

Julia • Lübbecke

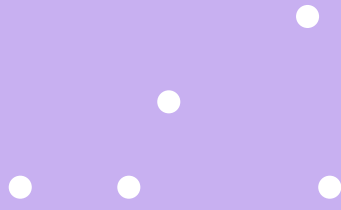
Sima • Ehrentraut

Kira • Dell • & • Laura • Seidel

The • Dirty • Archive

con • stel • la • tions

Temporal
Communities
× Neun Kelche



The Dirty Archive

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con•stel•la•tions showcases the results of collaborative research at the intersection of artistic and academic practice in blended formats and explorations that go beyond canonical forms of academic publishing within the humanities.

The series is a project of the eponymous hub for networked and transdisciplinary projects conceived within the framework of the Cluster of Excellence 2020 *Temporal Communities: Doing Literature in a Global Perspective* at Freie Universität Berlin. Entering into close dialogue with cultural institutions such as museums, theatres, archives and libraries, *CONSTELLATIONS* conjoins methods and perspectives from scholarship, the arts and knowledge formations beyond the university.

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Sima Ehrentraut
*The dirt between
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 Learning from
 the archive*

Over the last two years, the working group After Accumulation – How to Handle the Archive Without Getting Burned has built a temporary platform to engage with the archive and the discourses surrounding it. Troubled by the contradictory features of the archive and its seductive promise of preserving histories by sheltering material traces in more or less institutional spaces, the project grew out of the need to understand the complexities of archival practices. We came together with the intention of educating ourselves on the multiple approaches to the archive that circulate in contemporary fields of theory. To do so, we aimed to entangle ourselves more in the reality of archiving and to get in touch with practitioners, artists and scholars working on the topic.

The reflection on the complicity of the (state) archive in processes of institutionalisation, hegemonic knowledge production and the creation of exclusionary accessibility to resources is a shared point of analysis in most theories dealing with the archive. However, critical discussions on the archive also provide a multitude of perspectives on thinking about the archive as a place for counter- and para-institutional practices of remembering and constructing community through entangled materialities and temporalities. Multiple workshops with Berlin-based community archives and cultural institutions – including events with the Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv, Sinema Transtopia and the Schwules Museum Berlin – created the basis for a more material-based and practically informed understanding of archives. A further part of the project was a reading group dedicated to discussing texts the group considered essential for re-thinking the archive as a place where the dynamics of power, selective

visibility and the desire for preservation intersect. After Accumulation also organised a series of workshops on structural racism, canon critique and critical teaching that took place at the Cluster of Excellence Temporal Communities – the institution that framed and financed the project.

Bringing together people of different academic backgrounds, disciplinary attachments and positionalities, After Accumulation tried to build a bridge between the –on many levels– privileged scholarly interest in the archive and contexts in Berlin where archives are done with a lot of effort and constantly undone under often precarious conditions. The confrontation with the messy materiality of archives, their at times overwhelming structure and their systems of order that are often shaped by makeshift taxonomies, taught us a more situated view of the archive. The project helped us understand the archive as a space dealing with abundance – and often failing to do so as a result of the problematic value placed on accumulation. It also gave us new insights into the archive as a living tool for creating material continuity and richness where it may have been previously absent or distorted and scattered due to the violent suppression of often unwanted, repressed and marginalised stories, lives and communities.

The following text is itself a material trace of the process that was facilitated by After Accumulation. It contains the shared processes of refection and lays open the experience of the archive in its ambivalence of loss and maintenance, as well as in its potential to counter the hegemonic narratives reigning over the archive and to work against the erasure of marginalised histories and futures.

“What are we to do with what we have inherited or failed to? What can we do with the many sticky residues that are the traces within or without the archive, the traces on or in our bodies, the traces that mar, mark, maim, or are missing from us?”
— Olivia Gagnon, Archival Entanglements

“This is the future archive. The archive of alterity. And like yours and mine, it is a body that has gone up in flame. A body that is in excess, that is another world and also this one.”
— Julietta Singh, No Archive Will Restore You

“The activity of ‘archiving’ is thus always a critical one, always a historically located one, always a contestatory one, since archives are in part constituted within the lines of force of cultural power and authority; [...] always, as we tried to define it earlier, an engagement, an interruption in a settled field, which is to enter critically into existing configurations to re-open the closed structures into which they have ossified.”
— Stuart Hall, Constituting an Archive

What do you do with the archive once it has let you in? What do you do if it resists your touch, if it starts to slip away from you and crumbles to ashes in the fragments’ lack of framing? What do you do with the dust and the dirt of promised history sticking to pages, images, archiving boxes and settling on hands, bodies and clothes while you roam its halls?

