



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

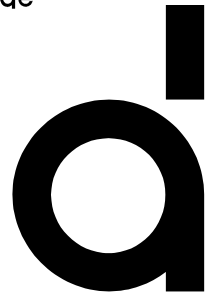
Friday, 23 November 2018, 11:30 – 12:15

Martin Koerber

Expert Networks to the Rescue, what can we learn from the Film Archives?

There were no film archives in the first four decades of film history.

Consequently, early films tend to be lost, and survival is rather the exception for a film made before 1930. Since there were no archives, there was no archival practice, and the know-how of archiving the rather ephemeral material of film, composed of volatile substances such as gelatin coated on nitrate or acetate cellulose, had to be invented as the first archivists went along. Even more volatile and thus undocumented were other things: the production circumstances, the projection practice, the musical accompaniment, and performance context in general. And yet: "Old Film" is alive and shown the world over. New discoveries are made constantly thanks to institutionalized as well as informal networks that form a global alliance of activists and organizations. What can be learned for seemingly unarchivable artworks that are not on film?



Martin Koerber studied media, art history, and musicology at Freie Universität Berlin. Starting in 1986, Koerber worked as a freelancer for the Deutsche Kinemathek, Nederlands Filmmuseum, and other film archives, followed by a permanent position at the Deutsche Kinemathek from 1999-2003. He worked on numerous restoration projects of German film classics such as *M*, *Testament des Dr. Mabuse*, *Menschen am Sonntag*, *Weißer Hölle vom Piz Palü*, and *Metropolis*, to name a few. In his affiliation with the Deutsche Kinemathek he organized the retrospectives for the Berlin International Film Festival from 1995 to 2003. In 2003, Koerber was appointed Professor for Restoration of Audiovisual and Photographic Heritage at the University of Applied Sciences Berlin. Since 2007, he has been Head of the Film Archive at the Deutsche Kinemathek – Museum for Film and Television and involved in the digitization of film heritage.