the compound notion of knowledge-power—as it is expressed through the physical space and physical organization of the archive. Controlling access and behaviour through policies and procedures, while creating knowledge through the organization of papers and other archival materials, is yet another way in which the archive creates and expresses its power.

I referred to Ketelaar's text as a link between the archive-as-metaphor and archive-as-place, because he considers the relationship between the idea of archive and its physical manifestation. So too do a wide array of authors who fit into the micro or *an archives* category. It was from within this category or framework that I explored a number of ideas, including the influence of theory on the archives, shifts in archival power structures, and the ontological problems that emerge around art documents. I considered how contemporary understandings of the archive, informed by the theories of people such as Foucault, no longer allow for illusions of neutrality; it is no longer sufficient to pretend that archival materials are somehow untouched or pristine

records that will allow the intrepid historian to reveal "how things *really* happened."

Accompanying the dissolution of this idea is the emergence of community archiving, one of four

major trends Cook identified in the history of archival thought, and one that sees the

redistribution of power from archivists to communities, and from dominant to non-dominant

groups. While the way in which community archiving proceeds can vary, I suggested that the

concept aligned well with Williams' spectrum of specializing, alternative, and oppositional

organizations. I attempted to fit the archives of at least some artist-run centres within this

framework, pointing out that such an approach allows them to maintain power and control of

their archives, while also choosing a political stance.

Consideration of some of the more practical aspects of archives then turned to the art-document

dilemma. Far from simply a matter of storage, the ability to categorize an item as art, document,

both, or neither has important implications for both the materials and the artist-run archives that

house them. Classification determines the ways in which the materials can be analyzed and used.

Archival material is often, though not always, treated differently than art; the information to be

gleaned from each type of material varies with context, resulting in different constructions of

knowledge. Further, classifications are deeply entwined with political orientations: how an

organization chooses to approach its documents forces it to engage with questions of identity and

of alignment with mainstream practices. Thinking about documents as art allows them to become

commodities, which in turn seems to contravene the intentions of at least some of the artists

involved in the foundational years of the artist-run movement. Indeed, it moves them closer to

the system from which they initially sought to exist differently. But on the other hand, resisting

the (re)classification of documents as art—a classification that may be tenuous and debatable to

begin with—fails to take into account the ways in which such materials are being used. Artists and curators associated with artist-run centres are reinterpreting and re-presenting documents in an artistic manner, and in doing so, contribute to the creation of artist-run centre histories and knowledge while also examining the nature of the movement itself.

Unable to come to a fixed conclusion about the problems of classification, I have instead suggested the adoption of fluid identities, analogous to those of artist-run centres themselves. Acknowledging that centres change over time, I have suggested that the art-document dilemma is one that will shift along with perceptions and ideas. It is here that ontology meets epistemology: the perception of the nature of a thing, its given or created identity, contributes to the creation of knowledge through a flexible and changing framework of classification for that thing. Re-defining a thing changes what might be knowable about it, and how that knowledge might be used.

Thinking about the links between art and document brought me to *an archive*, the final and most loosely defined body of literature that informs this research. In this section, I tried to understand archive in a Foucauldian and metaphorical sense: what counts as knowledge and can be included in an investigation around the operations and political positions of artist-run centres? What is the body of work that artist-run centres have produced about themselves, and what does it say about them? This symbolic archive exists in a form that is distributed across artist-run centres and other organizations and institutions; it is not the production of a single centre, but rather a mass of literature that exists in various libraries, archives, and exhibitions. This material emphasizes the importance of publication, exchange, and collection to artist-run culture; writing one's own

history, and having it validated through a network of peers (including an artist-run library), is an essential and deeply rooted component of the artist-run movement.

My attempt to understand an artist-run archive was complicated by the impossibility of fully separating the metaphorical and the literal: the publications that count as knowledge around the operations and politics of artist-run centres also appear in the physical archives of artist-run centres—the "Art Publications Archives" described by Bienvenue and investigated more in Chapter Three. While such overlap in the archive-as-place does not respect the traditional boundaries of libraries (published materials) and archives (generally unpublished), it reinforces the "do-it-yourself" nature of many centres: here, *archive* must expand to encompass what centres demand of it. *An archive* is thus an ongoing negotiation of identity and systems of permissible knowledge expressed in publications, artworks, documents, and any other vehicles. Put another way: everything artist-run centres produce, regardless of format, ultimately becomes part of their archive, often in the physical sense, and always in the metaphorical sense.

From within this expansive artist-run archive, I have suggested that there is relatively little written material that specifically addresses the archives of artist-run centres as a subject in and of themselves, rather than as a source of content. (In contrast, there are a number of works of art and exhibitions, sometimes commissioned by centres, which do a better job of considering archives as more than a means to an end). Additionally, and in spite of shared concerns, the archives of artist-run centres are only recently coming to the attention of formally trained archivists, while artist-run centres seem reticent to access the knowledge developed from within the archival field. If they are accessing this knowledge, it would appear that they are not yet

writing widely about it in a public forum. This is not to say that artist-run centres need to replicate the processes and operations from the established field of archival science; there is no need for organizations with an alternative or oppositional stance to mimic the tactics of institutions. Just as some artist-run centres once sought to be deliberately different from their dominant counterparts, so too can their archives be different, and indeed, it perhaps makes more sense for artist-run centres to critically reflect on their archives and deliberately choose an alternative direction for them. This path may, as has been discussed, include the use of archival material as artistic material. It may also change over time. But what it must ultimately do is address the different ways knowledge can be constructed through the organization and use of materials produced by artist-run centres. It must ultimately be shaped by an overarching question about the construction of knowledge: what are the epistemological challenges that artist-run centre archives pose?

Chapter Three: Where Are We Now? Surveying Artist-Run Centre Archives

3.1 Introduction: Creating a Starting Point

This chapter recounts and analyzes an ostensibly simple undertaking: a survey of artist-run centres in Canada, intended to establish some basic information about their archives. To date, relatively little has been published about the archives of artist-run centres, leading to some notable gaps in the knowledge about them. For example, what exactly do we mean by the term *archive* when we use it in relation to artist-run centres?[1] What does such a thing contain? How does it grow? Who uses it, and for what purposes? Do all centres have one? How do they think about their archives? To begin to address these questions, I conducted an online survey of selected artist-run centres in the late summer of 2013. In addition to establishing some basic data about these archives, the results are an initial step towards understanding how they might relate to broader aspects of artist-run culture.

The survey was complicated by the definitions of two key terms: *archive* and, surprisingly, *artist-run centre*. As suggested in Chapter Two, *archive* can take on a number of different meanings, depending on the areas from which the definition emerges, and the time in which they emerge. In the case of artist-run centres, the (sometimes) informal and/or undefined nature of the archives leads to particularly porous boundaries. While some ambiguity is tolerable and even

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[1] Note that the use of the term *archive* in realtion to *artist-run centres* in this chapter is different from the *an archive* concept outlined in Chapter Two. This chapter generally examines the archive as a physical entity, although its symbolic implications are also considered.

welcome, a lack of a common definition led to some unexpected responses, as detailed below. For at least some participants, exactly what counts as archive—and what does not—remains in question.

At the same time, the definition of *artist-run centre* presented its own set of challenges. This was an unexpected issue, given that the concept of artist-run centres is generally well understood. But while there are many reasonable definitions of such organizations, their limits become apparent when assembling a list of potential participants, especially when it is accepted that the receipt of funding from the Canada Council for the Arts is not necessarily the main criterion for classification, nor is a stated dedication to the creation or exhibition of a particular medium. Indeed, questions around funding, medium specificity, and mandates combine with shifting operational models to make the production of a list a complicated task. It was ultimately the idea of being *artist-run*—irrespective of gallery space, permanency, funding sources, or other factors—that became the defining criterion.

After expanding upon the survey's rationale, this chapter discusses the challenges that emerged while compiling lists of potential participants. It then turns to the survey's methodology: the development of the survey, aim of its questions, its limitations, and technical aspects. An analysis of the survey's results comprises the latter portion of this chapter, which closes with suggestions for further investigation.

3.2 Survey Rationale

Missing from the growing body of literature about artist-run centres in Canada is a dedicated text or resource about their archives. While these archives have garnered mention in a number of publications, these references are often cursory and focused on a single centre. With the exception of some very specific symposium proceedings, such texts tend to gloss over the more practical aspects of an artist-run archive, taking its existence for granted and failing to connect the archive with larger power structures related to the functioning of the centre itself.[2] This lack of information impedes a deeper understanding of artist-run centres, while also incurring some real-world consequences: it is difficult to manage, fund, publicize, and use something about which very little is known. Knowing about these archives, then, is important on both theoretical and practical levels.

While the survey would not be able to understand in detail the complex functioning of each participant's archive, what it could do was generate data that could be useful in its aggregate form. Such data would create a snapshot of artist-run centre archives in 2013, revealing their similarities and differences, identifying the specific challenges they face, and pointing to the opportunities they might present for artists and researchers. In the context of this thesis, the survey data could offer evidence of how such archives may or may not vary from their institutional (that is, "traditional") counterparts, which in turn would be useful in gauging the potential alterity of these archives, and thus their utility as an extension of a centre's mandate, or of artist-run culture more generally.

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[2] I refer here to Rachel Chatalbash et al., ed., *Artists' Records in the Archives: Symposium Proceedings* (New York: Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York, Inc., 2013).

The main rationale behind the survey, however, was to provide a starting point, to generate some basic data that could provide a foundation for this thesis. The archives of artist-run centres are a relatively unexplored area; establishing some basic information about them helps to fill in some of the blanks while also identifying areas for further investigation. This information may prove to be of some use not only to scholars, but to artist-run centres themselves, who may wish to use such information in thinking about and managing their archives.

3.3 Survey Design and Limitations

3.3.1 Overview

The survey addressed the following areas: the existence of a centre's archive, policies about it, the materials it holds (including both the format of the records, as well as the types of information they contain), location, accessibility, and funding. Participants were also asked about the use of the archive and their attitude towards it. Additionally, it was necessary to gather some basic information about the participants, including their roles at their organization, and the category that best described the mandate and operations of their centre.

Excluding the participant's initial choice of language (English or French), the survey had 16 questions, most of which were in multiple-choice format.[3] Participants were first asked for their

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[3] Both versions of the survey were equivalent. The survey was composed in English, and translated into French by a certified translator. After choosing the preferred language, participants were either directed to page 2 (English) or page 16 (French). All of the questions, in both languages, were part of the same survey, although access to the

consent, then asked for their name, the organization where they worked, and their position there. Subsequent questions asked about the topics listed above, while the final two asked for any additional thoughts, and gauged participant willingness to engage in an additional interview.

There were 254 organizations identified as potential survey participants. Letters of Information (LOIs), including a link to the survey, were sent to these organizations via their publicly available e-mail addresses, or via a request form supplied through their web page. Nine of the e-mails could not be delivered, whether due to a full mailbox, an account that was no longer being maintained, or some other technical problem. Some potential respondents contacted me directly, but declined to take the survey itself. The survey was open for approximately 45 days, and at its conclusion, there were 69 responses that were complete and suitable for use in this study. These responses are discussed in greater detail below.

3.3.2 Identifying Potential Participants: The Challenges of Defining Artist-Run Centres

Assembling a list of potential survey participants was a two-step process, with a broad and inclusive list being drafted before reviewing organizational mandates to ensure a reasonable fit within recognized definitions of artist-run centres. The second step, confirming compliance with "recognized definitions," was especially challenging because of the lack of a single, agreed-upon and standard definition of an artist-run centre. Definition*s*—in the plural—is the keyword here, and suggests the many ways centres have existed over the past forty years, not only as individual

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various pages was limited based on language choice. There were, in other words, different paths for each language. The order of the questions and answers remained the same in both survey pathways.

organizations that sometimes reinvent themselves, but as a network or movement that is diverse, dynamic, and at times contradictory.[4]

Concerns over just how we define artist-run centres and their roles have played out over the course of time, as illustrated by a recent series of articles in the journal *Fillip*. In its pages, multiple voices, all from people deeply involved with various centres for several decades, argue for different definitions and point to different understandings of the past. I refer specifically to *Fillip* 12 (Fall 2010), where an article by Keith Wallace, "Artist-Run Centres in Vancouver: A Reflections on Three Texts," discusses, among other things, the text he wrote for the 1991 book, *Vancouver Anthology: The Institutional Politics of Art*, as well as two chapters in *Vancouver Anthology's* successor, 2007's *Vancouver Art and Economies*, written by Michael Turner and Reid Shier. Wallace's article is critiqued in a subsequent issue (*Fillip* 14, Summer 2011) by Turner and Shier. Their assertions about centres and their continued relevance is then critiqued by Lorna Brown in *Fillip* 15 (Fall 2011). Each offers a different take on artist-run centres, and each admits that they have changed over time, as has the environment in which they exist. Despite these points of agreement, questions of alterity, necessity, and roles remain contentious. But that this decade-spanning dialogue has occurred at all, is, as Brown points out, "the best evidence that we have not seen the last of artists' self-organization and self-determined activity."[5]

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[4] I owe the description of artist-run centres as sometimes contradictory to Lorna Brown in her article, "Responses to *On Further Reflection*," *Fillip* 15 (Fall 2011), accessed January 15, 2015, http://fillip.ca/content/responses-to-on-further-reflection

[5] Brown, "Responses".

What the *Fillip* dialogue suggests to me is that the term "artist-run centre" describes any number of different organizations. These organizations differ not only from each other, but also from their own past incarnations; a single organization can have multiple identities over time. Defining such a thing—or rather, understanding the challenges of doing so, and identifying what is at stake—ultimately matters not only for the creation of a list, but for understanding how people involved in centres can understand them differently over time. Put another way: the people who participated in this survey were not necessarily the same people who worked at a particular centre at the time of its founding and at the time when its archive was initiated. The motivations and concerns of those early members may or may not be the same as those who have subsequently worked in a centre; the third- or fourth- or fifth-generation of artist-run centre workers may have an entirely different understanding of a centre, its mandate, and its role in a larger arts ecology. Thus their interpretations of an archive, their understandings of its role and function as it relates to a centre, may be entirely different from those of their predecessors.[6]

Apart from accounting for any perceived "inaccuracies" in participant responses, the point I wish to emphasize is that there are multiple, and sometimes equally appropriate, definitions available, and that these various definitions pose challenges for a survey of "all" artist-run centres in Canada. Each definition has its flaws and utility. Consider, for example, the definition provided by the Artist-Run Centres and Collectives of Ontario (ARCCO), an Ontario-based service organization. It describes them as "non-profit organizations, run by and for artists, supporting new and innovative practices in the arts."[7] This succinct definition allows organizations some

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[6] Note that in Chapters Four and Six, where I discuss MAWA and grunt, respectively, the interview participants are longstanding or founding members of the organizations.

[7] Artist-Run Centres and Collectives of Ontario, "Artist-run Centres," accessed July 21, 2013, http://arcco.ca/artist-run-centres/

room to vary; permanency and duration, for example, do not play into ARCCO's definition, while the use of "organization" as a synonym for "centre" renders a physical space less necessary (it shifts the importance away from a space, and onto the entity itself). There remains, however, a lack of clarity around the artistic disciplines and activities that will count, as well as around the phrase "new and innovative." Is a festival an artist-run centre? Is a film screening society? What about a community radio station? How do we define "new"? Who gets to decide? These questions are not facetious, although they may appear so at face value. Instead, I pose them in order to locate potential boundaries when "the arts" remains a category with undefined inclusions and exclusions.

It is perhaps equally telling that the Canada Council for the Arts, a major funder of at least some artist-run centres, currently fails to offer a definition, preferring instead to use a number of criteria to determine eligibility for funding. An arm's length governmental body funded by a parliamentary appropriation, the Canada Council has been, and continues to be, important to the artist-run movement in this country: its early and continued support of artist-run activities has been essential to the development and longevity of these organizations.[8] While there are multiple and ongoing debates surrounding the relationship between the Council and centres—does the Council conform to the changing needs of centres, or do centres have to respond to the Council's changing priorities and/or bureaucratic requirements? Does its funding restrict innovation, or is it essential for the operation of artist-run centres?—it remains that the Council has been influential

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[8] For further discussion of the intertwined history and continually re-negotiated relationships of artist-run centres and the Canada Council, see Clive Robertson, *Policy Matters: Administrations of Art and Culture* (Toronto: YYZBOOKS, 2006), 15-18, and particularly Part II, "Custody Battles with/at the Canada Council," 88-150. See also Keith Wallace, "A Particular History: Artist-run Centres in Vancouver," in *Vancouver Anthology*, 2nd edition, ed. Stan Douglas (Vancouver: Talonbooks and Or Gallery, 2011), 28-51.

in the continued existence of centres. It is for this reason that its funding programs must be considered here.[9]

The Canada Council offers two grants that are of interest, since they allow for the reverse engineering of a definition: *Assistance to Artist-Run Centres* and *Grants to Media Arts Organizations: Multi-Year Operating*. The grants are similar, but make somewhat arbitrary separations based on media. It is essential, however, to consider both grants, not only because of the fluid nature of artist-run centre programming, but because of the lack of historical distinctions between the media and visual arts in artist-run centres. Indeed, several "new media" organizations, such as EMMEDIA and Video Pool, have roots in artist-run centres. Calgary's EMMEDIA (formerly Centre Art Video) emerged from the Off Centre Centre (now The New Gallery), while Winnipeg's Video Pool was an offshoot of Plug In.[10] Such organizations, although funded by different granting programs, are closely related, and may consider themselves artist-run centres.

For the *Assistance to Artist-Run Centres* grant, the criteria include incorporation, status as a non-profit body, direction by a board consisting primarily of practicing artists, a permanent space that is open to the public, operations that have been in place for three or more years, and the payment of artist's fees. Most importantly, centres must "have a principal mandate to encourage research, production, presentation, promotion and dissemination of new works in contemporary visual

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[9] Note that I focus on the Canada Council in this section, although funding program regulations at the provincial and municipal levels also influence centre operations and defining characteristics. These different jurisdictions create multiple and complex obligations for centres. Also note that in June of 2015, the Council introduced a new funding model for all of its programs, set to be implemented in 2017. At the time of writing, the implications of this change were not yet clear, although it is possible that the funding programs discussed in this chapter may not exist in the future.

[10] EMMEDIA, "History," accessed July 24, 2014, http://emmedia.ca/?page_id=124, and Plug In Institute of Contemporary Art, "History," accessed July 24, 2014, http://www.plugin.org/history

arts."[11] The application guidelines also note, "For this program, the visual arts include drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, printmaking, installation, performance art, architecture and craft."[12] Potential applicants may "include video, film, new media, audio and interdisciplinary works in [their] programming," although "[i]f your organization's primary activities are in these fields ... you must apply to the Media Arts or Inter-Arts programs."[13]

The second relevant program, *Grants to Media Arts Organizations: Multi-Year Operating*, could be superficially summed up as a grant to non-visual arts artist-run centres (i.e., artist-run centres focused on "video, film, new media, audio and interdisciplinary works"), although the actual eligibility requirements are more complex. Organizations have to be incorporated and not for profit; they must have been operating for a period of time (although it is only two years in this case, instead of three); they must be directed primarily by artists or professionals in related fields; they must support the general advancement of the media arts; they must "demonstrate sound financial management;" and they must pay artists' fees.[14] One of the key differences, in addition to the explicitly stated need for fiscal responsibility, is the need to have previously obtained a grant from the Council. Festivals are eligible for funding under this model, as are cinematheques—organizations that combine the functions of an archive, museum, and cinema, with a focus on film, video, and television.[15]

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[11] Canada Council for the Arts, "Assistance to Artist-Run Centres," accessed July 10, 2013, http://www.canadacouncil.ca/en/visual-arts/find-grants-and-prizes/grants/assistance%C2%A0to-artist-run-centres

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Canada Council for the Arts, "Grants to Media Arts Organizations: Multi-Year Operating," accessed June 3, 2013, http://canadacouncil.ca/grants/mediaarts/cx129303424079762515.htm

[15] Cinematheque Québecoise defines a cinematheque as follows: "A cinematheque is an institution that preserves and provides access to films and, in recent years, video and television programs as well. It is both an archive and a museum, but not a lending institution, although some places do use the term in this sense." (Cinematheque Québecoise, "Frequently Asked Questions: What is a Cinematheque?" accessed July 11, 2013, http://www.cinematheque.qc.ca/en/cinematheque/frequently-asked-questions

The criteria for both programs primarily serve the Council's need to distribute its limited funding transparently, and exclude organizations based on factors that do not necessarily relate to the artist-run aspects of a centre. Indeed, some of the criteria have little to do with the underlying philosophy of how the centre operates, and more to do with bureaucracy. As such, meeting or not meeting these eligibility criteria does not necessarily define a centre. (Nor does meeting these criteria guarantee a grant, and thus a place on the Council's list of recipients. Eligible organizations may be turned down due to limited funding, or for other reasons). To better understand these limits, consider, for example, an unincorporated artist-run centre. Does the fact that it has not registered bylaws with a provincial body mean that it is not an artist-run centre? What if a centre does not have a permanent space, or operates out of multiple and changing spaces? What if it has not been in existence for three or more years? Or what if it wishes to pay CARFAC fees, but cannot yet pay full amounts due to a lack of funding?[16] I do not think that any of these limitations necessarily mean that a particular organization is not an artist-run centre. Instead, the criteria outlined by the Council provide a base on which to build, while also reinforcing the notion that it can be difficult to define an artist-run centre.

My consideration of appropriate definitions could go on almost indefinitely. But rather than continuing the search for the right balance of inclusivity and exclusivity, for a perfect definition that likely does not exist, I would like to instead consider the utility of an idea suggested by

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[16] CARFAC (Canadian Artists' Representation/Le Front des artistes canadiens) is a national, non-profit advocacy organization. It sets a recommended minimum fee schedule for the payment of artists whose work is featured in an exhibition. It also suggests fees for related activities, such as artist talks, curation, and the use of images for promotional purposes. See more at http://www.carfac.ca/about/

Jonathan Middleton, an artist involved in a variety of Vancouver-based centres. In *decentre: concerning artist-run culture*, Middleton writes,

> The term "artist-run centre" is less useful to describe a particular model of institution as it is to describe a sentiment. The principle attribute of this sentiment being responsibility—that artists should take an interest and a role in all aspects of art—not only in its production, but also in its contextualization through exhibition and writing, its distribution, collection, preservation, institutionalization and historicization...[17]

Middleton's description of "artist-run" as a sentiment more than an organization is particularly apt: it is the intentions behind an organization, its principles and values, that give meaning to its actions, and ultimately provide a definition.[18] This thinking locates the definition within the centre; it is not something imposed from the exterior, but rather a particular philosophy or idea that comes from within. It also emphasizes the multiple roles played by artists, and asks them to take "an interest and a role in all aspects of art," which in turn implicates archives as a component of an artist-run operation. While this definition is not without its flaws—many of the points I have made about the ARCCO definition are valid here, if not more so—it reflects an understanding of artist-run centres as more than just spaces; it acknowledges that "distribution, collection, preservation, institutionalization and historicization"—all processes connected to archives—are important aspects of being artist-run.

After much consideration, and with Middleton's definition—and a few others—in mind, a preliminary list of potential participants was created using the Canada Council's list of 2011

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[17] Jonathan Middleton, "68.1," in *Decentre*, ed. Robert Labossière (Toronto: YYZBOOKS, 2008), 186.
[18] For more on the important differences between principles and policies, see Clive Robertson, *Policy Matters: Administrations of Art and Culture* (Toronto: YYZBOOKS, 2006), Chapter 8 ("The collective noun model: Arm's length status and peer assessment," 112-141. This chapter includes an interview with the former Head of the Visual Arts Section of the Canada Council, Edythe Goodridge, wherein Robertson and Goodridge discuss the principles that initially informed the Council's practice, but were subsequently eroded by changes in government and an undue emphasis on policy.

grant recipients in both the *Assistance to Artist-Run Centres* and the *Grants to Media Arts Organizations: Multi-Year Operating* programs, as well as lists from previous years. These sources were supplemented with information from ARCA, the Artist-Run Centres and Collectives Conference, a national advocacy organization comprised of provincial and regional artist-run centre associations.[19] Once this list was drafted, I reviewed the mandates of the organizations, and in doing so, also checked websites for links or references to any sister organizations that may have been excluded from other lists.

I erred on the side of inclusion, finding it better to risk mild personal embarrassment at contacting an inappropriate candidate rather than excluding them entirely, and knowing that candidates could simply choose not to participate in the survey if it held little relevance for them. Indeed, in spite of the mandate review, my interpretation of an artist-run centre might vary from how an organization views itself. I included, for example, festivals as potential candidates. While their lack of a permanent space and limited periods of activity may seem to be exclusionary factors, it remains that being artist-run was ultimately the criterion of greatest importance, and the one factor these diverse entities had in common.[20]

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[19] ARCA uses an acronym that does not match its name. It currently uses ARCA rather than ARCCC because it felt the former was easier to remember and pronounce. It is comprised of nine smaller artist-run centre associations: Association of Artist-Run Centres from the Atlantic (AARCA); Le Regroupement des centres d'artistes autogérés du Québec (RCAAQ); Artist-Run Centres and Collectives of Ontario (ARCCO); Manitoba Artist-Run Centres Coalition (MARCc); Plains Association of Artist-Run Centres (PARCA); Alberta Association of Artist-Run Centres (AAARC); Pacific Association of Artist-Run Centres (PAARC); L'Association des groupes en arts visuels francophones (AGAVF); and The Aboriginal Region. For more, see ARCA, "Who Are We?" accessed May 20, 2015, http://www.arccc-cccaa.org/en/arca/

[20] Other organizations that might be considered outside or on the fringes of the definition of artist-run centres include community radio and television stations, and organizations that exist to assist artist-run centres (i.e., associations of artist-run centres). While such organizations met the main criterion of being artist-run, and were asked to participate, most declined.

To accommodate for my inclusive approach, in the survey's Letter of Information, I stated that "artist-run centre" was being interpreted in a broad manner, and added that organizations that do not consider themselves as such should disregard the survey. This option allowed organizations the option of identifying themselves as an artist-run centre (or an analogous self-organized body) or not. The exact phrasing of the letter can be found in Appendix II.

The finished list was intended to be broad, comprehensive, and inclusive, while still allowing individual organizations to classify themselves in the manner that they considered most appropriate. The list was not, however, exhaustive, and there are a number of potential participants that may have been inadvertently ignored. Among the excluded would be organizations without a web presence, and organizations without membership in ARCA or its regional equivalent, including those who do not receive Council funds, but do receive municipal or provincial funding.

3.3.3 General Research Ethics Board Approval

Since this research involved human subjects, it required clearance from the General Research Ethics Board at Queen's University. Following the submission of an application, which included a completed version of the survey, approval was granted. The approval letter, as well as a number of approved amendment letters, can be found in Appendix I.

Appendix II contains information that was integral to approval, including the Letter of Information (LOI) and the Consent Form/Survey Introduction. It is important to note that the

risks of participating in the survey were minimal, and that there were no direct benefits for participants. People who chose to take the survey were able to skip any question, quit the survey at any time, or withdraw their contribution, all without penalty. The LOI was sent via e-mail, and included both English and French versions, with the language used on the organization's website presented first. Included in the LOI was a link to the survey.

3.3.4 Question Formats

The majority of the questions in this survey were presented in multiple-choice format, with the selection of multiple options available for most questions (that is, you could "check off all that apply" in most instances). There were two main reasons for this decision: first, by limiting the range of answers, it would be possible to compare results between artist-run centres with relative ease. Second, by making the survey fairly easy to complete (that is, by not demanding multiple long answer questions), I hoped to both respect the participant's time and increase the response rate.

This format, of course, has limitations. An answer to a question may not easily fit into the available options, and selecting the closest option risks obscuring nuances. To partially address this problem, an "other – please specify" option was included in most instances. Participants also had the option of expressing themselves in a free text box near the end of the survey.

3.3.5 Questions, Assumptions and Rationales

After providing consent and identifying themselves, participants were asked to describe the general mandate of their organization. This question was motivated by the notion that an organization's mandate would affect the information it produced, both in content and in format. An organization that exists for the purpose of "advancing the arts" through exhibitions, presentations, or screenings could potentially produce different material than an organization that facilitates the production of new artistic works.

Participants were given the option of one of four choices to describe their mandate. The exact phrasing of the choices appears in Appendix II, but can be summarized here as follows: advancing the arts through exhibitions; providing services to help artists advance their careers; providing production facilities; or "other." These four basic choices, while limited, were informed by Burgess and De Rosa's earlier study, which sought to categorize artist-run centres into some seven different groups.[21] The choice to provide only three main options in this survey stemmed from the fact that 90% of Burgess and De Rosa's survey participants fell into the first category, "advancing the contemporary arts."[22] The next two largest categories of centres were those that were dedicated to specific art practices, and those that operated production facilities, although the authors point out that "all of the production centres identified in category 3 are in fact a sub-set of the second category of organizations dedicated to specific artistic practices."[23] The remaining categories in Burgess and De Rosa's report, while distinct, represented few artist-

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[21] Marilyn Burgess and Maria De Rosa, *The Distinct Role of Artist-Run Centres in the Canadian Visual Arts Ecology* (Montréal: MDR Burgess Consultants, 2011), 19-20.
[22] Ibid., 20.
[23] Ibid., 20, note 33.

run centres, and indeed, depending on interpretation, could be considered additional subsets of the first category. For ease of comparison, in this survey, the choice available to those centres was "other."

The next question was pivotal, and determined which version of the quiz participants would complete: Does your artist-run centre have what it considers to be an archive? If a participant indicated that their organization did not have an archive, they were given the option of providing an explanation in a free text box prior to being directed to the shorter form of the survey that skipped over questions pertaining to an archive. Participants who indicated that their organization had an archive were directed to the complete version of the survey.

The phrasing of this question was especially important in the context of the survey. Just as potential participants were ultimately asked whether they consider themselves an artist-run centre or not, they were also given the freedom to define the term *archive* as they saw fit. This phrasing is intended to acknowledge the organization's agency in determining what does and does not constitute an archive; in line with the notion of autonomy, this self-definition allows multiple variant definitions of the term. Allowing for individual definitions also sidesteps some of the confusion that surrounds discipline-based definitions.

Organizations with an archive were then asked if they had a written policy—that is, a set of guidelines—about it. This question was intended to both gauge the organization's attitude towards the archive, and to better understand its contents. The assumption here was that an organization with a written policy would have a more "active" attitude towards its archive; it

would have an idea about its current state, how it would grow, and what should and should not be included in it. A policy could shape the archive, or perhaps vice versa: a policy could be developed in response to the archive, so that the existing form could determine the future form. In contrast, a lack of a policy could indicate a lack of staff or financial resources to give to the archive. It could indicate a more haphazard approach, or even suggest that the organization's archive is simply not its greatest concern, and as such, no policy is needed. An organization without a policy might also have a broader range of materials in its archive, and may have no formal system of organization in place.

The subsequent questions sought to get a better understanding of the archive's physical and conceptual composition: in what format are the materials in your organization's archive, and what types of information do they hold? The former question relates to concerns over conservation and accessibility, and may vary depending on the nature of the participating organization. An organization that focuses on facilitating the production of new media works, for instance, could have records in different formats than an organization that focuses on the exhibition of works in other media. An archive with extensive holdings in video format could be facing preservation challenges that may be more urgent than an organization with an extensive holding of slides, on account of both the limited lifespan of videotapes and the increasing obsolescence of the equipment required to view them. The inability to access information because of format or physical deterioration affects the use value of an archive.

In addition to knowing about the format of archival materials, it is equally important to know about the type of information or content they contain. This was a particularly difficult question to

ask in multiple-choice format, not only because it is difficult to anticipate the many different types of information an archive may hold, but because listing these options creates a rather leading question: even though participants were given the option to enter additional information, a list of the different forms of content that may appear in an archive creates the appearance of completion, as though everything on the list is everything that *could* be in an archive. Similarly, the list—which was developed based on my own experiences in artist-run archives—could create the impression that what was on the list was what *should* be in an archive. Included on the list were materials that would not necessarily be included in a traditional archive, such as mass-produced books, works of art, or records not produced by the organization in question—items that provide evidence of a certain level of "categorical drift."[24] Such materials would normally find a home in a library or a collecting art gallery, rather than an archive, or they may be discarded. Including them on the list suggests that they may belong in an archive, and an organization that excluded them may draw the conclusion that their collection is inadequate. But it was important to include these materials as options in order to be consistent with the notion of a self-defined archive. If a participant has an archive that includes materials that would normally be excluded from an institutional archive, it is important to know why these materials are there, and how they might be used. How could this inclusive approach to collecting, whether driven by policy or not, affect what can be made from the archive? Whether by choice or by accident, (how) could this unique body of assembled material provide a new way to write and think about history?

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[24] The phrase "categorical drift" was inspired by the title of Lorna Brown's essay, "Category Drift," written to accompany grunt gallery's online archive and accessed March 31, 2014, http://gruntarchives.org/essay-category-drift-lorna-brown.html#fn:275.archivists

The next series of questions related to the accessibility of an archive. Participants were asked where their archival materials were stored, if they were accessible to the public, and the ways in which members of the public could access them. Presented in multiple-choice format, participants were given the option of checking off more than one possible storage location, and more than one method of access. This question intended to take into account the fact that not all archival materials are necessarily managed in the same way: an artist-run centre could have records stored in multiple places, and could make them available in a number of ways. Some records may have been donated to an institutional archive, some may be kept at the organization itself, and others could be made available online. Consequently, some records could be available only at, for example, a university archive, while others must be viewed on-site or online.

While having records in more than one location could simply be the result of a lack of storage space, it could also suggest that a centre values some records differently than others, and subsequently treats them in different ways. Are the most valuable records donated to a larger, dedicated institution—one that has resources specifically for the organization and preservation of records, as well as regular opening hours? Or are the most valuable records kept onsite, or made available online for the widest possible dissemination? How is value assigned to these records, and who makes decisions about them? Could the different storage locations simply be the result of changing archival policies, or are there other factors at work? What is the impact of having records spread across several real and virtual locations? While the survey question was too limited to capture these finer points, the unequal treatment of records is certainly an area for further investigation, and is (partially) addressed later in this chapter, and in Chapters Five and Six.

The following two questions related to funding, or lack thereof. Participants were asked if they

received funding for their archive, and if so, to describe the source (federal, provincial,

municipal, private, "other"). They were also asked whether the funding was project-based or

ongoing. The goal with these questions was to determine what resources, if any, artist-run

centres were accessing in order to manage their archives.[25] The answers would also suggest a

number of further avenues for investigation. For example, if an organization receives no funding

for its archive, how does that impact the use of the archive? Are funds set aside from its

operating budget? Is "archive management" simply included as one of many tasks staff members

must address? If an organization does receive funding, who provided it? Is a lack of funding

ultimately preventing the organization from doing what it wishes with its archive, or does it

consider its archive a less important aspect of its operations? Is there a larger need for funding

specifically for the archives of self-organized bodies, or would financial support ultimately shift

the role of these organizations, so that they become more focused on the past than the present?

The subsequent survey question sought to delve deeper into some of these issues by asking

participants to characterize their organization's attitude towards their archive. Five choices were

provided:

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[25] While the Canada Council for the Arts is a fluid organization that changes over time, currently, it appears that it neither actively prohibits nor encourages archival activities within its *Assistance to Artist-Run Centres* program. While explicitly stating that funds received through the program cannot be used for capital costs, it appears that money may otherwise be allocated as an organization sees fit, provided it continues to meet its mandate and to meet the Council's eligibility criteria. And indeed, depending on how one defines "services," an archive could fit within the Council's guidelines, which evaluates applicants based on the "[q]uality of the services offered to members and the community, or your organization's commitment to the development of contemporary visual arts practices in Canada, including engagements that reflect and advance the diverse nature of contemporary Canadian culture, such as its Aboriginal and culturally diverse communities." Canada Council for the Arts, "The Canada Council Guidelines and Application Form for Assistance to Artist-Run Centres, 2008-2013," accessed August 19, 2013, http://canadacouncil.ca/~/media/Files/Grants%20Prizes%20-%20EN/Visual%20Arts/Assistance%20to%20Artist-Run%20Centres/VAG14E%2008-13.pdf, 6.

- Our archive is a valuable resource that we have made a priority in our future plans
- We would like to give more attention to our archive, but are limited by a lack of funding and/or staff
- We focus on contemporary art and artists, and are less concerned with maintaining an archive, although we do have some records
- Other institutions can best manage archives, and we have donated (or are planning to donate) our records to another organization, or have otherwise disposed of them
- Other. Please specify.

The first four options were intended to provide participants with a range of answers that spanned different levels of archival involvement and valuing, from the greatest to the least. The fifth option, the ubiquitous "other," offered participants the opportunity to describe their organization's attitude in their own words. While it would have perhaps been preferential to ask this question in a short-answer free-text form, the multiple-choice format was chosen in the hopes of increasing the response rate. Indeed, if concerns over participant time and effort were not an issue, it would have been ideal to have participants write their own answers for most of the questions. Nevertheless, the data generated from the multiple-choice format remains useful, and is both succinct and easy to compare across multiple organizations and languages.

3.3.6 Timing

Potential survey participants were first contacted on July 31, 2013. The survey was left open for the following six weeks, until September 15, 2013. Potential participants were also sent a single reminder e-mail on September 1, 2013.

There were both advantages and disadvantages to providing such a long period of time to respond. It gave participants time to ask their boards for permission, if required, and allowed

them time to consider their answers, or to ask questions either of me or of their colleagues. If

they were particularly busy during a particular week, the survey could be postponed until later.