One lesson learned from encountering the archive is to let go of the ideological association of the archive with order. Experiencing the practical reality of community and movement archives undermined the sterile, tidy and clean image tied to the archive and its often representational architecture. As much as historical buildings with high ceilings and heavy shelves or contemporary palaces of glass and sandstone with their imperial elements transformed into a minimalist and flawless administrative interior might signal controlled conservation and accurate inventory-taking, the reality of storage rooms piling unclassified and unclassifiable objects, books and ephemera tell a contradicting story. Spending time in community-based and grassroots archives and precariously institutionalised collections housed in ill-fitting, excessively small and improvisationally equipped premises, disrupted the theoretical comfort of problematising the archive from a detached perspective unbothered by the material hardships of archival work. Going into the archive triggered a process of humbling and grounding. The events the After Accumulation group organised in collaboration with the Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv introduced a transformative complexity to our understanding of the archive and its conditions: I learned about the importance of the dedication of a few individuals in creating a space that tries to preserve a very local community and its stories under conditions of systemic invisibility, lesbophobia and limited

access to funding; I learned about the cost of storage boxes, and how a very limited budget determines how materials are stored and preserved; how an ever-growing collection can slowly take over rooms intended for entirely different purposes such as kitchens and lavatories, blurring functional boundaries due to a chronic lack of space and money.

The dedicated but constantly improvising collecting, sorting and cataloguing of books, letters, articles, ephemera, posters and objects materialised for us an altered image of the archive as an ongoing act of community care. Growing out of and with Lesbian movements in West and East Berlin, the Spinnboden archive sustains itself through donations from within the communities and estates of individuals complemented by very occasional purchases. While the collection comprises a lot of material from the German context spanning Lesbian, dyke, feminist, women’s rights activism and scholarship and an ever-growing library, the collection is clearly marked by white German, highly educated people. Estates running counter to this profile are rare, and their presence is arbitrarily dependent on individual donors’ relationships to other contexts. As much as an archive of a community marginalised in one regard is tracing and at the same time resisting the multiple forms of erasure that are inflicted on it, the archive itself in its community-bound character is an agent of erasure. In the case of the Spinnboden, the guided tours with Katja Koblitz and the workshops also critically reflected and tackled the blanks in Spinnboden’s history of its own becoming and soft institutionalisation, laying open the absence of Lesbian and Queer communities of colour, of trans communities and working-class activism. For it to remain a living archive, it is not only crucial to continue collecting material from living spheres obscured by history and making these materials accessible to increase

the chances that these histories can be re-read and told again and anew—it is equally important for the archive to confront itself with its own limitations and biases and to make itself porous for a critical re-assessment through lenses that were excluded from its own canon.

Working with the experimental cinema space and neighbourhood and research project Sinema Transtopia shed a clear light on Berlin’s and, by extension, Germany’s white supremacist and discriminatory cultural production. Sinema Transtopia is linked to the project space bi’bak berlin and dedicated to a local and at the same time transnational engagement with film as a cultural praxis. Their film series, talks, workshops, community events and research projects centre on migrant and post-migrant film histories and visual cultural production, exposing the lacunae of racist and exclusionary film histories and tracing the continuation of this marginalisation of the othered cinema in the film archives. They confront the film archive with its political complicity in the violent gaze of identifying the other, in the repetition and manifestation of the hegemonic voice of nationalised history. In a collaborative workshop in November 2023, Can Sungu, co-founder and artistic director of Sinema Transtopia, gave an introduction to the counter-canons of so-called migrant cinema and presented resistant forms of documenting, cinematic storytelling and visualisations that contest the oppressive and objectifying perspective of a national entity that never learned to see itself as a society of migrants. Film archivist and programmer Lisabona Rahman’s presentation on feminist film archives in postcolonial societies gave insights into the interrelation of archiving and extractivism, and how film functions as an ambivalent tool of ideology in creating (post)colonial realities. But it also addressed how zones of unreadability

and misrecognition are created in this cinematic footage, undermining the exoticising gaze and the pettiness of racist forms of representation by exposing the white gaze and its impoverished scope of seeing.

