

(DIS)AGREEMENTS

ARCHIVES-IN-THE-MAKING, VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES AND MIGRATION: OUTREACH AND INNOVATIVE SCHOLAR- SHIP IN AUDIOVISUAL-BASED RESEARCH PROJECTS AND ASSOCIATIONS*

Introduction

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introduction

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This edition of (Dis)Agreements is the product of our own experience with the conceptualisation, organisation, and development of an online open archive that compiles and shares a collection of films, videos, and other documents related to migration and mobility across the Atlantic. In the context of the research project *Cinematic Cartographies of Mobility in the Hispanic Atlantic*, we have launched the Archive of Cinematic Mobility (ACM)¹ with the aim of compiling a database of feature films produced in Spain and Latin America (covering all countries in the region and all of their different film histories) whose narratives deal with or depict issues of human mobility, migration and displacement. In addition, the archive includes amateur films and experimental videos taken from some of the regional film archives in

Spain (Filmoteca Vasca, Filmoteca de Andalucía and CGAI-Centro Galego de Artes da Imaxe), and also offers the results of the video workshops that we conducted over the course of our four-year project.

This is not the place for an in-depth exploration of the technical, material, legal, theoretical, and methodological discussions that influenced the conceptualisation and creation of the ACM. Suffice it to say that we faced the challenge posed by what Michelle Caswell (2021: 15) has described as the gap between the perspective of humanities scholars on “the archive” and the complicated realities of “actually existing archives”, a material reality closer to the everyday experiences of librarians, archivists, and scholars specialising in information studies. The focus of this section is

therefore inspired by our own need to encourage a conversation with and between colleagues all over the world who have pursued or are currently pursuing similar projects. Our admiration from afar for the diverse range of collective practices and efforts outlined in this section thus gave rise to the dialogue presented here, which hopefully will trigger further discussions about how and why we, who for the most part are film and media scholars, sought to develop audiovisual archives dealing with migrant experiences. We were intrigued by the social and intellectual principles underpinning each initiative and, at the same time, we wondered how each one reconciled the humanistic and material dimensions of the archive mentioned by Caswell.

In short, we have brought together researchers to talk about the work being done in the following initiatives: Archive/Counter-Archive: Activating Moving Image Heritage² (2018-2024 SSHRC Partnership Grant), a Canadian research project involving more than 17 community- and artist-run organizations in Canada dedicated to compiling diverse narratives of Indigenous, LGBTQ, immigrant and women's histories; the Archivio delle memorie migranti/Archive of migrant memories (AMM),³ an Italian association that collects, disseminates and produces audiovisual material on migration based on participatory methods; ITH-ACA. Interconnecting Histories and Archives for Migrant Agency,⁴ a European research project focusing on narratives of migration that aims to produce a "Superarchive" containing experiences on migration; the Make Film History⁵ project, a British initiative that fosters the creative reuse of archival material; and finally, the Reel Borders⁶ project, a Belgian-based project funded by the EU that looks at the ways cinema has imagined and represented borders. This heterogeneous group of research programs speaks in multiple ways about the diverse interests, topics and strategies pursued to analyse and audiovisually archive human displacement.

Drawing on contemporary discussions about archives and vulnerable communities, questions arose about who archives, what is being archived and how the archive is being presented. In this sense, issues of access and social justice cut across all of the different initiatives and interventions presented in this section. As Diana W. Anselmo has pointed out in her introduction to a recent publication on "Alternative Archives", archival work benefits from "being expanded along the intersectional lines of gender, race, class, ethnicity, nationality, and sexuality" (2021: 163). All of these issues have been considered and included in the extraordinary work carried out by the researchers and the teams and projects they represent. At the same time, as Anselmo also points out, the need to reconsider the affective dimensions of these archives and, in the long term, to present these initiatives as collective works open to public debate and new political perspectives on migration is what makes these projects important, not only for current debates about the work of film and media scholars but also as a way to bridge the gap between the academic world and the world we all live in.

In her recent call for "a global approach to audiovisual heritage", film curator and professor Giovanna Fossati proposes that we need to "rethink representation and inclusion of global audiovisual heritage and re-balance access across borders and economies" (2021: 128). Among her recommendations for a change of mindset and archival practices, Fossati mentions the need to develop new methodologies of research, preservation, access, and exhibition, as well as the promotion of "long-term knowledge exchange" between archivists and researchers from the so-called Global North and the Global South. Taking up Fossati's recommendations, we offer this conversation between scholars and activists deeply engaged in the study and presentation of documents and the archiving of film and video productions that explore and result from human

mobility. We accept responsibility for the limited scope of the sample. Of course, to build on Fossati's inspiring work, further conversations and intellectual, cultural and material interaction need to be encouraged not only among the participants in the exchange documented here, but with other academics and professionals from around the globe. ■

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discussion

I. Could you briefly explain what your research projects are about and how it is structured? Specifically, could you summarize your main goals and the reasons that led you to set it up?

Archive/Counter-Archive

Archive/Counter-Archive: Activating Canada's Audio-visual Heritage (A/CA) is a research-creation partnership involving over twenty-five archival organisations and cultural repositories for audiovisual (AV) and other media in Canada along with four university partners: York (Lead), Concordia, Queen's, and Toronto Metropolitan University. This project focuses on the challenges and generative opportunities afforded by diverse media archives belonging to Canada's Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis, Inuit), Black communities, People of Colour, women, LGBTQ2+ and immigrant communities. Through artist residencies, creative counter-archives, and innovative new scholarship, we are calling attention to collections that are most vulnerable to disappearance and inaccessibility. Through our network, we are dedicated to sharing resources and developing creative methodologies for understanding what AV archives mean to a new generation of researchers, scholars, artists, archivists, and activists. Through experimentation and research, we are committed to developing an archival action plan for community based and artist-run collections in Canada.

The project is structured through eight case studies and supported by five working groups devoted to specific themes: Epistemology of the Archive; Education & Counter-Pedagogies; Technology and Innovation; Cultural Policy, Intellectual Property, and Rights Ecosystems; and Indigenous Methodologies. It is funded through a CDN\$2.5 million Partnership grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). Now in its fourth year, the seven-year project involves over fifty academic researchers

across Canada, over seventy-five graduate students and is in the process of constituting an international advisory board.

Our project is oriented toward four concrete goals:

1. Create practice-based knowledge: we are conducting eight strategic case studies, each one corresponding to specific AV collections, tied to specific problems around preservation, and driven by community interests. Through collaborative research, Archive/Counter-Archive will establish best practices in terms of creating culturally appropriate systems of digital and analogue preservation, methodologies, and protocols.
2. Train and mentor: we are developing pedagogy, training, and mentoring tools shaped by best practices in community contexts and protocols of Indigenous methodologies. We aim to train and mentor the next generation of curators, archivists, cultural activists, scholars, digital humanists, and cultural policy and intellectual property (IP) specialists to advance moving image heritage preservation, accessibility, and presentation in Canada. This training will attend to the complex ethical and political issues of protocol, cultural property issues, and intersectional claims on national heritage.
3. Build a sustainable media-rich series of books with Concordia University Press. These books explore the new theoretical, methodological, and political questions that arise from the evolving nature of archives as keepers of memory and collective histories. Aiming to create a dialogue among scholars, artists, archivists, librarians, curators, and policy makers, this

book series seeks to challenge the hegemony of traditional archival institutions that have historically neglected or marginalised women, Indigenous peoples, the LGBTQ2+ communities, communities of colour and immigrant histories. We will produce two versions of each publication where appropriate—one online (containing additional, digital content) and the other in print. Our research as well as our case studies and final exhibitions will be collected and documented in these books.