Of course, the survey could also be postponed so long that the deadline could easily pass.

The timing of the survey—over the late summer—was another factor that likely affected

response rates. Some organizations, especially those in Québec, are closed or operate on reduced

work hours for August, although the extended time period was intended to allow for this

situation. Others can be exceptionally busy through the summer, with staff preparing for the fall

season, which may mark the start of the organization's programming year and sometimes

coincides with major grant applications. In the end, since each self-organized body is unique, and

it is difficult to anticipate an organization's schedule, it was decided that the months of August

and September were as good a time as any.

3.3.7 Response Rate and Limiting Factors

There were ultimately 96 responses to the survey, of which 69 were complete and suitable for

inclusion. A complete survey was one where the respondent provided consent, gave his or her

name, organization, and position at the organization, and clicked the "done" button on the final

page of the survey. A respondent did not have to enter any additional information to render the

survey complete; the respondent had the option to skip any or all of the questions. However, in

the case of this specific survey, all of the completed responses included answers to nearly all of

the questions.

Incomplete or partial responses were registered when a respondent entered at least one answer and clicked "next" on at least one survey page. There were 27 incomplete responses, and most of which agreed to provide consent to the survey, but declined to provide any identifying information. In most cases, no other questions were answered. In a few cases, additional questions were answered, although it appears that respondents stopped midway through because another person from the same organization was in the process of completing the survey or had already done so.

69 completed responses from a potential pool of 254 participants is a response rate of 27%. While this number strikes me as low—and seems especially so in comparison to Burgess and De Rosa's rate of 77%— I lack sufficient background in survey methodology to assess this rate as successful or not.[26] I can, however, offer some speculative thoughts about why an organization would choose not to respond.

Perhaps one of the greatest factors would be the use of the term "artist-run centre" in the introductory literature and throughout the survey. While I intended it to be an encompassing term, and indicated that it was being interpreted broadly, I think a number of organizations may have avoided the survey simply because they do not consider themselves artist-run centres. With only a few exceptions, no organizations from the outer fringes of "artist-run centre-ness" replied. Were it possible to conduct the survey again, I would likely change my phrasing to something along the lines of *self-organized visual and media arts groups*.

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[26] Burgess and De Rosa, *The Distinct Role*, 4. Note that Burgess and de Rosa contacted 110 organizations, of which 85 responded. All but six of those who responded received funding from the Canada Council. I am curious whether the fact that the Council commissioned their survey had anything to do with the high response rate. At the same time, the authors were contacting organizations clearly identified as artist-run centres, whereas I interpreted the concept in a broader manner, which may also account for the differences in response rates.

There are, of course, any number of other reasons for not responding to the survey. A lack of time, knowledge, or interest may have contributed. The significant length of the Letter of Introduction may have been a factor, and so too many have been the fact that the link to the survey was placed near the end of the letter.[27] Technical limitations may have played a role, although if they did, they were not reported by the volunteers who tested the survey, nor by the actual participants. The timing of the survey, as discussed above, may also have limited the number of responses. Finally, an organization without an archive may simply have opted not to participate because of the limited relevance of the exercise.

In spite of the low response rate, when considered in isolation, having 69 completed surveys is perhaps not disastrous—especially when it is recalled that the Canada Council only funds 79 organizations through its *Assistance to Artist-Run Centres* program.[28] In any case, regardless of how one views the number of responses—whether as adequate or less so—it should be noted that the survey results do not include all artist-run centres or self-organized visual or media arts groups. As such, the results should be interpreted with care, and for the rest of this discussion, generalizations will be used with caution: while it is reasonable to expect that the results are generally representative of the state of archives in artist-run centres, there will be notable

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[27] Including the link at the end of the letter, as opposed to at the beginning, was a deliberate choice intended to encourage potential participants to read through the entire letter prior to clicking on the link. While it may have discouraged some participants, it seemed more important to ensure potential participants were giving informed consent than to garner a higher response rate by making the link to the survey more obvious.
[28] The Canada Council reports that in 2011, the most recent year of statistics available at the time of writing, it funded 79 organizations through its *Assistance to Artist-Run Centres* program. This information was obtained through a publicly available database on the Council's website, accessed September 21, 2013: http://canadacouncil.ca/council/grants/past-recipients

exceptions. Additionally, since no festivals or other time-limited organizations replied, it cannot be assumed that these findings would be equally applicable to them.

3.4 Results and Analysis

3.4.1 A Note About Language

Of the 69 completed surveys, two-thirds (46) were completed in English, and one-third (23) were completed in French. Because the choice of language was the first option presented to respondents, and because the survey and its results are arranged according to language, comparing results from the different language groups offers a seemingly obvious method of analysis—and a clear example of how ordering information affects the ways in which it is subsequently understood. But analyzing exclusively along the divisions of language does not necessarily create meaningful interpretations: while language adds a layer of depth to the analysis, and seems to play a role in some responses (especially when it comes to donating archival materials to outside institutions, and to provincial funding), it should be remembered that all of the organizations have identified themselves as artist-run centres, regardless of language preference. They share similarities and differences that stem from their unique histories, mandates, and funding situations, among other factors. Language choice can be a useful element of analysis, but so too can be age, size, overall operational budget, province/region, and board composition—all of which are factors to be investigated in future studies.

In the case of this particular study, language choice appears to coincide closely with geography more than anything else: it was only organizations in Québec that completed the survey in French, in spite of inviting francophone organizations from elsewhere—particularly Ontario and New Brunswick—to participate. However, for most of the questions, with a few notable exceptions that will be considered later on, responses in both languages were very similar, often within a margin of 5 to 7% (or three to five respondents) of each other. While the connection between the French language version of the survey and participants based in Québec makes it tempting to use the results to make generalizations about artist-run centres in that province, it must be remembered that the results are just a sample from centres in Québec. To interpret them as a whole would obscure both the subtle and the obvious differences between these varied organizations.

3.4.2 "Paperwork is Paperwork": Defining and Valuing Archives

With these caveats in place, I turn now to the consideration of the self-defined artist-run archive. Asked if they had what they considered to be an archive, the vast majority of respondents answered in the affirmative: 100% of respondents to the French version indicated that they had an archive, and 91% of the respondents to the English version indicated the same. Of the four respondents who indicated that they did not maintain an archive, only two provided a reason. One organization appears to have interpreted *archive* as a collection of works of art, and indicated that they were not a collecting institution, apart from the occasional purchase of a book or printed work.[29] The respondent did not mention "other" archival materials—minutes, e-mails, newsletters and other kinds of general paperwork, whether electronic or in hard copy. The

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[29] Bart Gazzola, Gallery/Communications Coordinator, AKA Artist-Run, September 3, 2013.

second respondent stated, "Our 'archives' are too sporadic and altogether inconsistent (storage, labelling, formatting) to be considered an archive."[30] This interesting response, while at first seeming contradictory—they have an archive, although they do not think of it as such—suggests another theme that was touched on previously: does an archive "count" if it cannot be accessed publicly? Can an archive be useful without some form of architecture or imposed structure, regardless of what that system might be? The respondent implies that archives must do more than merely exist in order to be of (potential) value or use.

Together, the two "no" responses point to the larger question with which I have been grappling throughout this project: just what exactly is an archive, especially in the specific context of an artist-run centre? The respondent from Engramme, a printmaking centre in Québec (QC), noted that their archive exists in two parts: a collection of governance, administrative, and documentary materials (that is, a fairly traditional archive), as well as a collection of prints made at the centre (a print archive).[31] The practice of collecting a print from an edition produced at a printmaking facility, or collecting a copy of a work produced in multiples of any kind of production facility, is common (another survey participant, the Society of Northern Alberta Printmakers (SNAP), also stated that they participate in this practice, but do not consider it a separate part of their archive).[32] In Engramme's case, it suggests that the centre has a fairly conventional understanding of archives, but has adapted this understanding to accommodate its specific production. In other responses, participants suggest that they too have different kinds of archives, although in these cases, the divisions occur in less conventional ways. Suggestions of these divisions emerge slightly later in the survey when a respondent comments, "When I look to

[30] Brian McBay, Executive Director, 221A, September 13, 2013.
[31] Diane Fournier, Direction, Engramme, August 2, 2013.
[32] April Dean, Executive Director, Society of Northern Alberta Print-artists (SNAP), September 3, 2013.

the next question, I'm confused. I don't consider governance materials, minutes or the like, to be an archive. Paperwork is paperwork. But I will soldier on with the survey with the new knowledge that you are casting a wider net than I would."[33] While it could be argued that the vast majority of archival material is paperwork—at least for much of the 20th century, if less so for the 21st, when shifts towards the digital have changed the format of records—to simply suggest a misunderstanding of the term *archive* would fail to take into account the multiple and shifting definitions of the word, but moreover, would ignore pertinent information about how the future materials of history are valued.

Another example of the non-traditional distinctions survey participants made around archives comes from Western Front, which separates its archives into multiple entities, and uses media as a category of distinction.[34] In response to the question, "In what format are the materials in your archive?" Western Front wrote,

> Answers to these questions pertain specifically to the Western Front Media Archive, which is considered its own entity (i.e. apart from paper records (including artist files), published materials, and ephemera also maintained at Western Front). Still images (photographic prints, negatives, and slides) are increasingly managed together with the Media Archive, and there is a strong likelihood that print materials will also come to be managed more formally under the archive/library umbrella in future. However, for the sake of clarity, I will answer questions about the Media Archive proper (audiovisual records).[35]

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[33] Shannon Cochrane, Artistic and Administrative Director, FADO Performance Art Centre (Fado Performance Inc.), August 1, 2013.

[34] In this context, *media* refers to documentation or works of art produced as audiovisual recordings.

[35] Jana Grazley, Archivist, Western Front, August 6, 2013.

Although the respondent states that answering the questions about one particular aspect of Western Front's archive is for clarity, the response actually raises a number of questions. Why is the Media Archive separated from the other materials? Is it a matter of format (audiovisual versus non-audiovisual) alone, or are there other factors at play? How are the things excluded from the Media Archive conceptualized by the organization? The respondent does not refer to them as archives, although I would recognize at least some of them as traditionally belonging to that domain. Is the Media Archive, which seems to have received the most attention from Western Front, the most important aspect of its potential research materials?

Along with the observation that "Paperwork is paperwork," Western Front's imagining of its multi-part archive seems to suggest that written records that deal with the operations of an artist-run centre are valued differently than other records. While the exact composition of the Media Archive appears to be fluid, it likely includes records that relate to the organization's programming: evidence of exhibitions, performances, events, and other activities related to the advancement of the visual and media arts, as well as works of art on film or video. Distinct from administrative records, such materials can be either or both documentation or art, and provide evidence of past activities, rather than evidence of the structures that allowed those activities to occur. Generally in visual form, documentation is flashier and contains a different type of information than paperwork. It is this type of material that bolsters an artist's career more so than, for example, minutes from a programming committee meeting where the artist was selected to exhibit at a particular organization. Emphasizing the role and importance of the artist, documentation minimizes the infrastructure that allows the artist to exhibit in the first place.

Valuing documentation, or materials specifically related to artists, over "paperwork," or materials related to the actual operations of a centre, is an act with potentially significant ramifications: it paves the way for a future history that is written about artists, with much less emphasis on the bodies that support them. This strikes me as the maintenance of the status quo, where the careers of notable artists—often individuals, and less often groups—are used as landmarks in a narrative of art history. Although these artists may be entirely different from those who exhibit at larger galleries or institutions (that is, they may be marginalized or excluded from the mainstream), the larger patterns remain. The roles played by the community and the groups that gathered to create the space where the artist could exhibit in the first place are downplayed in this version of history. It could be a worthwhile endeavour for artist-run centres to seriously evaluate this pattern, and to determine if it is something they wish to perpetuate. If not, it may be necessary to reconsider how records—whether "paperwork" or "not paperwork"—are understood and valued, and to broaden the scope of a centre's archival mandate, if one exists at all.

3.4.3 Archive Policies: To Codify or Not?

I suspect, however, that this type of reflection is not necessarily a priority for most artist-run centres, given the results of the survey's next question: do you have a written policy about your archive? Three French-speaking respondents indicated that they had a policy, while the majority—19 (83%)—stated they did not. One organization was in the process of developing a policy. On the English-speaking side, six respondents have a policy in place, while 24 (57%) do

119

not. Eight organizations are in the process of developing a policy, while four selected "other" to best describe their policy situation.

It is significant that the majority of respondents have an archive, but do not have a policy about it. Unfortunately, the survey did not ask why organizations were lacking a policy, and relatively few participants chose to elaborate on their response, which means that the exact reasons for the absence of a policy are unclear. While further investigation into this area is required, there are a number of factors that could reasonably influence the existence of a policy: the lack of time, funding, or knowledge to develop a policy; a lack of desire to do so, perhaps because it falls outside the scope of the centre's main mandate; or a combination of all of these factors. Additionally, it cannot be ruled out that some organizations keep an archive solely because of legislative requirements: registered charities and incorporated societies—of which artist-run centres are often both—have provincial and federal obligations to keep certain records, especially those that relate to finances and employment—in other words, records that fall into the category of "paperwork." In such cases, it may not be necessary to have any kind of a policy beyond that which is laid out by external bodies.

But while these potential explanations are practical, tensions remains around having an archive without having principles and policies that support it. Why have an archive, and strive to maintain it, if the reasons for its existence are unclear? To me, this situation suggests that for those organizations who keep records in addition to "paperwork," and who consider themselves in possession of an archive, there must be some underlying belief about their potential value. A lack of policy—and an absence of the expression of the principles that inform that policy—could

indicate that the precise way in which an archive should be valued is up for debate; the potential value of the archive remains unrealized, although there is some agreement that this value at least exists. The feeling that an archive is important, although not necessarily in an immediately obvious way, seems only to complicate the matter of clearly defining an archive.

Support for this notion is provided by a written comment from a participant who selected "other" in response to the policy question:

> We are in the process of not exactly developing a policy, but trying to figure out how we take almost 20 years of video/image material and make it accessible to the public. Or to decide if this is even the goal. Certainly we feel that other performance artists or curators or researchers would be interested, how ever fringe and far between, but what [we] have right now is somewhat organized (or in the process) but not really accessible. We are less in the process of trying to figure out what the policy is, and instead are just trying to figure out what an archive is. Is it a bunch of stuff on a shelving unit...or?[36]

While this single comment from amongst the 69 respondents cannot be applied to all artist-run centres, or even to all survey participants, it seems to capture common themes that emerge from the free-text portions of the survey: not only are artist-run centres questioning the need to have a publicly accessible archive, they are also wondering how it could exist within the specific contexts of their organizations. What would the archive look like? Who would be the audience? What would be its role?

For the nine respondents who have a policy in place, it would seem that these questions have been addressed or considered, at least in part. But further in-depth study of these organizations is required to determine the extent of the policy; asking about the existence of a policy does not

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[36] Cochrane, FADO Performance Art Centre.

provide information about what that policy contains, nor does it confirm whether a particular policy is followed.

3.4.4 Formats and Content

The following two questions in the survey addressed topics that may have been addressed by a centre's archival policy, if it had one. These interrelated questions asked about the format of a centre's archival materials, and about the information they contained. The former question could provide insight into the conservation and storage issues being faced by some centres, while the latter sought to better understand the archive's composition, which would in turn provide some indications that could be useful in determining what "archive" means to artist-run centres in a very real sense. Asking what the archive contains was an attempt to understand the current state of the archive, rather than its ideal or projected state.

The question of format was relatively straightforward, and offered a list of potential formats from which participants could choose. An "other" category was also provided so that participants could address my oversights—including my inadvertent exclusion of photographic images (photographs, whether digital or film-based, and slides) as a category. In both the French and English results, a majority—more than 85%—of respondents had paper records, digital records, and audio-visual records. Approximately one-third had works of art, which may seem high, given that—unlike museums and some art galleries—artist-run centres generally do not collect works of art (exceptions, of course, would be production centres like Engramme and SNAP, which collect copies of the multiples produced at their facilities). On the other hand, given the

known fluidity of the boundaries between "art" and "documentation," and given that I left "works of art" undefined in the survey, it is quite possible that some forms of documentation, or other items, such as artists' books, certain posters, or video recordings were considered works unto themselves (and indeed, results from the subsequent question, analyzed below, seem to confirm that this is the case, especially for film, video, and audio works). It is also possible that non-documentary works of art simply "migrated" into the archive—that is, they were given as gifts, left behind, found, or otherwise acquired without a centre's active pursuit of them. Further research into the role and place of such works of art is an avenue for future exploration.

While the inclusion of works of art in the archival collections of non-collecting organizations raises a number of questions, so too does the finding that approximately 81% of respondents included "published materials" as one of the formats found in their archive.[37] This result is unusual in the sense that "traditional" archives tend not to collect published materials, leaving that task to libraries, their institutional sisters. There are many exceptions to this general rule, such as when a book forms an integral part of a fonds, although the general boundaries of published/unpublished remain. In the case of artist-run centre archives, the inclusion of published materials in the archive suggests a number of things, including—as Flinn et al. point out—that people involved with community archives sometimes find little meaning in traditional, institutional classifications.[38]

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[37] To be more precise, 79% of English-speaking respondents and 83% of French-speaking respondents counted publications as part of their archives.

[38] Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens and Elizabeth Shepherd, "Whose memories, whose archives? Independent community archives, autonomy and the mainstream," *Archival Science* 9, nos. 1-2 (June 2009): 74.

For some centres, the established distinctions between libraries and archives may be of little significance. This is not the case for all centres, however, and there is an important exception that should be pointed out. A respondent from Artexte, the art library mentioned in Chapter Two, completed the survey, but also followed up with me via e-mail to offer some clarification, which was necessary, given that the survey was designed for centres whose *primary* roles were not as libraries or archives. In an e-mail to the author on August 1, 2013, Artexte Information Specialist John Latour wrote,

> In completing your survey, I may have inadvertently blurred the line between our archive and our collection. Artexte does possess an archive (of unique documents of an administrative, legal and historical nature produced internally - but not publicly accessible). Our collection is more extensive and publicly accessible. Essentially, we are a specialized art library that provides access to the publications and printed ephemera of other contemporary art organizations and artists. The archive and collection are distinct entities.

Artexte is clearly aware of the differences between traditional definitions of libraries and archives, and is able to maintain these boundaries on account of its mandate, which includes "the advancement of the visual arts through reliable information sources."[39] Although it does not specify that the majority of these sources are books, periodicals, and other publications, it remains that it largely follows traditional institutional divisions.

For other centres, whether the rejection or blurring of library/archive boundaries is inadvertent or deliberate is unclear. If it is indeed deliberate, it may suggest a rejection of traditional forms of organization, and could be viewed as an oppositional act, one where different ways of doing things are intended to challenge—or at least provide alternatives—to the status quo. This

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[39] Artexte, "About Us," accessed August 15, 2013, http://artexte.ca/information/about/

intentional way of thinking about the collection could be seen as an extension of the artist-run project, whereby the artists who run the organization agree upon the way things are done, and existing dominant structures are not necessarily blindly adopted. It could suggest that artist-run centres envision for themselves a role where they provide comprehensive resources, with published materials—many of which provide general insight into artist-run culture—featured alongside unpublished materials. If this lack of division is inadvertent, and simply the result of all "resource" material being placed together, the potential benefits of such non-traditional grouping remain: although not oppositional, this unorthodox organization may provide researchers with a more comprehensive set of material with which to work, and one that allows for the easy comparison of unpublished/unprocessed and published materials, which may in turn make the exclusions of written histories more obvious.

Whether intentional or not, what the rejection of boundaries between published and unpublished might mean is that artist-run centre archives think about their materials in a way that is different from other organizations and institutions. In a broad sense, this conceptualization points to the limited utility of strict definitions, and suggests that the meaning of *archive* is highly subjective and changes along disciplinary boundaries. As such, and to avoid confusion, it may be more productive to think of the materials of artist-run archives as an *organic collection*[40] more than anything else: rather than seeking to replicate the dominant notions that divide libraries from archives, the archives of some artist-run centres can be understood as collections of materials that are deemed of value by the centre, irrespective of their status as published or unpublished

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[40] Even the phrase *organic collection* is not necessarily the most appropriate term to use here. *Collection* implies a body of things that has been assembled with some sort of overarching vision in place; in a collection, there is some kind of defined principle or mandate that informs selection processes. I have added the word *organic* to *collection* to signal a fluidity around the way the group of materials can be assembled—or, more accurately, accumulated—within an artist-run centre, but even with this qualifier, the phrase remains imperfect.

materials, or of their format, thus allowing works of art to happily coincide alongside published catalogues and meeting minutes.

This proposal is supported by the subsequent survey question, which sought to quantify the types of information held in artist-run archives. There were some 15 different choices of "information," plus one category for "other." The categories of information were described with some examples, so that "governance materials," for example, were defined as minutes, policies, incorporation papers, annual reports, and so on. Also included were categories beyond what might be found in typical archives, such as publications, artist files, and general reference materials. As mentioned above, the risk of including such options was that participants would simply check the options because they were offered. This risk, however, is outweighed by the opportunity to get a better understanding of the actual—as opposed to the ideal—contents of artist-run archives.

With the exception of the "other" category in the French language version of the survey, all categories were selected by more than one respondent, which indicates the breadth of materials held in artist-run archives. Some categories, however, were more common than others. In the English version of the survey, the top five categories were "photographs and/or audio visual documentation of exhibitions and events held at your centre" (selected by 95% of participants), "marketing and communication records" (90%), "publications you have produced" (88%), "administrative records" (83%) and "governance materials" (81%). The same categories had the highest response rates in the French version of the survey, although the order was different:

100% of respondents indicated that they had governance, administrative and marketing/communication records, and 96% had both documentations and self-produced publications.

Before considering the rest of the results, it is worth pausing to consider the variances in the responses between the different language versions of the survey. The French language results are as expected: as mentioned previously, as registered charities and incorporated societies, artist-run centres would be expected—and indeed legally required—to maintain records related to governance and administration (including financial information). These records, along with marketing materials and documentation, are also generally required for grant applications, including operating grants from the Canada Council. Why, then, do not all respondents to the English version of the survey have such documents? Being unincorporated, or lacking status as a registered charity could be one reason. Similarly, a centre may not receive operating grants from the Council. It strikes me, however, that these reasons are not sufficient. Were the categories of information misinterpreted or unclear in the survey? Were respondents unaware of what their archives actually contained? Or are there ultimately very different understandings of what is meant by *archive*? Given some of the earlier comments made in the survey—"paperwork is paperwork"—my suspicion remains that the way in which archives are conceptualized varies across centres.

The remaining results can be interpreted by looking at the categories with the next highest set of response rates, and specifically those categories checked off by 50% or more of respondents. In the English survey, these categories are "artist files for artists who have shown at your centre,"

"works of art in audio-visual form," "publications produced by other artist-run centres," and "general reference materials." The categories are the same in the French survey, with the addition of "publications related to art more generally." Categories selected by less than 50% of respondents were primarily related to materials not produced by the centre itself, suggesting that such materials fall outside the scope of most of the respondents' archives. These excluded—or rather, less frequently included—items suggest there are at least loose boundaries around the archives' contents, in spite of earlier survey results indicating that most centres do not have a written policy. Or, in words that echo both Hall and Robertson, artist-run archives can contain many things, but not anything: there appear to be some borders, even though they are porous and, for the most part, unwritten.[41] There seems to be a general understanding that the records kept and collected by an artist-run archive should primarily relate to records generated by the organization, but may be supplemented by files for the artists who have exhibited there, as well as by publications produced by sister organizations.

3.4.5 Storage, Possession, and Access

With a better understanding of what exactly artist-run archives contain, the next series of questions sought to understand where these materials are kept, how (and if) they could be accessed, and by whom. In both language versions of the survey, most participants indicated that archival materials were kept on site, at the artist-run centre. In the English version of the survey, the second most popular "storage location" was online, while in the French version, both "online" and "at an offsite storage location (e.g. storage unit, Board member's residence, etc.)"

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[41] Robertson, *Policy Matters*, 14, and Stuart Hall, "Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies," in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London: Routledge, 1996), 263. Hall's essay in this edition was first published in 1992.

were tied for second place. Only 10% of English-speaking respondents indicated that their records were stored offsite, while some 24% noted that their records had been donated to an outside body, such as the archives of a museum or university. French-speaking respondents were more likely to have their records stored offsite—something 23% of respondent reported—than to have given them to an outside body, which only 9% of respondents reported they had done. Note that it was possible for participants to select more than one potential location, and some participants indicated that they had archival materials in two or three locations.

Although I have tried not to give undue attention to the differences between the French and English responses, when it comes to storing and donating records, the discrepancies between the results are worthy of further reflection. Why have almost 25% of English-speaking respondents donated their materials to an external body, compared with less than 10% of French-speaking respondents? One possible explanation is that the question was unclear and/or rather confusing: should you indicate that you store your records offsite if you have given them to an outside institution? While the phrasing of the potential location choices was intended to suggest a difference between donating materials permanently to another organization and retaining the materials while simply storing them offsite, there is certainly room for different interpretations. Another possible reason could relate to the number of respondents: more centres responded to the survey in English than in French, and perhaps more of them had simply donated their records. A larger sample size of French-speaking respondents could produce different results. Or perhaps a number of these centres wished to donate their materials, but could not do so due to an inability to find a repository that would both align with the donor's values and be able to accept the materials.

At the same time, I wonder if the decision to keep—as opposed to donate—records is perhaps more meaningful for French language respondents (or for any minority or marginalized group) than for English speakers (or any other dominant group). Although I have limited experience of Francophone communities, it seems that the stakes surrounding a donation may be particularly high in Québec, given the province's status as the only one to have French as the sole official language within the confederation of Canada. As a linguistic minority, centres in Québec may have an increased awareness of the potential use value of their archives, and they may better understand that if an organization relinquishes control of its archive by donating it to an external body, then it also relinquishes some, if not most, of the power that goes with it. Even if a Québec-based centre donates its materials to another Québec-based institution, the centre loses at least a portion of its political power, defined here as the ability to create its own identity, its own history, and to exert influence within the cultural sphere, and within society as a whole. In contrast, artist-run centres in the English-speaking portions of Canada, as part of the dominant language group in this country, may feel that there is less at stake. While they too would give up a degree of power by donating materials to a different institution, being part of the country's dominant language group may have led to a reduced awareness around the potential consequences of donation; the desire to carve out and maintain a unique organizational presence may not be as strong in parts of the country where questions of language and identity are less subject to regular, rigorous scrutiny. In any case, the decision to donate or keep an organizations' archival material is complex, and certainly worthy of further study.

Returning to the question at hand, it remains that most artist-run centres, operating in both official languages, store their archival materials at their centres. Most of these organizations—62% of English respondents, and 74% of French respondents—report that their archives are accessible to the public, whether in person, online, through an outside institution, or all three. Visiting in person is the most common way to access an artist-run archive: 81% of English-speaking respondents, and 82% of French-speaking respondents provide access this way. The second most common way access is provided is online, with 59% of English respondents and 47% of French respondents reporting that they have an archival presence that can be accessed on the Internet. Perhaps not surprisingly, the least common way to access the materials generated by an artist-run centre is through another institution: 30% of respondents to the English survey indicated they—or rather, the other institution—provides this option, while only 6% of French respondents noted this option.[42]

In analyzing the survey results, the limitations of the survey and the importance of conducting further research are clearly emphasized. The number of respondents who indicate archival accessibility via an online presence is yet another instance of a situation where additional information is required. The current survey only measured the existence of an online archival presence, and not its functionality or extent. As such, there could be great discrepancies between the amount and type of information contained in such archives (not to mention that the definition of an online archive could vary greatly from how such a thing is conceptualized in the non-

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[42] It is puzzling that there are discrepancies between the percentages of respondents who have donated their materials to an outside organization and who indicate that their materials are available at such locations. If the number of organizations who made donations was higher than the number who indicated accessibility through those organizations, then the discrepancy could possibly be explained by the situation of the donated materials having not yet been processed—a common situation in many traditional archives. However, this is not the case, and the reverse appears to be true: more organizations are reporting accessibility through other institutions than have reported making donations to these institutions. I have no explanation for this unusual result, apart from human error or a greater (unknown) flaw within the survey.

virtual world, as is explored in Chapter Six). One centre could, for example, have a simple listing

of the past year's exhibitions, perhaps with a promotional photograph alongside these details,

while another could have a much more extensive, searchable database, complete with scanned

documents, interpretative text, and comprehensive photographic documentation dating back to

the centre's establishment. While the utility of these online resources would vary greatly, both

are archives, and both carry equal weight as results generated from the current survey.

3.4.6 Funding

The extent—or even existence—of a centre's online archive is deeply affected by funding, a

topic addressed by the survey's subsequent two questions. The first question asked about the

source of any funding, while the second question asked about its duration. In both versions of the

survey, the majority of respondents (63% of English-speaking respondents, and 70% of French)

reported receiving no funding for their archive. This result suggests that most archival activities

of the centres are undertaken with the use of existing funds, a conclusion supported by two of the

commenters. One noted, "Our centre receives municipal, provincial and federal operating

funding that all goes to indirectly support the archive (paying rent, utilities, etc),"[43] while another

stated that "We consider it part of our overall budget."[44] Archival management becomes one task

among many, and indeed, one that may be interpreted as existing outside of the scope of the

centre's main mandate. As such, it must compete for attention against issues with more

immediate impacts, such as programming or grant applications. A lack of funding could also

limit what a centre could do with their archive: although the desire to address the archive may be

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[43] Sharon Bradley, Distribution Coordinator, VIVO Media Arts Centre, August 1, 2013.
[44] Bruce Saunders, Coordinator, Movie Monday Society, July 31, 2013.

present, carrying out any work—and carrying it out to a meaningful extent—may not be possible due to financial constraints.

For the centres that do receive funding for their archives, the sources providing these funds are mixed. Respondents to the English version of the survey reported receiving municipal, provincial, and federal funds, although it is not clear if these funds are separate from regular operating grants. They also indicated they received "other public funding," "private funding," and "other." One respondent was unsure about funding sources, while another specified that money from an insurance claim was used to restore the archive following a flood.[45] On the French side, the results are similar, although no organizations reported receiving "private funding," and "provincial funding" was the greatest source of funding for the archive: of the participants who received archival funding, 26% reported that it was from the provincial government, as compared with 15% of English respondents who indicated the same. This greater provincial support in Québec could be the result of a differently structured funding system.

In all cases, the vast majority of archival funding is project-based, meaning that it is of limited duration and must be directed at a specific initiative. Ongoing, non-project-based funding is rare. This funding situation suggests that while there is some support for the archives of artist-run centres, it is both finite and specific, which in turn limits the potential of these archives. While short-term projects can be highly successful, and can be used to establish important aspects of an archive (such as a mandate, a policy and the principles that inform it, and an inventory), without sustained funding, its ongoing success can be limited, especially since asking staff to simply

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[45] Fynn Leitch, Director, ARTSPACE (Petebrorough Artists Inc.), July 31, 2013.

absorb its management into their other daily duties is not necessarily a viable route due to resource limitations. Further, the unpredictability of project grants can stall even the most dedicated efforts. Once started, an initiative may fail if monies for the next stage of the project are not available. Rather than being a death by a thousand cuts, the situation can become one where incremental progress is so limited that enthusiasm for the project is dampened, if not abandoned entirely; death by slow starvation (or by complete neglect) is the risk incurred when sustainable funding is not available.

There are, of course, examples of successful archival activities that come out of project-based grants; while a lack of ongoing funding certainly limits the attention that can be paid to artist-run centre archives, there can be very meaningful projects produced of and about archives within a limited time frame. Two examples of such activities are exhibitions or publications, often produced to mark centre's significant anniversary, although they could also be produced for any other reason. Survey participants were asked whether they had produced either, although the question did not link such production to project grants. In both languages, approximately half of participants had created either a publication or an exhibition, and half had not. While the production of a retrospective book or show likely coincides with a centre's age (a particularly new or young centre may not have enough material on which to draw), this situation also suggests that centres—like art galleries and museums—see value in acts of self-historicization, and especially in acts that draw upon their own historical materials. Keeping an archive, and being able to do something with it, is clearly valued by a significant number of centres; even if there is no specific policy in place, it remains that the archive—however it is defined—is important for many centres.

3.4.7 Attitudes Towards Archives

The survey's next question sought to gain deeper insight into the way centres think about and value their archives. The question asked participants to select one of five choices that best characterized the centre's attitude towards its archive. The first four choices were statements, each marking a place on a spectrum from a greater degree of attention/value to a lesser one. The fifth choice was "other," and allowed participants to enter their own responses. While attempting to characterize an organization's attitude within five limited choices inevitably obscures the finer points, and most likely does not provide completely appropriate choices for any centre, providing such options was an attempt both to encourage respondents to reply (assuming that it is faster, and perhaps easier, to choose from a list than to draft an explanation) and to provide uniform answers that could be compared to each other.

In the English version of the survey, some 68% of respondents chose option two, an option that was developed after preliminary discussions with various centres, and which awarded a high degree of importance to the archive, but noted limitations caused either by finances or personnel: "We would like to give more attention to our archive, but are limited by a lack of funding and/or staff." This option was also chosen by the majority (52%) of respondents to the French language version of the survey. In the French version, the second most popular choice was option one, which placed the greatest value on a centre's archives: "Our archive is a valuable resource that we have made a priority in our future plans." Approximately 30% of respondents selected this choice. The third most popular option, which approximately 13% of respondents to the French version selected, placed greater emphasis on a centre's role as an institution of the present: "We

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focus on contemporary art and artists, and are less concerned with maintaining an archive, although we do have some records." Just one respondent (or 4%) selected the option of "other," while no participants noted that they had donated or otherwise disposed of their archives. In the English version of the survey, the results were somewhat different. While most participants wanted to give more attention to their archives, the second most common selection was "other." Five participants (12%) chose this option, and provided more detailed responses, most of which incorporated aspects of all the options. 10% of respondents selected option one (archive as a valuable resource that is the subject of future consideration), while 5% selected option three (focusing on the contemporary, while maintaining some basic records), and 5% selected option four (donation or disposal).

The responses to this question are intriguing for several reasons. First, they suggest that a majority of respondents, in both languages, feel limited by a lack of resources for their archive. While the argument that archives tend to fall outside of the core mandate of most artist-run centres remains valid, it is perhaps more important at this point to consider what the centres actually have and what they actually do. If most centres are maintaining an archive, and if most would like to do more with it, perhaps it is time to consider funding models to accommodate these desires. This is not a question of turning artist-run centres into archives. It is a question of autonomy, and of being able to exert a degree of control over the future histories of artist-run centres by managing the resources from which those histories might be written. It is also a question of power, and one that takes into account the complex ecosystem of the cultural sphere. Neither artists nor artist-run centres exist in isolation, and to see the role of centres as only existing in the present ultimately reduces their power over a longer duration. While the

importance of exhibiting the works of emerging artists, or of experimental artists, cannot be denied, to focus only on those exhibitions at the time when they happen is a limiting act that prevents centres from having a larger role in cultural systems. Returning to my oft-repeated phrase, artist-run centres can be many things. Moreover, these things can change, and funding models should adapt to support the realities of Canada's numerous artist-run centres. While it may not be necessary for all artist-run centres to have their own archive, a support structure for those who wish to maintain one would be an important step in maintaining both autonomy and alterity.[46]

3.4.8 Participant Voices

The survey's penultimate question asked participants if they were interested in future discussions with the researcher, if the opportunity arose, and most respondents indicated a willingness to participate further. The ultimate question was not a question at all, but rather an attempt to deal with the limitations of a multiple-choice survey. For this final step, participants were given a text box in which they could comment on any aspect of the survey. Four respondents to the French language version of the survey availed themselves of this option, as did 11 respondents to the English version.

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[46] One possibility for addressing the archives of (some) artist-run centres in an environment of limited funding would be a centralized artist-run archive: a dedicated space that could operate according to principles agreed upon by participating centres. While centres would give up physical possession of the records they generated, their records would potentially be managed in a manner consistent with an artist-run ethos. Artexte, which is described in Chapter Two, may be an appropriate body to initiate or carry out this work. A somewhat less resource-intensive option would be some kind of jointly produced online archive—a networked presence that could provide online access to digitized resources from various centres, or, at the least, offer finding aids or guides to the organic collections of participating centres.

Some of these comments reinforced sentiments expressed earlier in the survey, especially those

surrounding the desire to do more with an archive, but being stymied by a lack of resources:

> Like most centres, we lack the budget, space or human resources to properly deal with any archive.[47]
>
> We have been hoping to get our archives in order, but it has been very difficult due to limited resources. If you have any leads on grants or other funding for archive development we have a very interesting collection.[48]
>
> Our archives are a mishmash of materials that we keep in various forms and states. We try very hard to keep as much information as possible for anyone to access but due to a lack of space, funding, and staff we really have not had the opportunity to do it justice.[49]
>
> We have an online version but it has been hacked and we don't have the resources to fix that.[50]

One commenter noted the importance of their archive, and pointed out that its potential success

is related to the will of the board and staff, and their subsequent desire to devote time and

attention to its maintenance:

> The whole idea of archiving is so important, but it is an overwhelming task often and not considered 'sexy' enough to garner much conversation and attention typically. We all have a responsibility to force ourselves to never give up on it and one way we are fighting the apathy of it all at our Co-op is to have an advisory made up of our staff and a few of our board members dedicated to it being discussed at every board meeting and they also meet outside of board meetings to talk about it. Luckily one of the people on the advisory works at the provincial archives which really helps, and as well the staff (the ED and I) have worked at the Co-op for a long time so it is always on our minds. It is difficult though, and all too easy for it all to go by the wayside if we are not careful.[51]

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[47] Gazzola, AKA Artist-Run.
[48] Anthony Meza-Wilson, Volunteer and Facility Coordinator, Gallery Gachet, July 31, 2013.
[49] Derek Brooks, Executive Director, Harcourt House Artists' Run Centre, July 31, 2013.
[50] Elizabeth Dent, Executive Director, Ed Video Media Arts Centre, August 1, 2013.
[51] Cat LeBlanc, Membership Services Director, New Brunswick Filmmakers' Co-operative, August 6, 2013.