Learning with and from these archives and the people committed to keeping them alive meant expanding our spectrum of thought beyond the development of a more differentiated and practically informed understanding of the archive. Getting into the depths and practical shallowness of archiving implied a confrontation with the dark and dirty parts of distorted and untold histories. It meant getting between the tainted pages, the crumbling celluloids and torn folders of long-untouched material that is in danger of disappearing due to inappropriate storage conditions and the lack of infrastructure; it also required us to confront the inevitably partial memory of archives and the pain haunting its gaps, voids and rips that form the negative skeleton of every archive in the making. Working towards an alternative vision of archiving has to entail working through the epistemic violence as an intrinsic feature of the archive, its institutional forms and its relation to the production of representation and visibility. Archiving that operates in awareness of this contradictory tension nevertheless subscribes to a project of imperfect repair: by reactivating the lived experiences that hide in the buried and incompletely preserved materials, by rereading objects, texts and residues against the intention of their genesis and by releasing a potential of re-narration and re-encounter in the interaction with archived material that is so heavily dependent on the eyes and hands and embodied contexts of a visitor from an unstable present.

In November and December 2022, After Accumulation had the opportunity to work with the multi-disciplinary artist

Julia Lübbecke, then an Artist-in-Residence at the Cluster of Excellence *Temporal Communities*, who was pursuing her ongoing project “Welcome to the Dirty Archive”. It was a complementary match to collaborate with Julia on questions of the material and political conditions of archiving, as her practice focuses on the ephemerality of archives and the constitutive role of decay in the doing and undoing of archives. The artist’s engagement with the contamination and material damage that occurs while handling, storing and processing materials contributed to a solo show in autumn 2023 that transposed her ongoing engagement with feminist, working-class and migrant worker’s archives into an expansive spatial installation paired with photography. Exhibited at the project space Neun Kelche in Berlin-Weißensee, *Kleber und Falten* dealt with questions of touch and materiality in the archive while challenging the latter as a system of order, access and readability and a place where knowledge and history are manufactured. Centring the question of scale and the impact of the artist’s/visitor’s body on the archive, her artworks created a space for the subtle erosion of the assumed cleanliness and tidiness of the archive. Traces of glue and fingerprints, light exposure and the dust and dirt of decades of storage softly move to the forefront of perception. The snippets and fragments of history featured in the works expose the lack of coherent historical narration and context in order to give space to an aesthetic potentiality of the archive that allows to reflect on these very decaying and partialising processes happening through precarious institutionalisation.

The cooperation with the artist was complemented by the workshop “Touching the Archive” in November 2023, which was facilitated in cooperation with Neun Kelche and the Schwules Museum Berlin (SMU Berlin) and was dedicated

to the topic of tactility and materiality within movement archives and the exploration of artistic approaches to archiving. The participants consisted of artists, researchers and a general audience interested in the subject, and the first day saw the group exploring the space and the collections of the SMU. Jessica Walter (SMU Berlin) gave an introduction into the search for as well as the handling and sorting of archival material, and provided a space for reflecting on the methodologies of a movement archive and its challenges and limitations. The second day at Neun Kelche shifted the focus to artistic approaches to the archive. Amongst the artworks of *Kleber und Falten*, Julia Lübbecke engaged in a conversation with the curators Kira Dell and Laura Seidel on the inherently political dimensions of materiality. This discussion was followed by an interactive presentation by the artist and researcher Maxine Vajt, who focused on the cultural sphere of trans video games as a form of community archiving and counter-hegemonic medialisation.