4. Foster an AV Archive Network in Canada: Archive/Counter-Archive is helping to create a network of smaller archival organisations, researchers and policymakers invested in identifying and addressing the challenges and new epistemologies that surround 21st century archives. In particular, we aim to determine the special needs of AV preservation across different community contexts. This will form the basis for designing an action plan for Canada's community-based AV archives. It is important to emphasize that the concept of the counter-archive is not set in opposition to major institutional archives; in fact, archives at all levels of funding and organization face obstacles of mandate, resources, and training (albeit at different scales). Rather, the counter-archival impulse seeks to energise and activate the potential of the archive and the multiple, intersectional histories embedded in collections, and to bring them into public view and discourse.

Archive of migrant memories

For the past fifteen years, the Archive of migrant memories (Archivio delle memorie migranti, AMM) has been working with transnational migrants by supporting mixed groups of asylum seekers, volunteers, media operators, and researchers in a collaborative project aimed at collecting, preserving and disseminating self-narrative stories and testimonies of (and by) transnational migrants coming to Italy. In recording these narratives, we have sought

to stimulate public awareness of the migrant condition in Italy, and to favour self-expressive forms of migrant voices as necessary traces of their coming and settling here in order to reconstruct their own memory of their arrival and destiny. Based on sociologist Abdelmalek Sayad's intuition that immigration and emigration are "two sides of the same coin", the research also tries to refashion the public representation of transnational migratory processes by looking at their "totality", linking the "here" and the "there" (the place the migrants left and the place they have travelled to), which is all the more relevant for foreign subjects roaming between former colonial empires and an uncertain and still undefined postcolonial present. Connecting the memory of Italy's colonial past with the memory of recent migrants from former Italian colonies seemed to us an urgent task in order to re-define Italy's multicultural national memory.

Despite the obstacles posed by the rigidly bureaucratic regulations for obtaining citizenship, the increasing number of new citizens of foreign origin in Italy is enriching the debate over the nation's memory and its capacity for reappropriation or inclusion. Even if multicultural coexistence is officially acknowledged as part of the globalised nation, Italian society still appears to be suspicious of its own hybrid memories and their implicit aspiration to a different national sense of belonging that questions the exclusionary political-cultural establishment and its foundations. From this point of view, migrants today and always are frontier-makers, creators not just of diaspora communities but also of cultural mediation, catalysts for resident communities whose physical and symbolic boundaries are constantly shifting and intersecting.

The associations' main activities are:

1. Participatory video workshops with migrants, with the aim of producing self-narratives;
2. Interviews and narrative circles for the creation of self-narratives;
3. School workshops about self-narratives and anti-racism;

4. Dissemination activities (screenings, public events).

Throughout its history, AMM has been funded by:

- Private foundations interested in fostering migrants' participation and new, grassroots-based and informed stories about migration in Italy/Europe, especially through creative and participatory methods (Lettera27; Open Societies; The Waldensian Evangelical Church).
- National public funds (Ministry of Culture's MigrArti Project; Italian Agency for Development Cooperation - AICS; Italian Office against Racial Discrimination - UNAR) for specific projects in cooperation with other organisations and institutions.
- Schools (from all over Italy) and cultural centres (Goethe Institut Rome, MAXXI Museum Rome).
- The European Commission.

Our partners are mainly other associations and NGOs, universities, cultural centres and institutional archives.

The research team is currently made up of four people, supported by one expert in communication and two administrative/project management team members.

Make Film History

As cultural heritage organisations digitise their collections and increase public access, moving image portals like the Irish Film Institute Player (IFI Archive Player),⁷ the Northern Ireland Screen's Digital Film Archive player (DFA),⁸ the British Film Institute (BFI) Player⁹ and BBC iPlayer¹⁰ provide audiences with virtual screening rooms to view their shared audiovisual history on demand. But the creative reuse of moving image archive material remains problematic, beset by questions of copyright law, rights clearance and "fair dealing" exceptions, and an audiovisual archives sector without a standardised framework to open up access to this material for creative reuse by young

filmmakers working in education and in the community. Young filmmakers cannot access this material without significant funding from film funds or broadcasters to pay commercial licensing fees.

The Make Film History project has addressed this problem by developing a new, sustainable model for the creative reuse of archive material for non-commercial use by young filmmakers, supported by our project partners, the British Film Institute, BBC Archive Editorial, the Irish Film Institute and Northern Ireland Screen. Our partners have contributed almost 300 films to the scheme as well as staff time for research and digitisation of assets, and operational and technical support.

The project asks: "How can we license moving image archive material for creative reuse by young filmmakers for education, training and community use? How can the creative reuse of this material increase community engagement with hidden cultural heritage and strengthen communities through new work created by emerging filmmakers reflecting on the past and developing talent for the future?"

Funded by Britain's Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Irish Research Council, the project has created a new research network around the creative reuse of archive material by young filmmakers, developing new partnerships between academic researchers and a range of non-academic partners: audiovisual archives and cultural heritage organisations who preserve and license this material; schools and training providers developing new talent in the creative industries; and regional film festivals who bring the local film community together. To date, 75 higher education institutions and eleven film festivals and training organisations have signed up to the scheme.

Ithaca

The H2020 ITHACA project (Interconnecting Histories and Archives for Migrant Agency) focuses on migration narratives in the past and present,

analysing them in a rigorous historical framework, whilst adopting an interdisciplinary, comparative and transnational approach. To this end, it involves a consortium of eleven partners from countries of origin, transit and destination of migrants in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Eurasia. The project deepens the various forms of narratives on and produced by migrants, considering them as agents of social change, historically retracing causes, transformations, and effects of migration narratives, and highlighting silenced voices.

At the heart of the project is the creation of a digital platform collecting databases on past and present migration narratives, and offering media tools and applications to policymakers, practitioners, and migrants. ITHACA is also committed to organising participatory, artistic and training activities to foster the engagement of key stakeholders, including scholars, archivists, museum curators, practitioners, NGOs, returnees and potential migrants. These actions aim to raise awareness, inform the public debate, and disseminate thoughtful recommendations for present and future policies of relief, empowerment, inclusion, and participation.

There are about 50 researchers involved in the project: they are representatives of different disciplines, such as history, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, linguistics, archival science and communication. ITHACA has received funding from

the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (GA no. 101004539). We are also establishing institutional partnerships, especially with NGOs, national and international organisations, as well as museums and cultural institutions (for instance, with the Musée National de l'Histoire de l'Immigration of Paris).