Another commenter left a somewhat cryptic statement that seems to be advocating for the

activation of archives, or perhaps their re-imagination in oral form, and not just their existence as

text-based documents:

> Archives are heavy and dead. They must be a living part of our present to be valuable. I do
> not believe in history I do believe in oral tradition and actions.[52]

Finally, one commenter provided a particularly candid observation about the state of his

organization's archives:

> I love picking around in our archive, but it is very unorganized and messy and there is a lot
> of junk in it. Maybe the junk was meant to be kept, maybe not, there are no records kept on
> what goes in.[53]

This statement likely applies to more than one organization, although certainly not to those who

have developed archive policies and undertaken steps to organize their materials. It also hints at

some of the potential contained within these "organic" archives: not yet subject to established

archival logics, these unorganized materials may actually provide unique avenues for conducting

research.

3.5 Summary and Avenues for Further Investigation

The survey closed on September 15, 2013, and shortly thereafter I began analyzing the results.

While pleased with the information provided by the respondents, I had an overwhelming desire

to conduct the survey again, with several changes. In addition to correcting some oversights, and

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[52] Laura Margita, Director/Curator, Gallery 101, August 1, 2013.
[53] daniel joyce, Artistic Director, Khyber Centre for the Arts, August 6, 2013.

addressing some of the flaws of the survey, I would have liked to have increased the participation rate, perhaps by using different terminology: *self-determined* or *artist-run organization* instead of *artist-run centre* may have made the survey feel more inclusive, especially for media arts organizations. I would have liked to have added a few more questions, and to have asked for clarification around some aspects of the survey, including obtaining better definitions of words such as *archive* and *history*, and probing deeper into the motivations for donating papers to an external institution. Learning more about how centres organize their materials (if they organize them at all), would have been helpful, as would have questions about the users of the archive: how many people access these archives, whether online or in person? What becomes of the research they undertake? Additional questions about how materials enter the archive—production by the centre, donation, purchase, or otherwise—would be equally important to ask. Of course, it would have been challenging to make some of these changes prior to carrying out the survey; it was necessary to conduct the survey first, and analyze the results, in order to see its limitations.

Ultimately, the results of this survey only scratch the surface of artist-run archives. There remain numerous unknowns, and even what seem to be relatively stable conclusions could change if participation rates increased, if boards and staffs changed over, if funding levels were to fluctuate, if questions were phrased differently, or if different multiple-choice answers were provided. However, even with all these qualifications, this survey nevertheless provides some basic quantitative and qualitative data about artist-run centre archives in Canada.

Chapter Four: Taking Up Space for Women: MAWA and their Archive

4.1 Introduction: Archiving for the Future

The act of creating archives is not about the past. It is instead an act oriented towards the future, and to future histories more specifically. Academic and archivist Terry Cook, in his article "Remembering the Future," phrases this time-twisting concept well: "Appraisal occurs primarily today on the records of yesterday to create a past for tomorrow."[1] Although he is referring to the process of selecting records for retention, he is also pointing out that the writing of history occurs in the future. History is not written as it happens, although first-hand accounts, whether written or oral, are certainly useful. Instead, it is written later, after the passage of time, and after carrying out a number of activities to ensure the illusion of neutrality and to give the impression of completion. One of these activities is the filtering of documents through archival processes. Given to the trained and ostensibly neutral archivist, materials are appraised, arranged, and described in preparation for a visiting historian. This historian generally approaches these documents well after the event in question took place, giving him or her an air of disinterest.[2] While the neutrality of these actions has been discredited, there remains in place the idea that written histories are somehow objective, that they have not been foreshadowed by both accident and choice.

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[1] Terry Cook, "Remembering the Future: Appraisal of Records and the Role of Archives in Constructing Social Memory," in *Archives, Documentation and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar*, ed. Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2007), 169.
[2] For a summary of how objectivity has been considered essential to writing histories, see Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 1-2.

But the writing of history is a predetermined act. What can be written—what can be argued and justified using archival materials as proof—is established long before historians sit down to write. That the past is written in the future—and that, although it may seem counterintuitive, archives are oriented towards the future—highlights the importance of managing materials considered worthy of history. This need becomes even more critical when dealing with materials produced by groups that have been historically marginalized. As Blouin and Francis suggest, the exclusion of documents created by women, people of colour, and other marginalized groups from archives narrows drastically the types of research that can be produced—assuming, of course, that these groups had an equal opportunity to generate such documents in the first place. It is possible, then, that "[t]he past may have to be written though the absence rather than the presence of documentation."[3]

This exclusion was one of the factors that spurred the creation of Mentoring Artists for Women's Art (MAWA), the artist-run centre that is the focus of this chapter. Founded in the early 1980s in Winnipeg, MAWA provides a particularly interesting case study for several key reasons: unlike the majority of the centres who participated in the survey for this project, MAWA has a mandate that explicitly states its support for women, a traditionally marginalized group.[4] MAWA carries out this mandate primarily through mentoring, as its name suggests. This mentoring, along with other aspects of MAWA's programming (lectures, workshops, social events, and so on), does not produce the same types of records as exhibitions, which comprise much of the programming of many other artist-run centres. This distinguishes both MAWA and its archive from other centres,

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[3] Blouin and Rosenberg, "Archives in the Production of Knowledge," in *Archives*, 87.
[4] MAWA fits into the category of providing "programming, services (including distribution services), and/or resources to artists to help advance their careers"—a general category of mandate selected by only 4.4% of survey participants.

as does its choice in managing these records: not only have they chosen to give some of their records to an external body, the ways in which these records were organized prior to their donation reflects the organization's feminist ethos.[5]

This chapter reviews MAWA's early organizational history and situates it within a context of other feminist activity in Canadian artist-run organizations at the time. It analyzes the formation and management of MAWA's archival materials, and then considers the possible implications of these actions. Drawing on a number of published resources produced by MAWA, including the 2004 book, *Culture of Community*, as well as on interviews conducted with MAWA staff members, and on MAWA's own archive, now located in the Archives of Manitoba, this chapter seeks to address a number of questions, both practical and theoretical: How are MAWA's archival records shaped by its programming? (How) Does MAWA's clearly articulated mandate to support a particular group affect its archival practices? Why has MAWA chosen to donate its records, rather than maintain them itself? How does MAWA's donation of its archival materials to an institution relate to its mandate? What are the consequences of this donation? What might it mean for the writing of future histories?

4.2 MAWA's Roots: The Women's Program of Plug In Art

MAWA was born of an observation and a proposal. In 1983, the board of directors of Winnipeg's Plug In Art, an artist-run centre that has since become Plug In Institute of Contemporary Art, noticed a dearth of women artists in its programming, and in the arts

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[5] Of survey participants, 23.8% of those who responded in English and 9.1% of those who responded in French indicated they had given their papers to an outside institution.

community more generally. More women than men were graduating from the University of

Manitoba's School of Art, but more men than women were applying for shows at Plug In. Men

also had greater representation in the Winnipeg Art Gallery's permanent collection and group

exhibitions, and were applying in greater numbers for funding from the Manitoba Arts Council.[6]

In late 1983, the board struck a research committee tasked with improving this situation, and in

early 1984, the committee proposed the formation of a "Women's Program" to be operated by

Plug In.[7]

It is important to note that the Women's Program of Plug In was just that—a program, and not a

women's gallery. It was not a dedicated exhibition space, although a number of exhibitions,

generally those featuring work produced by mentors and mentees, were produced under the

auspices of the program.[8] It was instead a program designed to address the systemic exclusion of

women from public cultural programming at the time, primarily through professional

development. Such a program allowed the committee to sidestep some of the challenges of a

gallery, not least of which would include the risk of marginalization: a women's gallery could be

easily interpreted as a space showing work not quite good enough for the "main" or "real" space.

This distinction between program and gallery is essential, because it has shaped the activities of

the organization now known as MAWA, and, consequently, has shaped the type of information it

produces.

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[6] "Women's Program: Mandate" (reproduction of a notice), in *MAWA: Culture of Community*, ed. Vera, Lemecha (Winnipeg: Mentoring Artists for Women's Art, 2004), 88 and 94. As discussed later in this chapter, the situation of men outnumbering women in prominent aspects of the artistic ecology has not changed drastically.
[7] Ibid.
[8] See "Chronology" in *MAWA: Culture of Community*, 95-135, for brief details about the exhibitions produced under this program.

4.3 Feminist Artist-Run Culture in the 1980s

Plug In's desire to initiate a women's program occurred at a time when there was a marked increase in discussions around feminist art and art historical narratives in Canada, and in artist-run centres more specifically.[9] Clive Robertson, in his review of significant turning points or key moments in artist-run culture, proposes a 1980 lecture by Judy Chicago sponsored by Montréal's La Centrale Galerie Powerhouse as a starting point—as much as there can ever be such a thing in complex and evolving narratives—for this increased concern.[10] Chicago's lecture occurred some two years prior to the exhibition of her famous work, *The Dinner Party*, in Canada at the Musée d'art contemporain (Montréal), the Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto), and Glenbow Museum (Calgary). When *The Dinner Party* travelled through Canada in 1982-1983, La Centrale Galerie Powerhouse organized a six-week series of performances, discussions, workshops, and video screenings.[11]

The Women's Cultural Building (WCB), which was founded in 1981, and was at the time not housed in a physical space, but rather engaged in building culture, also organized "After the Dinner Party," a panel discussion in 1982 to address *The Dinner Party*.[12] Emerging from these discussion was a sense that *The Dinner Party*, although popular and the recipient of much media

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[9] Feminist activity, of course, had been part of artist-run culture prior to the 1980s. Vancouver's Women in Focus Society, founded in 1974 to support the production and circulation of media works by women artists, is an example of the manifestation of feminist ideas within artist-run culture. (For more on Women in Focus, see http://rbscarchives.library.ubc.ca/index.php/vancouver-women-in-focus-society-fonds and http://www.vivomediaarts.com/archive-library/special-collections/women-in-focus-collection/, accessed April 28, 2015).

[10] In "Collective consciousness as network, social movement as agent," author Clive Robertson explores three such moments that have had a significant impact on the histories of artist-run culture. See Robertson, *Policy Matters: Administrations of Art and Culture* (Toronto: YYZBOOKS, 2006), 26-43.

[11] Robertson, *Policy Matters*, 34.

[12] Ibid.

attention, did not adequately address the concerns of women artists at the time. Indeed, Chicago's approach to feminism in this well known work was of the "just add women" variety, where it is proposed that the exclusion of women can be remedied by their "rediscovery" and "reintegration," rather than by addressing the systems and structures that exclude them in the first place. Artist Lisa Steele, writing in 1982 about Chicago's approach, finds that

> it reinforces rather than replaces the prevailing, patriarchal reading of history and culture. It suggests the Great Man theory can become the Great Man and Woman theory; that monuments are not such bad things and all that's missing are Women's monuments. The problem with this analysis is that it is the antithesis of self-determination, the antithesis of cultural democracy and thus, the antithesis of feminism.[13]

Indeed, adding women into a patriarchal framework does not allow women—or any marginalized group—to represent themselves on their own terms, nor does it recognize their specific concerns. It simply replicates the systems identified by Linda Nochlin in her influential 1971 essay, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" In it, Nochlin suggests that the absence of women in art history is the result of social and institutional barriers that prevent women from having the same opportunities as men. She argues that alternative answers to the question—that women are simply incapable of greatness, or that we just do not know about all the great women artists of the past—skirt the real issue, which is how social structures operate to oppress women.[14] Nochlin suggests that women acknowledge this problem, then turn to the creation of institutions open to all, regardless of gender identity.[15] Simply adding women is an insufficient mode of redress.

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[13] Lisa Steele, "The Judy Chicago Paradox," *Fuse* 6, no. 3 (1982), quoted in Robertson, *Policy Matters*, 35.
[14] Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" in *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1988), 146-150.
[15] Ibid., 176.

Plug In's committee, like La Centrale and the WCB, would have felt the impact of Nochlin's article, which Thalia Gouma-Peterson and Patricia Mathews point to as the beginning of "[f]eminist inquiry in art history."[16] The Women's Art Resource Centre (WARC), a Toronto-based organization founded in 1984—the same year as MAWA—would also have been familiar with Nochlin and contemporary feminist discussions catalyzed by *The Dinner Party* and its surrounding events. It is perhaps not surprising that it emerged at roughly the same time as MAWA, and shared a similar goal—that is, "to do something about the effacement of women from art history."[17] While MAWA and WARC were separated by geography, they took similar courses of action to address increasingly pressing concerns about the operations of the visual arts ecology in Canada. Both organizations ultimately created resource centres and professional development opportunities that would integrate women into the structures from which art history is written, but that would do so in ways selected and administered by women.

4.4 Creating an Environment for Inclusion

As suggested by the activities of La Centrale Galerie Powerhouse, the WCB, and WARC, as well as by the numerous feminist articles and texts published at the time, Plug In's committee was working in an environment rich in conversations about women and art. By 1984, they had created a mandate for the Women's Program—a program that would in August of that year be renamed Manitoba Artists for Women's Art (and renamed again in 1990, when it separated from

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[16] Thalia Gouma-Peterson and Patricia Mathews, "The Feminist Critique of Art History," *The Art Bulletin* 69, no. 3 (September 1987): 326.
[17] WARC, "Our Story," accessed April 28, 2015, http://www.warc.net. WARC, which is still in existence today, also provides professional development opportunities, public lectures, and organizes conferences approximately every three or four years. In 1998, it established a gallery space.

its parent organization and became Mentoring Artists for Women's Art).[18] The mandate outlined

four main objectives: to bring established women artists into contact with those of less

experience; to increase women's confidence in the exhibition of their work; to create a

"community resource" filled with information about women artists; and to give women the

chance to improve their professional skills through the administration of their own arts

organization.[19] While each of these objectives is important, and shows the Program's multi-

pronged approach to complex issues of exclusion, it is the third that is of the greatest interest

here, and worthy of considering in its full form:

> 3. To solicit and compile information on women artists, and in the contemporary arts in general, for the purpose of creating a community resource. Selection of material will be made with the intent to fill gaps of information found in other resource centres in the community.[20]

This written intent was confirmed by Bev Pike, a Winnipeg artist, archivist, and long-time

supporter of MAWA, who in an interview recalled,

> ...People were saying the reason why women can't succeed is nobody knows who's there. So, curators can't curate because they don't know who's making art, so right away the mandate was to have a resource centre, to prove that women were doing work...[21]

Prominent in both these quotations is the assumption that a lack of information about artists and

opportunities was limiting the inclusion of women in an artistic ecosystem. This assumption, and

the subsequent creation of MAWA's resource centre, can be understood as one of many actions

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[18] "Chronology," in *MAWA: Culture of Community*, 98 and 110.
[19] "Women's Program: Mandate" (reproduction of a notice), in *MAWA: Culture of Community*, 88.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Shawna Dempsey (Co-Executive Director, MAWA) and Bev Pike (Archivist, MAWA), interview with the author, Winnipeg, April 5, 2013.

taken to address the institutional exclusion identified by Nochlin. Not an attempt to "add women" to an established history, or to bring to light previously unknown information, it was instead an act that positioned women's art for future inclusion in institutions, including the institution of art history. Of course, collecting evidence of art produced by women also had some immediate impacts. These materials—mostly secondary sources, such as catalogues, journals, and other publications, but also slides sent in by individual artists—would be kept and made accessible to women artists who wished to better understand the work of their contemporaries.[22] Such resources could provide emerging women artists with role models, offering evidence of the possibilities of artistic careers.

While addressing immediate concerns about inadequate resources, the assembling of MAWA's collection was simultaneously an investment in future histories, and an attempt to shape as-yet unwritten narratives through deliberate actions in the present. Although this goal is not clearly outlined by the planning committee, it remains that the existence of a resource centre would eliminate a lack of information as a plausible explanation for writing women out of history, and local, regional, and national histories more specifically. Indeed, even if the underlying causes of exclusion (that is, discriminatory institutional practices and deep seated gender roles) could not be addressed fully by the creation of inclusive and accessible resources, what such an act could do is eliminate excuses. Exclusion could not be explained away as an accident: in light of extensive resources by and about women artists, omissions could only be viewed as deliberate.

The resource centre has remained an important element of MAWA, moving with the organization in 1990 when it split from Plug In and became its own artist-run centre. Today,

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[22] "MAWA News" (reproduction of a newsletter), in *MAWA: Culture of Community*, 99.

MAWA still maintains a resource centre, comprised primarily of texts written by, for and about women artists. Although underutilized, this resource stands in partial fulfillment of the centre's original goals.[23] Other bodies of information, produced—rather than collected—by MAWA also aid in the fulfillment of this objective, although perhaps not necessarily in the way intended by the founding committee. Instead, these archival materials offer resources to historians, more so than artists, and suggest possibilities about how alternative histories might be written.

4.5 From Resource Centre to Archive

I should pause to note that examining MAWA requires consideration of both its resource centre and its archive, even though the latter is not mentioned in the Women's Program's early mandate. The existence of an archive, however, fulfils a similar desire; an archive exists in the spirit of the third objective ("...to fill gaps of information..."), whether it does so intentionally or not. It should also be noted that neither an archive nor a resource centre is explicitly mentioned in MAWA's current mandate, which states that it "encourages and supports the intellectual and creative development of women in the visual arts by providing an ongoing forum for education and critical dialogue."[24] In this mandate, the presence of both the resource centre and archive— or some kind of comparable entity—is broadly implied through the phrasing, and particularly by the use of the words "education" and "intellectual and creative development."

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[23] Dempsey and Pike, interview.
[24] MAWA, "About Us," accessed August 1, 2014, http://mawa.ca/about-us/

At MAWA today, the resource centre and archive are conceptualized as separate entities that are divided more or less along the lines of traditional libraries and archives.[25] Libraries, for the most part, contain published materials, copies of which are generally available elsewhere. Archives, with some exceptions, generally hold unpublished materials generated by specific entities and collected in accordance with the institution's mandate. MAWA's resource centre is akin to a library, generally holding material produced elsewhere, while its archival records, self-generated through acts of administration, fit easily into the archives category. Although these categories of materials have been treated differently, both help MAWA in achieving its early goal of providing resources to women artists. Both help establish a place for women in the visual arts and its historical narratives, although in somewhat different ways, which become more apparent when looking at MAWA's archive.

4.6 Operational Models and Archival Records: Dissimilarities within Art Historical Infrastructures

Like other artist-run centres, MAWA produces archival materials that reflect its activities and operations. When it comes to records related to programming, however, MAWA's differ from those of centres with mandates that are fulfilled primarily through exhibitions. MAWA's service and resource-oriented mandate means that many of its programming records relate to workshops, lectures, outreach efforts, studio visits, and the mentoring program. There are records about its exhibitions, although these tend to be group—rather than solo—exhibitions. There are also some artist files, although fewer than would be expected in a centre with programming comprised primarily of (solo) exhibitions. These files are primarily for women artists, and often relate to the

[25] Dempsey and Pike, interview.

mentoring program. Artists also appear elsewhere in the records—in correspondence, primarily, but also in minutes and policy documents, as well as in some marketing materials. The ways in which they appear reflect MAWA's focus on processes and development, rather than on production, exhibition, and the promotion of any particular artist.[26]

As a result of its mandate, MAWA's records take on a shape that simultaneously challenges and conforms to what Nochlin calls "the whole erroneous substructure" of traditional art history.[27] The challenge comes from the nature of the records themselves: they reflect the collective activity of women, and in doing so do not offer evidence of individual (male) genius—the so-called "Great Men" who dominate mainstream art historical narratives.[28] And yet there is a degree of conformity that comes, rather ironically, from the mentoring-based model. The women artist-mentors who appear in the records are established artists, and are thus already players in a system of art history based upon the "Great Person" model. A mentoring-based program uses recognized "Great Women" to cultivate more "Great Women," and in so doing attempts to integrate women into existent patriarchal structures, rather than giving women the opportunity to create their own structures. It positions the individual artists that appear in MAWA's archive for possible inclusion in mainstream narratives, which can certainly be viewed as a positive thing, and which works to address the exclusionary situation that sparked MAWA's founding, but does little to challenge the underlying structures.

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[26] For more detailed information about the records contained in MAWA's fonds at the Archives of Manitoba, see http://pam.minisisinc.com/pam/search.htm. A finding aid for the MAWA fonds is available online through the AM's website.
[27] Nochlin, "Why," 176.
[28] Note that men are not excluded from MAWA's records, although they appear less frequently than women. Men have participated in MAWA since its beginning.

This assertion requires clarification. First, it is not my intent to assign to MAWA the task of existing in such a way that its operational model and archival records will somehow revolutionize the practice of art history. To do so would be unfair, and, moreover, would fail to recognize just how firmly the institutions of art history are entrenched within Western culture. And certainly, other artist-run centres that operate on different models are not immune from these deeply embedded systems. Those that focus on exhibitions and consequently retain artist files run the same risk of participating in and replicating patriarchal structures, even if the artists they exhibit are those that have been excluded from larger institutions. Existing beyond or correcting the substructures of art history is not a simple undertaking, and not one that is necessarily embraced by all (or any) artist-run centres.

Second, I do not wish to suggest that women artists are players on an even field. Even if the women artist-mentors who work with(in) MAWA are incorporated into an art history that is largely based on personality and individual achievement, it remains that they are not included at the same rate as men. As Joyce Zemans and Amy C. Wallace suggest in their 2013 article, "Where are the Women? Updating the Account!" and as confirmed by a recent examination of the gender and ethnicity of artists awarded solo shows in major Canadian galleries, discrimination is prevalent within current art historical practices.[29] Thus the activities of groups such as MAWA remain vital to challenging the social and institutional barriers that prevent the full participation of women and minority groups in the visual arts.

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[29] Joyce Zemans and Amy C. Wallace, "Where are the Women? Updating the Account!" RACAR XXXVIII, no.1 (2013): 1-29, and Alison Cooley, Amy Luo, and Caoimhe Morgan-Feir, "Canada's Galleries Fall Short: The No-So Great White North," accessed April 28, 2015, http://canadianart.ca/features/2015/04/21/canadas-galleries-fall-short-the-not-so-great-white-north/

MAWA is in a rather difficult position: its operational model produces records that both

challenge and conform to current structures of art history. Without at least some conformity, it

would be potentially excluded from art historical narratives. But because of this conformity, it

risks replicating problematic, existing practices. Another way of framing this situation is to

position it in relation to both cultural democracy and the democratization of culture. Cultural

democracy—mentioned earlier by Steele in her critique of Judy Chicago's work—is a

multiplexed idea about how and why culture is produced and consumed. It recognizes the

importance of cultural activity that emerges from the needs and desires of the cultural producers.

It does not recognize universal standards for artistic judgment, relying instead on producers to

evaluate—or refuse to evaluate—their own work. As author Owen Kelly suggests, cultural

democracy is playing by your own rules, rather than having the opportunity to join a game where

rules are beyond your control.[30] The democratization of culture, on the other hand, is a system

that values the distribution of the "best" kind of culture to a wide audience. It assumes that some

works are simply better than others, but tends to do so while turning a blind eye to the systems

that favour works by some groups and producers over others—the same mechanisms that prevent

cultural producers from having equal opportunities to produce, exhibit, and circulate work. In

this context, MAWA, as well as other artist-run centres, can be understood as culturally

democratic organizations that exist within a framework dominated by the democratization of

culture.

If cultural democracy were the dominant paradigm of cultural production in Canada, many of the

above concerns would quickly become moot. MAWA would not have to concern itself with

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[30] Owen Kelly, "Problems of Cultural Democracy," *Circa* 27 (March/April 1986): 18.

fitting into dominant narratives, since there would be no such thing. Its mentoring model could

be accepted as one of many ways that artistic organizations operate, and the records produced

from these operations could be one of many different types that ultimately inform many different

narratives, all of which are recognized for their value. But it remains that practices more aligned

with the democratization of culture are significant within this country, and within Western art

history more generally, and often overshadow highly successful culturally democratic

organizations.

4.7 Active Agents and Feminist Structuring

In spite of the inherent challenges, I would like to suggest that MAWA's treatment of their

archive has allowed them to strike a reasonable balance between resistance and incorporation

into dominant paradigms. This balance is partially a result of the content of the archive, but more

so the result of the way it has been managed, including both its arrangement by MAWA and its

subsequent donation to an external institution. I will focus first on its arrangement, framing this

process as an extension of MAWA's mandate and a means of conveying its values. I will then

consider the potential implications of donating these structured files to a dominant body, and

argue that this action allows MAWA's records to retain their unique characteristics while also

positioning them for potential inclusion in mainstream narratives.

In Chapter Two, I mentioned Ketelaar's Foucault-inspired observation that knowledge-power is

expressed through the "physical ordering of archives in the paper world and the logical ordering

of digital archives."[31] Archives are, in other words, inextricably linked to the construction of knowledge, and, as Hamilton, Harris, and Reid point out, "crucial elements in epistemological challenge and experimentation."[32] The organization of records gives knowledge its shape; it determines what is known and puts in place the structures that affect what might come to be known. Systems of organization informed by different sets of values may produce knowledge reflective of these structures. Conventions may be challenged, and values may be transmitted and amplified through physical acts of arrangement.

Just as shaping records matters, so too do the people who do the shaping. "Archivists are active agents in constructing social and historical memory," writes Cook.[33] Patrick Geary goes one step further, describing them as authors, and reminding us of the many voices that go into the constructions of history:

> Archivists, one might well argue, are not preservers of their documents: they are their authors, engaged in work as creative, and as subjective, as that of those who originally penned individual texts or those modern historians who pretend to tell the past to the present.[34]

However one wishes to frame archivists, their role ought not be underestimated. For this reason, it is worth learning a bit more about MAWA's long term artist-archivist-activist, Bev Pike.

Pike studied at the Alberta College of Art and Design, graduating in 1974. Now a practicing artist based in Winnipeg, she has been involved with MAWA for almost 30 years. Although not

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[31] Eric Ketelaar, "The Panoptical Archive," in *Archives*, 147.
[32] Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris, and Graeme Reid, "Introduction," in *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton et al. (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), 15.
[33] Cook, "Remembering the Future," 170.
[34] Patrick Geary, "Medieval Archivists as Authors: Social Memory and Archival Memory," in *Archives*, 106.

formally trained as an archivist, she amassed a significant amount of on-the-job training from work in other archives, and has also taken workshops in archiving from local organizations.[35] She first worked with MAWA's archive in 1990, and proposed the donation of their materials to an external body around 2001, but a number of events—including research being undertaken for *Culture of Community*—prevented their actual transfer until 2011. Prior to the transfer, the archive was culled and arranged again, and media records were addressed with the participation of two work-study students.[36]

Pike's work with MAWA's archive as a participant and archivist is in alignment with the artist-run centre movement, where control over one's work is essential. It is also an extension of MAWA's mandate, with Pike acting as a representative of the organization, arranging according to their guiding principles, and with knowledge developed through personal involvement in the organization. It is the opposite of being a disinterested archivist; there is no space between Pike and the organization that created the records, nor does the passage of time offer much of a buffer. This situation, while congruent with principles of artist-run culture, is not entirely unproblematic. There is tension between the real or perceived need to abide by established archival rules, and the need to structure MAWA's records in such a way that their story is being told in their own words, and according to their own values, but without casting the archive as the organization's ideal self: although warts and wounds can be erased in records, points of conflict may reveal more about an organization than its flawless operations.

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[35] Dempsey and Pike, interview.
[36] Ibid. The work-study students were Caroline Ferris and Laura Haines.

Interested in this tension, I asked Pike whether MAWA's feminist orientation affected the way in

which she addressed their records. Noting that she had a strong commitment to women's history,

she replied in the affirmative. She elaborated, noting the importance of relationships and

networks:

> ...if I came across something like a letter from a former mentor whose husband died the
> year she was a mentor, and there's a letter thanking the staff for their support, normally
> an archivist wouldn't keep that, but because of the context here, I thought it was really
> an important record, so I left it in the file. So where there was talk of relationships, and
> where it implied a network that was strong, or a network that was learning how to
> function better, I did keep those, and instructed people to keep those... But any evidence
> of feminist activity at that time was important to me as the archivist, so it did affect my
> decision making, yeah. It's not a bank, it's not the department of natural resources.
> We're not just going to take the policies, the financials, and the mandate and that's all.
> We're going to show the range of the community.[37]

She also pointed out that the perceived importance or impact of a single artist was not a key

factor in her processes; more important was the existence of that artist in the first place. She

stated, "The whole mandate of this place is to take up space, to make space for other women, and

if you say well, she only did one artwork in her life, you know, it was part of that era, that one

artwork was important to that scene at that time."[38]

Pike's understanding of community, and desire to emphasize networks, connections, and

narratives that might otherwise be considered only tangentially related or unimportant, suggests

how an organization can structure what is and can be known about it. Her processes of selection

and arrangement affect the ways in which the materials might be used in the future, and help to

define the limits of what will be known about MAWA. Of course, the records already had a

particular shape to them, prior to Pike's efforts: MAWA's day-to-day actions, performed in the

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[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.

service of its mandate, and governed by MAWA's legal obligations as an incorporated body, would have already structured the records, as would have whatever filtering events occurred prior to Pike's actions. A document could have been lost, a note thrown away, a box spilled and never reorganized—any number of things could have affected the "natural" shape of the information.

What is evident from both Pike's arranging, and from thinking through the "life" of a document, is that there is no neutrality within archives, whether considered mainstream or not. As Hamilton, Harris, and Reid point out, "Marginal archives often preserve materials excluded from the mainstream repositories but are themselves no less constructed than mainstream archives, and are likewise the product of processes of both preservation and exclusion."[39] Further, the creation and subsequent arrangement of a set of papers is an expression of power and politics. By choosing an artist as its archivist, and by permitting a way of arranging that is in line with its own values, MAWA expresses its mandate at a level often left unconsidered. It is exercising power in a fundamental manner; it is structuring future knowledge and predetermining its potential histories. Not only is the centre describing itself through the information contained within its papers, it is equally imparting information through their order, and through the relationships established between materials.

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[39] Hamilton, Harris, and Reid, "Introduction," 11-12.

159

4.8 Ordering, Access, and Ownership: Power and Control in Archives

As Derrida suggests, political power is directly connected to control over an archive.[40] This control, I suggest, can be conceptualized as having three constituent elements: ordering, access, and ownership. MAWA has already imposed order upon its archival records, so that element will be temporarily set aside to focus on the remaining two, both of which are required for the fullest realization of power. (And indeed, missing any one of these three elements may result in diminished power). Although the threat of what an archive might contain, the idea of its potential, can be very powerful, this power cannot be fully realized without physical accessibility. This accessibility, of course, cannot be offered unless the right ownership is in place. This situation creates a problem for artist-run centres, many of which are lacking the resources to provide access to their records. They may derive at least some power from simply having these records, but in the end, something must be done with them in order to activate that power.

It is this conflict between ownership and access that limits the potential of some artist-run centre archives. Unable to provide access, but unwilling to give up ownership, some artist-run centre records end up in permanent limbo, or worse, destroyed in a flood, fire, or other disaster. Fear of destruction, the acknowledgement of the inability to properly care for archival materials, or even a lack of space may lead to a donation, as has occurred in MAWA's case. Indeed, as Dempsey pointed out in our interview, "We've talked about some of the loftier goals of an archive, in terms of preserving a social history, or a legacy of artistic production, or of marginalized people,

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[40] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: a Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 4.

but from a very pragmatic point of view, we needed the space."[41] (MAWA, it should be noted, is

not alone. According to the survey described in Chapter Three, some 24% of English speaking

and 9% of French speaking centres have transferred at least some of their records to an external

institution).

Having a physical location, and having room within that location to carry out programming, is an

essential aspect of most traditional artist-run centres, and not one that should be taken for granted

or overlooked; a gallery space cannot be considered secondary to the operations of most centres

(and here I am exempting myself from considering newer models of artist-run centres, such as

those that are web-based, or that operate from shifting locations, such as Halifax's Eyelevel

Gallery, which gave up its space in 2013).[42] But, as suggested earlier, there is more at stake than

physical space: what is being affected by the choice to retain possession of archival documents is

an organization's metaphorical space within a dominant history. While the donation of materials

to an archival institution is not a guarantee of anything, it does at least suggest the possibility of

both longevity (that it, physical safety) and access. It also positions the records in a framework

that accepts the idea that we can find "...particular kinds of truth [in archival documents]: ones

that can be referenced and hence 'verified,' ones that are at least partly, in other words, created

by the real and symbolic capital of archival institutions themselves."[43] By their physical location

in a recognized archive, MAWA's records instantly gain legitimacy; they are eligible to

participate in an accepted system of identifying trails and evidence that reassure readers that the

events in question are real and can be proven.

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[41] Dempsey and Pike, interview.
[42] See Leah Sandals, "9 Thoughts on Running a Gallery—Without a Gallery Space," *Canadian Art* (online), posted August 6, 2014, accessed August 7, 2014, http://www.canadianart.ca/features/2014/08/06/eyelevel-gallery/
[43] Blouin and Rosenberg, "Archives and Social Memory," in *Archives*, 165.

The potential payoffs of a donation to a recognized institution may be significant. Still, relinquishing ownership of archival materials is not something to undertake lightly. I suggested earlier that the desire to retain materials is potential evidence of the connections between archives, identity, and power. If this is the case, then giving up possession of certain documents could be seen as a loss of identity. This situation could be compounded by a perceived lack of control over that identity, since the donor can no longer restrict or influence the use of the documents. While the extent to which an organization can direct what is written about it may be limited regardless of ownership, in making a donation, any illusions of control must be given up.

4.9 Infiltration via Donation

In MAWA's case, sorted archival records were transferred to the Archives of Manitoba (AM), a provincial body also based in Winnipeg. This transfer was suggested by Pike, and this specific institution was selected because a number of other relevant records, including those of Plug In and some related organizations, were also at the institution.[44] Removing the records from MAWA's basement brought with it a number of advantages, including more space, less responsibility for the physical care of the materials, lowered risks of destruction by unintended actions, and the opportunity for members of the public to access MAWA's records with greater ease—the AM keeps regular hours, and can provide researchers with the facilities they require to examine records. The main disadvantage was the forfeit of a degree of control, although because of MAWA's earlier structuring actions—because of its imposition of order upon the materials— this loss has been mitigated, and may even be an advantage. Indeed, I would like to suggest that, following Foucault, MAWA has carried out an act of resistance with its donation.

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[44] Dempsey and Pike, interview.

To understand how MAWA's donation may disrupt power relations, and to understand why, in this case, giving up ownership may not be a sacrifice of power, I turn to Foucault, who suggests studying power relationships by "investigat[ing] the forms of resistance [to power] and attempts made to dissociate these relations."[45] Examining a number of power struggles (including, for example, "opposition to the power of men over women"), he seeks to identify some of their common characteristics.[46] Most important here is his identification of these acts as "struggles against the privileges of knowledge." He writes,

> They are an opposition to the effects of power linked with knowledge, competence, and qualification—struggles against the privileges of knowledge. But they are also an opposition against secrecy, deformation, and mystifying representations imposed on people.
>
> ...What is questioned is the way in which knowledge circulates and functions, its relations to power. In short, the regime of knowledge [*savoir*].[47]

He is careful to point out that these struggles are against "a technique, a form of power," and not against the entity or body viewed as having that power.[48]

Although I would not position a provincial archives as the opposite of an artist-run centre, viewing them as evidence of dominant and non-dominant entities allows them to better fit within the framework proposed by Foucault. Thinking of them in this way allows me to suggest that MAWA is in a struggle to gain the privilege of knowledge, or perhaps a struggle to privilege

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[45] Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," in *Power*, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 2000), 329.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid., 330-331.
[48] Ibid., 331.

163

knowledge—in this case, specific knowledge of women's artistic production. MAWA has done this not only through their resource centre, but also through the transfer of their documents to an established institution, one that exercises power in a dominant way.

In other words, their donation is not in opposition to the Archives of Manitoba, but to the larger structures that construct and circulate knowledge and power, and that do so in an exclusive, rather than inclusive, manner. In this light, their donation can be viewed as an extension of their mandate, even if it were not originally conceived in that manner, and even if pragmatic concerns were the major motivating factors for the donation. They are seeking to make space for women, but in this case are doing so by structuring their records according to their values, and then by making these records available within a dominant institution. MAWA has taken control of its own representation to avoid the "mystifying representations" Foucault suggests, while simultaneously magnifying the potential impact of its records by making them available in an established archives. Through their donation, MAWA is carrying out an act of resistance by predetermining the shape of knowledge.

