

Archiving the Unarchivable – Das Unarchivierbare archivieren

International conference by the documenta archiv
in preparation for the future documenta Institut

Thursday, 22 November – Saturday, 24 November 2018
documenta Halle, Kassel

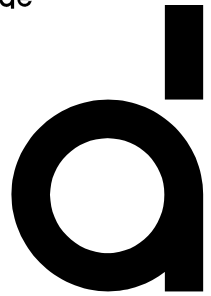
First Session: Archiving Memories

Friday, 23 November 2018, 10:00 – 11:00

Dagmar Brunow

Between Remembering and Forgetting: The Archive and Cultural Memory

In the wake of the “archival turn,” the digitization of archival collections has been regarded as an important means of countering forgetting, especially as analog film stock and videotapes slowly decay. But has digitization become a hollow promise? Can long-term preservation really be granted? The initial optimism has been challenged by the increasing number of data cemeteries. These are due to short-lived digitization projects, which lack sustainable planning. At the same time, archival storage alone does not automatically contribute to cultural memory. Instead, archival holdings need to be circulated again, preferably in various media environments, in order to feed into our constantly changing, dynamic cultural memory. This keynote address will explore the relation between memory and forgetting in the archive. Advocating for sustainable archival projects, it will discuss the impact of materiality (e.g. paper, videotapes and digital data). Looking at media specificity involves the question of what gets lost in media transformation, for example in video documentations of performance art or expanded cinema. Situating itself within recent trends in cultural memory studies, the talk will outline the challenges and possibilities of today’s archival practice. Drawing on a number of case studies from the documenta archiv as well as other heritage institutions, it will present methods of curating access to digitized collections. Different modes of access allow for a re-circulation of the archive, thus providing ways of constructing cultural heritage and memory.



Dagmar Brunow is Senior Lecturer of Film Studies at Linnaeus University in Växjö (Sweden). Her research centres on questions of memory, the archive, video collectives and the essay film. She was awarded a three-year grant by the Swedish Research Council for her research project "The Cultural Heritage of the Moving Image" (2016-2018). She is the author of *Remediating Transcultural Memory: Documentary Filmmaking as Archival Intervention* (Berlin/Boston 2015) and (co)-editor of *Stuart Hall: Aktivismus, Pop & Politik* (Mainz 2015), *Queer Cinema* (with S. Dickel, Mainz 2018) and of the special issue "Scandinavian cinema culture and archival practices: Collecting, curating and accessing moving image histories" of the *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema* (with I. Stigsdotter, 2/2017).