Reel Borders

The Reel Borders project studies the different ways in which films imagine borders. How do they contribute to, complicate or contest hegemonic understandings of borders? One of the driving motivations behind the project was that film is often overlooked as a site of struggle for important societal issues and that it seemed particularly relevant to address this in relation to borders, as they have an important symbolic dimension. The different sub-studies in the project concentrate on (a) border imaginaries in films, (b) cinema culture practices and (c) participatory film practices. These sub-studies are articulated quite differently in each of our border cases: Ireland and the UK; Spain and Morocco; and Turkey and Syria. At the moment, we are five researchers (but not all full-time) and we received funding from the European Research Council (Starting Grant). Our main partners are academic institutions that host us during fieldwork in the different border regions.

2. What role does the audiovisual archive play in the project? How do you understand and use the archive, both theoretically and practically? What kind of methodologies do you use?

Archive/Counter-Archive

The audiovisual archive is central to our project. Our primary concern is with media art, documentary, and independent film and video archives as they exist in different communities and circumstances. We are concerned with intangible archives that exist within a range of situations: traditional memory institutions, artist-run centres, communities, homes/private life. We are particularly aware of the urgencies for preservation of film, video, and community heritage in various artist-run centres and media distribution organisations, where undervalued media works and collections by women, Indigenous, queer, and media makers of colour are deteriorating and vulnerable to continuing erosion. Under-funding and other limitations on archival expertise and human resources have restricted priority to these understudied and neglected materials.

Traditional archives have invariably been shaped by ideological and political narratives about a nation's history, in Canada, as a white European settler colony. But, as we argue, they are also shaped by contestations, theorisations, and practices of the archive that come from feminist, queer, and Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour (IBPOC) scholars, archivists, and activists, who have provoked a reconsideration of the authority given to the archive and of what the archive contains. This legacy of contestation helps us consider the emergence of counter-archives, which are often linked to community archives that emerged from counterculture and social justice movements of the 1960s and 1970s.

The notion of the counter-archive puts the emphasis on the political, resistant, and community-based nature of minoritised communities' engagement with archival materials and protocols. Counter-archives disrupt conventional narratives and enrich our histories. They embody not only a

theoretical approach to conceptualising archives but also a focus on modes of practice—practices that resist the universalising force of dominant techniques of documentation and standardisation at work within most institutional archives, libraries, and museums. Counter-archives seek to challenge the hegemony of traditional archival institutions that have historically neglected or marginalised women, Indigenous peoples, LG-BTQ2+ communities, communities of colour and immigrant histories—and the audiovisual materials produced by or documenting these communities.

Archive of migrant memories

The Archive of migrant memories was created out of the necessity to collect, share and acknowledge the everyday stories of people who, through a combination of choice, determination, and external forces, decided to leave their country in search of a new future, and eventually settled in or transited through the Italian peninsula. The Archive's aim since the beginning has been to invite researchers and migrants to produce participatory oral, written and audiovisual narratives so as to enable migrants to familiarise themselves with collection, archiving and dissemination practices related to their own stories and testimonies. This participatory process has brought Italians and non-Italians together not just for academic research but for a unique ethical and political project that aspires to turn transnational migration into a shared collective heritage.

The idea of compiling an archive of audio and visual memories made by and for migrants came out of the joint effort of a group of field researchers, refugees and asylum seekers originally from the Horn of Africa, together with schoolteachers and cultural operators interested in making *migrant memory* a valuable *shared concern* for all. Through

the daily welcoming and care of immigrants at an Italian school in Rome, and the decision to base teaching methods and materials on the lived experience of transnational mobility, learning Italian was conceived as a necessary *survival* measure for migrants who wanted to honour the memory and dignity of their migratory journey to Italy. Narrating their own story soon became a way of recovering from the anguish of the journey, and of expressing their personal needs and desires.

Our previous educational experience comes from a collaboration with *Medici Contro la Tortura* (Doctors Against Torture), who worked with us on the first attempts at recording stories of migrants and asylum seekers, including accounts of traumas they suffered on their journeys or in the country of origin, transit or destination. With the active participation of migrants in the creation of listening groups as opposed to face-to-face encounters, we gradually reconstructed their life experiences (including traumatic ones) and transformed them into materials for sympathetic listening and self-reflection. Through a combination of public and private funds, and the input of media experts who joined our volunteers and researchers, we began organising events and exhibitions and creating participatory video-testimonies and documentaries.

We have explored the communicative and community-building potential of the audiovisual materials as a mediating tool in a multicultural and multilingual context of learning and the exchange of experiences. We have screened our audiovisual works to small audiences, schools, community centres and university groups, and we have made them available to migrant communities and social networks. In this way, the Archive has begun its *migration* to public forums and media.

Make Film History

The project focus is the creative reuse of the audiovisual archive by young filmmakers in education. Through the practice research of student projects,

young filmmakers critically engage with film and social history and create their own responses to found fragments of audiovisual history.

Once licensed by an educational institution, over two hundred films can be downloaded by tutors for use in the classroom, on campus or online. Students browse our website, choose an archive film to respond to and request download access to the film, integrating clips of up to two minutes into their own documentaries.

Ithaca

The audiovisual and, more generally, digitised documents have a crucial role in the project, especially in the construction of the ITHACA digital platform. To better inform the present, what we need is to create an adequate corpus of well-archived oral, written, and audiovisual sources, records, and archival collections to back in-depth studies of internal and external historical mobility across Europe and in the Mediterranean area. Many more attempts have to be made at archiving, digitising, cataloguing or preserving direct migration sources in the European context at the levels of government, NGOs, migrant communities and individual stakeholders.

One of the main aims is to save fragile and endangered sources of the recent past or of the present. At the same time, the response to this task cannot be *emotional* or disorganised. The task of meticulously compiling documents, ordering them into coherent categories, establishing detailed and well-structured archives, and developing exhaustive research aids is vitally important.

Beyond the urgent need to preserve the narratives of migrants and on migration, we want to enhance them for the production of historical knowledge as well as for more effective development of policies to govern migration flows. The basic idea is to build a digital archive that preserves and analyses memories of migration, both for scholars and for practitioners, policymakers and migrants themselves.

The idea is to allow the analysis of migration narratives in an open perspective, in time, space and their roots, to facilitate the identification of recurring elements, diversities and ruptures that will enable more effective research, reflection and policy making.

Reel Borders

We have started building databases of *border films* for each of the three cases, quickly realising that this exercise also involved thinking about demarcations of national versus transnational cinema, professional versus amateur cinema, documentary versus fiction, etcetera. The question of the archive comes in because it allows one to obtain a more diverse view on films that are relevant to the border imaginaries, beyond the traditional canon and beyond the usual lists. In the case of Ireland and Northern Ireland, for instance, we discovered that there are a lot of relevant films that form part

of amateur archives and we are now using this as a starting point to question and complicate dichotomies of amateur and professional filmmaking in border imaginaries.