It is important to remember that MAWA has already privileged its knowledge—privileged what can be known about it—through how the records were shaped prior to the donation. Once in the AM, the shape of these records will be maintained to the greatest extent possible, as per the principle of *respect des fonds*, an essential tenet of archiving. *Rules for Archival Description*, a document outlining Canadian archival standards, describes *respect des fonds* as "the basis of archival arrangement and description." According to this principle, "the records created, accumulated, and/or maintained and used by an individual or corporate body must be kept

together in their original order, if it exists or has been maintained, and not be mixed or combined with the records of another individual or corporate body."[49]

MAWA's archival materials will not be broken apart and added to those created by other entities, nor should they be rearranged, although an archivist may note their "reorganisation(s) by the creator" (that is, the organization by Pike prior to the donation).[50] While some filtering may occur, the carefully organized state in which the records were donated should be maintained; because the records have already been structured in anticipation of future researchers, relatively little further intervention should be required or permitted. The structures MAWA has established in its donation will remain more or less intact. (And this is indeed the case. In an interview with Joan Sinclair of the AM, she indicated that in processing MAWA's papers, the AM kept a number of items that would normally be filtered out—primarily materials produced by other organizations—in order to reflect MAWA's connections to a larger community).[51]

Rather than relinquishing power by giving up ownership of its records, MAWA has taken steps to encourage the creation of histories inclusive of women and their work within artistic ecosystems. Through both its resource centre and its donation to the AM, it has helped to increase the resources available about women artists in Canada. The donation has the added

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[49] Bureau of Canadian Archivists, *Rules for Archival Description* (Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 2008), xxiii.

[50] Bureau of Canadian Archivists, *Rules*, 1-66. See General Rule 1.8B13, Arrangement: "Make notes on the arrangement of the unit being described which contribute significantly to its understanding but cannot be put in the Scope and content (see 1.7D), e.g., about reorganisation(s) by the creator, arrangement by the archivist, changes in the classification scheme, or reconstitution of original order."

[51] Joan Sinclair (Archivist, Archives of Manitoba), interview with the author, Winnipeg, April 5, 2013. Note that the speed at which the recipient institution can make information about its holdings publicly available can play a role in the potential use of a donor's records. Slow processing (in particular, failing to make holdings information available online) effectively renders records invisible. Inadequate descriptions may also pose a threat, potentially obscuring key records from researchers. In the case of MAWA's records at the AM, an online finding aid already exists.

benefit of allowing the records to participate in traditions of verification and legitimation;

MAWA's records in the provincial archives—what Theresa Rowat calls "a privileged site" that

is "by definition the legitimate place to find authentic/official answers about our histories"—

should—in theory at least—have the same standing as any other fonds.[52] Future exclusions of

women's art and work in local and regional art historical narratives can only be understood as

intentional.

MAWA's efforts to influence unwritten histories do not end with their donation to the Archives

of Manitoba. Further accruals are expected; MAWA plans to deposit relatively recently created

materials with the AM on a regular basis, once the records are no longer required for the

organization's day-to-day operations. Pike has also developed a records management schedule

for MAWA, outlining a life cycle for the various materials MAWA generates.[53] Provided it is

fully implemented, this document should structure future archival materials in the same way Pike

structured materials already donated; MAWA's ability to shape its records in a deliberate way

should continue even without the involvement of Pike. MAWA's archive policy, approved in

2011, should have the same impact, although, as with any action requiring individual discretion,

there will be some variation.[54] The relationships identified by Pike as important to MAWA's past

may be of less concern to future archivists, or, alternatively, future archivists may place greater

emphasis on areas overlooked by Pike, especially as MAWA changes over time. Still, that

MAWA controls and organizes its records prior to donation ensures it retains a degree of power.

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[52] Theresa Rowat, "The Record and Repository as a Cultural Form of Expression," *Archivaria* 36 (Autumn 1993): 198.

[53] MAWA, "Appendix A File Structure for Archival Records," unpublished policy sent by Dana Kletke (Co-Executive Director, MAWA) to the author via e-mail, February 15, 2013.

[54] MAWA, "Archive Policy_Procedure," accessed January 15, 2013, http://mawa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Archive-Policy_Proceedure.pdf

4.10 Hazards of the Future

MAWA's future archival materials, however, still face a number of challenges. Electronic communication has fundamentally affected the production of records, particularly when it comes to e-mail. The areas so carefully preserved by Pike—personal correspondence and evidence of networks—are also those that are at greatest risk, on account of their ephemeral nature. While in the past such correspondence would have been conducted in hard copy (handwritten or computer-printed letters, cards, and so on), today much of this communication occurs over e-mail. While it is certainly possible to print and file an e-mail, or to make a digital copy on an external storage device, carrying out such actions can be a challenge, especially given other organizational priorities.[55] There are other problems as well: staff turnover can result in abandoned and inaccessible e-mail accounts, while technical issues—ranging from file format obsolescence to unexplained crashes—can hamper the best of record keeping intentions.

Of course, all materials deemed worth keeping, whether in hard or electronic form, have always been subject to loss or destruction, whether inadvertent or deliberate. But the move towards the electronic seems to magnify the potential for destruction, even as more and more records are produced. As Roy Rosenzweig points out, there exists the paradoxical situation of having simultaneously too much and not enough information: while records are being generated in massive quantities, a lack of stable and consistent management techniques puts them at risk— permanent deletion at the touch of a button is a possibility, especially for resource-limited organizations. From within this situation, historians, he writes, "need to be thinking

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[55] Dempsey and Pike, interview.

simultaneously about how to research, write, and teach in a world of unheard-of historical abundance *and* how to avoid a future of record scarcity."[56]

Although strict adherence to records management policies would mitigate both the potential loss of materials and the challenges of profound abundance, in the absence of their perfect implication, awareness becomes an important tool. As the shapes (formats) of our records change, so too will the shapes of available knowledge. Even if two records, one in hard copy and one in digital form, have the same written content, the way in which those records are organized and conceptualized can vary. The hard copy, for example, if believed to be unique, may be given special physical protections, while the electronic copy, viewed as infinitely replicable, may be left vulnerable. The electronic copy may also be filed differently, saved in multiple locations or linked to in various ways. These actions affect how the content can and may be used; the ostensibly harmless acts of filing or duplicating ultimately affect the construction of future histories.

In order for MAWA to continue to create records that privilege the knowledge born of its particular ontology, an awareness of these risks and changes is essential. The organization will have to recognize the challenges it faces in archiving in light of digital technologies. Equally important will be recognizing the significant influence of Pike, and planning for her successors. The magnitude of Pike's almost three-decade long contribution should not be overlooked: as an individual, she has shaped the way MAWA's history can be written. Subsequent interventions into their records will be undertaken by others who may or may not share Pike's attitude and

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[56] Roy Rosenzweig, "Scarcity or Abundance? Preserving the Past in a Digital Era," *The American Historical Review* 108, no. 3 (June 2003): 738.

beliefs. While a MAWA-chosen archivist would presumably share the organization's values, this situation cannot be guaranteed, especially since MAWA's current archival policy does not explicitly state a feminist ethos for arranging—although such a thing would be challenging to define. Nor can it even be assumed that future records will be arranged prior to their deposit at the Archives of Manitoba: time and resources may necessitate the deposit of unorganized boxes of material, rather than ordered and orderly items. While MAWA's day-to-day mandated activities ensure that the materials they produce—their future archival materials—automatically reflect a concern for women's artistic growth and production, the prominence of this characteristic could be muted, depending on how the materials are physically and electronically structured. Being aware of these factors, and choosing how to act in their light, will determine what can be written and said about MAWA in the future.

4.11 Summary: Archives as Ideological Tool

Through an examination of MAWA and its archival practices, I have tried to show the potential influence an artist-run centre archive may have on the construction of future histories. Thinking of MAWA's archival materials as an ideological tool, and one that has been structured in alignment with MAWA's values, I have suggested that the donation of carefully organized materials to a larger body can be viewed as both an act of resistance and an investment in future feminist histories; it is an act that allows them to fit evidence of their existence into broader narratives while still maintaining their distinctive values and ideas. Although some power is relinquished in giving up physical ownership of materials, I have suggested that the potential power in having a pre-structured "inside" position in a major institution is more significant than

what is lost. There are also more pragmatic concerns addressed via donation: the gallery gains space as well as physical protection for its documents. These gains are by no means minor. They allow MAWA to focus on its day-to-day activities, unencumbered by the physical evidence of its past.

MAWA's arrangement and donation of its records are in line with its early and current mandates, and advance its goal of making space for women within Canada's artistic ecosystem. Along with its resource centre, MAWA's archives, both those at the Archives of Manitoba and the new materials it generates daily, help to eliminate excuses for exclusionary practices in the writing of histories. These records may be incorporated into future histories in a number of ways. Researchers may focus on particular personalities that appear in the records as a result of MAWA's mentoring-based model. Or they may look to other parts of MAWA's records, and particularly those that suggest a different way to do things: cooperatively, through the advancement of all women artists, and not just those that meet certain criteria for historical significance. Whatever the case, whether the records are seen to conform to or challenge existent structures, they remain valuable as evidence of women's contributions to Canadian art history, through both their organizations and their works of art.

Of course, none of this potential can be realized without action. MAWA has ensured the physical safety and increased the accessibility of their records through its donation, but these actions will bear little fruit if no one actually looks at or uses the records. This situation, however, is not unique to MAWA, nor to artist-run centres; it is a situation faced by any entity that donates its records to an archives. Records may not be used until many, many years in the future, or they

may not be used at all. No amount of promotion guarantees use, and it is this threat that perhaps motivates other artist-run centres to take the use of their records into their own hands. And to focus on use alone may be to overlook the point: while I have discussed potential value at length, it may be that the actual value of these records is simply in their existence, in the fact that they take up space for women.

Chapter Five: Living and Working in the Non-Panoptical Domestic Archive: The LIDS Residency

5.1 Introduction: Thinking About "Unspoken Influences"[1]

The six essays in Part I of Antoinette Burton's *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History* provide insight into researcher experiences in physical—and in one case, virtual—archives. Collected under the title "Close Encounters: The Archive as Contact Zone," these essays were selected because of the editor's "belief that the material spaces of archives exert tremendous and largely unspoken influences on their users, producing knowledges and insights which in turn impact the narratives they craft and the histories they write."[2] It is this belief, sometimes overlooked or downplayed, that is the subject of this chapter, and one that I explore through an atypical situation: an artist residency that occurred at John Snow House (JSH), a once-private home now managed by The New Gallery (TNG), an artist-run centre located in Calgary, Alberta. While artist residencies are not uncommon, what is different in this situation is that it occurred in a space that also held the partial archival records of TNG, and that part of the artists' project included an exploration of these materials. Equally important is the fact that this exploration happened in a space that was largely without surveillance: the artists, although given some guidelines about finding, handling, and managing archival materials, were largely left to their own devices.

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[1] Antoinette Burton, "Introduction: Archive Fever, Archive Stories," in *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, ed. Antoinette Burton (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 10.
[2] Ibid., 9-10.

This situation—being left alone with archival records—is fairly rare, especially in large archival institutions. While my own experiences do not match, for example, the extensive security Craig Robertson (and countless other researchers) encountered on his trips to the main branch of the National Archives and Records Administration of the United States, I have encountered varying levels of archival security, ranging from the pre- and post-visit weighing of notebooks (to prevent me from absconding with a key document tucked inside), to more relaxed standards where I could bring both a bag and a coat with me into the reading room.[3] In no situation, however, have I ever been without supervision. While such security actions most certainly do protect the documents, they also impact a user's experience of the archive, as Ketelaar reminds us in "The Panoptical Archive." In this heavily controlled space, observation—whether in person, via camera, or both—and room arrangement ensure "a maximum of surveillance and a minimum of privacy for the researchers."[4] What happens, then, when users are granted liberal, unsurveilled reign in an archive? What happens when users are so unreservedly trusted? How does it affect the type of work they can produce?

While a lack of surveillance has the potential to influence the production of archive-informed or inspired work, so too does the provision of unlimited access to archival materials. In the case of the residency at JSH, the artists—the Ladies Invitational Deadbeat Society (LIDS), comprised of Anthea Black, Nicole Burisch, and Wednesday Lupypciw—were able to live, work, and create in an archival space. With the possible exception of online archives that are "always open," this type of access—being able to use original documents at "home"—is uncommon, if not entirely

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[3] Craig Roberston, "Mechanisms of Exclusion: Historicizing the Archive and the Passport," in *Archive Stories*, 68-69.

[4] Eric Ketelaar, "The Panoptical Archive," in *Archives, Documentation and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar*, eds. Francis X. Blouin and William G. Rosenberg (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2007), 147.

unique. Having access records in the middle of the night, on a Sunday afternoon, or while dressed in pyjamas, granted the artist-researchers the freedom to work entirely according to their own schedules and needs. Rushing to finish with a file before closing time, contemplating the paperwork required to view an additional box of materials, or juggling a schedule to coincide with limited opening hours were not barriers to research; the artists could spend as little or as long as necessary with the materials of their choice, without the mediation of an archivist. In this privileged situation, are there connections to be made between *living in archives* and *living archives*?[5] How do both relate to the creation of living histories—flexible and fluid stories about the past that reflect a diversity of perspectives?

That this residency occurred in a house—indeed, the former home of its namesake, Canadian painter and printmaker John Snow—must also be taken into consideration. Although lacking closed storage or a dedicated reading room, as might be found in a more traditional archive, the house offered a living room, kitchen, studio addition, two bedrooms, and an unfinished basement. Archival materials were spread throughout these areas, not necessarily in any particular order, but as was suitable to the space. Journals were filed in the second bedroom, because they fit well on the built-in shelves there. Filing cabinets holding artist files were in the living room for ease of access, as were a number of books, while binders of slides were in the basement, where shelving was available. How do these two factors—the convenience-based organization of the materials and the domestic architecture—affect what might be created within the space? Did working in a house, as opposed to a purpose-built archive, influence the creation of works of art?

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[5] I thank Clive Robertson for pointing out the connections between Stuart Hall's conceptualization of "living archives" and the idea of living *in* archives. For more on Hall's definition, see "Constituting an Archive," *Third Text* 15, no. 54 (Spring 2001): 89.

Using the LIDS residency at JSH as a vehicle for exploration, this chapter thinks through how the physical realities of archives—the way access is provided, the way the space is laid out, the supervision (or lack thereof), etc.—have the potential to shape the type of work that can be produced from them. It is, in other words, a scaling up and extension of the idea that the physical ordering of paper in archives is an expression of knowledge-power.[6] Here, following Ketelaar, I am applying that idea to larger spaces and processes, and considering the potential impacts of the ordering of both space and behaviour in an archive. My goal is not to change the practices currently in place at large, institutional archives, nor to downplay the important roles of archivists in caring for and providing access to materials. Instead, it is my hope that an awareness of the potential influences of archival physicalities might affect the ways other artist-run centres approach their archives.

5.2 Analogues and Audiences

This chapter draws upon studies produced by institutions analogous to artist-run archives— libraries, museums, and traditional archives. While there are many important similarities between all of these bodies, there are also some meaningful differences, many of which I identify as they arise.[7] One that must be pointed out now, however, is that the LIDS, a collective comprised of three women artists, is perhaps not a typical archive user. While the idea of a "typical user"

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[6] Ketelaar, "The Panoptical Archive," 147.

[7] In her article, "Emerging convergence? Thoughts on museums, archives, libraries and professional training," Jennifer Trant elaborates on the important differences that exist between these institutions, including the different assumptions they make about patron needs, desired levels of mediation, and methods of patron-institution interaction. See Trant, "Emerging convergence?" *Museum Management and Curatorship* 24, no. 4 (December 2009): 369-387, and especially 369-372.

likely obscures the wide variety of reasons patrons visit archives, here, it is a necessary construct to highlight key differences between JSH and more traditional archives. For the purposes of this discussion, it will be assumed that artists (and artist collectives) are not the primary audience for mainstream archives. That designation would instead be assigned to historians, academics, and other researchers, without excluding the possibility that a person can be both an historian and an artist, and may indeed use an archive for artistic purposes. Or perhaps this concern could be framed by intended product, rather than by producer: it will be assumed that the production of visual or performance art is generally not the goal of archival research carried out at traditional archives.

These distinctions between patrons and products are important to bear in mind while considering the physicality of archival spaces. They are a reminder that the comparisons made here are not necessarily between equivalent situations and organizations, but rather between analogous entities that ultimately make different choices about space and security based on any number of factors, including mandates, anticipated audiences, budgets, and staffing levels. Such distinctions also raise a number of questions essential for artist-run centres to consider when managing their archives: who is the target audience? How does this audience wish to use the archive? Is it a research resource, a source of artistic inspiration, or both? For artist-run centres, if the audience is indeed artists, the policies and procedures they develop will have to reflect artist needs. Such needs may vary from those of other researchers, and may ultimately call for the design of non-traditional archival protocols, beginning, perhaps, with a lack of surveillance.

5.3 Why and How Spaces Matter: Some Theoretical Engagements

Foucault's 1975 book, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, includes a chapter titled

"Panopticism."[8] An oft-cited work about the effects of space and surveillance upon behaviour,

this chapter analyzes Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, a penitentiary designed around a

watchtower, with all cells visible from a single, central point. The person placed in the tower

would not be able to monitor all inmates at all times, which was precisely the point: not knowing

when they were being observed, prisoners would condition themselves to constantly behave

correctly, lest they be caught behaving inappropriately. Foucault explains the effect of this

architecture on power relations as follows:

> Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers.[9]

As Foucault suggests, in this situation, the design of the space amplifies the already unequal

distribution of power. He continues: "Power has its principle not so much in a person as in a

certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal

mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up."[10] It is this "distribution of

bodies, surfaces, lights, [and] gazes" that conditions inmates and makes power manifest. This

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[8] Michel Foucault, "Panopticism," in *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, 2nd Vintage Books Edition, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House Inc., 1995), 195 – 228. First published in French in 1975. First translated into English in 1977.
[9] Ibid., 201.
[10] Ibid., 202.

particular distribution, of course, is not limited to penal institutions. As Ketelaar points out, the power relations at play in the prison are also existent in the archive: "Every user is enveloped in the observation by the other users and by the archives personnel. Nobody escapes this watch or the exacting ritualization of the search room."[11] While he reminds us that *inmates* are called *patrons* in the archive, the conditioning effects of potential observation, combined with spaces arranged to facilitate that observation, are intended to have similar results: well-behaved researchers who act in ways deemed appropriate, and who in turn produce texts influenced by these experiences.[12]

From Bentham, Foucault, and Ketelaar, it is understood that observation, facilitated through architectural design, can exert power over the users of a particular space. A number of other authors also consider the potential effects of architecture on actions and thoughts, but temporarily set aside the idea of surveillance, and instead approach the topic with greater attention to the space itself, and the ways in which things are positioned within that space. Of particular interest are some recent articles from researchers looking at libraries and museums, as well as purpose-built archives. These authors examine this topic on a variety of scales, considering the overall design of a building and its exterior, the layout of the space inside of it, and even the way objects are arranged upon furniture within the space. Although there are others, I would like to briefly consider four articles in particular, each of which offers increasingly granular insight into how space can communicate particular ideas and affect a patron's behaviour within it.

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[11] Ketelaar, "The Panoptical Archive," 147.
[12] Ibid.

In her 2013 article, "The Psyche of the Library: Physical Space and the Research Paradigm," librarian Hannah Bennett seeks to examine "a research paradigm embedded within a building design program." She asks, "What is it about a library's physical design that directs and nurtures discovery or enlightenment?"[13] Comparing two purpose-built libraries, one from the 20th century and one from the 21st, she considers how architecture can be the physical expression of a particular idea. In the 20th century library, the Stockholm Public Library (1928), the way one moves through the building—from darker areas to lighter ones—gives physical expression to a quest for knowledge, described metaphorically as a movement from darkness and ignorance into light and knowledge.[14] In contrast, and symbolic of a different way of thinking about research processes, is the 21st century library, the "Berlin Brain," built in 2006 and formally known as the Philological Library at the Free University of Berlin. With a layout that resembles a human brain, Bennett suggests that the building "epitomizes how people think and study rather than necessarily guiding their process; students come to plug in and compute, and in doing so, become part of a larger network. Thus, the building is commensurate with the crowd source notion of intelligence."[15]

The buildings Bennett describes convey expectations in subtle and overt ways, reflecting—and perhaps even shaping—ideas about research processes. Lilly Koltun, in her 2002 article, "The Architecture of Archives: Whose Form, What Functions?" also considers the messages embedded in architecture, but does so through the examination of a purpose-built archive. Taking Library and Archives Canada's Gatineau Preservation Centre (1997) as her topic, Koltun

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[13] Hannah Bennett, "The Psyche of the Library: Physical Space and the Research Paradigm," *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* 32, no. 2 (Fall 2013): 175.
[14] Ibid., 176-177.
[15] Ibid., 182-183.

examines the conflicting messages built into its architecture.[16] She begins the article by drawing

parallels between the "inevitable, neutral" forms of Modernist architecture and the ostensible

claims of impartiality put forth by archivists, then deconstructs both, looking at how they have

been naturalized through assumptions about their objectivity.[17] She also considers the "mutually

metaphorical" relationship between buildings and bodies, where both are gendered, and both are

"expressive of social assumptions and power relations."[18] Within this gendered framework, she

writes, "the feminine is seen as a system of difference from the masculine order or norm."[19]

Looking at the Gatineau Preservation Centre itself, she discusses both its Modernist/masculine

elements, as well as those that can be considered Mannerist/feminine, and ultimately argues that

the building's physical form manages to simultaneously affirm and challenge notions about "an

unchanging truth and permanence."[20] The building is, as she states, both "an ideology and its

subversion."[21]

Bennett and Koltun's articles demonstrate the close connections between architectural form and

function. Libraries and archives, like museums, hospitals, city halls, houses, and other purpose-

built buildings, all attempt to communicate with their visitors, informing them of the building's

intended uses, projecting messages about power and authority, and giving physical expression to

contemporary thinking and architectural trends. But what happens when a building is used for

purposes beyond those for which it was first designed? How might a repurposed space such as

JSH influence research activities? Although not intended as a library-archive, the house is

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[16] When Koltun was writing her article, the body now known as Library and Archives Canada (LAC) had not merged with the National Library and was still known as the National Archives of Canada.
[17] Lilly Koltun, "The Architecture of Archives: Whose Form, What Function?" *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 244.
[18] Ibid., 252.
[19] Ibid., 252.
[20] Ibid., 258.
[21] Ibid., 259.

nevertheless used as such. What might be the effect of this use on the research that happens in the space? Does a potentially familiar environment—a house—affect the type of work that occurs in it? If so, how? At the same time, as Koltun suggests, the gendered implications of such a space cannot be ignored. By placing its archives in a house, a building that is part of the traditional feminine/domestic/private sphere, what messages might TNG be creating, either intentionally or not? Could it be a subversion of the notion of "an unchanging truth and permanence" associated with more traditional archives, or could it be read as a sort of dismissal, a relegation to a secondary, less important location? Having the LIDS, a group of feminist artists, work within the space only adds to the complexity.

Before considering the LIDS, and the meaningful implications of their work with(in) a house, I want to look at spatial arrangement on a smaller scale. To do so, I turn to eMotion, an interdisciplinary project conducted by Swiss researchers. Through a number of experiments, the overall project "analyzes the museum experience experimentally"—a challenging task, and one that the researchers admit is "plagued by an array of methodological difficulties, largely due to the fact that the interactions between visitors and things in museums remains essentially invisible."[22] It is the project's examination of the potential influence of curatorial arrangements on visitor behaviour that is of greatest interest here.

The authors of "The Effects of Curatorial Arrangements" take as their starting point the work of Bruno Latour, who, as the authors note, suggested a mutualistic relationship between people and things: both shape each other, or, as they state, "things and humans transform themselves equally

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[22] Martin Tröndle et al., "The Effects of Curatorial Arrangements," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 29, no. 2 (2014): 141.

in practice." Consequently, "exhibitions are complex networks of actions and force fields in which a rapport between visitors, architecture, and things can be generated."[23] Empirically studying such a network is challenging, although increasingly possible because of various technological developments. For the eMotion project, researchers were able to generate data by measuring visitor movement and physiological reactions as they walked through an exhibition that was configured differently during its run. By having participants wear a glove that recorded their position, rate of movement, heart rate, and skin conductance level, researchers were able to create maps showing visitor pathways through various layouts of the same exhibition, which in turn offered information about how viewers interact with works of art and each other in the space.[24]

Lead author Marin Tröndle and his team come to several fascinating conclusions that are of particular relevance here. First, they found that visitors to a museum paid more attention to a work of art inside the exhibition space proper, as opposed to one located in the foyer just outside the exhibition entrance, even though it was part of the exhibition. They proposed that this phenomenon was the result of entering an "esthetic mode of viewing," a state "caused by a specific conditioning of visitor behaviour, causing their attention to increase as soon as they crossed the threshold into the 'actual' exhibition space."[25] In addition to this "institutionalization of viewing," they point out that a patron's behaviour "is not just dependent on curatorial context, the artworks, and the architecture, but furthermore on the interactions of museum visitors themselves and how many visitors are present in the exhibition halls."[26]

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[23] Ibid., 140.
[24] See ibid., 143ff. for a full explanation of research methods and variable exhibition layouts.
[25] Ibid., 151.
[26] Ibid., 142.

Given this observation, and keeping in mind Foucault, Ketelaar, and Bennett's ideas around the importance of spatial design to appropriate or expected behaviour, I would like to suggest that similar processes occur in archives. A carefully demarcated archival space likely encourages researchers to act in a particular way; the architecture and layout of the space, as well as security and control processes, come together to impact a user's experience and understanding of the archive. If this is indeed the case, then the situation of JSH raises some interesting questions, not only about a space that is not purpose-built, but also about a space that is not a traditional (or perhaps "real") archive. Are there particular expectations around an artist-assembled and artist-run archive housed in a house? Does its physical space allow for a certain degree of freedom, given that it lacks some of the trappings of other archives, including a clear demarcation of work and living spaces?

The impact of a room's arrangement on a micro level is also addressed by Tröndle et al. Their study found that the order in which works are hung on a wall can affect viewing behaviour. Given a "relatively balanced series" of works arranged in a row, the first work will get the greatest attention, while progressively less time will be spent with the remaining works.[27] Does this idea translate into other areas, such as bookshelves and file folders? In an unmonitored or "free access" archive such as JSH, does this mean that the first file or box will receive the greatest attention? What does this phenomenon mean for the writing of histories? Is the accident of being first a greater factor in historical narratives than previously realized or consciously acknowledged?

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[27] Ibid., 161.

Tröndle et al. also found "that the spatial structure and interferences between artworks have a strong impact on visitor behaviour and attention."[28] Not only do artworks and the relationships that exist between them affect visitor experiences, so too does the layout of the space, as the authors discovered when manipulating the location of sculptures in the exhibition. The way the sculptures were positioned in the space "had a considerable influence on visitor art reception (as can be seen in the physiological responses), and the sculptures evoked strong force fields interfering with other artworks."[29] While an exhibition space is notably different from both a traditional archive and a space such as JSH, it is not implausible that analogous effects also occur in these locations. Once inside the archival space, and in possession of an "archival mindset" that accompanies the entrance of that space, how much does the arrangement of the furniture matter? Is the location of the filing cabinet, or the couch or the table, important? Does it direct the actions of the artist-researcher? Although much more research would be required, the conclusions of Tröndle et al. would suggest that the answer is a tentative "yes."

While I am optimistic that the findings of the eMotion project would be applicable in an archival environment, I wish to point out that there are a number of factors that preclude fully transposing the results of the study into a different space. In JSH, for instance, the way in which the space is encountered is significantly different. Unlike a gallery space, where visitors walk through in a generally linear manner that goes from the beginning of the exhibition to its end, the artist-researchers at JSH had no defined or expected path. There was no obvious beginning or end to the archive; archival materials were placed throughout the house. Nor were there time limits or time pressures for the researchers: the house did not have closing hours, nor was the need for

[28] Ibid., 169.
[29] Ibid., 166.

food or rest necessarily a reason to leave the space. Additionally, repeat visits were possible and

convenient. While a person who has viewed an exhibition in an instituition once may certainly

view it again, in JSH, the fact that the artist-researchers were living in the space greatly increased

the chances of them repeatedly encountering the materials, and gave them the opportunity to do

so in different ways.

Even with these factors in mind, the general conclusions about the potential effects of space on

behaviour remain valid. This notion is supported by one additional article, Ksenia Cheinman's

"Creating Alternative Art Libraries." In it, Cheinman considers a number of ways to engage

visitors who come to such libraries—including the libraries of artist-run centres, or a space such

as JSH. She makes a general observation that is particularly salient here, and that echoes the

findings of the previously discussed articles: the way things are arranged will affect the ways in

which visitors encounter them. She provides a particularly concrete example of this

phenomenon:

> Based on first-hand accounts of attempts to make printed resources visible, the most direct
> way for alternative art spaces to engage their visitors with the holdings of their collection
> might be through a certain staged disorder of items. There is a simple reason why such a
> strategy works, besides the possible disorderly appeal: it is because individuals often feel
> hesitant to touch something that is shelved in a pristine fashion, tidy to the point where any
> contact would ruin the display. The mild disarray provides comfort, and it seems to
> communicate to the visitors that someone else prior to them had engaged with the material.
> This simple approach triggers curiosity, making the visitor eager to read an item that
> someone had borrowed earlier.[30]

This deliberate "staged disorder" might include books shelved at different depths, or items left

on tables, and perhaps even turned to a specific page. But whatever the form of this intended

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[30] Ksenia Cheinman, "Creating Alternative Art Libraries," *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* 33, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 45.

imperfection, what is important is that positioning objects in this way seems to affect our interactions with them. If this is the case, as Cheinman suggests from her anecdotal evidence (which, coincidentally, agrees with my own personal experiences), and as Tröndle et al. attempt to quantify with their research, how might such principles apply in a space such as JSH? Was the environment a welcoming and comforting one not only because it was a house, but because materials were *not* organized in a particularly disciplined way?

What Cheinman's article makes clear is that all aspects of spatial arrangement matter, down to the smallest detail. While such things most likely cannot yet be quantitatively measured, that they may impact research processes is important to keep in mind. Indeed, all aspects of a space and the materials it contains must be considered, especially if the organization to which they belong seeks to encourage research in a particular direction. Cheinman expresses this sentiment eloquently:

> The space the materials occupy and the manner in which they fill it can have a great impact on the way an art space is experienced. An organizational principle is also a narrative, a constructed navigation system that tells a story. Being aware of such effects, arts organizations can attempt to diversify the standard modes of representation and create unique ways of accessing information, opening up new avenues for reflection on its contents.[31]

What is the narrative of TNG's materials in JSH? What are the new avenues for reflection that it provides? Through their residency, the artists of the LIDS suggest one of many possible answers to these questions.

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[31] Ibid., 47.

5.4 State of the Archives: TNG and its Archival Materials

Understanding the narrative possibilities of TNG's records at JSH requires some knowledge of the archival materials themselves, as well as of the centre. The organization that is today known as TNG was founded in Calgary in 1974 as the Clouds 'n' Water Gallery and Visual Production Society. It was incorporated the following year, and, over the course of its 40-year history, has undergone changes in both name and location, becoming the Off Centre Centre (a play on its location off Centre Street) before becoming The New Gallery, its name since 1987.[32] Through these various moves and changes, it retained a varied body of materials that were both self-generated and collected from other producers. These materials included documents, images, publications, and other assorted things that fail to fit neatly into any category.

By the time I became involved with TNG, multiple changes in location had forced the board to address its numerous boxes of archival material. At the same time, TNG had secured the use of JSH for an indeterminate period of time, and was hoping to use the space for a number of purposes, including as a resource centre, which it defined as a combined library and archive. It was determined, however, that the space would be ultimately unsuitable for the secure storage of all of TNG's materials, and thus began a process of sorting and organization that culminated in the donation of a body of material to Glenbow Museum, a local institution with a wide-ranging collection of art and cultural materials, as well as an archives.

The choice of what to keep and what to donate were largely my own, and reflected my own best guess as to what might be useful in the context of TNG and JSH. They were, however, also

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[32] The New Gallery, "History," accessed November 17, 2014, http://www.thenewgallery.org/about/history/

guided by direction of the board, and, to some extent, by the Canada Revenue Agency, which outlines specific requirements for record keeping for registered charities, of which TNG is one. The need to maintain quite recent records for the purpose of reporting to the centre's funders, particularly The Canada Council for the Arts, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, and the Calgary Arts Development Authority, also informed my decision.

In the end, the materials donated to Glenbow were primarily administrative: minutes, reports, financial statements, and similar materials. While these materials are very important—they contain the decisions that ultimately allow the centre to function, and offer evidence of how artists run an organization—they seemed to lend themselves less easily to artistic and research pursuits than some of the other materials, such as slides and artist files. The visual materials seemed more likely to be used for artistic inspiration, and, if they were in the possession of TNG, could potentially be digitized and made available online, provided copyright permission was secured. While it would have been ideal to keep all of the records together, such an act was not an option, and the breaking up of the collection—that is, the identification of some records as potentially more valuable than others—was a necessary, though unpalatable, step. It was also an act that required guessing at the identity of the target audience, and hoping that it would be comprised of artists (and some researchers) interested in imagery and information about other artists.[33, 34]

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[33] Prior to making the donation, I had contacted a number of other centres that had given their archives to other institutions, and was aware that such a donation would not be unusual. In the course of conducting this project, however, I have come to find that the separation that occurred between administrative records and visual materials is also somewhat common. Grunt, for instance, makes distinctions between its "documentary" and "administrative" archives. I have discussed this separation in Chapter Three, and address it again in Chapter Six.

[34] In reflecting on this donation, I realize that writing about how I made these choices, and making this information available to archive users, would be a way to increase transparency around the collection, and would offer users a useful explanation of why the collection contains some things and not others.

I offer reflection on these decisions as a way to introduce the materials with which the LIDS was working, and to acknowledge the extent to which their work was limited—or partially predetermined—by these choices. The Ladies had access to some of TNG's most recent administrative records, to slide binders and photographs, to a limited number of posters and marketing materials, to the artist files, to a few items of unknown provenance and identity, and to TNG's collection of publications, including journals, exhibition catalogues, and some books of generally limited publication runs. These materials were in various states of organization, with the slide binders, organized by date, and the artist files, arranged somewhat alphabetically, having the most consistent order. Many of the other types of material were lacking a deliberate order, and no finding aids were available. (The materials donated to Glenbow were the ones I had organized, leaving a variety of materials in the house that had not yet been sorted, or only loosely grouped).

5.5 John Snow House and the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives: Housing Archives in Houses

As mentioned earlier, TNG's materials were spread across John Snow House, a mustard yellow two-storey wood-frame house built in 1912, and located centrally within the city. Now registered as a Provincial Historic Resource in the Province of Alberta, the house is of historical interest because of its association with John Snow (its owner for more than 40 years), and for the its studio addition, designed by Maxwell Bates, an architect as well as Snow's fellow painter. Entering the house from the street, one passes through the veranda and can either go upstairs, to where there are two bedrooms and two bathrooms, or continue to the main floor, where the living

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room, dining area, kitchen, and studio addition are located. There is an unfinished basement, as well as a small back yard that is fenced off from an alley. In general, the space retains the feeling of a house. Apart from some office-like filing cabinets, the décor is very much residential, and includes IKEA shelving, some leather couches, a melamine kitchen table, and a few other pieces of furniture that were either in the house when TNG assumed management of it, or donated by people associated with the centre.

Figure 1. Exterior of John Snow House, Calgary, Alberta, June 2015. Photo: Author.

The environment at JSH, and the approach taken to the house by TNG, can be compared to another archive located in a house, the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (CLGA). Although a "deliberate" archive (that is, one founded specifically to be an archive, whereas TNG's archival production, and that of other artist-run centres, is more organic), and much broader in scope, the CLGA's situation is similar to TNG's in that both are archives produced/assembled by non-mainstream/marginalized groups, and both are operating from repurposed spaces. There are also some similarities between the collections: as is common among community archives, TNG retains materials that would fall outside the purview of traditional archives, as does the CLGA.[35] Its collection includes a wide variety of materials, including artifacts and works of art. As it states on its website, "Most archives do not collect artifacts, or only very selectively, relying on museums to do so. As these museums do not collect material documenting our lesbian and gay communities in all their variety, the Archives endeavours to retain artifacts that document our activities, and which are readily stored and present few conservation problems."[36] Finally, both TNG and the CLGA have invited artists to work in their collections. The LIDS member Anthea Black has created work from the collections of both organizations, working at the CLGA in 2013.[37]

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[35] As discussed in Chapter Three, and as pointed out by Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens and Elizabeth Shepherd in "Whose memories, whose archives? Independent community archives, autonomy and the mainstream" (*Archival Science* 9, nos. 1-2 (June 2009): 74), archives that emerge from independent communities often define "archival materials" according to their own needs, regardless of "traditional" or "official" distinctions.

[36] CLGA, "Collections," accessed May 8, 2015, http://clga.ca/collections-main

[37] In 2013, the CLGA produced an exhibition titled, *Gay Premises: Radical Voices in the Archives, 1973-1983*, which examined the history and influence of *The Body Politic*, a Toronto gay newspaper and the organization that provided the impetus for forming the CLGA. At the same time, it produced an exhibition called *TAG TEAM: Gay Premises*, which was a response by a number of artists, including Anthea Black, to *Gay Premises: Radical Voices in the Archives, 1973-1983*. It also produced *TORNADO TAG TEAM*, an event that responded to both exhibitions. For more information, see CLGA, "Past Exhibitions," accessed May 12, 2015, http://clga.ca/exhibitions/past. Also note the use of "premises" in the exhibition titles, which seems to be a play on premises as both a location and an assumption, which in turn seems to suggest the importance of a marginalized group having its own space (a premises).