Merging the very concrete practical experience of an archive with an artistic perspective on the failing promises of the archive to preserve, hold space and communicate lived experience in mediated form, the event showcased the project’s emphasis on community-oriented models of archiving, while bringing into focus the importance of reflexive disruption and counter-reading, of challenging received notions of accessibility, visibility and representation. On the one hand, the legacies and productive historical echoes of social segments, community fragments and bits of history rely on the desire for preservation that materialises in the archive; on the other, the archive’s inextricable links to processes of institutionalisation, selection and categorisation—often inherently discriminatory—as well as its embeddedness in a specific regime of knowing and knowledge production

inevitably makes it an ambivalent ally in the striving for differentiated representation and practices of memory that account for past and present harm while carving out spaces for epistemic vulnerability.

So how do we deal with the archive, its fraught relationship to community and its material failures? Every viable answer will have to carefully consider these ambivalences. Getting into the archive means digging up the dirt of its biased desire for accumulation and spending time among the often scattered, dusty and bloody residues of broken histories, annihilated lives and the shadows of faded contexts that are overwritten by narratives invested in the wielding of power and in curbing their disruptive potential. Can the archive in its revised form nonetheless function as a tool to hold space for non-aligned histories, restorative attempts and new embodiments of resistant engagements with the past? The projects, initiatives and individual agents that kindly opened their doors to After Accumulation are all paving the way for a different engagement with the ruins stored in the archive by re-centring the collateral dust produced by the distorting, deracinating and, in many cases, plundering practices of archives. Reclaiming barely preserved and overlooked material and exposing the contaminated sources storing so many acts of devaluation, injustice and exclusion for a re-reading in new settings, community-based, grass-roots and movement archives are negotiating the loopholes of interpretative domination and material discrimination as they work in the cracks of the seemingly polished surface of the desire-knowledge complex archive. Their goal to make space for marginalised stories and perspectives exists under the pressure of an appropriating and constantly re-defining dominant discourse that comes disguised as objective neutrality and innocent knowledge, while permanently

encroaching on the troubling fields of counter-archiving emerging at the margins of the orders of knowledge.

Making an absent life present is a work of the moment and requires fabricating a temporal thread that cannot necessarily rely on continuity. The potential of resistance and how it can appear in acts of archiving hides in the turning of pages, in turning the object upside down to liberate it from its object character and to rekindle it in a short or long instant of collective understanding. Bringing a decontextualised object into the present is a work of grief, as many people thinking and writing about the archive have consistently pointed out. The survival of mediated voices and the traces they have left requires a dedicated engagement that opens up a space for non-productive abundance (without the aim of accumulation), for the coexistence of contradictory perspectives (without desiring a single, pure truth) and accepts the altering touch of every mediation (without deeming it unauthentic). While the emphasis on the archive’s capacity for community preservation, depiction and building is beautiful and offers solace, and while the methodologies of counter-reading, reanimation and radical revision practiced within projects of counter-archiving are genuine and convincing, the weight of the archive (and the corpses it produces) remains. An archive that welcomes its own hauntings with open arms and honours those who did not make it in, who were consumed and crushed by it, left without a story to tell, will always foil its own narrative of abundance. The story of its participation in erasure will expose where it failed to be present when it was busy collecting, where it turned a blind eye when prioritising a past injustice, where it passed over a story even though it could have encouraged a rekindling in the present.

An archive after accumulation will have to account for the stories it extinguished and ignored, and it will be up to us to defend why we decided to carry on in its wake.

After Accumulation would like to thank Wassan Fouad Ali, Katja Koblitz, Jul Kolberg and xart splitta e.V., Julia Lübbecke, Lisabona Rahman, Can Sungu, Jessica Walter and everyone who attended the workshops and contributed to the project group for their time and input and their will to engage.

My heartfelt thanks go to Saskya Jain for her critical editing and contributions, which helped shape this text into its current form. I would also like to express my deep gratitude to Sabine Saba and Sanabel Abdelrahman, whose generous sharing of knowledge collapsed and re-centred my beliefs in and about the archive. For inducing a different way to stay with the heavy weight of history while bearing witness to the material and political realities of the genocide on the Palestinian people. And for teaching me persistence by turning the archive against its own tendency towards annihilation.