For example, we are collecting in-depth interviews with the directors of the Irish Film Institute (Kasandra O'Connell) and the Digital Film Archive of Northern Ireland Screen (Francis Jones), as well as with promoters of independent initiatives that have been focused on collecting and archiving amateur film and audiovisual footage of crucial historical periods and places (such as the Prisons Memory Archive¹¹ and the Belfast Archive Project¹²). By putting in dialogue these institutional and non-institutional archives, we analyse the different policies for acquiring, preserving, disseminating, and representing amateur films in both Ireland and Northern Ireland, looking at the role they play in building a notion of cinema memory in post-conflict societies and young nations.

3. What relationship does the archive have with the experiences of migrant people? What kind of material do you have, and how do you work with it?

Archive/Counter-Archive

Our case study on the Winnipeg Film Group (WFG) is a great example of how Archive/Counter-Archive's approach in terms of counter-archives can both reveal the erasure of the contributions made by minoritised communities and further help create new materials. Founded in 1974, WFG is central to any history of independent and experimental filmmaking in Canada. The A/CA case study is extending the preservation efforts WFG itself has undertaken in recent years, digging deep into their archives to identify those films sidelined and subordinated in conventional histories of the organisation—in particular, films made by Indigenous people, the Black community, and people of colour, many of whom arrived as migrants to Canada, whether directly or as second or third generation children of migrants. These works have the capability of transforming our understanding of the city, its cinema, and the cultures that converge here. In addition to identifying and preserving these works, an artist-in-residence will work with and in the WFG archive, having carte blanche to both create and critique, to recognise the possibilities that WFG opened up for independent filmmakers over the course of its history, but also to acknowledge the exclusions and elisions that complicate and compromise these achievements.

The WFG artist-in-residence program builds on other successful residency programs that A/CA case studies have featured. Archive/Counter-Archive partnered up with Library and Archives Canada (LAC) to create two inaugural artist residencies there. Jennifer Dysart (autumn 2019) and Nadine Valcin (winter 2020) worked with LAC's archivist Caroline Forcier-Holloway to activate, remediate, and engage with AV collections at LAC and to create artworks that imagine new counter-archives. Dysart's work examined various films from the colonial era that often end up

in archives without information about the Indigenous people and communities shown. Her goal was to identify the families shown in the Keewatin Missions film, housed at LAC, which shows the Catholic archdiocese covering much of central and northern Canada in the 1950s. Nadine Valcin's film, *Origines*, is a two-channel media installation that uses footage from Claude Jutra's 1963 film *À Tout Prendre* (Take it All) to explore his then lover and film co-star Johanne Harrelle's complicated quest for identity as a Black Franco-phonie woman in Canada.

Since we are located in Canada, it is imperative for us to adopt an intersectional perspective that takes into consideration the genocidal displacement of Indigenous peoples through the settler-colonial histories of English and French European conquest. To be clear, Indigenous peoples are not migrant communities—and yet the legacies of colonialism have effectively positioned Indigenous people as minoritised communities in Canada. "From Birchbark Scrolls to Online Activism: Archives at Urban Shaman and Shoal Lake 40 First Nation" explores the relationships between archives, art, and Indigenous First Nation Shoal Lake 40 in relation to the city of Winnipeg and Anishinaabe archival protocols. This case study activated archives through praxis-based and relational Indigenous methodologies that oriented AV material through the land and its histories, expanding the archive beyond traditional colonial forms of documentation. In July 2021, Urban Shaman hosted Angelina McLeod's show *Mide-wigwas: Transmediating*, curated by Daina Warren and Jessica Jacobson-Konefall. This exhibition came out of McLeod's research at the City of Winnipeg archives and the Glenbow Museum in Calgary. At the City archives, she assessed over 1,000 photographic images for the exhibition, considering Shoal Lake 40 First Nation's relationship to Winnipeg in the present and

future. In early 2020, just before the pandemic, McLeod visited the Redsky birchbark scrolls at the Glenbow Museum, analysing the audio files created by James Redsky, explaining the scrolls' narratives, meanings, and histories.

The Arnait Video Productions case study focuses on a collection of films and production materials created by Arnait (originally the Women's Video Workshop of Igloodik) in Nunavut. A team of A/CA researchers from Queen's University, through their Vulnerable Media Lab, have been collaborating closely with the Arnait video collective of Inuit women to remediate and digitise the Arnait archive and keep it alive and well. The collection encompasses thirty years of stories, interviews, production materials, and documentation. We have been working to make the digitised films and media content available to the collective and, in consultation with Arnait members, to make some content accessible to the general public.

A/CA is committed to further centring Indigenous methodologies and archival protocols. In 2021, we held a Summer Institute, led by Stacy Allison-Cassin, focused on "The Practice of Indigenous Metadata and Knowledge Organization." These discussions will be further developed during the *Indigenous Archives Gathering* event set to take place in October 2022, organised in collaboration with the ImagineNATIVE film and media festival, in Toronto. The *Indigenous Archives Gathering* will bring together Indigenous artists, film and media specialists, archivists, curators, Knowledge Keepers, Elders, memory workers and scholars from across Canada. Themes of traces and care will be explored through three perspectives: 1) access; 2) engagement; and 3) activation of archives from different First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities from multiple regions. The central focus of the *Indigenous Archives Gathering* will be media art archives and related intangible archives that exist within traditional memory institutions, artist-run centres, communities, and homes/private life. The aim is to foster conversa-

tions and allow participants to share knowledge and identify needs, best practices, and experiences about the current state of Indigenous media art archives in Canada. The presentations and outcomes of this gathering will be published as a part of A/CA's publication series.

Archive of migrant memories

In our project migrants are considered the main actors of the narrative and of archiving practices. They are involved not only in the narrative phase, but also in the dissemination of the sources they have produced or gathered. We have texts, multimedia self-narratives, participatory video products, academic writings concerning our methodology and projects. We use them in dissemination events such as school workshops, public screenings, academic conferences and public events. Sometimes we also use materials that were produced and archived in the past in order to produce new materials that acquire new meanings in the present.

Make Film History

We have several films reflecting the migrant and the refugee experience.¹³ These have prompted very interesting responses from students, including *The New Road* (2020), a graduation film made by Iranian refugee Sinai Noor in the M.A. filmmaking course at Kingston School of Art. Here is an excerpt from the film's IMDB synopsis: "The film glimpses the life of an art student who fled to the UK in 2018 and a Hungarian who fled to the UK in the 1950s—both representing the common refugee experience in modern times."

Ithaca

Mainstream and scientific accounts of forced migration and, in particular, irregular human mobility toward Europe are often plagued with over-simplistic, fragmented, and at times even rhetorical representations of the relationships between migrants travelling across borders and the

wide array of facilitators, *passeurs*, and/or smugglers accompanying them along these routes. According to most of the narratives disseminated by the media, by policymakers but also by some studies, migrants are depicted as irrational and basically desperate and passive actors exploited by hardened and unscrupulous criminals whose profile is often overdetermined by the perspective of criminal justice and border control measures. Alternative narratives, however, especially those collected from migrants themselves, point to the intricate web of social and cultural processes, relations and dynamics underlying border-crossing, as also reflected in the complex array of relationships that migrants and facilitators actually establish with each other. Hence, the ITHACA project will identify similarities and/or discrepancies between these two different narrative fields, paying specific attention to the need to incorporate migrants' perspectives and experiences into the production of knowledge about the phenomenon.