Founded in 1973 and billed as "the largest independent LGBTQ+ archives in the world," the CLGA is now located at 34 Isabella Street, a mansion in Toronto. The CLGA came to its house relatively recently; prior to 2009, when it relocated to its current space, it had operated out of a number of smaller offices.[38] The house, which was donated to the CLGA by the Children's Aid Society and accompanied by a donation from a developer, was built in 1858, and required multiple upgrades and repairs to meet the CLGA's needs.[39] In discussing the upgrades that would occur prior to the move, Robert Windrum, former general manager of the CLGA and head of its volunteer committee, stated that unlike in previous locations, the stacks at 34 Isabella would be closed (that is, not available for patrons to browse): "The actual materials that we have won't be as visible or accessible as they were in the past." According to Windrum, "It will be operating at a much more professional level, much more like a typical archive and library."[40]

Windrum's comments are revealing of CLGA's attitude towards its space, and help to illustrate the different approaches taken by two community-based archives, two similar organizations with comparable buildings. CLGA has found stability in a permanent space, which allows it to make its operations increasingly professional: the mechanisms of control found in "typical" archives are being put in place here, and although they decrease researcher autonomy, they may increase the safety of the collection. Adopting traditional practices also lends the CLGA an air of legitimacy, which can be important in recognizing the work and history of marginalized groups.

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[38] CLGA, "About Us," accessed May 7, 2015, http://clga.ca/about-us. Note that the CLGA is unable to store all of its collection at the Isabella Street location, and maintains some off-site storage.

[39] *Daily Xtra*, "CLGA face surprise structural repairs," November 5, 2008, accessed May 7, 2015, http://www.dailyxtra.com/toronto/news-and-ideas/news/clga-face-surprise-structural-repairs-8049. The donation from the developer was in exchange for a relaxation of city regulations that limited the number of stories permitted on a condominium tower; by donating funds, the city allowed the developer to build additional stories on its tower.

[40] Robert Windrum, quoted in ibid.

By participating in established archival practices, the CLGA positions their materials for potential incorporation into mainstream histories. This approach, however, can also be problematic, since it may not account for the group's own values, which may not necessarily match those of mainstream histories.[41]

Still, professionalism remains a goal of the CLGA. Operating the house as an archive, and not as a living space, as occurs in JSH, contributes to a professional impression. But the basic domestic architecture of the house on Isabella Street remains, and its appearance is potentially in conflict with the idea of a professional environment, especially when compared to a purpose-built archive, such as the Gatineau Preservation Centre. This possible drawback, however, may also contribute to the normalization of the archive and its contents: placing an archive into a domestic space is a reminder that the people who have generated its contents have always lived within Canadian society with varying degrees of recognition and safety. As well, putting an ever-growing and "activated" archive (that is, one that is actively used for research and projects) into a living space plays with and magnifies the idea of a "living" archive. And perhaps surprisingly, houses were probably some of the first locations of archives, which makes the CLGA's space seem less unusual. In *Archive Fever*, Derrida traces the roots of the word *archive* to the Greek word

> *arkheion*: initially a house, domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the *archons*, those who commanded... On account of their publicly recognized authority, it is at their home, in that *place* which is their house (private house, family house, or employee's house), that official documents are filed.[42]

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[41] As considered in Chapter Four, questions of whether marginalized groups should replicate dominant practices or attempt to forge their own are complex and difficult to satisfactorily resolve. On the one hand, aligning with mainstream practices better positions marginalized groups for potential inclusion in broad historical narratives. On the other hand, such an alignment does not recognize the unique ways in which such groups may wish to operate.

[42] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: a Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 2.

Perhaps unwittingly, the house at Isabella Street participates in a long tradition of locating powerful documents in the home.

The CLGA's space reveals some of the overlapping tensions that may emerge in repurposed buildings; situating a professional organization within a domestic space results in both challenges and advantages. Their space and the approach they take to it also contrasts with that of TNG, which, rather than attempting to entirely repurpose a space, has simply added on to it: at JSH, the space is both a living space and an archive. This approach is not a deliberate rejection of professional practices, but rather an attempt to make the most of available resources while operating within the boundaries of TNG's mandate. Unlike the CLGA, TNG's primary function is not as an archive, but as a vehicle for various exhibitions and events related to contemporary arts. Rather than attempting to create a professional archival space, TNG instead adopted a permissive attitude that allowed the artist-researchers to use the archives at home, and to have a home within them. This approach has potential drawbacks opposite to those faced by the CLGA: by allowing researchers to live in the house, TNG skirts traditional archival practices, and risks creating the impression of being an unprofessional organization. But since TNG's mandate has never been to be a professional archive, this risk is minimal. Moreover, it reflects a fairly non-traditional and/or do-it-yourself approach that can be aligned with artist-run culture more generally. It also has the benefit of taking a fairly literal approach to the concept of living archives, which, as will be discussed below, potentially impacts the type of work that can be created from this particular environment.

The CLGA and JSH offer two examples of archives operating from repurposed spaces, and suggest the symbolic implications of such acts. While the implications vary depending on the organization, what is important to note is that the spaces from which they operate are not neutral, and can contribute to how the organizations can be understood. Of course, the people working within these spaces—archivists, artists, researchers—affect the potential production, as can be seen in the case of the LIDS at JSH.

5.6 Artist/Art Workers Take Over the House/Archive: The LIDS and their Feminist Practice at JSH

Anthea Black, Nicole Burisch, and Wednesday Lupypciw form The Ladies Invitational Deadbeat Society, a group "founded in 2006 as a closely-knit affiliation of then-unemployed cultural workers, not working, but still bustin' ass within Alberta artist-run culture."[43] Artists and, at various times in the past, employees of local artist-run centres (among other roles), they describe their work as "mak[ing] visible and politiciz[ing] women's roles in the local arts economy through tactical laziness, crafty collaboration, over-performance, and wild hilarity."[44] This is indeed what they did during their month-long residency at JSH in the summer of 2012, which they titled "The Incredisensual Panty Raid Laff Along."[45]

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[43] Anthea Black, Nicole Burisch, and Wednesday Lupypciw, *Incredisensual Panty Raid Laff Along 2012: A Month in the Life of The Ladies Invitational Deadbeat Society* ([Calgary?]: The Ladies Invitational Deadbeat Society Press, 2013), 54.

[44] Ibid., 54.

[45] The LIDS' experience at JSH was not the first time a group of women artists has taken over a house. A notable precedent can be found in *Womanhouse*, a project/exhibition that occurred in 1972 in Los Angeles and was the product of the Feminist Art Program at the California Institute of the Arts. Led by Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro, this project saw the program's students transform an unused mansion into an immersive installation of feminist art. For more, see http://womanhouse.refugia.net, accessed May 7, 2015.

The LIDS produced a number of works during the residency, and none of them took the form of what might be expected from study within a traditional archive; there were no essays or journal articles about TNG or JSH (although it should be noted that they produced a book, *Incredisensual Panty Raid Laff Along 2012: A Month in the Life of The Ladies Invitational Deadbeat Society*, after the completion of the residency. This publication reflects upon the works produced by LIDS during this time period). Instead, they created and presented two "Sunday Tea 'n Chats" (discussion groups addressing issues of artist rights and social justice), a "Feminist Art Workers Relay Race" (a performative relay race around the block where JSH is located), "Joyce Wieland Day" (a number of actions staged on July 1—Canada Day—and intended as a reflection on complex ideas of nationalism and women's roles in Canadian art), and the "RGBBBQ" (a performance wherein the LIDS, dressed in red, green, and blue, returned a borrowed barbeque to its owner).[46] They also produced "Unidentified... Enigmatic, Perhaps Even Romantic," which was an exhibition of materials drawn from TNG's archives and displayed within the studio space of JSH. While all of the events that comprised the "The Incredisensual Panty Raid Laff Along" were related in some capacity to JSH and the archives of TNG, it was this final exhibition that made the connections most evident. Indeed, this exhibition took its name from a note typed by artist and former TNG employee Nelson Henricks on a divider placed between pages of slides: "The following slide [sic] are unidentified, which is kind of enigmatic, perhaps even Romantic... please don't mix them up, not that anyone will ever look at them, or even read this."[47] The LIDS's selection of this cheeky statement for the title of their exhibition is a telling summary of one of many attitudes centres take to their records over time.

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[46] More information about the works produced from this residency can be found at https://ladiesinvitationaldeadbeatsociety.wordpress.com/pantyraid/, accessed May 7, 2015.
[47] Nelson Henricks, note from August 1998, reproduced in Black et al., *Incredisensual*, 39.

Figure 2. A viewer examines one of the tables featured in "Unidentified... Enigmatic, Perhaps Even Romantic," an exhibition held at JSH. Pencils and note paper on the table allowed visitors to add their personal recollections to the selected materials. Note that the materials are protected by a layer of Plexiglas. June 29, 2012. Photo: Author.

While Henricks' message to future researchers is interesting, I would like to set it aside to

consider instead the implications of feminist artists working in a domestic space. Of concern here

are not any masculine or feminine elements of the architecture, like those that Koltun identifies

in her article about the Gatineau Preservation Centre, but rather the potential impacts of feminist

artists working in a space traditionally associated with "women's work"—housekeeping,

cooking, and childrearing. As author Jennifer Kennedy points out, by living and working in a

women's space, the LIDS are, like other feminist artists and authors before them, "enact[ing] a

radical form of praxis—bringing the aesthetic and theoretical into the material of everyday

life."[48] They are, in other words, offering a clear example of how the personal is political: the

very act of living, of carrying out the work of everyday life while simultaneously creating works

of art, is one that should not be discounted because it operates outside of neoliberal systems of

value based almost exclusively on monetary exchange. Instead, the LIDS residency can be

understood as an attempt to draw attention to the work (labour) and work (artwork) created by

women, and to do so by operating from a traditionally feminine space. Indeed, the residency

exposes the multiple meanings of "work" by moving these activities from a formerly private

sphere (a house) into a (semi-)public one (a house operated as an archive). Reducing or

obliterating the boundaries between life and art (and between life and archive, and archive and

art), the residency brings into question assumptions about how artists, and particularly women

artists, create works of art, and is a reminder of the highly fluid and somewhat unbounded

practice referred to as art. As both Lupypciw and Black discuss, however, the erasure of these

distinctions brings with it its own set of challenges.

5.7 At Home in the Archive: The LIDS Reflect on Working in John Snow House

I have introduced TNG, the LIDS, and the house that hosted both. I have also identified a

number "unspoken influences" that have the potential to affect the production of work from

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[48] Kennedy, "What Happens Between Women Now is the Most Interesting Thing in the World Because it's Least Described," in *Incredisensual*, 9.

within a space, and from within an archive more specifically. These factors are surveillance, the purpose for which a building was built (and the patron's or visitor's accompanying mindset and expectations, whereby they start to behave in a certain way because of social and spatial prompts), and the potential influence of the arrangement of things within a space. I would now like to brings these factors together, and consider how a specific space, its layout, and a lack of surveillance helped to shape the LIDS's artistic production.

While I lack the resources employed by the eMotion team, and cannot yet track pathways or physiological responses in an archive, I was able to speak to each member of the LIDS at different points in time after the conclusion of their residency. I spoke with Nicole Burisch in October of 2013, more than one year after the residency, and individually with Anthea Black and Wednesday Lupypciw in October of 2014. In the following sections, I present and discuss some of their responses, first considering the notion of surveillance, then considering space and its arrangement on a variety of scales.

5.7.1 The Unsurveilled Archive: Balancing Trust, Autonomy, and Preservation

The LIDS were left relatively undisturbed in JSH. The New Gallery employees, including myself and Sheri Nault, appeared on a regular basis, and were available to help, but did not monitor the LIDS's actions or use of materials. While they were asked to keep track of all the materials used, and to replace them in their original locations when they were finished with them, there were no mechanisms to enforce this behaviour; the use and replacement of materials was based on the honour system. As Lupypciw stated, "...we're unsupervised in the archive—it's like the little

child's fantasy, of 'I can sleep in the museum at night, with the dinosaurs'... Nobody is here to prevent us from using archival materials twenty-four seven."[49]

Indeed, the artists used these materials at their convenience. Lupypciw, in particular, would select materials for viewing, and lay them out in the living room, on a low coffee table next to a couch. This couch also happened to be her bed, which meant that she was quite literally able to look at materials as she fell asleep (or, as Black joked, Lupypciw could have slept with the materials under her pillow).[50] While I will not suggest that sleeping with research materials will improve one's research output, what I will suggest is that this ability to have constant, unsurveilled access to documents and images is reflective of a different way of working with and thinking about archival materials. It suggests a way of getting to know materials that incorporates all of the senses, not just the visual. It suggests a way of knowing not necessarily born of language, but of time spent interacting with documents as physical things, and of using physical means as a way of learning and thinking about the past. This is perhaps a particularly artistic and embodied way to explore ideas and create histories. As Black states, "...to really get in there and live that in the house was also an important thing to experience in the body, for us, as artists who work with performance and textiles and a lot of other media that are very physical..."[51]

The LIDS, in both their individual practices and their work as a collective, are tactile in their work: they use their bodies, they use materials that are intended to be touched, such as woven or knitted textiles, and they create works that appeal to all of the senses, not just the sense of sight.

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[49] Wednesday Lupypciw (artist and member of LIDS), interview with the author, October 28, 2014.
[50] Anthea Black (artist and member of LIDS), Skype interview with the author, October 7, 2014.
[51] Black, interview.

Given this production, it seems fitting that the artists would work (and live) with archival materials in a non-traditional manner. Such actions remind us that physicality matters, and that archival materials are of value not only for what is written upon them or for the images they reproduce, but for their physical nature, for what they are and what their physicality might represent.

As James M. O'Toole writes of the American Declaration of Independence, what matters is "its existence as much as its contents."[52] But it is rare that researchers can interact with materials in a particularly physical way; certainly, no hands will be laid upon the Declaration of Independence. Even in the case of less significant documents, in traditional archives, handling materials may be restricted in some manner, especially if an item is particularly old or delicate. I do not criticize these restrictions; certainly, these documents or photographs, these physical things, must be handled carefully (or made available as reproductions) if they are to be available for future generations. Preservation matters too. But I wonder, what ways of knowing are we missing out on, what kinds of knowledge are we limiting, through conservation actions?

I am not suggesting the abandonment of the principles of preservation, especially in the case of traditional archives. Instead, I am trying to think through what happens when an archive such as the one housed at JSH allows unfettered access. Does the potential for the production of new work, artistic or otherwise, outweigh the risk of physical damage or loss? What can happen when custodial concerns are secondary to the desires of artists or researchers? Does a willingness to "sacrifice" archival materials imply a desire to destroy or negate the past, or even a desire to renounce power? Or could such a stance be viewed differently, perhaps as a way to create a new

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[52] James M. O'Toole, "Between Veneration and Loathing: Loving and Hating Documents," in *Archives*, 43.

history, one more fitting with the values of a particular organization? With such questions, I am perhaps taking too literally Stuart Hall's concept of living archives, which he defines as "present, on-going, continuing, unfinished, open-ended."[53] Allowing for the "death" or destruction of materials makes their reuse and reinterpretation impossible. Still, I think these questions are worthy of some consideration, given that they offer a way for organizations to manage their materials in a deliberately different way, albeit one that is antithetical to the concept of most archives.[54]

In the case of the LIDS residency, the artists treated the materials with respect—even those that Lupypciw had next to her bed. TNG's expectations about preservation, as well as those of the LIDS, were analogous to what generally exists at more traditional archives. The materials themselves, though handled, were handled carefully. Documents and photos that were exhibited as part of "Unidentified... Enigmatic, Perhaps Even Romantic" were presented under Plexiglas, and could not easily be touched or taken by visitors. Items were returned to their original locations following the exhibition. This was no easy task, since, as mentioned above, some of the materials in JSH were only loosely organized, if organized at all. None of the documents had catalogue numbers or permanent homes; it was not possible to simply find the established location for an object by searching in a database, as one might do in a museum. Thus Burisch had a spreadsheet that detailed both traditional and non-traditional locations, such as "third poster down in the pile of posters in the upstairs bedroom closet, on the top shelf."

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[53] Stuart Hall, "Constituting an Archive," *Third Text* 15, no. 54 (Spring 2001): 89.
[54] Note that I am not taking into account oral histories in this conception of "archival materials." Having recorded and maintained oral histories may be one way that an artist-run centre could strike a balance between the use of physical archival materials for artistic ends and the desire to maintain some sort of knowledge of the past.

Burisch's dedication to the replacement of materials into their existing order demonstrates her respect for them, as well as TNG's faith in the artists. How could cultivating an environment of trust, an environment where the responsibility of the patrons/visitors/artists is assumed, shape artistic (or literary) production? Such an environment relies on archival users tempering their own behaviour, as is the case with the Panopticon imagined by Bentham. Here, however, it is not the threat of further punishment that motivates patrons, but rather respect, both for the materials themselves, and for the organization offering access to them. A sense of responsibility, and concern for future archival users, provides incentive to care for the materials, provided, of course, that an organization has made the choice to continue to preserve these materials, and not use them in ways that might ultimately destroy them.

While there are risks with this approach, and establishing boundaries is essential—can materials be deliberately destroyed? Can the order of materials be modified?—it would seem that such an attitude is well aligned with the general ethos of the artist-run movement. Instead of enacting complicated security and bureaucratic procedures to ensure power remains with the institution and archivists, power is given to artist-researchers through acts of trust. The agency and authority of these users is presupposed. It is hoped that this faith will be returned in kind, and used to produce works of art best suited to the artists. In other words, rather than maintaining the power relations seen in traditional archives—where surveillance buys longevity for documents, but comes at the cost of very unequal distribution of power—artist-run archives have the potential to create archival environments where power is not only vested in one party.

How such trust can affect the production of work is difficult, if not impossible, to measure. I

cannot say that the LIDS made "better" work because of the situation in which it was produced;

too many factors—including the inability to measure artistic quality in any meaningful or

objective way—make it challenging to gauge the effect of trust on production. What I can do,

however, is highlight some relevant comments that emerged from my discussions with the LIDS,

and that suggest how working in this environment was different from other archival

environments. My conversation with Lupypciw, in particular, brought up the topic of

conviviality, a concept that links notions of surveillance with the potential impact of an "archival

mindset."

5.7.2 Combining the Archival Mindset with the Domestic Mindset

Work in the surveilled archive, the traditional archive, is often solitary, though not for lack of

fellow researchers. It is a situation of being "together alone:" patrons may sit near each other, but

their research concerns are their own. Respect for other patrons and reading room rules help

discourage conversation, while constant surveillance creates an environment where social

interaction may feel illicit or overly disruptive. Such a situation is in stark contrast to what

occurred during the LIDS residency at JSH, when the artists were free to have guests over and to

talk about the materials they were working with.

Lupypciw discussed the social aspects of the house, noting that because of its location in central

Calgary, it was "an ideal place to have your pals over." There were, as she describes it, "a lot of

instances of being social in the living room." The ability to have multiple people look at the

materials set out on the coffee table in front of the couch/bed led to numerous conversations, and to the sharing of various perspectives. As Lupypciw states, "a lot of friendship and camaraderie, and like, accidental encounters were happening with the archive because it's a house and it's where you live and hang out and do all of your stuff."[55]

Her comments address two key ideas. First, there is the notion of the unsurveilled archive as a social space, as a space where ideas can flow freely, and where rules and regulations do not limit the types of conversations that can happen around archival materials. These collaborative exchanges and "accidental encounters," facilitated by a comfortable space, seem to exist in contrast to traditional archives, where such conversations may be less likely to occur, or may even be discouraged by reading room protocols. While such social interactions could be viewed as a hindrance to one's work, they also seem like a useful way to expand and challenge one's ideas. Indeed, such interactions seem to emphasize the *living* aspect of a *living archive*—here understood in the way Hall likely intended, as an archive that continues to grow not only through the further accumulation of materials, but through their active use, and, in this situation, collective consideration.[56]

The second idea Lupypciw's comments bring up is that of how the archival mindset might change when the archive is set in a house. Recall that in the eMotion study, researchers found that defining a space is essential to how an exhibition can be understood; visitors view works differently once inside the clearly defined exhibition space. They call this phenomenon the "institutionalization of viewing," and point out that "viewing an artwork is strongly dependent on

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[55] Lupypciw, interview.
[56] Hall, "Constituting an Archive," 89 and 92.

the environment in which it is positioned."[57] How might such factors affect a visit to an archive that is also a house? How does the idea of home, a generally private space where behaviour is largely unsurveilled, and monitored only by the self, contrast with that of the archive, a somewhat public space where behaviour is highly regulated by both the self and others? What might be the result of these mixed mindsets?

Both Black and Lupypciw addressed this repositioning of an institution in a house, and both mentioned a lack of separation between work and life as one of the challenges of combining these mindsets. Said Lupypciw of the residency,

> ...You get this interesting question about work-life separation... When you're here, it's maybe a bit anxiety-inducing, because it just feels like you're hanging out, all the time. But then when we made our book, and we look on it in retrospect, it was like the whole experience of being in the house is shaped by the archive and our work within the archive, so even if it is just hanging out and doing these basic living things, it's still like that archive is a part of that, so... You're not actually hanging out because you're researching, but then when you are researching, it does feel like hanging out, or we're cooking dinner and then something happened or we found something... So it's... this hazy thing with no boundaries.[58]

For Lupypciw, the lack of boundaries between work and life led to the temporary feeling that not enough work was being completed; with no specific number of hours to spend at a work site, and no clear demarcation between work/not work, it was challenging to feel a sense of accomplishment—at least until after the completion of the project, when the assembly of their book offered evidence of what had been done. Black echoed these sentiments:

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[57] Tröndle et al., "The Effects," 147-151, and 169.
[58] Lupypciw, interview.

206

> We were in a house, we were living in a house, we were surrounded by all these things and the idea that arts work is a boundary-less practice... [...] There are some instances where the blending of art and life can be really desirable, and pleasurable even, but there's also an acknowledgement that boundary-less work, in terms of time and professionalization and labour, presents a lot of different affective problems—like working all the time, or being undercompensated for labour.[59]

From Black and Lupypciw's statements, it becomes clear that the home-archive environment is not necessarily a utopia; while it does provide a contrast from traditional archival situations, and while it can be conducive to different ways of working with and thinking about archival materials, it is not without its drawbacks. When living in an archive, the separations between work and not work—distinctions necessary for relaxation and refreshment—become far less clear. This appears to suggest that working in a home, as opposed to working in an archive, does indeed result in different behaviours and ideas. While the domestic environment can foster productive dialogues and useful collaborations, it can also affect one's life, reducing distinctions between work, rest, and play. Combining the "archival mindset" with the "domestic mindset" can lead to confusion about both.

5.7.3 The Finer Points of Spatial Arrangement: Ordering Furniture and Files

The creation of a "domestic mindset" is spurred, in part, by architecture and interior design. The spatial cues within a house—comfortable couches in a sunny living room, or a cheerful table in an intimate kitchen, for example—create an environment conducive to certain behaviours. So too do the spatial cues within a traditional archive space. But these are not the only arrangements that matter; on a smaller scale, the ways an organization's records are ordered matters too. Cheinman's assertion bears repeating: "The space the materials occupy and the manner in which

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[59] Black, interview.

they fill it can have a great impact on the way an art space is experienced."[60] Burisch and Lupypciw both discussed this factor as influential during their time at JSH, and particularly in relation to the artist files.

In JSH, a series of cabinets known as the "artist files" were placed in the combined living/dining room. These files generally contained materials related to artists and exhibitions, although not always ones that were held at TNG. Although painted black—a colour perhaps less "office-y" than their original grey—they seemed somewhat incongruous next to a brick fireplace (now painted white) and set against a wood-paneled wall. The cushiness of the couches in the shared space only served to increase the contrast between the cold, metallic cabinets and the warmth of the furniture in the rest of the room, including a round, wooden table positioned next to them. But while their form and functionality could not be disguised, they were nevertheless an important part of the residency.

Burisch prefaced her consideration of these cabinets with an observation about how the Ladies informally divvied up the space: Black looked at publications, which required spending time upstairs, as well as on the main floor; Burisch looked through the artist files on the main floor; and Lupypciw spent time with slide binders in the basement, as well as with the artist files. There was, of course, much overlap between the artists' research locations. Although she seemed hesitant to state what might be seen as obvious, she noted, "The filing cabinets being upstairs meant that that was the thing I was looking at..." She continued, "... when I think about not only the infrastructure but the architecture of that domestic space in particular, that table in the living

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[60] Cheinman, "Creating Alternative Art Libraries," 47.

room was just a really nice spot to work, and it was next to the filing cabinets."[61] Burisch's observation supports Cheinman's, reinforcing the idea that something as simple as furniture arrangement can influence an archival experience.

The influence of arrangement also applies at the file level. In the case of the artist files, they were—in theory at least—arranged alphabetically. This arrangement, however, was not entirely consistent; staff turnover and different interpretations of order meant that there was not necessarily a "right" location for a file. Examples of files ordered inconsistently would be those for a group show, where the title of the exhibition, rather than an artist's name, might be the basis of classification. As Lupypciw described it, the system could be somewhat "arbitrary," and even frustrating at times: "It's just an adventure, because it's just like, 'what the hell is this?' Every five things you go through, you're just like, what?"[62]

Fortunately, the LIDS was able to accommodate—and even celebrate—the loose organizational structures of these files, in part because of the nature of their research, which, although it had a clear direction, was not strictly defined. States Burisch,

> ...Vaguely we knew we wanted to look at stuff linked to performance and feminist practice—but we weren't really approaching [the residency] as researchers. It was more in this aesthetic or artistic kind of way.
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> [Our work] was affected by what was there. There's just so much of it. Because there is no finding aid, or because it is structured in this way that's a bit flexible... it worked really well to do that kind of research.[63]

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[61] Nicole Burisch (artist and member of LIDS), interview with the author, October 22, 2013.
[62] Lupypciw, interview.
[63] Burisch, interview.

In this case, because the LIDS was not seeking a specific thing—say, a file about a particular artist—the organizations of materials at JSH fit well with their desires. They did not go into the archive with the idea that it would hold the answer to a specific question or confirm a suspicion; they avoided the fetishization of the archive as the location of "all" answers. Instead, the LIDS were able to simply browse the materials, relying, to a certain extent, on serendipity. Burisch explains this research method:

> I started in the As, and I just started looking at stuff, and if I saw a name I recognized, or if I saw something that was interesting, I pulled it. So the research was also very ambiguously structured... And I think after I while I got tired of the beginning of the alphabet and I moved to the end of the alphabet.[64]

Her comments resonate with Tröndle et al's observation that the first work of art hung in a series is the one give the most attention, although here it the first file in the cabinet that gets the greatest consideration. Could it be that the As, or things filed or presented first, are indeed the things most studied? If so, could the writing of histories be changed by random rearrangements of source materials? While such an approach would obviously be inappropriate for researchers seeking specific things, some organizations may wish to deliberately interrupt unconsciously "easy" histories—histories created based on ease of access—by orienting their materials towards narratives built upon accidental or deliberate disorder.

At JSH, there was already an element of disorder within the cabinets. Lupypciw, in discussing these artist files, contrasted their contents with those of publications, and highlighted one of the benefits of working in this partially random manner:

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[64] Burisch, interview

> ... in these filing cabinets, which are the artist files, weird stuff presents itself, and it's way more adventurous, because you can't have any preconceptions about what's in the filing cabinet, whereas these books have titles, and they're all in the format of a book, and they're quite nice, valuable objects, and in here, there's like, there's wigs, or there's like personal photos from Anna Banana, and then there's people's random personal effects... Anything that can physically fit in a drawer is here...[65]

What both Burisch and Lupypciw's comments suggest is that the organization—or lack thereof—of files can greatly influence one's research. That this is so is not a new revelation; as Ketelaar writes, "...knowledge is embedded in the records—their content, form, structure, and context."[66] What is interesting here, however, is the particular structure and context of the records, ordered inconsistently and presented in a domestic space, so that their use is strongly directed towards a manner that is, as Burisch states, primarily aesthetic or artistic. The LIDS was able to take advantage of this situation, allowing the order of the files to dictate the shape of their research. This was ultimately an approach that was effective for the type of work they produced (and one that would most likely be highly frustrating for researchers with other agendas).

The argument here is not that things should be disorderly; I am not suggesting that unsorted boxes of potential archival material should be left entirely in their original state to act as artistic fodder—although such an approach, if chosen deliberately, might work for some artist-run centres. What I would like to suggest instead is that the concerns of artist-run centres, and of other resource-limited bodies, may not necessarily be best served by mimicking the structures in place at traditional archives. Perhaps artist-ordered archives—which may in fact be archives that are deliberately ordered differently—are the best match for some artist-run centres, and their anticipated audiences (provided, of course, that these audiences are willing to work with the

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[65] Lupypciw, interview.
[66] Ketelaar, "The Panoptical Archive," 147.

211

particular structures in place). Abandoning strict surveillance and organization, and accepting a mindset that values archival materials for both their content and physical manifestations, may ultimately prove an effective strategy for addressing the archives of artist-run centres.

5.8 Summary

This chapter has considered a number of spatial and procedural factors that influence the creation of artistic work within an archive. With surveillance as a starting point, I have discussed how architecture and policy can create and amplify unequal power relations within traditional archives. Although such controls exist to ensure the safety and longevity of archival materials, I have questioned whether their replication is meaningful or necessary in the context of artist-run archives: if such archives are created by and for artists, then perhaps the same principles that apply in the centre should apply in the archive, with trust and respect for the artist's authority and autonomy acting as guiding principles. While a blatant disregard for acts of preservation fails to recognize one of the key roles of archives—that is, to make certain materials available into the future—I have wondered if some centres may benefit from conceptualizing their materials differently, not thinking of them as an archive for the future, but instead opening them up to uses in the present that purposely nullify the very concept of archives. Such a radical stance, of course, would not be appropriate for all centres, and indeed, the centre under consideration here, TNG, chose a fairly conventional approach that attempts to balance potential future needs with the desires of exhibiting artists.

The space in which TNG's partial archives are kept, however, is much less conventional, and likely fosters a mindset quite different from those found in traditional archives. As Tröndle et al demonstrated, the way we act in a particular space depends at least partially on its intended use, as well as the arrangement inside the space. They propose the concept of "the institutionalization of viewing," where a visitor acts differently in a space because of the expectations around that space: more time is spent looking at a work of art inside a gallery, in part because the visitor is in possession of what might be called a "gallery mindset." I have extended this concept to archives, suggesting the existence of an "archival mindset," and then questioning what happens to it when the architecture of a space is incongruous with its original intent, as is the case in JSH or the CLGA, where a house has been repurposed as an archive.

For the LIDS, this merging of the archive and home—resulting in a semi-institutional, semi-private and semi-public live-work space—affected their creative processes. The blurred boundaries of the space made the distinctions between research and relaxation less obvious. While this was positive in some instances, allowing a degree of conviviality and leading to, as Lupypciw stated, some fortuitous "accidental encounters," it also cast into bright light the unique nature of artistic production, which may come at a very high personal cost. As Black suggested, a boundary-less life is not without its drawbacks.

My exploration of the LIDS residency also looked at spatial arrangement on increasingly fine levels, first considering furniture, then turning to the organization of files. Here, the proximity of a table to filing cabinets was identified as an influential factor in the creation of work. While I am sure this seems simple or obvious, it remains that locating research materials in a comfortable

place, and providing the infrastructure necessary to use those materials, increases the likelihood of their use. Such "convenience-based" choices may also translate into how files are reviewed, especially when the absence of a finding aid makes the search for specific materials nearly impossible.

The lack of consistent organization at the file level was my final area of consideration. Although somewhat "arbitrary" filing systems can be almost unusable, they are, as Burisch suggests, suitable to very open-ended research. If one's research question is not strictly defined, including elements of adventure or surprise can lead to some interesting production, as the LIDS's output demonstrates. Such an approach—or rather, lack of an approach—may be desirable to some artist-run archives, given its suitability to artistic pursuits. If chosen deliberately, alternative systems of organization may also offer a way for centres to be purposefully different from other archives, and in a way that is less extreme than allowing for the destruction of archival materials.

While the LIDS residency at JSH was ultimately a very specific situation, it highlights some of the possibilities that may exist for artist-run archives. The narrative a centre tells about itself through its choices in surveillance, space, and organization can be aligned with a centre's own values, ultimately creating a resource that may better meet the specific needs of artists. The "unspoken influences" of an archive, if given thoughtful consideration, may be as influential or important as the content of the materials themselves.

Chapter Six: Shaping Future Histories and Identities: Artist-Run Centres and Digital Archives

6.1 Introduction: Digital Archives as a Cultural Strategy

This chapter looks at the creation of digital archives by artist-run centres as a cultural strategy—a way to deliberately influence the ways in which centres and the artists they support can be known. Presenting information online is not a neutral act, and not something that can be taken for granted. Instead, this act, like the creation and organization of physical archives, shapes and is shaped; it affects the arguments that might be made about the past in the future, but is at the same time itself a product of particular ideologies. Understanding how such archives are being structured, and the technologies they employ, is essential to understanding their potential impacts on the creation of historical narratives.

Approximately half of Canadian artist-run centres report having some kind of a publicly available digital archival presence.[1] Using the online archives of a number of these centres as examples, I attempt to understand the wider implications of particular choices around both content and presentation. Practices such as digitizing some materials but not others, listing past exhibitions by date, or creating a searchable database, all affect how centres can be known by others, and can be seen as part of larger attempts to create organizational identities. Put another way, I use these centres' current practices as a catalyst for investigating digitization as a cultural

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[1] Please see Appendix II.VI. 59% of English-speaking respondents and 47% of French-speaking respondents reported that some of their archive was available online. Note that these percentages are subject to change as centres work to develop online presences or are no longer able to maintain existing ones.

strategy. What are the potential implications of employing particular technologies within the environment of a digital archive?

Through the examination of selected online archives, this chapter also reviews a theme that emerged in Chapter Three, and that was considered again in Chapter Five: some artist-run centres think about their physical archives as comprised of two parts, a "documentary" portion, and an "administrative" portion.[2] The former is used to denote collections of materials that have been intentionally created as records of an exhibition or event, while the latter could be broadly described as "everything else," although, as with most things related to artist-run centres, the boundaries between these categories can be fluid. These divisions are replicated online, and have significant implications: by presenting only selected materials in a digital archive, centres reveal both how they see themselves and how they would like to be seen by others. The impact remains even when, as discussed below, the physical administrative archive is donated to an external institution. Although these materials are not entirely inaccessible, their exclusion from a digital realm administered by a centre can still be viewed as an attempt to point conversations about centres in a particular direction.

Underlying this discussion is the assumption that future histories will be written primarily from electronic/digitized sources, and that participating in the digital world is necessary for the opportunity to be included in such histories. Although I propose two ways to understand the

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[2] Curiously, this split between the administrative and documentary portions of the archive parallels the division of labour that sometimes occurs when centres have two paid staff members. There will often be a programming or artistic director, whose role could be seen as producing the materials of the documentary archives, and an administrative director, whose role generally encompasses areas related to the administrative archive. The connections between these structuring methods and archives, if any, are unclear at this point, and further research is required. Also note that some centres do not follow this organizational structure, and operate with more or less paid staff that may play different roles. I thank Clive Robertson for bringing this situation to my attention.

relationship between the Internet and archives—online archives can be a subset of the Internet, or, in contrast, the entire Internet can be an archive—I generally consider "purpose-built" online archives. More extensive than a website that simply lists a centre's basic information, online archives are evidence of purposeful actions taken to disseminate selected material in particular ways.[3] It will also be assumed that such specialized archives, because of their particular content and the ways it is presented, will have a potentially greater impact on future historical narratives than websites without a deliberate and dedicated archive component.

With these ideas established, the chapter discusses the ways centres present materials online in order to understand the values these practices suggest. Although I consider a number of centres, I pay particular attention to grunt,[4] a centre in Vancouver. Grunt has an extensive online archive and has presented its archival material in a variety of ways: as a blog, in a database, and as "curated archive sites." These three methods are fairly standard examples of how a centre, or any autonomous organization, may present its materials online. Although I briefly address the curated sites, I focus upon databases, framing them as ideological instruments, with their biases made known through their assumptions, structures and keywords.[5] But in spite of their limitations, I suggest they hold the potential to challenge current assumptions about the

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[3] Throughout this thesis, I have used *materials* and *records* to describe things that offer evidence of the practices of artist-run centres. In this chapter, in addition to these terms, I also refer to *assets* and *content*. Although my usage of them varies according to context, they are generally used interchangeably with *materials* and *records*. I use these words to avoid monotony, but also to be more appropriate in the digital age, where the physicality implied by *materials* is not entirely correct. "Digitized material" verges on being an oxymoron, even though its meaning is likely understood: the electronic/digitized/non-material representation of a thing that exits, or existed at one time, in a physical form. Asset and content are synonyms for this term, referring to digital records in any format, while also referring to things "born digital"—that is, originally created in digital form.

[4] As mentioned in Chapter One, grunt uses a lower case "g" when writing about itself. I follow that convention throughout this chapter, with the exception of at the start of a sentence, when I use an upper case "G" to avoid a jarring appearance.

[5] *Keywords*, *tagging*, and *subject headings* are three additional terms that are used more or less interchangeably in this chapter. They refer to descriptive words applied to electronic records. As discussed below, in some cases, these words may be part of a controlled vocabulary or list of permitted terms. In other cases, they may simply be applied as deemed appropriate by a cataloguer.

importance of particular characteristics in both research and writing, which may in turn facilitate the creation of non-traditional or unexpected historical narratives.

