

Archive

An archive is a collection of documents, digital or physical, that is constructed to operate across multiple contexts **academic and governmental, private and commercial, educational, non-profit and cultural etc.** This multiplicity of environments causes the documents to be kept for a wide range of reasons. **In many cases, the** process of archiving **is** a rigidly codified act from the start due to the institutionalised aspect of the process. Being the product of institutionalisation, archives have been attracting much critical scrutiny because of their strong political implications. **More often than not,** the act of archiving creates **will create** an imbalanced relationship between the one who’s archiving and the one who’s being archived. Archives assembled by **institutions such as** museums and scientific centers **have become a mirror of** the disproportionate power relations shaping our society such as **the** wealthy educated **professionals** observing and archiving the underprivileged or the white **West** archiving **the** indigenous populations. Archives have the power to maintain or even strengthen the oppression and subjugation of their archived subjects through the shaping of particular narratives by the archivist. As Achille Mbembe argued ‘the archive is primarily the product of a judgement, the result of the exercise of a specific **power and authority**. But not all archives **and not all institutions** are the same. They are also being used by communities as tools and practices of resistance. Caring for their own documents and histories allows these communities to thwart the authority of institutional archives as they create possibilities to shape other narrative and to fight their eradication by capitalist, patriarchal and colonial states.

Augmented Reality

Augmented Reality (AR) is applied in for example military, entertainment and healthcare **contexts**. It is generally described as a technique for ‘enhancing real-world environments with computer-generated perceptual information’, **emphasizing** a clear separation and hierarchy between what is “real” and what is “computer-generated”. In addition, AR also assumes a two-eyed user. This not only because it relies on ocular devices **such as smartglasses, head-mounted devices or smartphone applications**, but also because the Computer Vision algorithms that calculate

the alignment between physical and computational reality, calculate their so-called “real world coordinates” from stereo cameras that mimic human eyes. AR is different from Virtual Reality (VR) and potentially more interesting, in the sense that the interactive experiences of AR explicitly mix computational materiality with physical environments. What other perspectives could AR make possible?

Cultural heritage

Cultural heritage is a term used to describe the tangible and intangible legacies that a culture **inherits is considered to be heir to**. Cultural heritage often plays a role in the construction of national and regional identities; its genealogical understanding of culture presupposes a stable lineage. What counts as cultural heritage is therefore easily confused with establishment **or a cultural norm** and **when** a lively debate around the terms of inclusion or exclusion is missing, it risks to become a tool for sedimenting conventions. In Belgium, cultural heritage is also an administrative term that sets apart cultural production from work being done at museums and archives. It is exactly these borders that DiVersions would like to blur. **The close look we took at physical and digital repositories of cultural heritage made us also interested in the ambitions behind the construction of such repositories in relation to the articulation of national narratives. It is common to see the formulation of such national narratives used as a marker tool for the work of inclusion or exclusion as this capitalisation on cultural heritage tends to fix elements and to leave very little room for critique, changes and examination.**

Classification

Classification is the act of sorting out elements. The practice of classification relates to many different areas hence its pervasiveness in our everyday life. Classification finds its presumed scientific grounds **during in** the period called the Enlightenment **where**. European scientists and intellectuals were driven by the illusion of objectivity and believed rigid methodologies, such as classification were the way to achieve it. That process brought the classification of **the** flora with **for** instance, **plants vs trees;** **the** fauna with **for** example, **mammals vs cephalopods;** and the humans **with** for example blacks vs whites or women vs men. The classification of elements **is highly problematic, not only for** humans, **is highly problematic** because the process generally

ignores complexity, multiplicity, fluidity and **simplicity complexity**. Furthermore, the classification of humanity turned into a strategy for scientists to validate their strong bias towards people who did not look or act like them, namely **as** white European men. Nevertheless, classification **remains** omnipresent because it helps people make sense of what is around them. For instance, institutions working with cultural heritage are based on the construction of databases **formed that through** rely on classification. The very scenography of institutions such as museums are designed following specific classifications (euro-centrist in many cases) with instances of displays of non-European populations following an European chronology as classifier. The **attachment between** the act of classification **has** **been a** **rich** history **with claims** of objectivity **is** and **fixity**. **Justified** **if** **believed** these **indeed** **claims** **that** **are** **important** **not** **questioned** **classification** **from** **its** **computational** **the** **process** **start** **has** **classifications** **multiplied** **harm** **that** **tend** **propensity** **to** **intensify** **neutrality** **when** **implemented** **in** **computational** **digital** **systems**.

Conservation

A term that defines the work done in many cultural institutions such as museums. Conservation entails taking care, labelling and ordering the various items making up a collection. As the word indicates, there is a purpose of keeping items that have entered a collection “as-is”: to protect them from alteration due to exterior forces, or to save them from changing state. Conservation is conservative, conservare = “to keep, preserve, keep intact, guard”. In addition to precise conservation techniques such as temperature and light control, digitization is a technique which meets the interests of conservation. In that mode of thinking, creating a digital double of a statue or a building is understood as a way to protect these elements from loss, oblivion or destruction since the public can be granted access to the double, and the original of that double can be kept in a controlled environment ... or returned to the countries or regions they were taken from. Conservation already holds power by creating the means and conditions for what needs to be “saved”, how, by who and what state deserves to be fixed. In addition, the premise of conservatism in conservation techniques tends to disregard the many complexities specific to the items they are dealing with, such as the necessity

or right for their disappearance, deterioration and forgetfulness. Digitization extends the intensity of the seizure by replicating, instead of displacing, the item within a foreign space; foreign in the sense of its conditions of existence and representation.