The materials collected on the ITHACA digital platform will be chosen from a wide range of typologies and chronologies: from the Middle Ages to the present, and from historical documents, mostly preserved in the archives, to interviews and recordings made by migrants themselves.

Reel Borders

In Ireland, we work mostly with amateur film archives made in Ireland and Northern Ireland, but also in England and North America as they have been the main destinations of Irish migrants since 1845 due to the Irish Potato Famine. In the case of Morocco-Spain, we have video archives made by migrants from Guinea Conakry, Côte d'Ivoire, and Cameroon who have crossed the borders of Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Ceuta, and film and video archives of independent filmmakers made on both sides of this border. What unifies such a diverse sample of archives is their capacity to reveal the common colonial past and to understand the *migrant archive* as a site for negotiating the geopolitical locations of cinema beyond nation-states. For the archives coming from the migrants who record their attempts at border crossing, these archives mean a *mobile* practice of both filmmaking and placemaking. In any case, the archive might be seen as a transversal site of memory that criss-crosses nations, periods, and cultures and that therefore addresses a global history of mostly forced mobilities.

4. In what ways does the project encourage engagement with hidden or lesser-known audiovisual heritage and how does it expand the notion of cultural heritage? How do your archival practices challenge official narratives about nationhood, history, and identity?

Archive/Counter-Archive

Our work with the Regent Park Film Festival (RPF) is a good example of the kinds of projects we have been developing with diverse communities in Canada. RPF is a community partner and part of the research network of A/CA. It is a non-profit cultural and educational media arts organisation grounded in Canada's largest and oldest public housing neighbourhood, which hosts Toronto's longest running (since 2003) free community film festival. RPF is a staple in the community. In addition to an annual festival in November, it offers year-round screenings, an annual School Program, workshops, and community events at no cost.

RPF is dedicated to showcasing local and international independent works relevant to people from all walks of life. The key constituencies that RPF serves are IBPOC communities, people with low incomes, people who live in public housing, and Regent Park residents, many of whom were part of different historical waves of immigration to Canada, including contemporary migrants. The films RPF presents break stereotypes and show that no one place or person has just one story. This past November at their 19th Annual Film Festival, RPF featured a panel, "Disrupting the Archives," that showcased the works of A/CA's two artists in residence at LAC. The panel featured the artists along with the archivist at LAC who supported them. RPF also screened the media arts works through their digital platform.

To commemorate its 20th anniversary in 2022, RPF commissioned four local IBPOC artists (prioritising gender diversity and those from Regent Park or similar communities in Toronto) to produce digital media arts works that engage with the history of Regent Park. The basis for their artistic engagements will include visual source ma-

terial such as archival footage of Regent Park (e.g., documentaries, news coverage, home videos from residents), as well as narrative media forms set in Regent Park (e.g., short and feature films, web series episodes, music videos). The commissioned projects will have opportunities to use film source material and audiovisual archives as part of their new artistic work. They will creatively respond to any film source material (with permission) or tell their own story that is rooted in the history of Regent Park.

The project is titled "Regent Park Made Visible" because it showcases and artistically engages with the history of a quickly changing community through visual responses. The title also references RPF's last artistic commissioning project, Home Made Visible (2018-19), where six works were commissioned to engage with digitised home movies of IBPOC Canadians and reflect on the power of how archives shape our relationship to the past and shared identities on colonised land. The 80 preserved films are in a collection at the Clara Thomas Archives at York University.

Archive of migrant memories

To build a migrants' archive together with the actors of migration has been for us not only an educational choice but a sign of welcome to the newcomers to our society: to empower their testimonies so that they can be spoken and heard, and to ask our fellow citizens simply to listen and allow them to express themselves and to be publicly recognised. Our objective has been to keep records, and leave public traces, of the transnational identity that has slowly but steadily been manifesting itself in Italy in the recent past. It is for this reason that the Archive has been for us a tool for change and an instrument of "memory action", a space in which narrated and shared memories may

become circular, reciprocal, narratable, and where established dichotomies (citizen/migrant, lawful/ clandestine, us/them) are openly questioned.

Through the involvement of bigger institutional archives—such as the ICBSA (National Institute for Sound and Audiovisual Heritage) in Rome (see below)—we also try to attract the interest of institutional bodies and civic communities—especially those playing a key role in shaping public memory—in the *minority* but no less substantial stories of our contemporary condition. The aim is to hold central institutions more accountable for decentralising, denationalising, and decolonising the public sphere in order to make it more inclusive and aware of the memory gaps between communities.

Make Film History

By working with our project partners, we make films about hidden or lesser-known audiovisual heritage accessible to young filmmakers in education, not just for viewing but for inclusion in their films. We work with the curation teams of our project partners to make the selection of films as diverse and inclusive as possible and are responsive to requests from students and staff at participating institutions. We are about to add another 80 films from BBC Archive on the themes of the environment, diversity, and mental health and neurodiversity.

The project has created a new research network around the creative reuse of archive material by young filmmakers, developing new partnerships between academic researchers and a range of non-academic partners, audiovisual archives

and cultural heritage organisations that preserve and license this material, schools and training providers developing new talent in the creative industries, and regional film festivals that bring the local film community together.

Ithaca

To dismantle the current public debate, often based on rhetoric and prejudices, the ITHACA project intends to investigate the narratives on migrations and migrants produced by different actors (policymakers, media, humanitarian workers, public authorities).

The identification, description and access to archives, both international and institutional, are crucial in this sense. But also extremely important is the exploitation of sources associated with the present, such as audiovisual platforms or social media. If we want to understand migration as a long-term phenomenon, we need to compare *traditional* historical sources with those testimonies that are used today to transmit and define the experience of and about migration.

Reel Borders

By working with participatory filmmaking we hope to expand the scope of stories and voices when it comes to border areas. This will complement and complicate more institutional narratives about the border. At the same time, we want to use the project to explore how film can be a way to develop future imaginaries, thus also complementing the heavy focus that (institutional) archives usually put on historical memory and national identity.

5. How do you approach mediation and the transfer of knowledge to society at large? What are the main outreach initiatives designed for social engagement? How do you work with the archive in educational and artistic contexts?

Archive/Counter-Archive

A/CA fundamentally aims not only to preserve and activate existing archives, but also to think about the future of AV archives. In that context, we are training the next generation of archivists through internships at our partner institutions and developing guidelines and best practices for the preservation of counter-archival materials. Similarly, we are currently writing a report that will analyse current federal and provincial/territorial policies and funding programs for community-driven archives that include audiovisual archives in Canada. This report will lead to policy recommendations that will help support the evolving media archive ecosystem.

Furthermore, we are digitising and historicising various films and videos that are currently deteriorating—in effect helping these works to find a new life and to be shown to new audiences. Several of the films we helped preserve are now back in circulation and can be shown to new audiences, be it in classrooms or in theatres. Several of our researchers are creating various pedagogical and educational guides (led by Chloë Brushwood-Rose in the Faculty of Education, York University) that will enable these films to be used in classes of any topic and level, in both secondary and postsecondary settings.