As I write about digital archives, I am aware that time is of the essence. Although I mainly discuss concepts and general practices, and attempt to avoid specifics that may be meaningless in a few years, I remain aware that this chapter, more so than the others, will be affected by the passage of time. Aspects of technology—particularly software and hardware—change. So too does the Internet: what exists there today may not be there tomorrow. This assertion perhaps seems paradoxical when phrases such as "the Internet never forgets" abound, but in actuality, things can and do effectively disappear in the digital world, whether through deliberate intention or neglect.[6] Thus I am aware that the sites I examine in this chapter are potentially ephemeral, and the critiques I offer may quickly become dated. Rather than fret over this limitation, I instead view it as part of a process: it is only through the examination of current practices that more appropriate approaches for the future can be found.

6.2 Divided Archives: The Valuation of Archival Material and its Impact on Artist-Run Centre Ontologies

Attempting to understand digital archives as a cultural strategy requires some information about how artist-run centres think about their archives more generally. As suggested by Chapter Three's survey, what some centres count as "archive" or "not archive" seems to fall along the

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[6] Even with the existence of organizations such as the Internet Archive, which aims to create a permanent record of the entire Internet (see http://archive.org/web/), not all existent web pages have been captured, nor are they necessarily easy to access. As the Internet Archive points out, the size of their current collection—as of early 2015, some 435 billion webpages—requires users to have programming skills to access the material, although they hope to create more accessible tools in the future. See https://archive.org/about/ for more.

aforementioned lines of documentary or administrative, rather than along divisions of physical and digital.[7] The format of a record seems to matter less than the content itself, with the documentary trumping the administrative. Indeed, for some centres, there are boundaries around documentation—a specific thing and part of a cultural practice—that render it more valuable than other forms of evidence (that is, the components of the administrative archive). This definition is not universal among artist-run centres, but it is not uncommon. Two exceptions are MAWA, which, as discussed in Chapter Four, makes divisions only between its library and archive, and VIVO (Vancouver), which organizes its material according to its own divisions (video, publications, documents, equipment, and special collections), but nevertheless presents each division more or less equally.[8]

Evidence of the conceptualization of an archive as a divided entity comes not only from the survey, but from the material some centres present in their online archives. Stride (Calgary), Art Metropole (Toronto), Optica (Montréal), and La Centrale Galerie Powerhouse (Montréal), for

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[7] This statement is not intended to imply that there *should* be any divisions between the formats of archival records, but rather to acknowledge that the ways in which records are treated may depend upon their format, as discussed in Chapter Two. For example, digital records, because of their perceived ability to be reproduced infinitely, may be treated differently than hard copies, especially if only one such copy is believed to exist.

[8] VIVO Media Arts Centre, "General Collection," accessed May 19, 2015, http://www.vivomediaarts.com/archive-library/collections/. While VIVO (Video Inn, Video Out) has an extensive archival collection, it is excluded from the body of this chapter because relatively little of the material itself is featured online; the contents are described online in some detail, and there are a few scanned items, but researchers must ultimately visit VIVO in person to access most of the collection. It does not have a catalogue or database that can be searched online, except for the one that pertains to the "Video" portion of its archive. Describing the video collection as an archive, however, requires a fluid interpretation of the term, since this portion of the collection operates much more like a library than an archive. Indeed, as VIVO—which was previously known as the Satellite Video Exchange Society—states elsewhere on its website, it was "the first video exchange library" (http://www.vivomediaarts.com). The remaining portion of the archive is divided into four categories. The "Publications" section includes materials published by VIVO, as well as a number of other books and periodicals. "Documents" is a section that includes a number of scanned images of VIVO's important documents (including its "daybooks," where the centre recorded its daily activities), and is most like what I have called the "administrative archive." VIVO's "Equipment" archive contains various technologies from the 20th century that are maintained to allow the viewing of video works produced in now-obsolete formats. Finally, "Special Collections" is a body of material comprised of donations from a number of external sources, including now-defunct production societies, and a number of deceased artists who produced video works and were associated with VIVO. More information about each of these sections can be found on VIVO's website.

instance, all take similar approaches to their online archives, providing access to information related to programming via various styles of lists, while excluding administrative material. The information might be as simple as the dates of an exhibition, listed by year, or it might be a link to a photograph or scanned item, listed by artist name or type of material ("ephemera" or "book" are two examples from Art Metropole). In the case of Art Metropole, there is one notable exception amongst the programming material: there is a record classified as ephemera and titled "Art Metropole Archive Programme/Overview Reports/Funding Appliations [sic] 1971 - 2003 Photocopies from the National Gallery of Canada Library."[9] Unfortunately, unlike the other records, no images are associated with this title, so it is not currently possible to view these photocopies online. People wishing to view this material would have to travel to Art Metropole or the National Gallery, the institution to which the centre donated its records. It should be noted that Optica and La Centrale have also donated some of their records to an outside institution, Concordia University.[10] These records are therefore not inaccessible, although the degree to which they can be accessed online is at the discretion of repository: the recipient institution may simply list the donated records as part of its collection, or it may digitize all or some of the records and, pending any copyright or other access restrictions, make these available online.

Western Front (Vancouver) has also donated selected records to another body, and in doing so, has revealed that it values its administrative materials somewhat differently from its programming ones. In this case, the centre gave some of its administrative records to Rare Books

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[9] Art Metropole, "Art Metropole Archive Programme," accessed May 15, 2015, http://artmetropole.com/archive/836
[10] The reasons a centre donates or retains its archival records is an area that requires further study. Although I asked about donations in the survey I conducted, the multiple choice format I selected only allowed for simple responses that do not reveal the reasoning behind these choices. While this chapter suggests that digitizing some materials but not others reflects the perceived value of that content, and is in turn an expression of self-image, this thinking may also be applicable to donations.

and Special Collections at the University of British Columbia.[11] The materials the centre itself

has made available online are primarily documentary, and relate to exhibitions, events, or works

of video and audio art produced at or otherwise associated with the centre; they are part of the

"Media Archive" described by the survey respondent in Chapter Three. These materials are

presented through a highly developed web presence that provides a number of search methods,

including a keyword search, lists of artists and terms that can be browsed, and an interactive,

use-based search system on a page titled "Archive Activity." On this page, visitors can see a

visual representation of the most-viewed records. These records, represented by small boxes, are

darker in colour if more visitors have viewed them.[12]

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[11] University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections, "Fonds RBSC-ARC-1609 - Western Front Society fonds," accessed May 2, 2015, http://rbscarchives.library.ubc.ca/index.php/western-front-society-fonds. A finding aid for this fonds is available online.

[12] The presentation format Western Front employs on its "Archive Activity" page is intriguing. I asked about the choice of this technology in an interview with Western Front employees Sarah Todd, Jana Grazley, and Scott Owens (Vancouver, April 11, 2013), and learned that it was the result of funding stipulations, which required an "interactive" component on the website. While such a technology was necessary in order to fill a grant requirement, it nevertheless has potentially meaningful implications that would benefit from further investigation. If the darker rectangles are those that are viewed the most often, does that mean they are the ones that subsequently appear in written histories or other projects produced from the archives? Do more people look at the dark rectangles simply because they are dark? Conversely, could the lighter coloured rectangles receive more views as some researchers search for as-yet unexplored areas?
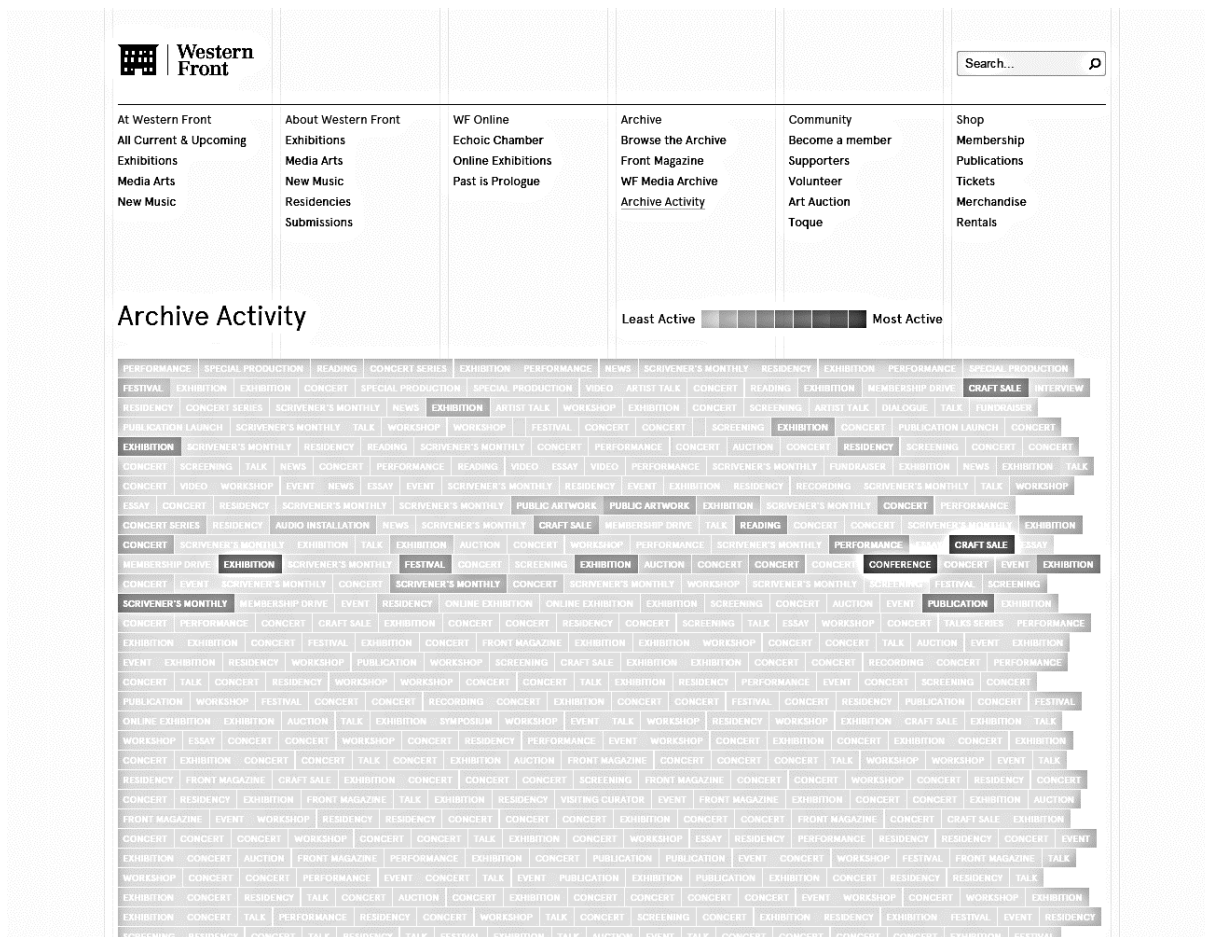
Figure 3. This screen capture of Western Front's "Archive Activity" webpage shows the most active records in its online collection. The text in the two darkest boxes says "CRAFT SALE" and "CONFERENCE." Screen capture, June 3, 2015, http://front.bc.ca/archive-activity/. Readers are directed to the Western Front website to view a higher quality image of this webpage.

One final example of this conceptualization of an archive, and of the reasoning that informs it, can be found in grunt, which, although it has retained physical possession of its administrative archive, nevertheless manages it quite differently from its documentary archive. Founded in 1984, grunt, located in Vancouver, has since its beginning created records of its exhibitions and events, first in hard copy, and later, as technologies changed, digitally. As Glenn Alteen, one of grunt's founders and its longtime director, states, "We're furious documenters. So, since the early days, if there were performances, we would pay a photographer..." This documentation,

222

however, was viewed as underutilized—"just sitting in the closet," in Alteen's words. [13] It forms

the bulk of what grunt considers its archive, and is described by grunt as consisting

> of nearly 100 binders of slides, paper and digital materials pertaining to our exhibitions, performances, special projects, and other activities. In addition there are 300+ videotapes documenting performance, conferences, and other activities. There are also about 150 publications produced in relationship to these activities.[14]

As this excerpt suggests, grunt does not count materials of a more administrative nature among

its archive. They exist, of course, and like the documentary archive, are kept onsite at grunt's

Vancouver space. But they are generally not included in grunt's conception of its archive, and

are kept physically separate from the documentary archive. While they are potentially available

to in-house researchers, they are considered to be of limited interest.[15] This reasoning—that such

materials are likely not of interest to researchers—suggests how grunt views both itself and its

audience of potential researchers. It makes the assumption that grunt's larger contributions to a

cultural ecology are from its programming, and that this programming, and the documentation

that accompanies it, is what is relevant to researchers. Grunt is, as authors Kim Sawchuk and

Stacey Johnson suggest in their general discussion of archives, acting as a "memory machine[e]

that decide[s] what is worth knowing about the past" and about itself, as well as "speculat[ing]

on what will be of relevance to future researchers."[16] Given these assumptions and predictions, it

is not surprising that grunt's online archival presence is comprised primarily of documentation.

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[13] Glenn Alteen (Program Director, grunt), Cynthia Bronaugh (volunteer archivist, grunt), Karlene Harvey (Communications Director, grunt) and Meagan Kus (Operations Director, grunt), interview with the author, Vancouver, April 10, 2013.
[14] Grunt, "Archives Plan, 2013-2016," unpublished policy sent by Glenn Alteen (Program Director, grunt) to the author via e-mail, February 26, 2013.
[15] Alteen et al., interview.
[16] Kim Sawchuk and Stacey Johnson, "Editorial/Introduction," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 26, no. 2 (2001): 186.

There are meaningful implications to placing lower value upon administrative materials and excluding them—conceptually and physically—from self-defined physical and digital archives. For artist-run centres, such an approach emphasizes artists and their work, and prioritizes their production over the internal functioning of the centre, which is in line with the mandates of most centres: they exist to advance the contemporary arts, and tend to do so by supporting artists with exhibitions, production spaces, and professional development services. These mandated actions focus visible attention on artists and their practices, and leave the advancement of the organization itself in a distant second place—although it should be kept in mind that most centres belong to a regional or national association that seeks to act on their behalf (such as ARCA, RCAAQ, or PAARC), which in turn is a reminder that centres are also invested in their own organizational development.[17]

Artist-run centres are thus tasked with promoting both artists and themselves, although the ways in which some of them treat their archives suggest they wish to focus upon artists. Highlighting documentary material in both the physical and digital realms predisposes future histories towards this understanding of artists and centres; unless administrative records have been made accessible elsewhere, what will be known about centres in the future will be related to artists and their work. In Chapter Three, I argued that such an approach, while appropriate, also tends to stress individual artist accomplishment, and in doing so, orients archival material towards the creation of historical narratives that replicate existent patterns in art history. Narratives are written around selected personalities and works, to the detriment of artists who fail to fit into

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[17]ARCA is The Artist-Run Centres and Collectives Conference. RCAAQ is Le Regroupement des centres d'artistes autogérés du Québec, and PAARC is the Pacific Association of Artist-Run Centres. For a complete list of such organizations, see ARCA, "Who Are We?" accessed May 20, 2015, http://www.arccc-cccaa.org/en/arca/. See also Chapter Three, note 19.

expected or conventional patterns—the very artists that some centres exist to support in the first place. There are other limitations to this biographically informed approach as well.

The de-emphasis—or outright exclusion—of a centre's minutes, grant applications, memos, correspondence, etc. from an archive creates a situation that minimizes evidence of the ways that centres have sought to be different from their institutional counterparts. While "alternative" remains a term that must be used with caution, if centres are to be seen as such in future histories, or even if they want to be known in a different way, proof of this difference should extend beyond the work of artists. It is not necessarily impossible to understand how artist-run centres are different from other galleries and museums by reviewing their programming, but information about a centre's operations would certainly help. As author Line Grenier points out, while programming and documentary materials "can be viewed as integral parts" of the organizations that produce them, "they provide little information concerning the apparatus itself."[18] Evidence of policies and procedures, from jury processes to decisions to focus on (once-) marginalized artists or practices, suggests how centres are distinct within an arts ecology. Such materials are the "guts" of an organization; while not flashy or necessarily aesthetically interesting, they can narrate a centre's past in a meaningful way.

Excluding administrative material from archives emphasizes artists over the organization (including the staff, board members, and volunteers who operate or otherwise contribute to the organization), and over the larger artist-run centre movement. In doing so, it poses challenges to anyone wishing to study centres as a sociological phenomenon, although, as previously noted,

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[18] Line Grenier, "In Search of an Archive: Methodological Issues in the Genealogical Analysis of the Popular Music Industry in Quebec," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 26, no. 2 (2001): 278.

other institutions (e.g., those bodies to which a donation of archival material has been made, or other bodies, such as the Canada Council for the Arts) may be able to provide additional information. It may also limit a centre's ability to understand itself and its own administrative past. If, after the passage of a generation or more, founding members are no longer associated with a gallery, and can no longer pass on origin stories and founding values, and if administrative materials are not viewed as a vehicle through which important ideas may be carried into the future, what reasons would a centre have to continue operating in a particular way? This is a rhetorical question, of course, and I do not intend for it to imply that no change should come to a centre, or that things should be done as they were in the 1970s or 1980s; political, social, and economic changes would make such operations impossible. Nor do I intend it to imply that histories are somehow forgotten without administrative materials; publications and oral histories can certainly provide important narratives about centres and their pasts, as do mandates and mission statements. Instead, I ask this question to help in thinking about the ontology of artist-run centres in a digital age. Why are they what they are? How do they know what they are? Why should they operate one way and not another? And if they wish to change, what are they changing *from*?

By excluding the type of material that may provide insight into such questions from their physical and digital archives, centres limit the extent of what might be known about them now and in the future. While supporting artists can remain a centre's first priority, doing so is not incompatible with keeping administrative records in an artist-run archive. Defining archival material in a much broader sense (that is, as more than documentary), and making such material available online through a centre's own website, would actually provide further evidence of how

226

centres can operate in support of artists. Today, however, grunt and other centres continue to

focus on their documentation. Additional motivations for this choice, beyond grunt's suggestion

that such materials are of limited interest, are not entirely clear. Survey responses suggest that

money is a factor; having limited—or no—funding requires the creation of digitization

priorities.[19] Materials related to artists may quickly rise to the top of the list because of both their

aesthetic appeal and perceived value to researchers. Concerns around potentially sensitive

information within administrative materials, as well as questions around copyright, may also

prevent their addition to digital archives, although simple rules and policies should be able to

mitigate these concerns. And given that what is at stake is not only the ability to know about

artists into the future, but also the ability for an organization to know itself, finding strategies to

overcome these barriers may need to be a higher priority for some centres.

6.3 Research Practices of the Present and Future: The Dominance of the Digital

The divisions that have emerged in the archives of some artist-run centres—not just grunt, but

others as well—are evident in both the physical and digital realms. But when looking at digital

archives specifically, the impact of this separation seems greater, because the exclusion of

administrative materials as evidence of past practices is compounded as research practices shift

towards the almost exclusive use of digital resources.[20] In a physical setting, there is at least a

chance of being able to view a variety of archival materials. In contrast, in a digital environment,

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[19] Please see Appendix II.VI. 63% of English-speaking respondents and 70% of French-speaking respondents reported that they receive no funding for their archive.

[20] I do not mean to suggest that physical archives will become obsolete. Certainly, not "everything" has been or will be digitized, and researchers with particular interests will still need to consult physical records, especially when seeing the original document is essential to the research. I am instead making the assumption that research will occur substantially online, and that physical archives will be placing greater emphasis on the provision of digital records via the Internet.

materials that are not placed online will not be available for online research. Although this observation is self-evident, it bears stating because the potential ramifications for researchers and cultural producers are significant: materials that are not online will likely not have a chance to be incorporated into historical narratives.

In making this assertion, I am operating on the assumption that digital resources will dominate 21st century research practices. I am drawing upon a statement author Paul Conway made in 2001, when he clearly identified what is at stake in digital research: "In the age of Google, nondigital content does not exist, and digital content with no impact is unlikely to survive."[21] Although more than a decade old, his statement still resonates today. If particular content—whether digitized or born digital, documentary or administrative—cannot be found on the Internet, it is effectively invisible. When research begins with Google, a digital representation essentially comes to supersede a presence in the physical world.

Additionally, as Conway suggests, given the vast quantities of digitized content available, that which is deemed less relevant or less meaningful will be filtered out, perhaps through neglect (such as failing to reformat materials according to present standards), but also through a low position in a hierarchical list of search results, as determined by Google's complex and hidden algorithms. Even the most dedicated (human) researcher is unlikely to sift through millions of potentially relevant hits, rendering low impact material almost undetectable, and ultimately pointing researchers towards the same pool of oft-viewed materials. In this sense, making administrative material available may be somewhat futile, assuming that its perceived status as

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[21] Paul Conway, "Preservation in the Age of Google: Digitization, Digital Preservation, and Dilemmas," *The Library Quarterly* 80, no. 1 (January 2001): 64.

"low impact" is true (although, as I have argued above, the status of potential research materials varies depending on the nature and orientation of the research). And of course, the only way to ensure its lack of impact is to exclude it entirely.

The chance of being relegated to the third or fourth—or 50th—page of search results is a reminder than an Internet presence is not a guarantee of inclusion in historical narrative, just as a presence in a physical archive does not guarantee that a researcher will look at or incorporate particular materials into their work. Still, the increasing dominance of the digital—and especially the well-managed, high-ranking digital—remains, and presents a number of challenges for artist-run centres, regardless of the type of material (documentary, administrative, or both) they choose to upload. Simply putting digitized content online is not sufficient. This content must be managed—formatted, tagged, organized, published (that is, made visible to the public), made available for Google indexing, maintained, and so on—much as hard copies of records must be managed in the non-digital world. These actions, like the analogous actions enacted upon physical records, ultimately shape the knowledge that can be created from them. But in the case of digital archives, new ways of accessing information add a layer of complexity to this shaping, because the needs of human researchers must be taken into account alongside the "needs" of computer programs: search engine optimization—making webpages that will be found and highly ranked by a search engine—must also be considered. To be effective (that is, findable on the Internet), the management of digital records must cater to both humans and algorithms.

Creating a digital archive quickly becomes a matter of more than making physical records available digitally. It is in multiple ways a strategic act, whether immediately recognized as such

or not. Choosing to make selected archival materials available online for the potential inclusion in future histories is a cultural strategy, as is selecting the ways in which that material is presented. So too is working to improve an organization's search rank. While none of these strategies can guarantee particular outcomes, they demonstrate an awareness of dominant historical practices, and suggest a desire to be included in them, although potentially on different terms—terms established by the centres themselves and reflected by the content they choose to make available. Together, these practices can suggest how a centre sees itself, and how it wishes to be seen by others.

6.4 Internet Archives and Internet as Archives: Conceptualizing Digital Archives

The way that a centre presents itself online can be understood as potentially archival; a website, as well as a social media presence, can offer evidence of a centre's activities and identity. Although digital, these things, like their hard copy cousins (newsletters, promotional posters, postcards, and so on), are candidates for inclusion in an archive. At the same time, a centre's online archive, separate from but connected to its "main" website, is also an archive. A centre's overall web presence can include material specifically designated as archival, and presented as such, as well as "pre-archival" material, created in the course of carrying out a centre's mandate, but not necessarily immediately viewed as part of an archive by the centre. There is, then, a certain duality within the notion of online archives: the entire Internet can be considered an archive (with Google as its apparently benevolent archivist), or just portions of it may be considered in that way.

So far, this chapter has generally engaged with the latter understanding of archives, which envisions online archives as analogous to non-digital archives, and assumes the creation of a webpage or online database specifically for the preservation and presentation of materials, whether these things are digital in origin or created in the physical world and subsequently digitized. This is an understanding generally shared by the centres who have participated in interviews with me.[22] At the same time, however, it is necessary to be able to conceptualize the entire Internet as an archive. In this much broader understanding, an organization's entire online presence can be considered an archive. In this sense, all artist-run centres with a web presence have an archive, regardless of whether they acknowledge it as such. Although a less strategic approach to digital archives, in at least one instance, it has the benefit of preserving both the documentary and (semi-)administrative portions of a centre's production.

6.4.1 Internet as Archive: Articule's Example

Montréal's Articule appears to have fully embraced the understanding of the Internet as an archive. On both the English and French versions of its website, it has a menu item called "Archives." Hovering over it, a user has the choice of either "Programming Archives" or "Archived Websites." The former is what I would classify as a documentary archive, and presents information about past programming by date, similar to the examples considered above. The latter is what the description suggests: versions of Articule's entire websites from different eras: 1997 to 2009, and 2009-2013.[23] Both versions roughly mirror the content of the current website, and include things such as mandates, contact information, submission information,

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[22] Artist-run centres interviewed about their online archives were grunt, Western Front, and VIVO, all located in Vancouver, and interviewed in April of 2013.

[23] Articule, "Archived Websites," accessed January 16, 2015, http://www.articule.org/en/archived-websites

current and past exhibitions, special events, news, publications, membership information, and so

on—a mix of documentary and administrative materials. Both also have archive sections, where

one can explore what might be thought of as an archived archive: an online archive that is no

longer being updated, but is nevertheless preserved as part of the Internet *as* archive.

While the archived archive is an interesting concept, what matters more is that Articule has kept

these websites intact. Rather than adding the aged content to a new website, or replacing old text

with new, Articule has left the websites as they existed, giving researchers the opportunity to see

how aspects of the gallery's presentation have changed over time. The phrasing of the mandates,

for instance, has changed, reflecting changes in how the gallery views itself and its role.[24]

Careful analysis of the site layout can offer evidence of changing values and organizational

ideas, as well as evidence of contemporary web design in the late 1990s. Compared to the

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[24] Compare, for example, the mandates listed below. The first is from 1997-2009, while the second is from 2009-2013. Both are reproduced as they appear on the websites. The first mandate emphasizes a commitment to "socially and aesthetically engaged" practices, while in the second mandate, "open-access" and "a broad range of contemporary practices" are emphasized, while "artistic excellence, interdisciplinarity and social engagement" appear later in the text. While there are significant similarities between the two, the political orientation of the first seems much more prominent than the second.

> **articule** is an artist-run centre dedicated to the presentation of new art practices that are socially and aesthetically engaged. Our artistic direction is founded on the shared belief that the relationship between the creative and the political is not contingent but necessary. articule's activities reflect the constant transformations of this relationship. We support a range of discursive and alternative activities that test the limits of aesthetic gesture, promote dialogue and build networks with artists' collectives and other organizations. Our open structure encourages the direct participation of an active membership and we recognize the importance of directing this vitality to give it the cohesion and professional bearing it requires. (Articule, "Mandate," accessed January 16, 2015, http://www.articule.org/archives/1997-2009/mandate.html).

> articule is an open-access artist-run centre dedicated to the presentation of a broad range of contemporary practices. Through our various programming channels, we strive for artistic excellence, interdisciplinarity and social engagement. While special consideration is given to emerging artists, we also respect those who have already established important precedents, who continue to test the limits of aesthetic gesture, and who commit themselves to the ideals of experimentation and risk-taking. articule supports discursive and alternative activities that promote dialogue and build networks with local, national and international artists, collectives and organizations. Our open structure encourages the direct participation of an active and diverse membership on both programming and organisational levels. (Articule, "Mandate," accessed January 16, 2015, http://www.articule.org/archives/2009-2013/web/menu02/mandat_en.html).

context in which materials in a physical archive are often viewed—that is, in a setting and situation almost certainly different from that in which it was created or first used—the visitor to these pages has the chance to view them as initially intended. The visitor can see Articule's website as it existed in, say, 2000, and can have an experience quite similar to someone originally viewing it in that year. While perhaps lessening Articule's administrative burden—it is more work to transfer material to a new website than to leave it as-is—the preservation of a website in its entirety provides a rather unexpected form of time travel for researchers. It is a good example of how the Internet can be an archive, and offers researchers a chance to see materials that would not necessarily be preserved in a purpose-built online archive dedicated to documentation.

6.5 From "What" to "How:" The Impacts of Methods of Presentation and Search Technologies on Ways of Knowing in Grunt's Online Archive

Although any kind of online presence can be viewed as part of a cultural strategy, the implications are clearer when a centre approaches its digital archive as a distinct entity on the Internet. Such an approach creates a more extensive digital representation that suggests a centre's investment in future histories. The search technologies and methods of presentation employed by a centre in turn offer increasingly detailed insight into the nature of this cultural strategy. I have already mentioned some of these methods—such as lists ordered by year or artist name—while discussing divided archives. I would now like to consider a few more methods, and will do so by considering grunt once again. Grunt is a useful example for two reasons: first, like Western Front, it has an extensively developed online archival presence that incorporates a variety of

search technologies that can act as a jumping off point for exploring a number of issues. Second, the technologies it uses have characteristics and implications that are applicable to similar types of search methods employed by other centres; although the specific examples may come from grunt, they may also be applied elsewhere.

Grunt was able to begin digitizing selected portions of its documentary archive through a project started in 2010 and referred to as "Activating the Archives," or ATA. This project was largely funded by a grant from Heritage Canada, through its Department of Heritage Canada Interactive Fund, and not through the centre's major funder, the Canada Council for the Arts. This is a distinction worth noting, for it suggests the Council's inability to fund such work, and points to the necessity of seeking outside funding sources if centres wish to digitize some of their records.[25] Without this additional funding, grunt would not have had the infrastructure to undertake its regular operations as well as those required by this project. This situation raises a number of questions about the roles and responsibilities of the Canada Council and of artist-run centres themselves. While these questions are too lengthy to explore here, what can be pointed out is this: if future histories will be written from digital resources, then it is those who can afford to create and maintain them who will have the opportunity to be involved in constructions of the past. It may be time for further consideration of how art histories will be written (and funded) in Canada; while the exhibition and creation of contemporary art is important, so too is its representation into the future.

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[25] It should be noted that although the Canada Council did not fund the ATA project specifically, it is still thanked in the "Welcome message from ATA producer Glenn Alteen" (accessed January 15, 2015, http://gruntarchives.org/welcome-message-glenn-alteen.html). The Council does, of course, fund grunt's ongoing activities, and without such support, the project could not have occurred in the first place.

Grunt's investment in the future comes, in part, from ATA. It is comprised of six curated websites and a database called the "ATA Activation Map." Grunt also runs a Tumblr blog, where selected documentary material is shared on a relatively regular basis. Together, this multi-pronged approach offers a variety of ways to access information. Through the database, researchers can search for specific materials, or browse through the current holdings, which are growing as additional material is digitized. The blog and curated sites offer more "pre-packaged" material; they guide the user towards certain items that have been deliberately selected for presentation. Like the database, the blog will continue to grow, while the six curated websites, which grunt calls "Curated Archive Sites," are static.[26]

6.5.1 Grunt's "Curated Archive" and Transparency Around Presenting Archival Selections

When I first encountered the term "curated archive sites," I was struck by the phrasing, which seemed to be a rather elaborate way of saying "online exhibition." The pairing of "curated" and "archive" seemed odd, since for me, the archive in its curated form would no longer be the archive, but rather the product of the archive. Researchers visiting this archive would not be sifting through materials on their own, but rather viewing the results of other researcher's efforts. Upon further reflection, however, I suspect my concerns may be misplaced, for several reasons. First, artist-run centres often use the term archive fairly loosely; almost anything having to do with the past can be described as an archive or archival. Moreover, my stance from the beginning has been to allow centres to define archives as they see fit. While the overextension of the term may dilute its meaning, or at least create confusion among people who would use it very

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[26] See grunt, "Archives," accessed January 15, 2015, http://grunt.ca/activating-the-archives/

differently, its use in this context is not entirely beyond what might be expected. These sites, after all, are the result of "activating the archive." For a site based upon this premise, calling something an archive may be more effective than calling it an exhibition.[27]

The second reason why my concerns may be misplaced relates to the positioning of the Internet as an archive. As considered above, almost everything that appears on the Internet can be considered a record—evidence of a particular activity. Given this understanding, the entire Internet—a rather substantial collection of records—can be positioned as an archive. Viewing it in this manner reduces the need to be overly precise in terminology: if most of the Internet is an archive, asserting that an archival website would be better termed an exhibition is of little meaning. Even if the site in question *is* an exhibition, it is also an archive, or more, specifically, a record (or multiple records) that offers evidence of how something was carried out, and how the creators wished for that activity to be viewed. It can be understood as a subset of a larger archive, which makes its classification appropriate.

Finally, I cannot be too critical of "curated archive sites," since I suspect it may actually provide some clarity around the notion of archive. As suggested earlier, an archive does not contain evidence of "everything" that ever happened. Not everything has been documented, not everything has survived the passage of time, and not everything has been deemed worthy of future study—or indexed by Google. (And, of course, not everything is on the Internet, even if the Internet is potentially the world's largest archive). Nor is the material contained in an archive

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[27] Grunt employed a number of curators in order to create these sites, and each curator offers a different interpretation of the selected archival material. This approach produced a number of thematic websites that highlight the many different facets of grunt's documentary archive. Please note that I support this approach, and am not critiquing it in any way. Any concerns I have are with the nature of the terms that were used to describe this project.

in some kind of "natural" form; as discussed previously, any number of people may have been

involved in the preparing the records for use. But the word archive, for the uninitiated, does not

necessarily disclose this selectivity and organization. By adding the word curated, grunt reminds

the researcher or audience of this situation; they willingly disclose the way that they have shaped

this archive, and suggest to the user that more related material exists. I suspect that grunt,

perhaps unintentionally, has created a particularly transparent idea of an archive through its

specific terminology.

6.5.2 Grunt's "Activation Map" and Databases as Points of Access

In addition to the six curated sites, grunt offers its ATA Activation Map, which is a searchable

database. Here, rather than being presented with pre-selected material, users conduct their own

research, either by using their own search terms, or by exploring categories selected by grunt.

The former method is generally referred to as "full text searching," and depends on the

researcher entering a search term that matches a term that also appears in the description of the

asset or in the asset itself. This type of user interface—essentially a blank box into which the user

enters text—is generally employed by companies such as Google, and is commonly encountered

on the Internet.[28] The latter method relies upon classifications created by grunt, which are in this

case "programs," "collections," "categories" (a rather non-descript term), "artists," "curators,"

"medium," and "dates." Researchers cannot independently search within these fields, as in

traditional "metadata enabled searching," which relies upon matching terms in specific fields.[29]

(In such traditional searching, a user could search for a particular artist by typing his or her name

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[28] Jeffrey Beall, "The Weaknesses of Full Text Searching," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 34, no. 5 (September 2008): 438.
[29] Ibid., 438.

into the "artist" field). Instead, grunt presents its users with a subcategory. For the category

"artists," a user is presented with a list of names to choose from, similar to the list of names

featured on Stride or Optica's website. Clicking on a name will deliver all results associated with

that artist. In this instance, the user is guided through the search, but only lightly so. Compared

with the full text search, users are more limited in their options, although spared the frustration of

entering term after term and coming up with no matches.
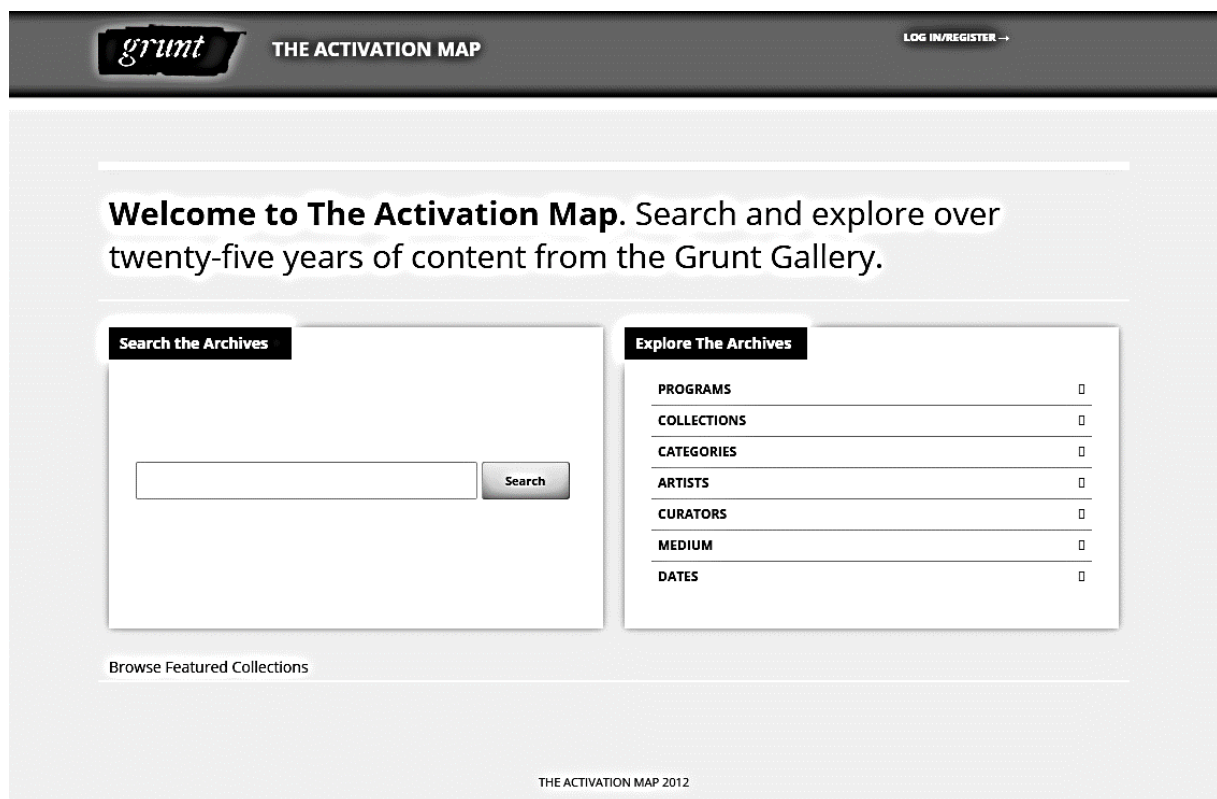
Figure 4. This screen capture shows two different ways to access grunt's online archives. Visitors can either search the archives by entering their own terms into the box on the left side, or they can use the categories provided by grunt and seen on the right side of the page. Screen capture, June 3, 2015, http://gruntarchives.org/ata/

In addition to offering multiple ways to access content, a database also lends itself to non-

conventional ways of putting information together, which may be useful in the creation of

alternative histories. Kristen Veel, in her article "Information Overload and Database

Aesthetics," claims that "...the archive, in particular in the form of a database, contradicts the inclination to privilege one connection between two pieces of information over other possible connections, enabling multiple simultaneous constellations."[30] Even though I am more comfortable framing the database as archive, rather than the archive as database (the latter fails to recognize that it is the relationship between papers that has been understood historically to give records their evidential value), her point remains: databases allow for the connection of information in ways different from what might be possible in the physical world. An asset can be viewed separately from any related assets, or viewed simultaneously with unrelated assets, making possible "multiple simultaneous constellations." For some centres and researchers, such an approach may be highly desirable.