Cultural Appropriation

Cultural appropriation takes place when traditions, fashions, symbols, language, and music are transferred between cultures, along the axes of historical power and oppression. Cultural appropriation follows colonial faultlines and contributes to its continuation. This (dis)placement might involve exotisation and exploitation; it’s problematics derive from the power difference between groups that block the possibility of actual cultural exchange. Sometimes cultural appropriation can be considered as a form of expropriation when the meaning of cultural elements are disrespected, distorted or even lost because they are removed from their context. Obviously there is a complex tension with critiques of originality, purity and “true” culture. Another complicating factor is the assumption that culture operates under the regime of ownership (hence the possibility to appropriate), is itself deeply rooted in European conceptions of intellectual property and the colonialist ideologies from which they formed. In that sense, copyright and patent law enforce the systems of punishment and reward which benefit those already-powerful, at the cost of others. The private and public values which uphold these systems are inseparable from broader forms of oppression. Understandably, these same frameworks are often considered as the only option for protecting cultures against exploitation.

Database

‘Within databases, the tractability of data and relations depends in no small part on the degree of normalization of data and the structures it is entered into. Normalization means the treatment of each piece of data and each relation as a separate entity. It involves stripping away unnecessary hierarchies or other structures within data. This means that as data are updated, deleted, or inserted, they do not carry any dependencies on other data or structures (such as nesting within a set of parent-child nodes). Normalization implies a neutrality as to the relative importance of one datum as compared to another. What it thus allows is for a query to be formulated through any point in

the network of relations mapped by the table. Nonnormalized data offer one kind of resistance, in that they require nested sets of dependencies. A red round thing may be a cricket ball or an apple, and neither may exactly be round, but once they are normalized and interpretable as simply exemplars of bearers of one or more of the categorizations red, round, and thing, they lose their specificity. The quality of irreducibility is transferred from the entity described to the categories into which its qualities are organized.’

Digitisation

Digitisation is the act of transforming an object from an analog into a digital format. As a result, the object becomes machine-readable. Digitisation is a major challenge for cultural heritage institutions such as museums that are forced to allocate significant parts of their budgets in the process. 2D and 3D scanning technologies are used to create a digital file that acts as a digital double, a sort of extension of the “original” object which is now easily transportable, shareable, quantifiable and transformable in comparison with the infrastructural cares most museum objects are said to require. The possibilities brought by digitisation interestingly became an argument in favour of restitution and against it. Indeed, on one side, digitisation extends access (geographically and temporally) to an item which means it does not need to stay in an institution thousands of kilometres away from its place of creation. From the other side, since digital doubles can travel more easily (in terms of costs, legal issues, insurance, ...) than the “originals”, there is no reason to make an effort to remove it from the place it is considered to already been safely taken care of.

Decolonial

A decolonial practice rejects everything taught by the system of racial oppression we were all born into. Decoloniality calls for an active, intellectually strong and unapologetic disobedience in the pursuit of dismantling this century-old system. The difficulty **in** **this** **practicing** **more** **decoloniality** comes from the omnipresence of colonial heritage in every part of our lives from education programs, languages (the dominance of English being a very good example), science, gender and sexuality, religion, fashion, food, travel and so many others. Decolonial thinking attempts to propose generative

gestures of thinking/doing from other point of entries than the ones of the ongoing historical and neo-colonial regimes. In Belgium, the ongoing **uninterrupted** **celebratory** presence of Leopold II’s regime in public space and the general lack of critique on the Belgian colonial rule, demonstrates that the decolonial process has not reached the collective conscience yet.

Diversity

Diversity literally defines ‘a condition of having or being composed by multiple elements’ and can be considered as a synonym for “variety”. More recently, it became the **leading** **default** **word** **term** to define groups **of** **people** **composed** **composed** **by** **of** **individuals** **considered** **as** **belonging** **to** **diverse** **categories** **of** **human** **what** **diversity** **we** **make** **up** **as** **human** **identities**. Diverse **referring** **refers** in general to race, religion, ability or gender. The increased use of this word has moved it into the realm of corporate vocabulary, **institutional** **management** and marketing. In that transformation, the condition of diversity became deeply **institutionalized** **entangled** with instances of “diversity training” and “diversity officers”. **This** **In** **general** **this** **framed** **context,** **diversity** **is** **framed** in terms of aesthetics, hence focuses on visible traits such as race or ability, instead of fundamentally changing the way oppression and power work in relation to them. Diversity acts as an agent of recognition for everything that fits within the norm. The general narrative surrounding “diversity”, **managed** to create a feel-**-**good politics by obscuring topics that are generally not-feel-good at all, such as racism and queerphobia by placing, once again, the focus on the not-white, not-straight, not-male so to prevent the uncomfortable formation of white, heterosexual and other types of guilt. **‘Diversity is a white word’,** as Tania Canas argues, ‘It seeks to make sense, through the white lens, of difference by creating, curating and demanding palatable definitions of “diversity” but only in relation to what this means in terms of whiteness.’ In September 2020, a large poster appeared which covered an important part of a building in Brussels city center. The poster reads: ‘Embrace Diversity’ and depicts several indiscernible rainbow-colored bodies holding each other, as the artist states: ‘the bodies “embrace” each others’ diversity’. The poster signalled the launch of an action plan by the city of Brussels for the “inclusion of LGBTQI + people”. The banner exemplifies the feel-good