Archive of migrant memories

In the past ten years the following outreach activities for wider social and cultural engagement have been pursued:

The DiMMi Project

DIMMI (Diari Multimediali Migranti/Multimedia Diaries by Migrants) is an Italian storytelling contest aimed at collecting and giving publicity to stories by people from foreign countries who live

or have lived in Italy or in the Republic of San Marino. The contest has a dual objective: soliciting, collecting and preserving migrant self-narratives, and contrasting anti-migration stereotypes through multimedia representations of personal experience.

Originally supported by the Region of Tuscany in 2014 with the aim of raising citizens' awareness and promoting their social involvement, in 2018 it became a national project financed by the Italian Agency for Cooperation and Development for issues such as peace, memory and intercultural dialogue. The DIMMI project has resulted today in the creation of a growing collection of migrants' diaries housed in the Archivio Diaristico Nazionale (National Diary Archive) at Pieve Santo Stefano, where each year a DIMMI Prize is awarded.

AMM has participated in the DiMMi project from the start, cooperating in the collection of testimonies and life stories and sharing its own experience of collecting, producing and preserving audio and video self-narratives.

The Mutti Prize

Cultural policies encouraging film production (along the lines of the Arts Council in the UK) and direct investments by television channels (such as Channel 4, Artè and ZDF) are rare in Italy, and with few exceptions there is virtually no support for cinema from the global South. The Mutti Prize for foreign and Italian filmmakers of migrant origin was created in 2008 by Officina Cinema Sud-Est in collaboration with the Bologna Cineteca with the dual aim of promoting new forms of self-representation through films and documentaries and of stimulating the development of more inclusive cultural policies.

The prize is awarded to foreign and Italian authors from Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the Middle East, Central and South America who have lived in Italy for at least twelve months. The prize is the only Italian venture of this kind for migrant and/or foreign filmmakers resident in Italy, created to support art and inclusion in the field of cinema. The prize helps to select a film project presented by a migrant or foreign director who receives 18,000 euros to support film production.

For foreign filmmakers or Italian filmmakers of migrant origin living in Italy it is almost impossible to find funding for their work.

AMM was invited to join the Mutti prize in 2012 after one of its migrant directors, Dagmawi Yimer from Ethiopia, won the prize that year.

The FRMM-Migrant Memories Network Collection

The Migrant Memories Network Collection (FRMM) hosted at the ICBSA (National Institute for Sound and Audiovisual Heritage) in Rome contains audiovisual material on transnational memory and mobility in Italy. The collection originated with an agreement signed in 2012 between the Archive of migrant memories, Circolo Gianni Bosio, the University of Naples "L'Orientale" and the Central Institute for Sound and Audiovisual Heritage. In 2021, the agreement was renegotiated between AMM, Circolo Gianni Bosio, the Global Humanities degree program at the University of Rome La Sapienza, the National Diary Archive of Pieve S. Stefano (DiMMi project) and the Central Institute for Sound and Audiovisual Heritage.

The main objective of the FRMM is the preservation of the audio and visual heritage produced by intercultural and transnational projects in a network of different individuals involved in recording social and cultural interactions currently taking place in Italy. The collection focuses specifically on the preservation of audio and video documents created by people with different historical, cultural, social, and linguistic migration experi-

ences, which are constantly growing in number in the country. The collection comprises memoirs, narratives, music, writing, sound and video testimonies—produced by foreign communities in Italy and by individual migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers—with the aim of making them part of the national heritage accessible to the public once they are included in the national archiving network of the National Institute and its preservation and evaluation system.

ITHACA H2020 project

More recently, AMM has received a grant from the EU's Horizon2020 programme, in the context of the ITHACA project *Interconnecting Histories and Archives for Migrant Agency: Entangled Narratives Across Europe and the Mediterranean Region* (g.a. 101004539). In this project, AMM is in charge of coordinating research activities concerning present migration narratives, with partners in France, Jordan, Italy, Morocco, the Netherlands, and Tunisia; it is also carrying out specific research on current migration with migrants in Italy and Tunisia. AMM focuses its research on self-narratives and participatory methods. The research is based on a series of *narrative circles*—group workshops involving five to eight people each—with people from Afghanistan, Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa. These *narrative circles* aim to foster collective exchanges of life stories between migrants and Italians involved as researchers, practitioners, and activists. Particular attention is paid to the participants' reflections on the meaning, significance, and effects of self-narratives in their experiences.

At School with the Other

Drawing on our experience in 2013 of producing an educational toolkit based on one of our films (*Va' Pensiero. Itinerant stories*, Dagmawi Yimer, 2013), AMM has devoted part of its activities to disseminating migrants' self-representation in schools, through self-narrative laboratories ai-

ming at reproducing the same participatory process adopted with migrants in the classroom. The core idea behind AMM's workshop is that experiencing self-narratives, and the complex relational dynamics they entail, increases one's ability to listen carefully to other voices.

Make Film History

Since our launch symposium in September 2020, we have run a series of events that have taken three forms: industry panels and workshops, exploring the key themes and research questions of the network; creative workshops and virtual film camps where young filmmakers can engage with archive material on short film projects, mentored by professional filmmakers, and regional archives and training organisations can pilot creative reuse in a festival setting; and follow-on events where some of the work produced through the project has been screened for the local community.

Some of the films produced have been showcased at film festivals in Cork, Rathmullan, Glasgow, Leeds and London. As part of last year's BFI Future Film Festival, 605 people attended an online workshop led by Turner Prize-winning artist and filmmaker Jeremy Deller, which demonstrated the value of the Make Film History collection and led to new institutions signing up to the scheme. We held another sold-out workshop yesterday with filmmaker Charlie Shackleton at this year's edition of the festival.

Ithaca

The development of a digital platform will highlight the importance of network analysis in historical appraisal, allowing new levels of complexity and reaching a wider public. This last point un-

derscores the historian's importance as mediator, a particular element that has emerged recently with the development and spread of so-called digital public history. Within ITHACA, social science researchers, archivists, curators, humanitarian workers, migrant and refugee associations and digital developers collaborate together. Crucially, this interdisciplinary approach will be associated with a solid and rigorous documentation search.

Another fundamental initiative planned in the ITHACA project is the so-called Policy Council System: the project results will be verified each year with actors outside the academic community, in particular policymakers, practitioners, migrants, and experts on migratory phenomena from civil society. This will allow academic research to interact more effectively with society and help to *translate* research results into policy briefs and recommendations, i.e., operational proposals to inform the migration policies of governments and practitioners.

Reel Borders

Since we are still in the early stages of the project we are not able to give a lot of details on this yet. However, in one sub-study of the project participatory processes are central and the aim is to collaborate with people living in border areas, with community organisations and local filmmakers. Our objective is to develop outreach initiatives that emerge from these participatory processes. We will make short films together with participants about their border experiences and we plan to develop ways to make these films visible to a wider audience as part of film festivals or an (online) exhibition. In this way, we can hopefully bridge the scientific, artistic and educational domains.