A database, then, has multiple advantages for an artist-run centre archive: it is an approach that makes use of established and expected ways of accessing information, which in turn may positively affect its use by researchers; when used as a tool for browsing, it can help researchers understand the collection, or, when used for keyword searching, it can provide direct access to certain records; and through its semi-context free methods of presentation, it has the potential to impact the construction of future histories (since no method of online presentation could be called "context-free"—the user interface itself is a context—I describe it as "semi-context free" to indicate that related records are not necessarily displayed alongside a selected record, as would usually be the case in a physical archive). But the database, as well as other ways of presenting information online (such as lists by date or artist name), also make the assumption that assets can be described and located using text and defined characteristics, such as a date,

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[30] Kristen Veel, "Information Overload and Database Aesthetics," *Comparative Critical Studies* 8, nos. 2–3 (2011): 308.

medium, or keyword. This assumption requires methods of searching that are not necessarily well aligned with either the highly visual content of artist-run centre (documentary) archives or with their particular worldviews.

6.6 The Subjective Nature of Cataloguing and Searching

As Fiona Cameron and Helena Robinson point out in their discussion of the documentation (or cataloguing) practices of museums, the act of description is not neutral. According to them, such "documentation is more than a repository of unadulterated 'facts,' rather, it constitutes an ideologically and culturally drenched form of text in its own right."[31] Characteristics such as date, medium, and artist, while seemingly neutral, are not necessarily so. I am not arguing here that time frames, materials, and makers cannot be agreed upon, but rather suggesting that describing things using these particular qualities, and not others, points to the subjectivity that surrounds such "facts." Documentation is created to record specific aspects of an asset that are considered relevant and useful, but what is defined as such is relative and the result of particular cultural assumptions. The goals of documentation are very specific; there is intent behind the creation of such records, and this intent ultimately shapes what is recorded and how it is recorded, even when it comes to something that is seemingly objective, such as the documentation of the physical characteristics of an object, or its date.[32] Something as simple as associating a record with a date is making the assumption that the date matters. When grunt, or any other centre, provides a way of searching records by date, medium, artist, or curator, it is

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[31] Fiona Cameron and Helena Robinson, "Digital Knowledgescapes: Cultural, Theoretical, Practical, and Usage Issues Facing Museum Collection Databases in a Digital Epoch," in *Theorizing Digital Cultural Heritage: A Critical Discourse*, ed. Fiona Cameron and Sarah Kenderdine (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2010), 161.
[32] See Ciaran Trace, "What is Recorded is Never Simply 'What Happened': Record Keeping in Modern Organizational Culture," *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 137–159.

expressing the idea that these characteristics are important; it is not partaking in the objective presentation of some records, but rather suggesting the ways in which they might matter.

6.6.1 Selecting and Assigning Keywords

It is perhaps easier to understand the subjectivity of documentation when focusing on words rather than numbers or names, as Nancy Ruth Bartlett does when she expands upon this concept from a viewpoint specific to archives and archival descriptions. She writes, "The Library of Congress Subject Headings" (LCSH)—suspected to be one of the most widely used indexing systems in the world—"and the Anglo-American cataloguing rules favoured the English language, the Christian faith, the academic canon, and the American worldview."[33] Additionally, the LCSH is not discipline specific, meaning that it has shortcomings in describing certain materials, such as those related to art and architecture. There is, of course, a vocabulary developed specifically to address these materials—the *Art and Architecture Thesaurus* (AAT), created and maintained by the Getty—but its terms conform to certain assumptions that are by no means universal. Consider, for example, the following answer to a frequently asked question about the AAT:

> Why aren't the terms in the AAT organized in the way I expect to see them?
>
> Within its given scope of art, architecture, and material culture, the AAT is organized for general use; it is not organized for one particular use or according to any specific discipline. For example, a user asked, why aren't communion cups and chalices narrower terms to church plate? This happens because church plate is a collective term for many different types and forms of objects used for ecclesiastical purposes, thus it is placed in the

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[33] Nancy Ruth Bartlett, "Past Imperfect (*l'imparfait*): Mediating Meaning in the Archives of Art," in *Archives,* 129. The claim about the Library of Congress Subject Headings comes from the Library of Congress itself, as stated on its webpage and accessed January 13, 2015, http://www.loc.gov/aba/cataloging/subject/

Object Genres hierarchy. Individual examples of church plate, such as communion cups and chalices or candlesticks, for instance, are found in various other places in the AAT, because the AAT's organization stresses function and form over the context in which an object is used. For this reason, communion cups and chalices are placed in Containers, and candlesticks in Furnishings, under lighting devices. However, the AAT links them to church plate as an alternate parent using polyhierarchical relationships.[34]

While this answer addresses the concerns of a cataloguer, more than those of a researcher or end-user, it nevertheless reveals how key assumptions affect organizational structures; it shows the subjective thinking that motivates specific choices. Indeed, valuing function and form over the context of use is a choice, and one that is very much informed by cultural contexts and ideology. Researchers working from a position outside this framework will be met with increased challenges.

In the case of artist-run centre databases, compliance with LCSH, or the AAT, or any other consistently applied system, is not guaranteed. Cataloguers may not necessarily be formally trained in the application of subject headings or keywords; they may be interns, volunteers, or staff members with expertise in other areas.[35] There may or may not be a controlled vocabulary that has been developed in-house, or regulations about the application of specific words. Such a situation presents an opportunity, in that a centre can create its own keywords that best reflect its worldview and are tailored to its specific collection. At the same time, and overshadowing this opportunity, is the concern that a lack of a consistently applied and publicly known system will result in very limited search results; the use of uncommon or unexpected search words may

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[34] The Getty, "AAT: Frequently Asked Questions," accessed January 23, 2015, http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/aat/aat_faq.html
[35] Interviews with staff members at grunt and Western Front, held in April of 2013, suggest that the people who manage artist-run centre archives and databases can come from many different backgrounds. Western Front has hired archivists or student-archivists to work on their digital archives, while grunt relies upon interns and volunteers, who have varying levels of training in archival practices.

render collections inaccessible. The dilemma, then, is to conform to established systems as much as possible, even though such systems may not be the most appropriate for an organization's ideology, and even though cataloguers may not be trained in such a system, or risk a degree of obscurity through the use of self-developed key terms. Either system is potentially exclusionary, and, moreover, exclusionary in an invisible way (unless, of course, keywords are displayed to the public alongside the records, or made public in some other way, such as Western Front has done by creating a page that displays the 589 keywords it uses on its records).[36]
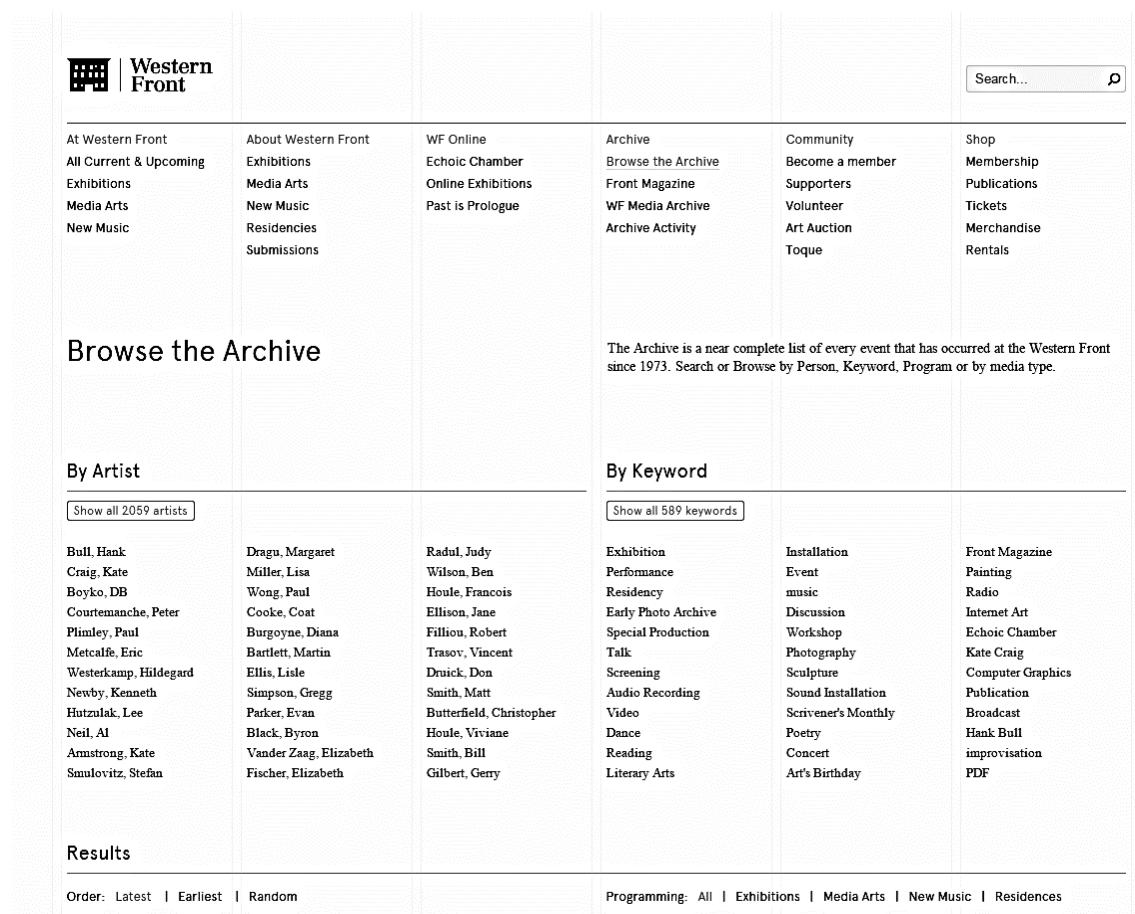
Figure 5. This screen capture of Western Front's "Browse the Archive" webpage shows how visitors can search by using a list of artists or keywords. Visitors can also use the search box on the upper right side of the screen. Screen capture, June 3, 2015 http://front.bc.ca/entries/. Readers are directed to the Western Front website to view a higher quality image of this webpage.

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[36] Western Front, "Browse the Archive," accessed May 18, 2015, http://front.bc.ca/entries/. On this webpage, users can also view the 2059 artist names Western Front associates with its records. Curiously, some, but not all, of the key words are also artist names (Kate Craig and Hank Bull are two examples).

The structures that make the retrieval of information from an archive possible are in no way neutral; cataloguing practices are political and as much a part of an ideological framework as anything else. Such practices, which are based in language, are also not necessarily the most appropriate way to describe the types of materials found in artist-run (documentary) archives, and especially images or works of art. These visual assets may not translate particularly well into meaningful text, even with availability of tools such as the AAT, which have been carefully crafted to take into account the specific nature of works of art. Using words to describe an image requires conversion from the visual to the verbal, which inevitably fails to convey the nuance of the image. Compounding this problem is the subjectivity of cataloguers themselves. Even if trained similarly, and even if following the facets (main subdivisions) and hierarchies of the AAT or another vocabulary, they may interpret an image differently, picking up on one aspect of it while glossing over another. The terms themselves are also subject to interpretation, making their application challenging in some situations. How might we consistently distinguish an image of an installation from an image of a sculpture? When might the term "conceptual art" be applied? When would it be appropriate to call something "postmodern"?

As series editor Murtha Baca points out in Patricia Harpring's *Introduction to Controlled Vocabularies: Terminology for Art, Architecture, and Other Cultural Works*, such vocabularies do attempt to take into account the complex and fluid nature of language and interpretation: "We recognize that a single concept can be expressed by more than one word, and that a single word can express more than one concept. Words can change over time and take a variety of forms, and

they can be translated into many languages."[37] Consequently, controlled vocabularies are intended to provide "the 'right' or 'preferred' name or term to use in describing collections and other resources," but also to assemble "all of the synonyms, orthographic and grammatical variations, historical forms, and even in some cases 'wrong' names or terms in order to enhance access for a broad range of users without constraining them to the use of the 'right' term."[38] Still, in cases where cataloguers have little training, or are not using a vocabulary structured to accommodate these "wrong" terms, such attempts to account for the complexity of language and interpretation can be ineffective.

In such situations, applying multiple terms to a record can be a solution, but only if done so judiciously. *Introduction to Controlled Vocabularies* acknowledges the flexibility of cataloguing and defers responsibility for determining the most appropriate number of keywords to the organization carrying out the task.[39] If artist-run centres have not previously defined expectations around cataloguing, records are at risk of what might be called "keyword spamming"—too many terms applied in an attempt to be as thorough as possible, and to anticipate all the terms a researcher may use. Such an approach is as problematic as insufficient keywords, since spammy records can lead to imprecise and copious search results. An attempt to describe everything can lead to the opposite, with nothing being described in a meaningful way. Other solutions can include having multiple cataloguers review and apply keywords, or even opening up keyword application to end users. Both approaches are resource intensive, with "open source" keywording requiring at least some moderation. Even then, some writers express concerns about the

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[37] Murtha Baca, Foreword to *Introduction to Controlled Vocabularies: Terminology for Art, Architecture, and Other Cultural Works*, by Patricia Harpring (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2010), x.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Harpring, *Introduction to Controlled Vocabularies*, 170.

"coherence" of user-added keywords, noting that "crowdsourcing would be unlikely to produce a consistent and reliable research set," especially in comparison to projects with more carefully controlled keywords.[40]

6.6.2 Other Ways to Catalogue and Search: Cultural Strategies for the Future

I dwell upon keywords not only because they reflect ideological assumptions and affect the ability of records to be found, but also because they imbue records with a certain level of authority, and even closure. To label an archival record is to assert from a position of power that it is what the label states. By describing something as "this" and not "that," a level of resolution is created around the thing, as though no more terms might be applicable, and as though what is known is known for certain. But even when an organization such as an artist-run centre applies keywords to its own records, or uses its own specific vocabulary, the act of assigning a keyword to a record does not eliminate the possibility of debate; labels are not necessarily definitive, although they may seem so. Indeed, it is this aura of unquestioned authority that surrounds a highly subjective practice that is problematic. Disclosure about cataloguing practices is relatively rare. Even crowdsourcing, which can successfully redistribute power from the organization that controls the asset to the public, and which offers a built-in reminder of the subjectivity of cataloguing through its name, still imbues a record with defining characteristics. Additionally, as discussed in Chapter Two when considering the archives of Fluxus artists, there are works of art and artistic practices exhibited within artist-run centres that have been designed so as to

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[40] Robert Cole and Chris Hackett, "Search vs. Research: Full-Text Repositories, Granularity, and the Concept of 'Source' in the Digital Environment," in *Better Off Forgetting? Essays on Archives, Public Policy, and Collective Memory*, ed. Cheryl Avery and Mona Holmlund (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 120.

specifically resist categorization and description. Assigning keywords to such records invokes an artificial sense of closure, the very thing the artists who created the works were seeking to avoid.

I have framed the application of keywords to records in online databases as a kind of necessary evil; it is a system with multiple flaws, but one that seems necessary in order to make records accessible. However, advances in technology may be changing this situation. While not yet widespread, there exist any number of non-text based ways to search for materials. Museums, having collections that are more visual than verbal, are beginning to offer such functionality on their websites. The Victoria and Albert Museum in London, for instance, is currently developing new, non-text-based ways to search for digital images, using colour, shape, and what it describes as "visual texture."[41] Cooper Hewitt, a design museum in New York, is also exploring similar technologies. While there are options to search the collection by fairly conventional attributes, such as date, title, artist, medium, object type, and size, there are also options to search via other criteria, including by display location in the Carnegie Mansion (the building in which Cooper Hewitt is located), by colour, or even by complexity—the busyness or intricacy of an artifact.[42]

For traditional archival or library collections—collections based primarily upon text—using attributes like colour or complexity would be largely inappropriate; as Joan Schwartz pointed out in 2011, the "logocentrism of archives persists."[43] But what would happen if such search

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[41] Victoria and Albert Museum, "Test Search by Colour," accessed January 13, 2015, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/information/information_fabricvisualiser

[42] Cooper Hewitt, "Welcome to our Collection Database," accessed December 18, 2014, https://collection.cooperhewitt.org. Information about different search methods can be found under the "Explore the Collection" tab. Note that the as of 2015, the organization's full name is Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum.

[43] Joan M. Schwartz, "The Archival Garden: Photographic Plantings, Interpretive Choices, and Alternative Narratives," in *Controlling the Past: Documenting Society and Institutions: Essays in Honor of Helen Willa Samuels*, ed. Terry Cook (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011), 70.

technologies were applied in less conventional archival settings, in situations where the collection's diversity lent itself to multiple ways of searching, such as in the archives of artist-run centres? What if one could search digitized slides of exhibitions by colour, or press releases by potential "complexity," measured by the amount of text on a page? What if digitized video recordings could be searched by sound, perhaps using an averaged-out tone as an identifying characteristic? Put another way: in light of new technologies, do online archives have to be the digitized versions of their analogue predecessors, or can they be something more? And of course, accepting new methods does not require abandoning old ones: multiple access points to a collection can be provided simultaneously.

I will not suggest that new methods of searching are necessarily more objective than their analogue counterparts. These technologies are part of an ideology, as are characteristics such as size or medium. It should also be noted that they are based on algorithms and mathematical formulae, and although the temptation exists to separate such programs from people, to point to such codes as though they are somehow impartial, it must be remembered that they are written by human beings. Nor will I discount the very real limits that funding places upon website development. Nevertheless, having search techniques that engage multiple skills and senses seems to broaden the possibilities that exist for collections of material. These widened search horizons may in turn affect the type of narratives that can be developed about centres and the work they exhibit. As Norie Neumark writes, "What is possible in technology depends on the particular cultural imagination and individual subjectivities, while in turn cultural imagination

and individual subjectivity are produced by these technologies."[44] There is a symbiotic relationship between imagination and technologies, with each influencing the other. Emerging search technologies may prompt new possibilities for the writing of histories.

6.7 Summary

This chapter has been wide-ranging in scope, covering multiple—but certainly not all—facets of digital archives. Indeed, there remains much more to consider, from the weighting of keywords and methods of ranking search results, to copyright, funding, and ongoing website maintenance. I have not spoken of the broader range of digital archival programming that is possible, nor of the innovative ways in which some centres, such as VIVO, are using technology to create audio-visual presentations that animate their archival material.[45] Nor have I been able to delve into digitization as a method of conservation-preservation, which is especially important for media-based artist-run centres. Many of these centres used video to both document and create works of art. Now, some 30 years after their creation, the magnetic tapes will almost certainly be lost without immediate actions to convert them to different formats. This pressing issue, and many others, remain areas of future investigation.

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[44] Norie Neumark, "Introduction: Relays, Delays, and Distance Art/Activism," in *At a Distance: Precursors to Art and Activism on the Internet*, ed. Annmarie Chandler and Norie Neumark (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2005), 10.

[45] VIVO features a number of "Research Projects" on its website, including the "S.V.E.S. Oral History Project," a series of digital video recordings where founding members of the society discuss how the organization emerged. "Videographics" is another archival research project. In this video recording, artist and S.V.E.S. founding member Paul Wong reviews a series of promotional posters, sharing his memories of each of them. For more, see VIVO, "S.V.E.S. Oral History Project," accessed May 15, 2015, http://www.vivomediaarts.com/s-v-e-s-oral-history-project/, and "Videographics," accessed May 15, 2015, http://www.vivomediaarts.com/videographics/. Note that VIVO's approach to these projects could be considered analogous to grunt's efforts in its "Curated Archive Sites."

What I have discussed, however, are some of the implications of digitizing materials and making them available on the Internet. Identifying the creation of digital archives as part of a cultural strategy, I have suggested that digitization is not just an act that takes something from the physical realm and gives it a presence in the electronic realm. It is instead a deliberate and tactical act, and one that is just as powerful—if not more so—as the act of creating an archive in the physical world. It structures what and how information will be known; it helps a centre in creating an identity both for itself and to present to others.

At the present moment, and based on a number of examples of valuing the visual/documentary over the textual/administrative, the identity some centres are creating for themselves is limited. By neglecting the administrative portions of their archives, centres ensure a perception of themselves as organizations that put artists first, but do so at a cost: without evidence of particular decisions, it will be challenging to view artist-run centres as organizations that are deliberately distinct from other museums and galleries. While financial limitations are a very real barrier to further digitization, I would urge centres to reconsider the lower research value they place upon their administrative materials. Not only is it challenging (if not impossible) to anticipate the needs of future researchers, there are tangible reasons for digitizing administrative materials: they allow centres to be studied and known as entities in themselves, and they highlight the role they can play in a diverse arts ecology.

While concerns around the exclusion of administrative materials remain, any digital archival presence is nevertheless an important part of cultivating a gallery's identity. I have examined a number of ways centres represent themselves and their archives online, but have focused on

grunt and its highly developed archival presence. For the purposes of this discussion, grunt has been a catalyst for thinking about much broader issues that affect other centres as well. It has allowed me to consider the concept of the "curated archive," an intriguing way to present material that, in contrast to a database, offers a more concrete view of how a centre sees itself and its contribution to art history. It is also, as I suggested, an important reminder about what archives contain: they do not contain "everything," but are instead a selection of things. In the online environment, the addition of the word *curated*—itself a term increasingly used in a wide variety of ways in daily life—signals this selectivity and subjectivity.

Choosing which information will be made available is an important act. So too is determining how it will be made available; the assumptions that inform its "findability" deeply affect how it might be used by researchers and other interested parties. These concerns become particularly evident when examining databases. I have pointed to their limitations, including their demand for highly subjective keywords, their inability to manage records of "in-between-ness," their challenge in describing the visual with the verbal, and their implied authority. At the same time, I have suggested that in spite of these limits, the database as one component of an online archive can be useful for a centre: it can be a cultural strategy that holds the potential to predispose future histories to a fluid and potentially disconnected narrative, rather than to one that is written as a constant evolution that winds up in the present day.

There is much at stake when creating a digital archive. More than a neutral repository, a digital archive is at once structured and structuring; it is shaped by the people and technologies that enable it to exist, but then shapes the ideas and narratives that can be constructed from it. It is a

251

cultural strategy, and a powerful one at that, in both its creation and use. As more centres seek to employ this technology, as they seek to create a presence that informs both their internal identity and its external expression, they should ensure that their choices are ultimately in line with their own values and the ways they wish to be known.

Epilogue

In their article, "An Unfinished Revolution in Art Historiography, or How to Write a Feminist Art History," Victoria Horne and Amy Tobin pose a question about the expectations that surround the construction of art historical narratives:

> as feminist art historians, do we hope to uncover particular narratives embedded within a women artist's work and/or biography (struggle, heroic achievement, bravery, sisterly camaraderie), and are we disappointed if our subjects (almost inevitably) fail to meet these high expectations?[1]

When I embarked upon this project, I held at least faint hopes that I would discover narratives that parallel those described by Horne and Tobin: through the study of artist-run archives, I would find evidence that pointed to their potential to challenge the authority and structures of dominant art historical practices; I would demonstrate how impressively alternative artist-run archives could be, and champion them as a source from which to construct new/feminist/intersectional art histories that are not necessarily rooted in individual achievement.

The claims I can make at the end of this project, of course, are much more modest. I am not disappointed in my subjects by any means, but have come to identify with author Lilly Koltun's statement that mainstream "...History's monolithic proposed truth is certainly not dislodged by the latest forays of a few archivists into contextual variety; this effort is merely absorbed by the system it should overthrow."[2] More specifically, I would suggest again that it is not necessarily the role of artist-run centres and their archives to single-handedly restructure how histories can

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[1] Victoria Horne and Amy Tobin, "An Unfinished Revolution in Art Historiography, or How to Write a Feminist Art History," *Feminist Review* 107 (2014): 81.

[2] Lilly Koltun, "The Architecture of Archives: Whose Form, What Function?" *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 260.

be written; to exist outside of—or to entirely reject—current practices in both archives and history writing is an near-impossible task. Indeed, as Michel de Certeau pointed out, "The historiographical institution is inscribed within a complex that permits only one kind of production for it and prohibits others."[3] There are limits to what can count and be imagined as history, and to expect a narrative of the past to exist beyond this framework is to risk it no longer being recognized as a history.

At the same time, I do not wish to downplay the significant potential of artist-run archives. While they may be bound by the structures of historiography, there are nevertheless ways to exist within those structures that challenge assumptions or permit an organization to exert control over its own histories. The centres profiled in Chapters Four, Five, and Six demonstrate this notion: MAWA, through its arrangement and donation of archival materials, points to how a degree of control can be maintained even when partaking in the dominant institutions of history; TNG, through its permissive attitude towards the portion of its collection held at JSH, suggests how future projects can be influenced by the ordering of both space and records; and the series of centres considered in the last chapter offer examples of how control over online archives can (at least partially) predispose historical narratives to certain points of view.

There are meaningful points of difference in the archival practices of other centres as well, even when the approach largely replicates or resembles the processes and structures that exist in traditional, institutional archives. Conceptualizing an archive in a very broad manner, and including materials that are both published and unpublished, is an example of such a difference. Not necessarily the result of rejecting traditional boundaries or of ignorance, such an approach is

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[3] Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 68.

instead an instance of a centre creating a collection to best meet its own needs and support its own ideas. This kind of self-defined archive can be understood as an extension of the artist-run movement, where principles of autonomy and self-determination guide actions more so than the desire to conform to expectations established by external bodies. Full dismissal of all things traditional or institutional is not a condition of alterity; centres can and do create archives that both align with existent ideas and challenge them. What matters most is that centres are taking an approach that best fits their values and priorities.

The values that centres consider in managing their archives are not fixed; over time, boards, funding, and mandates change, and all of these factors may impact how a centre approaches its archive. While I did not find any centres that take what might be described as a radical approach, it is quite possible that such centres simply did not participate in my survey, or that such an approach—if desired at all—has not been developed yet. For some—but certainly not all—of the centres with which I interacted, it would seem that relatively little has been done around the development of archival strategies, often stymied by a combination of a lack of resources and mandates that do not fully account for the management of archives. This is an area of study to which I would like to return in the future: ten or twenty years from now, what will be the state of artist-run archives? Will they be more developed, or will the status quo be maintained? Will any centres have adopted completely radical stances, such as permitting their use in a (presumably artistic) manner that leads to their destruction? Will centres continue to donate their materials, or will they manage them on their own? Will they band together to produce a physical or online archival presence?

There are other areas of this research that would also benefit from more study. As suggested in Chapter Six, the potential of new digital search technologies, and their possible adoption by artist-run archives, is an avenue of future research. Could the use of such technologies aid in the creation of projects by artists? Rather than attempting to position digital archives to challenge the institutions of historiography, could they instead be understood as tools for artistic explorations that need not conform to the expectations of any discipline? Could such an entity, a re-imagined archive, be a better fit for the values of artist-run centres?

There are also some areas of this research that, if given the opportunity, I would do over. I have in mind the survey, the limitations of which I mentioned in Chapter Three. While it was successful in providing a starting point, there are a number of revisions or adaptations that might lead to better results. For instance, I might attempt to design a survey to better accommodate the different types of artist-run centres. Production centres, in particular, have a specific set of needs and practices, including the collection of works produced at those facilities, which distinguish them from other centres. The survey, in attempting to anticipate a broad variety of practices, was not necessarily structured to account for their particular nature. Nor was it designed to fully accommodate centres that provide services or resources. Designing specialized surveys for different types of centres may allow the differences that exist between them and their archives to be more prominent.

I would also attempt to follow up with a number of survey respondents, and to investigate in greater depth those centres that left particularly intriguing comments. For the centres that denied having an archive, for example, I would like to understand exactly how they define archive. For

those that make divisions in their archives, whether around administrative and documentary materials, or in other ways, I would like to better understand the reasoning behind these choices. Although my discussions with grunt provided some insight into this practice, I would like to speak to other centres as well. Do they have additional reasons for making such choices? And how do such choices relate to the decision to donate only part of an archive to a larger institution?

I would also like to follow up with more centres that report having policies. What do these policies look like? To what materials do they pertain? What more do they reveal about a centre's archives and its attitude towards them? How do they compare to policies at other centres? I would like to know how these centres understand their archives in the context of a larger ecosystem of the visual arts. What is the role of such archives? Who is the audience for their archives? Artists? Everyone? Do they wish for their archival material to be incorporated into larger narratives, or do they consider their reach to be more local? Do they keep data on the number of visits (online or in person) for their archives? If so, what does it look like? And if given unlimited time and funds, what would they choose to do with their collections?

Other areas of exploration include more thorough investigations into the projects that come from the archives themselves. Who carries out such projects? Is it primarily the centres themselves, or are artists initiating projects? How do such projects align—or not—with conventional archival production? Can these projects be traced, and their larger impact gauged in any way? That is, do these archive-informed works have a life beyond their initial exhibition or publication? For instance, are they incorporated into textbooks about Canadian art, or do they appear in scholarly

anthologies? This research has only identified a limited number of these projects, and there remain many more worthy of individual attention.

I would also like to expand this research to include the study of archives, and particularly online archives, that are arts-related but not necessarily artist-run. There are any number of alternative or community archives, often crowd-sourced, that exist to provide access to literary and artistic works that may be otherwise inaccessible—or that may technically be accessible, but only to those who can either visit a physical location or pay for digital access. I have in mind organizations like UbuWeb (ubu.com), which describes itself as "a completely independent resource dedicated to all strains of the avant-garde, ethnopoetics, and outsider arts," or AAARG, which was mentioned in a note in Chapter Two.[4] Although not entirely legal, AAARG provides free access to arts-related literary materials. I am curious to learn more about the approaches of these organizations, and to consider their work not only as the action of potentially marginalized or non-mainstream groups, but also as a political stance that values the distribution of information and cultural heritage over potential monetary gain. This stance, of course, requires some careful balancing: how can artists' rights to profit from their work be balanced with the importance of making cultural production publicly available in a timely manner?

While many unexplored areas of artist-run and other non-dominant archives remain, it is my hope that this research will ultimately be of use to the centres themselves. I hope it will provide insight into what other centres are doing, and I hope it will help centres that wish to take an active approach to their archives to do so. By understanding that it is the creation of knowledge

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[4] UbuWeb, "About UbuWeb," accessed May 28, 2015, http://www.ubu.com. As of May 28, 2015, AAAARG was located at http://aaaaarg.org. This URL is subject to change due to threats of legal action.

that is at stake within archives, I hope centres will give serious consideration to their archives. I will not advocate for a specific approach; ultimately, whatever choices a centre makes must be those that are the most appropriate for it. Alignment with or rejection of dominant practices is not necessarily the most important issue; what matters more is that a centre determines what works for its particular stance and values at a particular point in time.

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Appendix I

I.I Project Approval, January 25, 2013

January 25, 2013

Ms. Johanna Plant
Ph.D. Candidate
Department of Art
Queen's University
Kingston, ON K7L 3N6

GREB Ref #: GART-021-12; Romeo # 6007662
Title: "GART-021-12 Artist-Run Archives and Constructions of Canadian Contemporary Art History"

Dear Ms. Plant:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB), by means of a delegated board review, has cleared your proposal entitled **"GART-021-12 Artist-Run Archives and Constructions of Canadian Contemporary Art History"** for ethical compliance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (TCPS) and Queen's ethics policies. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (article D.1.6) and Senate Terms of Reference (article G), your project has been cleared for one year. At the end of each year, the GREB will ask if your project has been completed and if not, what changes have occurred or will occur in the next year.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB, with a copy to your unit REB, of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one year period (access this form at https://eservices.queensu.ca/romeo_researcher/ and click Events - GREB Adverse Event Report). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example you must report changes to the level of risk, applicant characteristics, and implementation of new procedures. To make an amendment, access the application at https://eservices.queensu.ca/romeo_researcher/ and click Events - GREB Amendment to Approved Study Form. These changes will automatically be sent to the Ethics Coordinator, Gail Irving, at the Office of Research Services or irvingg@queensu.ca for further review and clearance by the GREB or GREB Chair.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

John G. Freeman

John Freeman, Ph.D.
Professor and Acting Chair
General Research Ethics Board

cc: Dr. Clive Robertson, Faculty Supervisor

I.II Amendment Approval, April 18, 2013

April 18, 2013

Ms. Johanna Plant
Ph.D. Candidate
Department of Art
Queen's University
Kingston, ON K7L 3N6

Dear Ms. Plant:

RE: Amendment for your study entitled**: GART-021-12 Artist-Run Archives and Constructions of Canadian Contemporary Art History; ROMEO# 6007662**

Thank you for submitting your amendment requesting that participants be able to provide consent via e-mail.

The revised method of obtaining consent seems reasonable and does not impose increased ethical concerns. By this letter you have ethics clearance for this change.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

John G. Freeman

John Freeman
Acting Chair, GREB

c.   Dr. Clive Robertson, Faculty Supervisor

I.III Amendment Approval, December 16, 2013

December 16, 2013

Ms. Johanna Plant
Ph.D. Candidate
Department of Art
Queen's University
Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6

Dear Ms. Plant:

RE: Amendment for your study entitled: **GART-021-12 Artist-Run Archives and Constructions of Canadian Contemporary Art History;** ROMEO# **6007662**

Thank you for submitting your amendment requesting:

1) To revise the language in the Letter of Information and Consent Form so that it better applies to the varied situations of the potential participants;

2) Revised Letter of Information and Consent Form.

By this letter you have ethics clearance for these changes.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Joan Stevenson, Ph.D.
Chair
General Research Ethics Board

c.:   Dr. Clive Robertson, Supervisor

January 17, 2014

Ms. Johanna Plant
Ph.D. Candidate
Department of Art
Queen's University
Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6

GREB Romeo #: 6007662
Title: "GART-021-12 Artist-Run Archives and Constructions of Canadian Contemporary Art History"

Dear Ms. Plant:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB) has reviewed and approved your request for renewal of ethics clearance for the above-named study. This renewal is valid for one year from January 25, 2014. Prior to the next renewal date you will be sent a reminder memo and the link to ROMEO to renew for another year.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one year period. An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours. Report to GREB through either ROMEO Event Report or Adverse Event Report Form at http://www.queensu.ca/ors/researchethics/GeneralREB/forms.html.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example you must report changes in study procedures or implementation of new aspects into the study procedures. Your request for protocol changes will be forwarded to the appropriate GREB reviewers and/or the GREB Chair. Please report changes to GREB through either ROMEO Event Reports or the Ethics Change Form at http://www.queensu.ca/ors/researchethics/GeneralREB/forms.html.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Joan Stevenson, Ph.D.
Chair
General Research Ethics Board

c.:   Dr. Clive Robertson, Faculty Supervisor

December 22, 2014

Ms. Johanna Plant
Ph.D. Candidate
Department of Art
Queen's University
Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6

GREB Romeo #: 6007662
Title: "GART-021-12 Artist-Run Archives and Constructions of Canadian Contemporary Art History"

Dear Ms. Plant:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB) has reviewed and approved your request for renewal of ethics clearance for the above-named study. This renewal is valid for one year from January 25, 2015. Prior to the next renewal date you will be sent a reminder memo and the link to ROMEO to renew for another year.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one year period. An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours. Report to GREB through either ROMEO Event Report or Adverse Event Report Form at http://www.queensu.ca/ors/researchethics/GeneralREB/forms.html.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example you must report changes in study procedures or implementation of new aspects into the study procedures. Your request for protocol changes will be forwarded to the appropriate GREB reviewers and/or the GREB Chair. Please report changes to GREB through either ROMEO Event Reports or the Ethics Change Form at http://www.queensu.ca/ors/researchethics/GeneralREB/forms.html.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Joan Stevenson, Ph.D.
Chair
General Research Ethics Board

c.:   Dr. Clive Robertson, Faculty Supervisor

Appendix II: Survey

II.I Letter of Information: English

La version française suit

My name is Johanna Plant, and I am a PhD candidate at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. My thesis project is an investigation of the role played by artist-run centre archives in the shaping of Canadian art history. My supervisor for this project is Dr. Clive Robertson.

I am contacting you to find out if you would be interested in participating in a brief online survey about your centre's archive/library, if you have one. This survey is being sent to all artist-run centres in Canada. For this project, "artist-run centre" is being interpreted broadly, and includes different manifestations of artist-run culture. Organizations dedicated to visual and media arts are being contacted, as are artist-run advocacy organizations, distribution and resource centres, and artist-run festivals. It is not necessary for an organization to have a permanent exhibition space to participate in this survey, nor is it necessary to receive funding from the Canada Council for the Arts, or any other governmental body. The main criterion for inclusion in the survey is that artists run the organization.

