

## *(Re-)works: re-cycling, re-circulating, re-staging, re-ing the archive(s).*

In a nutshell, Marc Johnson's research practice is concerned with ways of working with the archive(s).<sup>1</sup> That which is *there* comes *here*.

How is the re-calling *from there to here* made?

What does re-cycling, re-circulating and re-ing archive(s) afford?

What can cultural workers learn from re-searching and re-staging archive(s)?

To answer these questions, Marc Johnson have designed a series of *(re-)work* experiments in a studio environment.

Marc Johnson has deployed research methods such as (1) performing extensive research on records in national collections, (2) carrying out interviews, (3) writing work stories<sup>2</sup>, and (4) reprinting, rephotographing, refilming, re-editing and re-ing archival images from state archives, digital libraries and other cultural artifacts in digital forms, publicly accessible Git<sup>3</sup> repositories, and training datasets used for machine learning tasks such as deep-learning predictions.

The outcomes of these experiments are Marc Johnson's own archive, books, born-digital artifacts, films and videos, maps, forms of re-enactments/re-staging, photographs, tapestries and texts.

Through interpreting the results of the experiments, Marc Johnson has found that the archival re-staging practice vehicle, bear, carry and hold:

(1) a creation of a social space in which viewers become aware of each other's presence to consider what it means to think through a subject as a temporary community in the exhibition space and through time;

(2) an emphasis on the present tense importance of the history with which the *(re-)work* is concerned;

(3) a mechanism to make the viewers aware of their agency and responsibility in deciding what to make of the story or subject of the *(re-)work*, and how they contribute to a new mode of historical representation through their reading of the *(re-)work*;

(4) an education to inform viewers of their potential affiliations with the material exposed.

(5) a calling at the viewers to revive or pursue forms of activism in the civil society.

Where does the archive fever<sup>4</sup> comes from?

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<sup>1</sup> Embodied, intangible and material knowledges.

<sup>2</sup> Magnus Bårtås, "You Told Me – Work Stories and Video Essays / Verkberättelser Och Videoessäer" (2010).

<sup>3</sup> Git is an open-source distributed version control system; that is a practice of tracking and managing changes to software code.

<sup>4</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Pr., 1995) ; Terry Cook, "What Is Past Is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift," *Archivaria*, no. 43 (February 1997): 17–63; Carolyn Hamilton et al., eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Dordrecht, Boston,

I have been affected by *archive fever* since 2006.

First, I re-used a fragment of film depicting a Senegalese tirailleur in the first world war. The young soldier looked like my father and that was enough of a reason for me to borrow it from the military archivist and reproduce it in front of my class in art school in France. A phenomenologist obsessed with *Aufhebung boomerang* and the relations between painting and cinema had the idea to introduce the class to *Mirror* (1975) by Andrei Tarkovski. In it, the cinematographer uses documentary archival images in relation to fiction which is an artistic operation I had never seen.

This event triggered my interest and curiosity to know more. I was at the time completely ignorant of the history of cinema. I had seen no moving images outside Hollywood blockbusters and Tv-series from the USA. I was not particularly underprivileged. I had simply no access to such films in my home.

Therefore, the class had much impact on my upbringing as a filmmaker.

A community of archival practitioners

I am not alone in this labour. Many before me have re-examined various historiographies—outside the context of academic history—with various levels of societal change if any.

Nonetheless, the potency and agency of embodied, intangible and material records seem unfathomable.

Looking at the works of Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci-Lucchi made me reconsider my personal engagement with the past.

What is the past? Who makes it? Who controls it? How is it made?

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Londo: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002); Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, A John Hope Franklin Center Book (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Okwui Enwezor, ed., *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art*, 1st ed (New York, N.Y.: International Center of Photography, 2008); Tonia Sutherland, “Restaging the Record: The Role of Contemporary Archives in Safeguarding and Preserving Performance as Intangible Cultural Heritage” (Thesis dissertation, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh, 2014), <http://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/id/eprint/23889>; Michelle Caswell, Ricardo Punzalan, and T-Kay Sangwand, “Critical Archival Studies: An Introduction,” *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 1, no. 2 (June 27, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.24242/jclis.v1i2.50>;