6. At this point, could you summarize some of the main findings of the project?

Archive/Counter-Archive

Here, we focus on how the partnership network has yielded results at this halfway point to demonstrate the critical importance of cross-pollination across archival, artistic, and academic communities. Partner organisations have been crucial to the work happening on the project and are embedded at all levels in the structure of our case studies and working groups, training opportunities, and knowledge mobilisation. Collaboration is imperative to the project. Embedding partner organisation involvement in all aspects of the project has helped to bridge conversations and shared concerns for the future of AV preservation and archiving across the sectors engaged.

Partner organisations of different sizes have different needs. The challenge has been how to balance and respond to their needs. For example, due to COVID-19, ArQuives (Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives) has needed another space for their MITACS postdoctoral researcher to carry out archival work while following safety protocols. We connected ArQuives to another archival space at the Sexuality Representation Centre at the University of Toronto (overseen by Patrick Kielty) so that research could continue safely this year.

Training and mentorship are cornerstones of A/CA. One of our research findings is that training must be designed to attend to the complex ethical and political issues of protocol, cultural property issues, and intersectional claims tied to notions of national heritage. Despite COVID-19, our trainees have been provided with training in Indigenous protocols, metadata creation and knowledge architectures through annual workshops. Via the Vulnerable Media Lab at Queen's, students are being trained in the latest best practices for AV digitisation, archival digital asset workflow, and long-term storage. Our academic partner, the Film and Photography Preservation and Collec-

tions Management program at Toronto Metropolitan University, has organised annual media rich internships at memory institutions and archives across Ontario and Quebec. Whether at a small artist-run centre or at LAC, these placements have given students hands-on training in managing AV assets, including the management of their records and metadata. Our Summer Institute, "Locating Media Archives", in spring 2021 provided 37 students from across Canada with training in Indigenous preservation protocols, and the ethics surrounding AIDS activist archives and vulnerable media. In total, 20 academic courses have been developed alongside 12 seminars, workshops, and master classes.

One of our most significant research findings has come from our Indigenous case studies to help us understand the complex protocols of Indigenous archives. The Indigenous Methodologies Working Group identified a need to gather Indigenous artists, academics, archivists, curators, Elders, and community members to build on the A/CA network and research mandate, to delve deeper into the state of Indigenous archives. This includes a focus on ancestral knowledge, storytelling and memory keeping, as well as strategies of archival preservation and activation within community or memory institutions—embodied and/or intangible. A successful grant was co-written by the team to support the aforementioned *Indigenous Archives Gathering* in 2022.

Archive of migrant memories

Over the years, we have come to the conclusion that besides basic aspects of life such as income, housing and documentation, one of the *basic needs* of migrants is a context of mutual intercultural understanding. Our participatory activities clearly show that the quality of narration, the kind of details migrants are willing to share about their live experience, and the possibility of expos-

ing unexpected and non-conventional viewpoints on migration in the public sphere strongly depend on a careful arrangement of an inclusive listening context.

Make Film History

We are currently writing a Creative Reuse Guide, which will summarise the main findings of the research network phase of the project. The project won the 2021 Excellence in Unlocking the Value and Potential of Archives Award from FIAT/IFTA, the world's leading professional association for those engaged in the preservation and exploitation of broadcast archives.

Ithaca

The project has been running for a year and in 2022 it will begin on-field activities and discussions with stakeholders and policymakers. What has already emerged in the first year of work, unfortunately hampered by the pandemic situation, is the importance of thinking from a multi-disciplinary perspective. The ICT design of the digital platform, which is now at an early stage, has succeeded in bringing together scholars from different disciplines: their research perspectives will come together in a unified architecture and will therefore dialogue with each other. The outcomes of this challenge are what we will measure and reflect on over the next three years of the project.

Reel Borders

We are just at the start of a long data collection period, so it is unfortunately too soon to talk about definite findings. However, having concentrated mainly on the Irish and Northern Irish border so far, we have managed to find some promising paths for our research.

The border between Ireland and Northern Ireland, where we have started our research, is a unique space for the experience of film. Despite its troubled history marked by the tug of war between Ireland and the UK, religious sectarianism and the violence associated with paramilitary groups, the porosity of the border and its underlying social relations have consolidated local cultures related to film. Many associations promote film festivals, film screenings and many other activities in these border towns, allowing many people to travel across the border to attend these events.

On the other hand, we have realised that the lack of a sustained local film industry in Ireland until the 1970s contrasts with the fruitful work of Irish amateur filmmakers, who were producing snapshots of the most relevant events of the beginning of the 20th century in pre- and post-partition Ireland. These amateur collections today constitute a social and historical heritage to understand the local film culture in Ireland, which diverges from the visions of some foreign companies, like British Pathé or Topical Budget, who were framing (and visually *promoting*) a divided Ireland even before the partition. In this sense, the research by scholar Ciara Chambers is seminal.

7. What will happen to the archive once the project is finished?

Archive/Counter-Archive

The fate of the films, video, and other documentation preserved and activated by A/CA—including the project's own records—remains an open and active question for the project leadership team. Although the digitised films are preserved in perpetuity at the Centre for Advanced Computing at Queen's University, they are not publicly accessible. The oft-ignored vulnerability of born-digital collections is a concern for A/CA and the reason that it abandoned its initial plans for a digital online portal, as its main planned research dissemination outlet was unstable given the changing nature of digital portals and platforms. The rapid obsolescence of digital platforms (e.g., websites, CD-ROMs) has led A/CA to move to a media rich book series that has media elements that will be planned for longevity.

Each case study is dealing with questions of how to archive its collections and how to find local and specific solutions to the problem of preservation. Most of the major independent film and video distributors in Canada – CFMDC, Vtape, VIVO, WFG, GIV – are members of A/CA, and each have become “accidental archives”: over time, the media works that they distribute have often become the sole copy, raising complex legal, ethical, and resource questions. These organisations have been wrestling with these issues for some time, and we hope that the knowledge-sharing and training facilitated by A/CA, including a report on copyright and IP by the Cultural Policy, Intellectual Property, and Ecology Working Group, will have positive long-term effects for the sector.

The vulnerability of AV media and its documentation is a dilemma for the entire independent AV sector in Canada, where state funding supporting artists and researchers has rarely considered questions of archiving. The Canada Council for the Arts supports the production and dissemination of art works, but not their preser-

vation, which is deemed others' responsibility. Yet archives in Canada, from the national through provincial, regional, and municipal levels, are severely under-resourced. Community archives are particularly vulnerable, partly because most archivists are trained in paper-based archival methods, which often render AV materials outliers in collections. Moreover, the resources required for proper archiving of film, video, and digital media—specific to each format and physical material—is beyond the capacity of most small archives. A basic goal of A/CA is to bring people from across the archival sector (from LAC to local archives) with the film and media arts community (from TIFF to artist-run centres), together with academic faculty and students, in order to share expertise, resources, and experiences. The sustainability of this knowledge network will be monitored over time. We are hoping that the A/CA project will not simply end but continue as a network managed by the Independent Media Arts Alliance (IMAA) or one of the other partners on the project.