If you feel your organization does not qualify as an artist-run centre in this broad sense, please disregard this message. If you do not have an archive, you may still participate in the survey, although not all questions will be applicable.

The survey aims to find out about the current state of artist-run archives in this country. The information gathered will ultimately be used in my thesis, which seeks to address the following question: if we accept that the production of archival records is the result of specific political, social and cultural processes, then what possibilities do artist-run archives suggest for how Canadian art history can be created?

There are no known risks associated with completing this survey. Participation is entirely optional.

There are no direct benefits to survey participants. Instead, this project will further knowledge about how artist-run centre archives create the "raw material" of art history, which will benefit society at large in that it contributes to our understanding of how history can be written.

The survey has 16 questions, and should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Most of the questions ask you to select the options most applicable to your artist-run centre. You will also have the option to provide written feedback for some of the questions.

You will be asked to provide your name, the name of your artist-run centre, and to confirm that you have read this letter of information, and wish to participate in this survey. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer, and/or stop the survey at any time, without penalty.

The deadline to complete the survey is **September 15, 2013**.

If you wish to withdraw your completed survey from this study, you may do so by **October 15, 2013**. There is no penalty for withdrawing.

The results of this research will be made public through the production of my thesis. Most of the data gathered through this research will appear in aggregate form (the answers will be discussed as a whole, instead of focusing on the answers of a single artist-run centre). If you chose to add additional comments with your survey, these comments may be used in the thesis, and you will be identified with your comments. Whether you provide comments or not, you and your artist-run centre will be identified and thanked for your contribution.

This survey is being conducted with tools provided by SurveyMonkey. The data generated will belong to the researcher, and will be transmitted securely.

If you would like to participate in this survey, please click on the following link, or paste it into your browser: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CWST3HJ

This study has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines, and Queen's policies.

If you have any questions about this project, I can be reached at johanna.plant@queensu.ca, or via phone, at [phone number] (I am currently based in Calgary, Alberta). Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board in Kingston, Ontario, at chair.GREB@queensu.ca or 613-533-6081.

Sincerely,

Johanna Plant

II.II Letter of Information: French

Je m'appelle Johanna Plant et je suis candidate au doctorat de l'Université Queen's à Kingston, en Ontario. Mon projet de thèse est une enquête sur le rôle des archives de centres d'artistes autogérés dans le façonnement de l'histoire de l'art au Canada. Mon superviseur pour ce projet est le Dr Clive Robertson.

Je vous écris aujourd'hui pour déterminer si vous souhaitez participer à un court sondage en ligne au sujet des archives ou de la bibliothèque de votre centre. Le présent sondage est envoyé à tous les centres d'artistes autogérés du Canada. Pour le présent projet, j'interprète l'expression « centre d'artistes autogéré » dans son sens large et j'y inclus différentes manifestations de culture artistique autogérée. Je communique avec les organismes voués aux arts visuels et médiatiques tout comme avec les organismes de défense d'artistes autogérés, les centres de distribution et de ressources et les festivals artistiques autogérés. Il n'est pas nécessaire qu'un organisme dispose d'un lieu d'exposition permanent pour participer au présent sondage tout comme il n'est pas non plus nécessaire de recevoir du financement du Conseil des arts du Canada ou de tout autre organisme gouvernemental. Le principal critère recherché afin d'inclure un organisme dans le sondage est que l'organisme soit géré par des artistes.

Si vous croyez que votre organisme ne se qualifie pas à titre de centre d'artistes autogéré dans ce sens large, je vous prie d'ignorer ce message. Si vous ne disposez pas d'archives, vous pouvez quand même participer au sondage, cependant certaines questions ne s'appliqueront pas à vous.

Le sondage vise à comprendre l'état actuel des archives de centres autogérés du pays. L'information recueillie sera finalement utilisée dans ma thèse, qui cherche à répondre à la question suivante : si l'on suppose que la production de documents archivistiques est le résultat de certains processus politiques, sociaux et culturels, alors quelles possibilités les archives de centres d'artistes autogérés présentent-elles pour la création d'une histoire de l'art canadien?

Il n'existe aucun risque connu lié à la participation au présent sondage. La participation au sondage est entièrement volontaire.

Il n'y aucun avantage direct pour les participants au sondage. Ce projet servira plutôt à faire avancer les connaissances sur la façon dont les archives des centres d'artistes autogérés créent de la « matière première » pour l'histoire de l'art, ce qui profitera à l'ensemble de la société en nous faisant mieux comprendre comment on peut écrire l'histoire.

Le sondage comporte 16 questions et il vous faudra environ 15 minutes pour le remplir. Pour la plupart des questions, vous n'avez qu'à choisir la réponse qui s'applique le mieux à la situation de votre centre d'artistes autogéré. Vous aurez également la possibilité de développer votre réponse pour certaines des questions.

On vous demandera d'inscrire votre nom et celui de votre centre d'artistes autogéré ainsi que de confirmer que vous avez lu la présente lettre d'information et souhaitez participer au sondage.

Vous pouvez passer toute question à laquelle vous ne souhaitez pas répondre ou encore arrêter de remplir le sondage en tout temps, et ce, sans pénalité.

La date limite pour remplir le sondage est le **15 septembre 2013**.

Si vous souhaitez que votre sondage rempli ne soit pas comptabilisé dans le cadre de mon enquête, veuillez m'en aviser d'ici le **15 octobre 2013**. Cela ne vous occasionnera aucune pénalité.

Les résultats de ma recherche seront publiés dans le cadre de ma thèse. La plupart des données recueillies pour cette recherche paraîtront sous forme agrégée (on traitera des réponses regroupées et non des réponses d'un seul centre d'artistes autogéré). Si vous décidez d'inclure des commentaires supplémentaires dans le sondage, ils pourraient être utilisés dans la thèse et vous serez nommé. Que vous choisissiez ou non d'inclure des commentaires, votre nom et celui de votre centre d'artistes autogéré seront donnés afin de vous remercier pour votre contribution.

Le présent sondage est réalisé à l'aide d'outils fournis par SurveyMonkey. Les données produites appartiendront à la chercheuse et seront transmises en toute confidentialité.

Si vous souhaitez participer au sondage, veuillez cliquer sur le lien suivant ou copier l'adresse dans votre navigateur Web : https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CWST3HJ

Cette étude a été approuvée en fonction des principes recommandés par les lignes directrices canadiennes en matière d'éthique et des politiques de l'Université Queen's.

Si vous avez des questions sur le projet, veuillez communiquer avec moi en envoyant un courriel à johanna.plant@queensu.ca ou en composant le [numéro de téléphone]. (Je demeure actuellement à Calgary, en Alberta.) Les questions d'ordre éthique sur cette enquête peuvent être adressées au président du Comité d'éthique de la recherche de Kingston (Ontario), à l'adresse chair.GREB@queensu.ca ou au numéro 613-533-6081.

Je vous prie d'accepter mes meilleures salutations.

Johanna Plant

II.III Consent Form/Survey Introduction: English

Consent Form/Survey Introduction

This research is being conducted as part of a PhD project. The goal of this project is to find out how the materials collected by artist-run centre archives can contribute to the creation of Canadian art history.

This survey has been created to learn more about artist-run archives in general. It asks about your archive, the types of materials it contains, how it is accessed, how it is funded, and the role it plays in your organization. There is also the option to provide more detailed information as you see fit.

There are no known risks in completing this survey. Similarly, there are no direct benefits to participation, although the research will advance knowledge about how artist-run centres contribute to the creation of Canadian art history.

Participation in this survey is entirely optional. You do not have to answer all of the questions if you do not wish to do so. You may skip any question, and you may stop your participation in the survey at any time, without penalty. The deadline to complete the survey is **September 15, 2013**. After you have completed the survey, you may withdraw your contribution entirely by **October 15, 2013**.

Consent to participate in this survey will be given electronically. The first question in the survey asks for your consent. By consenting to participate in this survey, participants do not waive any legal rights.

Participants and the artist-run centres where they work will be identified and thanked in the completed thesis.

If you have any questions about this project, you can reach me, Johanna Plant, at johanna.plant@queensu.ca, or via phone, at [phone number] (I am currently based in Calgary, Alberta). Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board in Kingston, Ontario, at chair.GREB@queensu.ca or 613-533-6081.

Survey

1. Consent

I,   (type full name)

(select one)

☐ do
☐ do not

agree to participate in a survey as outlined in the Consent Form/Survey Introduction and the accompanying Letter of Information.

2. Please fill in the following information:

Name of your artist-run centre:
Your role or position at your artist-run centre:

II.IV Consent Form/Survey Introduction: French

Formulaire de consentement / Introduction au sondage

La présente recherche est menée dans le cadre d'un projet de thèse de doctorat. L'objectif de ce projet est de déterminer comment les matières recueillies par les archives des centres d'artistes autogérés peuvent contribuer au façonnement de l'histoire de l'art du Canada.

Le sondage a été créé dans le but d'en apprendre davantage sur les archives de centres d'artistes autogérés en général. On y pose des questions sur vos archives, le type de matières qu'elles contiennent, comment on y accède, le type de financement qu'elles reçoivent et le rôle qu'elles jouent au sein de votre organisme. Vous avez aussi la possibilité d'inscrire d'autres renseignements si vous le jugez nécessaire.

Il n'existe aucun risque connu lié à la participation au présent sondage. De même, il n'y a aucun avantage direct pour les participants au sondage. Le projet servira plutôt à faire avancer les connaissances sur la façon dont les archives des centres d'artistes autogérés contribuent au façonnement de l'histoire de l'art du Canada

La participation au sondage est entièrement volontaire. Vous n'avez pas à répondre à toutes les questions si vous ne souhaitez pas le faire. Vous pouvez passer toute question ou encore arrêter de remplir le sondage en tout temps, et ce, sans pénalité. Même après avoir participé au sondage, vous pouvez demander à ce que votre sondage rempli ne soit pas comptabilisé dans le cadre de l'enquête; veuillez nous en aviser d'ici le 15 octobre 2013.

Votre consentement pour la participation à ce sondage est recueilli de façon électronique. La première question du sondage vise à obtenir votre consentement. En acceptant de participer au sondage, vous ne renoncez à aucun de vos droits légaux.

Dans la version définitive de la thèse, on nommera et remerciera les participants et les centres d'artistes autogérés où ils travaillent.

Si vous avez des questions sur le projet, veuillez communiquer avec moi, Johanna Plant, en envoyant un courriel à johanna.plant@queensu.ca ou en composant le [numéro de téléphone]. (Je demeure actuellement à Calgary, en Alberta.) Les questions d'ordre éthique sur cette enquête peuvent être adressées au président du Comité d'éthique de la recherche de Kingston (Ontario), à l'adresse chair.GREB@queensu.ca ou au numéro 6135336081.

Sondage

1. Consentement

Je, (inscrivez votre nom au complet)

(choisissez une case)

☐ accepte
☐ n'accepte pas

de participer au sondage décrit dans le « Formulaire de consentement / Introduction au sondage » et dans la lettre d'information qui l'accompagne.

2. Veuillez donner les renseignements suivants :

Nom de votre centre d'artistes autogéré :
Votre rôle ou poste au sein de cet organisme :

II.V List of Participants and their Artist-Run Centres

Note: all information is presented as entered on the survey.

Participant Name	Organization	Title	Province	Language Choice
Derek Brooks	Harcourt House Artists' Run Centre	Executive Director	AB	English
Dave Cunningham	The Film and Video Arts Society – Alberta	Executive Director	AB	English
April Dean	Society of Northern Alberta Print-artists (SNAP)	Executive Director	AB	English
Jessica McCarrel	Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers (CSIF)	Operations Director	AB	English
Sally Raab	Untitled Art Society	Programming Coordinator	AB	English
Su Ying Strang	The New Gallery	Administrative Director	AB	English
Sharon Bradley	VIVO Media Arts Centre	Distribution Coordinator	BC	English
Peter Gazendam	Artspeak	Associate Director	BC	English
Lucas Glenn	Alternator Centre for Contemporary Art	Community Outreach Facilitator	BC	English
Jana Grazley	Western Front	Archivist	BC	English
Keith Higgins	UNIT/PITT Projects (formerly the Helen Pitt Gallery)	Executive Director	BC	English
Brian McBay	221A	Executive Director	BC	English
Anthony Meza-Wilson	Gallery Gachet	Volunteer and Facility Coordinator	BC	English

Bruce Saunders	Movie Monday Society	Coordinator (everything pretty much)	BC	English
Tracy Stefanucci	Project Space	Director	BC	English
hannah_g	aceartinc.	co-director	MB	English
Bev Pike	Mentoring Artists for Women's Art	archivist	MB	English
Daina Warren	Urban Shaman Inc.	Director	MB	English
sophia Bartholomew	Gallery Connexion	Associate Director	NB	English
Jacqueline Collomb	Third Space Gallery	Programming Chair	NB	English
Amanda Fauteux	Struts Gallery Inc	Program Manager	NB	English
Cat LeBlanc	New Brunswick Filmmakers' Co-operative	Membership Services Director	NB	English
Caroline Clarke	St. Michael's Printshop	Business Manager	NL	English
Martha Cooley	Atlantic Filmmakers Cooperative	Executive Director	NS	English
daniel joyce	khyber centre for the arts	Artistic director	NS	English
Phil Anderson	Gallery 1313	Executive Director	ON	English
Lise Beaudry	Gallery 44	Director	ON	English
Laura Berazadi	InterAccess (Toronto Community Videotex, est. 1983)	Director	ON	English
Andrea Carvalho	Hamilton Artists Inc	Administrative Director	ON	English
Shannon Cochrane	FADO Performance Art Centre (Fado Performance Inc.)	Artistic + Adminstrative Director	ON	English

Elizabeth Dent	Ed Video Media Arts Centre	Executive Director	ON	English
Astrid Ho	Open Studio	Print Sales Manager and Archivist	ON	English
Reena Katz	Galerie SAW Gallery	Acting Director	ON	English
Chris Kennedy	Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto	Executive Director	ON	English
Fynn Leitch	ARTSPACE (Petebrorough Artists Inc)	Director	ON	English
York Lethbridge	Mercer Union, a centre for contemporary art	Director of Operations & Development	ON	English
Laura Margita	Gallery 101	Director/Curator	ON	English
Stephen Remus	Niagara Artists Centre	Minister of Energy, Minds, and Resources	ON	English
Indu Vashist	South Asian Visual Art Centre	Executive Director	ON	English
Laura Walker	Factory Media Centre	Arts Administrator	ON	English
Petunia Alves	Groupe Intervention Vidéo (GIV)	codirectrice	QC	French
Catherine Benoit	Spirafilm	Directrice Générale	QC	French
SOPHIE BRUNET	ATELIER PRESSE PAPIER	COORDONNATRICE	QC	French
Pascale Bureau	VU, centre de diffusion et de production de la photographie	direction générale	QC	French
Stéphanie Chabot	Centre des arts actuels Skol	Coordinatrice	QC	French

Martin Champagne	Praxis Art Actuel	Directeur	QC	French
Virginie Chrétien	Caravansérail	directrice générale	QC	French
Caroline Cloutier	ARPRIM	Coordonnatrice à la programmation	QC	French
Joëlle Françoise Dallot	Atelier Silex Inc.	Coordonnatrice	QC	French
Jennifer Dorner	Independent Media Arts Alliance	National Director	QC	English
Martin Dufrasne	DARE-DARE_Centre de diffusion d'art multidisciplinaire de Montréal	Coordonnateur de la programmation	QC	French
Matthieu Dumont	L'Écart	Coordonateur general	QC	French
Eliane Ellbogen	Eastern Bloc	Artistic Director	QC	English
Diane Fournier	Engramme	Direction	QC	French
Mélissa Landry	La Bande Vidéo	Coordonnatrice des communications et de la distribution	QC	French
Guylaine Langlois	Centre d'artistes Vaste et Vague	Directrice générale	QC	French
John Latour	Artexte	Information Specialist	QC	English
Audrey Legerot	Vidéographe	Chargée de projets en Création	QC	French
Mériol Lehmann	Avatar	Directeur general	QC	French
Jean-Baptiste Levêque	Vidéo Femmes	Coordonnateur distribution/diffusion	QC	French
Amélie Marois	Centre MATERIA	Directrice	QC	French

deborah mcinnes	main film	executive director	QC	English
Josianne Monette	OPTICA, un centre d'art contemporain	Coordonnatrice aux communications et aux archives	QC	French
Claudine Roger	VOX, centre de l'image contemporaine	Adjointe à la direction	QC	French
Rachel Tremblay	Galerie Séquence	Secrétaire de direction	QC	French
Julie Tremble	articule	coordonnatrice à la programmation	QC	French
Maude Vien	Centre d'exposition Circa	Assistante à la programmation	QC	French
Michel Boutin	The Indigenous Peoples Artist Collective	Artistic Director	SK	English
Bart Gazzola	aka artist run	Gallery / Communications Coordinator	SK	English

II.VI Summary of Results by Question

Introduction

The survey is more fully explained in Chapter Three. The information below is an abbreviated introduction to the survey and also explains the presentation of the data.

Participants were able to choose from an English or French version of the survey. Participants filled out the same survey, although depending on language choice, they either filled in questions 2 through 17 (English version), or 18 to 33 (French version). (Question 1 was bilingual, and offered a choice of language. The selection made at this point determined the path survey participants would take). It was not possible to switch between languages during the survey.

Questions were presented in the same order for both versions of the survey. Questions were the same in both languages. Participants were free to skip any questions they did not want to answer.

For ease of comparison, French versions of the questions and the responses are presented here immediately after the English ones.

In order to present the information as efficiently as possible, free-text answers have been omitted from this appendix. Discussion of these answers, however, can be found in Chapter Three.

The information below is presented in chart form, with relevant comments below each chart. Note that the final line of each chart, titled "Total respondents," is the number of participants who answered a question, and not the total number of answers. Some questions allowed participants to select more than one answer, so the total number of answers can exceed the number of participants.

Q1: Choose your language / Choisissez votre langue.

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
English	46	66.7
Français	23	33.3
Total respondents	*69*	

Q2: I agree to participate in a survey as outlined in the Consent Form/Survey Introduction and the accompanying Letter of Information.

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Yes	46	100
No	0	0
Total respondents	*46*	

Q18: J'accepte de participer au sondage décrit dans le « Formulaire de consentement / Introduction au sondage » et dans la lettre d'information qui l'accompagne.

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Oui	23	100
Non	0	0
Total respondents	*23*	

Q3: Please fill in the following information:

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Your name	46	100
Name of your artist-run centre	46	100
Your role or position at your artist-run centre	46	100
Total respondents	*46*	

See Appendix II.V for a list of participants and their organizations.

Q19. Veuillez donner les renseignements suivants :

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Inscrivez votre nom au complet	23	100
Nom de votre centre d'artistes autogéré	23	100
Votre rôle ou poste au sein de cet organisme	23	100
Total respondents	*23*	

See Appendix II.V for a list of participants and their organizations.

Q4: Which statement best describes the primary mandate of your organization? Please only check one.

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
We advance the arts by exhibiting, presenting, or screening works of art by contemporary artists	24	53.3
We provide programming, services (including distribution services), and/or resources to artists to help advance their careers	2	4.4
We provide production facilities and resources to artists to help them make new works of art	6	13.3
Other. Please specify:	13	28.9
Total respondents	*45*	

Most of the "other" answers were some variation of "all of the above," suggesting that the centres had mandates combining elements of the first three choices. One participant skipped this question.

Q20. Quel énoncé décrit le mieux le mandat principal de votre organisme? Ne cochez qu'une seule case.

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Nous faisons la promotion de l'art en exposant, présentant ou diffusant des œuvres d'art créées par des artistes contemporains.	12	52.2
Nous offrons des programmes, des services (y compris des services de distribution) ou des ressources aux artistes pour les aider à faire évoluer leur carrière.	1	4.4
Nous fournissons des installations et des ressources de production aux artistes pour les aider à créer de nouvelles œuvres d'art.	3	13.0
Autre – veuillez préciser :	7	30.4
Total respondents	*23*	

One respondent who indicated an "other" mandate specified that their activities encompassed all of the above choices. Four respondents specified that their mandates included production and distribution; these responses could be counted among the second category. Two other respondents added their organization's specific mandate.

Q5: Does your artist-run centre have what it considers to be an archive?

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Yes	42	91.3
No	4	8.7
Total respondents	*46*	

Participants who answered "no" to this question were given the chance to elaborate in a free-text box. They were then directed to the end of the survey, as the remaining questions were not applicable. Their responses are discussed in Chapter 3.

Q21: Votre centre d'artiste autogéré possède-t-il ce que l'on peut décrire comme des archives?

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Oui	23	100
Non	0	
Total respondents	*23*	

Respondents had the opportunity to elaborate on this question. Engramme, an organization that provides facilities for printmaking, noted that they have two different types of archives: one is comprised of administrative and governance materials, while the other consists of prints made at their facility.

Q6: Do you have a written policy about your archive?

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Yes	6	14.3
No	24	57.1
We are in the process of developing a policy	8	19.1
Other. Please specify:	4	9.5
Total respondents	*42*	

Respondents who selected "other" provided the following information: one organization noted that the external body to which it had donated its records maintains a policy around its collection; one centre stated that it had a policy about its "current digital archive," but not its "physical print archive;" one organization shared its process of trying to decide what to do with its archive; and the final respondent stated that their organization had "digital and written records of each piece," but no policy.

Q22: Avez-vous une politique écrite au sujet de vos archives?

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Oui	3	13.0
Non	19	82.6
Nous procédons actuellement à l'élaboration d'une politique	1	4.4
Autre – veuillez préciser :	0	0
Total respondents	*23*	

Q7: In what format are the materials in your archive? Check all that apply.

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Paper records	39	92.3
Digital records	35	83.3
Audiovisual records, such as videos and audio recordings	36	85.7
Published materials (books, catalogues, periodicals, zines, etc.)	33	78.6
Works of art in any form	14	33.3
Other. Please specify:	6	14.3
Total respondents	*42*	

Respondents who selected "other" specified the following materials: slide documentation of past exhibitions; posters; and invitations. Western Front took the opportunity to explain that they were answering these questions about their Media Archive, and Artexte explained that they have both a library collection as well as a conventional archive that is not accessible to the public.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the exclusion of visual materials from this question was an oversight.

Q23: Quel est le format des matières de vos archives? Cochez toutes les réponses pertinentes.

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Documents papier	22	95.7
Documents numériques	23	100
Documents audiovisuels, tels que des enregistrements vidéo et audio	21	91.3
Publications (livres, catalogues, périodiques, magazines, etc.)	19	82.6
Œuvres d'art sous toutes leurs formes	8	34.8
Autre – veuillez préciser :	1	4.4
Total respondents	*23*	

The respondent who indicated other formats stated that their collection included slides.

Q8: What kinds of information do you keep in your archive? Check all that apply.

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Governance materials (minutes, policies, incorporation papers, annual reports, etc.)	34	81.0
Administrative records (grant applications, general correspondence, financial documents, etc.)	35	83.3
Marketing and communications records (e.g., newsletters, press releases, etc.) that you have produced	38	90.5
Marketing and communications records (e.g., newsletters, press releases, etc.) produced by other organizations	20	47.6
Photographs and/or audiovisual documentation of exhibitions and events held at your centre (if applicable)	40	95.2
Artist files for artists who have shown at your centre	28	66.7
Artist files for artists who have not shown at your centre	7	16.7
Publications you have produced	37	88.1
Publications produced by other artist-run centres	24	57.1
Publications related to art more generally	16	38.1
Donations of material (in any form) from artists	17	40.5
Policy reports produced by the government (e.g., Canada Council reports)	14	33.3
General reference materials	24	57.1
Works of art in audiovisual form (film, video, sound recording, etc.)	27	64.3
Works of art in any form other than audiovisual (e.g., drawings, photographs, paintings, etc.)	13	31.0

Other. Please specify:	5	11.9
Total respondents	*42*	

Three of the "other" responses specified types of information that were already listed as potential choices. One respondent, the Society of Northern Alberta Printmakers, specified that the bulk of their archives consists of prints made at their facility.

Q24: Quels types de renseignements conservez-vous dans vos archives? Cochez toutes les réponses pertinentes.

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Documents de gouvernance (procès-verbaux, politiques, documents de constitution, rapports annuels, etc.)	23	100
Documents administratifs (demandes de subventions, correspondance générale, documents de nature financière, etc.)	23	100
Documents relatifs au marketing et aux communications (bulletins, communiqués, etc.) que vous avez créés	23	100
Documents relatifs au marketing et aux communications (bulletins, communiqués, etc.) créés par d'autres organisms	7	30.4
Photographies ou autres documents audiovisuels d'expositions ou d'activités organisées à votre centre (le cas échéant)	22	95.7
Dossiers d'artistes qui ont présenté leurs œuvres à votre centre	19	82.6
Dossiers d'artistes qui n'ont pas présenté leurs œuvres à votre centre	4	17.4
Publications que vous avez créées	22	95.7
Publications créées par d'autres centres d'artistes autogérés	13	56.5
Publications plus vaguement associées au domaine artistique	14	60.9
Matières (de toutes sortes) données par les artistes	9	39.1

Rapports sur les politiques produits par le gouvernement (p. ex., rapports du Conseil des arts du Canada)	7	30.4
Documents de référence généraux	14	60.9
Œuvres d'art sous format audio-visuel (film, vidéo, enregistrement sonore, etc.)	15	65.2
Œuvres d'art sous tout autre format qu'audio-visuel (dessins, photographies, peintures, etc.)	10	43.5
Autre – veuillez préciser :	0	0
Total respondents	*23*	

Q9: Where are your archival materials kept? Check all that apply.

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
At our artist-run centre	37	88.1
At an offsite location (e.g. storage unit, Board member's residence, etc.)	4	9.5
We have donated our materials to another organization (e.g. university or museum archives)	10	23.8
Online	17	40.5
Other. Please describe:	5	11.9
Total respondents	*42*	

For this question, three of the "other" responses actually described donation situations (e.g., donated to a university library/archive). It is unclear why the donation option was not selected in these cases. One respondent described an offsite location, and another provided more details about their online presence.

Q25: Où conservez-vous vos documents d'archives? Cochez toutes les réponses pertinentes.

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
À notre centre d'artistes autogéré	22	100
Hors site (lieu d'entreposage, résidence de l'un des membres du conseil d'administration, etc.)	5	22.7
Nous avons donné nos documents d'archives à un autre organisme (p. ex., les archives d'une université ou d'un musée)	2	9.1
En ligne	5	22.7
Autre – veuillez décrire :	1	4.6
Total respondents	*22*	

One participant did not answer this question. The respondent who indicated an "other" location described a situation that could also be considered an online archive.

Q10. Is your archive accessible to the public?

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Yes	26	61.9
No	16	38.1
Total respondents	*42*	

Q11: If you answered "yes" to the previous question, how do you make your archive accessible? Check off all that apply.

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Available in person, walk-in or by appointment	22	81.5
Available online	16	59.3
Available at another organization (e.g., we donated our materials to a different archives)	8	29.6
Total respondents	*27*	

It is strange that 26 respondents indicated that their archive is accessible to the public (Q10), but that 27 were able to specify the ways in which it is available (Q11). It is possible that an error was made in answering Q10.

Q26. Le public peut-il avoir accès à vos archives?

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Oui	17	73.9
Non	6	26.1
Total respondents	*23*	

Q27: Si vous avez répondu « oui » à la question 9, comment rendez-vous vos archives accessibles? Cochez toutes les réponses pertinentes.

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
En personne (avec ou sans rendez-vous)	14	82.4
En ligne	8	47.1
Par l'entremise d'un autre organisme (p. ex., nous avons donné nos documents à un autre centre d'archives)	1	5.9
Total respondents	*17*	

Q12: Have you received funding for your archive? Check off all that apply.

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
None	26	63.4
Municipal funding	4	9.8
Provincial funding	6	14.6
Federal funding	4	9.8
Other public funding organization	2	4.9
Private funding	4	9.8
Other. Please describe.	6	14.6
Total respondents	*41*	

For this question, most of the "other" responses elaborated on funding that could be included among the other choices (i.e., naming a grant that is funded by a federal or provincial body). In one circumstance, funding came from an insurance claim. Additionally, one respondent was unsure of the source of funding.

Q28: Avez-vous reçu un financement pour vos archives? Cochez toutes les réponses pertinentes

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Aucun	16	69.6
Financement municipal	2	8.7
Financement provincial	6	26.1
Financement federal	3	13.0
Autre organisme de financement public	1	4.4
Financement privé	0	0
Autre – veuillez préciser :	2	8.7
Total respondents	*23*	

One of the respondents who selected "other" as a form of funding indicated that they received money from a university as part of an internship program, while the other respondent entered a comment about wishing to obtain more funding in the future.

Q13: If you have received funding, is it project-based or ongoing? Check off all that apply.

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Project-based	12	85.7
Ongoing	4	28.6
Total respondents	*14*	

This question would have benefitted from the inclusion of an "unsure" option, as well as an "other" option. "Ongoing funding" should also have been better defined, since some centres may simply use operating funds for their archives.

Q29: Si vous avez reçu un financement, était-ce pour un projet en particulier ou un financement continu? Cochez toutes les réponses pertinentes.

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Pour un projet en particulier	6	85.7
Financement continu	1	14.3
Total respondents	*7*	

Q14: Have you produced an exhibition or publication based on your archive, whether as part of an anniversary celebration or for any other reason?

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Yes	20	50
No	20	50
Total respondents	*40*	

Respondents were provided with a free-text box along with this question. Several respondents mentioned being in the process of creating an archive-derived work, while others provided details about existent publications or exhibitions (online or in-gallery).

Q30: Avez-vous produit une exposition ou une publication sur vos archives, que ce soit dans le cadre des célébrations entourant un anniversaire ou autre?

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Oui	12	52.2
Non	11	47.8
Total respondents	*23*	

Participants described a number of projects, including books chronicling organizational histories, exhibition catalogues, specialized exhibitions (retrospectives), websites, and screenings of video materials.

Q15: Which statement best characterizes your centre's attitude towards its records/archive? Please only check one.

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Our archive is a valuable resource that we have made a priority in our future plans	4	9.8
We would like to give more attention to our archive, but are limited by a lack of funding and/or staff	28	68.3
We focus on contemporary art and artists, and are less concerned with maintaining an archive, although we do have some records	2	4.9
Other institutions can best manage archives, and we have donated (or are planning to donate) our records to another organization, or have otherwise disposed of them	2	4.9
Other. Please describe.	5	12.2
Total respondents	*41*	

The five respondents who selected the "other" option either described an approach generally in line with the given options, or else wanted to combine elements of each option.

Q31: Quel énoncé décrit le mieux l'attitude de votre centre au sujet de ses documents ou archives? Ne cochez qu'une seule case.

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Nos archives sont des ressources précieuses auxquelles nous accordons une priorité dans nos plans futurs.	7	30.4
Nous aimerions accorder une plus grande attention à nos archives, mais avons un financement ou un personnel limité.	12	52.2
Nous misons sur l'art et les artistes contemporains et sommes moins préoccupés par l'entretien d'archives, mais nous conservons quelques documents.	3	13.0
D'autres établissements peuvent gérer nos archives plus efficacement, et nous avons donné (ou planifions donner) nos documents à un autre organisme ou nous avons trouvé un autre moyen d'en disposer.	0	0

Autre – veuillez préciser :	1	4.4
Total respondents	*23*	

The respondent who picked "other" described their archives as important and worthy of care, but not a priority.

Q16: Would you be willing to discuss your artist-run centre and its archive with the researcher in the future, if the opportunity arises?

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Yes	42	91.3
No	4	8.7
Total respondents	*46*	

If respondents answered yes, they were asked to provide an e-mail address that could be used to contact them.

Q32: Seriez-vous prêt à discuter de vos archives avec la chercheuse à un autre moment, si l'occasion se présente?

Answer Choices	No. Responses	Percentage
Oui	21	91.3
Non	2	8.7
Total respondents	*23*	

Q17: If you would like to comment on any aspect of your archives or this survey, please do so here: [free-text box]

11 participants chose to provide additional feedback. Seven of the respondents expressed frustration around their archives, largely due to a lack of human and financial resources. They wished to better care for the archives, or to undertake a project with them, but were unable to do so. The remaining four respondents offered messages to the researcher, including an expressed interest in the survey results.

Q33: Si vous souhaitez discuter de tout autre aspect de vos archives, veuillez inscrire vos commentaires ci-dessous.

Four respondents provided feedback for this question. One thanked the researcher, while two stated they were willing to provide more information in an interview, if one was undertaken. The final respondent expressed concern over improving and financing artist-run archives.

Appendix III: Interview Letter of Information and Consent Form

III.I Interview Letter of Information

Letter of Information

Johanna Plant
[Address]

Dear [Name of Participant]:

My name is Johanna Plant, and I am a PhD candidate at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. My thesis project is an investigation of the role played by artist-run centre archives in the shaping of Canadian art history. My supervisor for this project is Dr. Clive Robertson.

I am contacting you to find out if you would be interested in participating in an interview about your involvement with artist-run centre archives. This information will be used in my thesis, which aims to address the following question: if we accept that the production of archival records is the result of specific political, social and cultural processes, then what possibilities do artist-run archives suggest for how Canadian art history can be created?

There are no known risks associated with participating in an interview of this nature.

There are no direct benefits to the participants in this project. Instead, this project will further knowledge about how artist-run centre archives create the "raw material" of art history, which will benefit society at large in that it contributes to our understanding of how history can be written.

If you chose to participate in an interview, it will be conducted in person, via telephone, or online, via a technology such as Skype. The interview may be audio recorded, and you will have the option to agree or disagree to this recording. If you decline the recording, the interview may still proceed, with no penalty. Interviews may also be conducted in writing, via e-mail. I will provide you with a basic outline of the questions I will be asking in advance so that you have time to reflect upon your answers. You and I will mutually agree upon the time and date, and the interview will take approximately one to two hours. Some follow-up contact may be required. You may stop the interview at any point, and will have the opportunity to resume the interview at another date and time, or not resume the interview at all, with no penalty. During and up to one month after the interview, you will have the option to withdraw or rephrase any portion of the interview you feel may be damaging or controversial, or withdraw your contribution entirely.

The results this research will be made public through the production of my thesis, and you will be identified and thanked for your contribution. I will also send you a copy of my thesis in electronic

form. Portions of the interviews may be published as journal articles. In this instance, you will be contacted for permission prior to publication.

This study has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines, and Queen's policies.

If you have any questions about this project, I can be reached at johanna.plant@queensu.ca, or via phone, at [phone number] (I am currently based in Calgary, Alberta). Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board in Kingston, Ontario, at chair.GREB@queensu.ca or 613-533-6081.

If you would like to participate in this research, please sign and return the attached Consent Form.

Sincerely,

Johanna Plant

Appendix III: Interview Letter of Information and Consent Form

III.II Interview Consent Form

Consent Form

This research is being conducted as part of a PhD project. The goal of this project is to find out how the materials collected by artist-run centre archives can contribute to and shape the creation of Canadian art history.

The information for this project is being gathered through interviews with people employed by or otherwise involved with artist-run centre archives, including practicing artists who use archival materials in their work. The interviews will vary depending on the participant's role. Employees of artist-run centres will be asked why their centres collect archival materials, and how they use those materials. Other participants will be asked about why they are interested in archival materials, and about how such materials relate to the production of their artistic work. Interviewees will be able to offer opinions and ideas based on their personal experiences.

Risks of participation will vary depending on the participant. For employees of artist-run centres, risks include the chance of creating workplace tension or endangering one's job if the content of the interview is found to be critical or controversial. Similarly, the results of the interviews may create tension in the artist-run community if they are found to be contentious. For participants not employed by an artist-run centre, there are no known risks.

There are no direct benefits to participation, although the research will advance knowledge about how artist-run centres contribute to the creation of Canadian art history.

Participation in these interviews is entirely optional. Interviewees do not have to answer questions they find uncomfortable, and may end their participation in the project at any time, without penalty. Participants will be able to review their interview contributions and request changes up to one month after the interview, or may withdraw their contribution entirely within this timeframe.

Participants and the artist-run centres where they work will be identified and thanked in the completed thesis. Participants will be sent an electronic copy of this document.

By consenting to participate in an interview, interviewees do not waive any legal rights.

If consent is granted, interviews will be conducted in person, or via telephone or Skype. They may also be conducted in writing via e-mail. The interviews may be audio recorded. Interviewees will have the option to agree or disagree to this recording. If interviewees decline the recording, the interview may still proceed, with no penalty. The interviews are expected to take one to two hours, and may require some follow up contact.

If you have any questions about this project, you can reach me, Johanna Plant, at johanna.plant@queensu.ca, or via phone, at [phone number] (I am currently based in Calgary, Alberta). Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board in Kingston, Ontario, at chair.GREB@queensu.ca or 613-533-6081.

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Consent Form

I, _____ (print full name)

(circle one)   Do   Do Not

agree to participate in an interview as outlined in this document and the accompanying letter of information.

Signature: _____   Date: _____

Please indicate whether you agree or do not agree to having the interview audio recorded by writing your initials next to your choice below.

I   agree   _____ (initial here)
           do not agree   _____ (initial here)

to having the interview audio recorded.

Please return this form to:

Johanna Plant
[Address]

Or send a scanned version to:

Johanna.plant@queensu.ca