Julia Lübbecke
*With my filthy fingers
 I try to grasp
 what's left to be done.
 Everything*

One of my habits is to digress into researching the lives of words, their etymology and their often-diverse biographies. I'm not interested in excavating 'the origin' but in the process that words have undergone. As the author Antje Ravik Strubel puts it in her acceptance speech on receiving the German Book Prize in 2021:

“(…) dass Sprache beweglicher ist und wandelbarer als wir in unseren Gewohnheiten. (Obwohl wir sie ja angeblich erfunden haben.) An dieser Wandelbarkeit habe ich Freude, an Wörtern, die bisher Unsichtbares bergen, an einer Sprache, in der Spielen ausdrücklich erwünscht ist, die ins Stolpern kommen darf und Ungesichertes aushält.”



When I look at terms such as ‘institution’ or ‘archive’, it seems as if nothing much has changed since their birth:

instituere, institutus, “to set up, put in place; arrange; establish; appoint, govern, administer; teach, instruct”, from in- “in” + statuere “establish, to cause to stand”, from *sta- “to stand, make or be firm”.

archives (n.)c. 1600, “records or documents preserved as evidence”, from French archiv (16c., Modern French archives), from Late Latin archivum (plural archiva) “written records”, also the place where they are kept, from Greek ta arkheia “public records”, plural of arkheion “town hall, public building”, from arkhē “government”, literally “beginning, origin, first place” (verbal noun of arkhein “to be the first”; see archon). The sense of “place where public records and historical documents are kept” in English is from the 1640s.

It is what institutions were doing yesterday, what they are doing today and unfortunately what they will be doing tomorrow. A continuous putting in place and arranging of subjects, an establishing of norms and a governing of bodies with the unconditional help of categories. And, in the case of the archive, from the assumed position of being *the first*. A position of the Western world, which claims undisputable neutrality and objectivity.

So how can we cause *the archive* to stumble? Besides the works of such brilliant writers as Saidiya Hartman or Ariella Azoulay, this movement is unfolding in places I have visited and worked in, which can be loosely subsumed under the term ‘community-based archives’.

These places take care of resistant knowledge born out of varying political circumstances. The ones I have visited grew out of queer and feminist and workers’ movements.



It has now been more than three years since I have continuously worked in these places, and besides their different backgrounds, histories and constitutions, all the archives I engaged with have precarity embedded in every fibre of their being. Precarious spatial conditions, precarious working conditions and precarious conditions of the archived material.

Consequently, my research took a turn towards the sociopolitical role of dirt or, as Mary Douglas puts it in *Purity and Danger*: “all events which blur, smudge, contradict or otherwise confuse accepted classifications.”

This idea helped me to understand the sites of knowledge I have visited as the ambivalent in-between spaces they are, and has enabled me to focus on their ways of making *the archive* stumble.

During my endeavours, I came across not only the sociopolitical role of dirt, but also of decay, dissolution, dust, glue, wrinkles, creases and folds, rubber bands, sunlight, sweat, spit and thanks to these I encountered the sociopolitical role of the elusiveness of clear readability.

In short, the politics of materiality unfolded in front of me, as my obsession to touch, my délire de toucher, grew. To leave behind my salty sweat and the grease of my fingers as a contribution to the ongoing process of making the dominant normative approach to memory and knowledge not only stumble, but fall.







Kira Dell & Laura Seidel
Of matters and bodies
 – *unboxing community archives.*
Julia Lübbecke's exhibition
 Kleber und Falten
 at Neun Kelche (Berlin)

When thinking about archives, the mind starts wandering through long corridors, filled with shelves and boxes upon boxes—almost building a fortress of memories in our imagination. How many stories are trapped in there? Will they be preserved for a time that feels like an eternity? Who is eligible to enter their protected space and reveal their stories? In reality, ever so often there is no browsing among shelves. It is more likely we are not even allowed in the actual archive, where all the documents are stored. The suspected archival secrets might only cryptically present themselves to us through a library card, an index or an online catalogue. The stories of the archives might reveal themselves to us only partially through a folder or box that we are allowed to take a look at. Or, in the worst case, we might be denied access to their hallowed halls.

The nature of the state archives and other well-funded collections is based on exclusivity. Permission to access them might only be granted following a request that is deemed to be based on a legitimate research interest. And even if they are freely accessible, they still might be hard to navigate without years of academic training. Are all these precautions indeed simply protective measures, aimed purely at safeguarding crucial archival documents? What, then, is our societal consensus on what to preserve and what not to preserve? Whose belongings, writings and thoughts; what documents and evidence of past occurrences are so important that we want to keep them forever? So important we might be denied access altogether?

Community-based archives are the opposite of the described exclusive and subsidised scenario. Often started by a few individuals or a single person, they might be based on an informal collection, are open to a wider public, and visitors might be confronted with a much broader range of materials. Filling in the blanks of what might be a state's notion of memory, community-based archives are a place for stories from the margins and have been the site of Julia Lübbecke's artistic research over the past few years.

Archival operations not only are predicated on allowing immense databases to speak, they also give a textual voice to the silence of a forgotten reality and transform parts of the world that intrude upon it into material for a world yet to be fabricated.

– Wolfgang Ernst, *Stirrings in the Archives.*
Order from Disorder

Julia Lübbecke turns dusty archival matter into sophisticated installations. The artist finds her material in community archives that initially documented the history of the labour and women's movements dating back to the nineteenth century and have existed since the mid-1970s as a result of the New Social Movements. Interestingly, the artist chooses not to narrate the stories she finds in the archive through conventional storytelling via text or image, but instead lets the archival documents speak for themselves. The physicality of every component—the artist, archive material, art objects—plays an important role in her work. It takes a body to imagine another body, to build a body of work. Julia Lübbecke accumulates, describes, preserves and then often chooses to focus on lacunae and fleeting situations. In keeping with this approach, she transferred the archival environment and her own way of working in these precarious settings into the exhibition space Neun Kelche in Berlin-Weißensee, where her site-specific installation *Kleber und Falten* was shown from October 2023 until February 2024.



The aluminium frame that the artist has built as a backbone for the installation features documents found in the online archive Sinister Wisdom, the feminist archive FFBIZ in Berlin and in the archive of the Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft, whose collection is focused on non-governmental women’s movements in the GDR. In the installation, which traverses the space like a folded leaflet, we are not shown the archival documents that Julia Lübbecke might have encountered, but mainly their reverse sides, prominently featured on the stage of her exhibition. Two enlarged backs of leaflets are hung across the metal structures. They look exhausted, like workers coming home after a long shift or from a battle against capitalist exploitation. One can see from the many folds that the soaked flyers have already struggled before becoming archival materials. Julia Lübbecke focuses on the precarity of community-based archives, which is often mirrored in the porosity and vulnerability of the archival material.

Most archival material shows evident traces of prior touch. Either there are clear signs of their initial use, as in the case of flyers handed out to announce a protest, or the archiving process itself is inscribed into them. Due to the lack of funds or simply to the history of their existence, articles and other documents are glued onto a sheet of paper. That way they are more easily stored, but the gluing also has an effect on the material itself. The artist describes how people working in these archives often feel shameful about the condition their materials are in, condemning their use of glue especially, while Lübbecke presents glue as a collaborator. Receiving a prominent spot within her installation, the artist not only shows the effects of glue and how it connects different materials and stories, but also creates a chain of bodies all connected through the archive and, by extension, through the exhibition space.

Archive as if the future depends on it.
Because it does.
– Lisbet Tellefsen, *Keepers of the Record: The History of the Hudson’s Bay Company Archives*

Starting with social activists, female workers and other women—whose stories form the basis of the archives—Julia Lübbecke also makes the process of archiving a tangible experience via the narrative potential of the materials themselves. Materials so fragile they might fall apart when touched, yet in another time many people used these particular objects. The wavy reverse of the papers tells us of the hands gluing things to them, of people starting archives in their homes, opening up community spaces for exchange. The artist also incorporates the bodily presence of the people researching in these archives, such as herself. Not unlike some of the workers documented in the materials she was browsing, her hands would get very dirty as she spent hours in these archives. On the one hand, this mirrors the financial state of the places she is researching, since many of them cannot afford archival gloves. On the other hand, the artist is constantly confronted with the question of what to touch with her fingers, running the risk of the material getting stained or damaged. It is impossible to work within a community archive without changing it. But how does her presence inscribe itself into its system? She reflects on her own bodily presence through the photographic triptych *Délire du toucher*, showing us her hands, presenting some images she had found in the archive for social movements in the Ruhr area. But she takes this physical presence one step further in the exhibition space. In the work *Entry into*

a caring home—also hanging from the aluminium frame—we see a photo of an archive that was depicted on the cover of the Sinister Wisdom journal. The photo is creased because the artist embraced it. Her own body is imprinted into the work.

The order of the ephemeral
Reading was dangerous
Warm und erschöpft
Alles mögliche, das ständig in mir kocht
A rotating credit circle with comrades
Als ich mich weigerte
Ihr dürft alles ändern
Was immer da bröckelt bröselt blättert bricht
– List of quotations from Julia Lübbecke’s
performance *Glamour Grammar*

Can a text be physical?

Text plays a very important role in Julia Lübbecke’s work, whether it is placed on sculptures, performed during a lecture or quoted in index plans that she always prints as an essential part of her installations. Yet in her exhibition *Kleber und Falten*, the focus lies not on text, but on the materiality of archival documents and their connection to the artist’s body.

The exhibition was accompanied by Julia Lübbecke’s lecture performance *Glamour Grammar*, in which the artist places small silicon sculptures on the floor so that they lean against her installation. On them, we can read the quotations above, deriving from texts that she is working with. For about half an hour, the artist moves through her exhibition, making several stops in the installation and reading from different books that she has placed on the ground. At one point, she pushes her arms and head through the slats of blinds in the middle of the metal frame and her body becomes part of the installation, blurring the lines of the supposedly static archive and the ephemeral nature of performance. After the performance, the quotes on the silicone sculptures remain a part of the installation, as traces of someone once writing them and of the artist reading them out loud.

Community archives can be more accessible places. Here, societal outlaws can meet and maybe even feel safe while being surrounded by like-minded people. Julia Lübbecke mirrors the community archives’ politics of access by creating installations that translate text or image material from the archives, which can be hard to grasp or relate to, into aesthetically pleasing yet profound objects. In her visual art, there are no closed off display cases, no obfuscating texts replete with jargon. It is the artist’s sensory experience with the material that brings us closer to her perception of the archives she worked with. While Lübbecke’s approach can seem abstract, she always centres the people either working in the archives or depicted in photographs in a moment of self-empowerment. It is their knowledge and battles that we, as a society, can still learn from today; and it is their bodies that are connected to our contemporary reality and that bring the archives back to life in politically challenging times.







Julia Lübbecke studied at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp, UMPRUM – Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague and the Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig. She completed the Goldrausch Künstlerinnenprojekt postgraduate programme in 2020. She was one of the recipients of the IKOB – Art Prize for Feminist Art in 2019, and has received grants from the Berlin Senate and the Stiftung Kunstfonds, among others. Her works have been shown internationally: at Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos in Santiago de Chile, Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien in Berlin, Künstler:innenhaus Bremen and IKOB – Museum of Contemporary Art in Eupen.

Eva Dorothea Dittrich studied photography and media at the HGB Leipzig, at UMPRUM Prague, and at the Academy of Fine Arts Helsinki. She participated in the Goldrausch Künstlerinnenprojekt support program in 2019 and was nominated for the Kunstpreis of Haus am Kleistpark in 2019 and for the Neuköllner Kunstpreis in 2020. Eva Dittrich's works have been exhibited internationally, including at the Center for Contemporary Art in Leipzig, the National Gallery Prague, the Off-Biennale Budapest, Taskuu Gallery Helsinki, the Photographic Collection SK Stiftung Kultur in Cologne, Galerie FO.KU.S Photo Art Forum in Innsbruck, as well as at the Center for Contemporary Art in Berlin. She lives and works in Berlin.

Sima Ehrentraut is a research associate at *CONSTELLATIONS* at the Cluster of Excellence *Temporal Communities* (Freie Universität Berlin), where he organises formats that bring together research, the arts and the cultural sphere. From 2021 to 2023, he was an active member of the project group *After Accumulation*. He is currently pursuing a PhD at the Department of Theatre, Film and Media Studies at the University of Vienna. His research focuses on performance theory, visual dramaturgy and trans embodiment.

Kira Dell and **Laura Seidel** have been a curatorial duo since 2018. In 2021, they founded the project space Neun Kelche, where they primarily collaborate with local and international FLINTA* artists, creating site-specific installations that expand into performance, film, video and sound. Beyond the project space, their work also includes further media such as textiles and painting. Their curatorial practice is grounded in a critical, intersectional perspective, with a focus on utopian ideas of planetary coexistence, collective love, societal views on parenthood and the agency of materials. Embracing a collaborative approach, Laura Seidel and Kira Dell critically examine the structures of work within the art world, emphasising transparent funding and fostering long-term partnerships.

Projects

This publication emerged from the collaboration between the project group After Accumulation and the artist Julia Lübbecke, who was the Dorothea Schlegel Artist-in-Residence at the Cluster of Excellence *Temporal Communities: Doing Literature in a Global Perspective* in November and December 2022.

From 2021 to 2023, the working group **After Accumulation** – comprising Sima Ehrentraut, Lindsey Drury, Karina Rocktäschel, Samira Spatzek and Nina Tolksdorf – built a temporary platform to engage with the archive and its discourses. Bringing together artists, archive professionals and researchers from various fields, After Accumulation organised a series of workshops with Berlin-based community archives and cultural institutions. These included events with the Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv in Berlin, Sinema Transtopia and the Schwules Museum Berlin, along with training sessions on teaching, diversity and anti-racism. The group also hosted a reading group focused on texts that re-think the archive as a site where dynamics of power, selective visibility and the desire for preservation intersect.

After Accumulation was a project group of the Cluster of Excellence *Temporal Communities* in collaboration with CRC 1171 *Affective Societies* (Freie Universität Berlin).

Welcome to the Dirty Archive, Julia Lübbecke's project for her residence at *Temporal Communities*, was embedded in the artist's ongoing research into enabling new ways of dealing with knowledge using the concept of ephemerality. The project focused on the potential of decay and dirt in Western archives, centering images and texts that have been excluded from so-called 'representative moments' due to material damage occurring during storage or supposedly faulty processing. Lübbecke aimed to examine the practice of dissolution – of depriving oneself of clear legibility – as an alternative access point for unlearning systems of Western knowledge production. The project was further developed in the context of her collaboration with After Accumulation and directly contributed to the solo exhibition *Kleber und Falten*, presented at the project space Neun Kelche from October 2023 until February 2024. The exhibition translated Lübbecke's engagement with the materiality of archives and the role of bodies in institutional contexts into an expansive installation. Photographer Dorothea Dittrich documented the exhibition and is featured in this publication.

The Dorothea Schlegel Artist-in-Residence Programme offers artists of all fields and genres time and space to develop new projects in dialogue with EXC 2020's research agenda. The residencies foster long-term collaborative relations with Cluster members and facilitate exchange between academic research and artistic practice by encouraging the exploration of innovative formats of knowledge production, knowledge transfer and artistic research, as well as reflections on the mechanisms and dynamics of critique.

Temporal Communities

The Cluster of Excellence 2020 *Temporal Communities: Doing Literature in a Global Perspective* (EXC 2020) at Freie Universität Berlin has set itself the task of fundamentally rethinking the concept of literature from a global perspective. In a move beyond the Eurocentric categories of 'nation' and 'period' traditionally deployed to frame literary history, we understand and study literature as a phenomenon that operates in and through time, creating its own temporalities in the process. Key to our concept of literature as a form of 'doing' that challenges received boundaries and stands in constant exchange with other cultural practices is its ability to establish communities across time and space in ways that transcend the restrictive notion of the literary developed by Western modernity.

Bringing together international researchers from fields as diverse as literary studies, art history and art theory, film studies, theatre studies and philosophy, the Cluster's work is characterised by a collaborative, exploratory approach that fosters exchange between the humanities and the arts.

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con•stel•la•tions 04
The Dirty Archive

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“It is what institutions were doing yesterday, what they are doing today and what they will be doing tomorrow. A continuous putting in place and arranging of subjects, an establishing of norms and a governing of bodies with the unconditional help of categories. So how can we cause *the archive* to stumble?”

“An archive after accumulation will have to account for the stories it extinguished and ignored, and it will be up to us to defend why we decided to carry on in its wake.”