Archive of migrant memories

As a small association we have established robust relationships with other institutions in order to guarantee the preservation of our archive in the long term. Both the FRMM-migrant memories Network Collection at the ICBSA in Rome and the Ithaca superarchive meet this goal.

Make Film History

Our research network funding finishes in March 2022 but the project will continue and the licensing agreements for the archive material do not expire until 2030, sustaining the life of the project.

Ithaca

The archive is designed to survive and continue to grow. The consortium has already foreseen

that the ITHACA digital platform will continue to live and grow: at the end of the project, the project coordination will keep the platform running and a special tool (MigrApp) will allow anyone who logs on to record and deposit their *narrative of/* about a migration. The idea is to create an open project and, above all, a prototype: it is an experiment at the service of the scientific community and society, which we expect will be expanded in the future and shared with other similar projects thanks to the principle of interoperability of data that inspires us.

Reel Borders

In a way, our project is making its own archive with the films created in the workshops, which re-make and give new meaning to the archives

of others. In this sense, we can talk about the *migratory* nature of the archives enabled by the hyper-mediatisation of images in today's digital landscape—which means that we can contribute to creating a site for new generations to renegotiate previous discourses of (symbolic, territorial) borders by taking advantage of the polysemic value of the archives for the imagination of new futures.

We also hope to have screenings of these films at the end of the project and to circulate them in other border communities. This is still an idea that we have to work on, but our aim is to plan film exhibitions (with the consent for the screening of these films by each author) and to create an archive of new voices and perspectives on borders. ■

| conclusion

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In the preceding pages, we have orchestrated a meeting of scholars to share theoretical, ethical and material concerns and their manifestation in research experiences with moving images on migratory phenomena. Our main objective has been to create a space for international academic exchange, an enriching experience that generally takes place at conferences, but that has been drastically reduced in recent years due to the restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering the effect that this situation may have had on these projects, in terms of impact and dissemination of research outputs, our purpose has been to shed light on recent projects where archival research and creation are central and an awareness of the openness of archival production and access is always kept alive. Although most

of the projects presented here tend to be centred around a national framework due to the nature of the sources of funding that support them, their attention to migration and their investment in local contexts have transnational repercussions. As noted in the introduction to (Dis)Agreements, in line with Giovanna Fossati's observations on global archival practices (2021), we believe that scholars and professionals involved in archival practices need to pursue inclusive collaboration when developing new epistemological and technological approaches to digitisation and the activities related to the different collections in order to correct numerous asymmetries. These inclusive collaborations call for interaction not only between the Global North and the Global South, as Fossati proposes, but also between institutional

and non-institutional archives, as can be inferred from the projects described here. As noted throughout the dialogue, unofficial archives like these become *counter-archives*, not necessarily in the sense of being anti-official archives, but rather in their comprehensive effort to cover a wide range of highly vulnerable film and media materials and practices that have traditionally been excluded/occluded from institutional archiving processes and official historical records and narratives. Among other interests, these initiatives show a particular concern with documentary, independent and amateur films and videos, productions by Indigenous collectives—particularly present in Canada, with Winnipeg Film Group or Arnait Video Productions—or videos created by migrants arriving in Italy, on which the Archive of migrant memories is based.

Our experience with the Archive of Cinematic Mobility has raised many of the questions posed to our colleagues here, particularly those related to the return of these materials to the communities concerned and the social knowledge transfer to society at large. It is revealing that these experiences—despite their geographical, economic, institutional and developmental differences—constitute a clear example of how film studies on human mobility and cinema—which include migration processes, exiles and refugees—advocate for direct critical intervention in the public space. Under these terms, research is not only about searching, retrieving, cataloguing these materials and sometimes making them available online, but also about reciprocity and dialogue between academics, archivists, artists, students, activists and grassroots communities. Specifically, we can identify a clear commitment to participatory dynamics that often include the use by young people

of film materials that are unknown or inaccessible to them outside the collaborative contexts these projects have built.

At the same time, a crucial aspect that concerns both the migrant archive and these projects is the preservation of materials and their open access through digitisation and online dissemination. Initiatives such as Making Film History are only possible thanks to a strong institutional commitment and previous efforts by film libraries. However, legal issues establish limitations on the duration and geographical scope of the project. The vulnerability and complexity of digital collections therefore seem to require a constant dialogue between different archives, film libraries and researchers for their long-term preservation.

Finally, the emphasis on the role of academic institutions as mediators or facilitators raises important ethical and political questions—and, in the case of minority communities, access, protocols, and archival management have been the subject of significant debate (see O’Neal, 2015). As the Archive of migrant memories explicitly points out, these projects also question institutions in the sense that an inclusive public sphere (sensitive to the differences between vulnerable communities) can only be articulated “through the decentralization, denationalization and decolonization of archives,” in the words of Gianluca Gatta and Sandro Triulzi. As has been discussed in these (Dis)Agreements, the migrant archive not only reveals different colonial legacies whose histories connect with current migratory phenomena, but also allows the construction of a pluralist national and cinematic memory. In conclusion, migrant archives constitute a space for negotiating geopolitical locations of cinema beyond nation-states. ■

NOTES

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The different conversations took place by e-mail from October 2021 to February 2022. For the Archivio delle memorie migranti (AMM), Alessandro Triulzi wrote the answers to questions 1, 2 and 5 and Gianluca Gatta those of questions 3, 4, 6 and 7.

- 1 Available at <https://humanidadesdigitales.uc3m.es/s/cine-de-movilidad/page/inicio>
- 2 Available at <https://counterarchive.ca/welcome>
- 3 Available at <https://www.archiviomemoriemigranti.net/about-us/?lang=en>
- 4 Available at <https://ithacahorizon.eu/>
- 5 Available at <https://www.archivesforeducation.com/makefilmhistory>
- 6 Available at <https://reelborders.eu/Home>
- 7 Available at <https://ifiarchiveplayer.ie/>
- 8 Available at <https://digitalfilmarchive.net/index>
- 9 Available at <https://player.bfi.org.uk/>
- 10 Available at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer>
- 11 Available at <https://www.prisonmemoryarchive.com/>
- 12 Available at <http://www.belfastarchiveproject.com/>
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ARCHIVES-IN-THE-MAKING, VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES AND MIGRATION: OUTREACH AND INNOVATIVE SCHOLARSHIP IN AUDIOVISUAL-BASED RESEARCH PROJECTS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Abstract

The (Dis)Agreements section brings together four research projects and an association engaged in the preservation, creation and restoration of archives, especially audiovisual archives, connected with migratory phenomena and subaltern communities. The dialogue with the researchers of these initiatives—based in Canada, Italy, the UK and Belgium—covers the origins of these projects and explores their goals, their theoretical and ethical positions, their relations with grassroots communities, their outreach activities and the difficulties associated with preserving the materials included in their archives in the digital era. In general, these projects take a critical approach to traditional archives, functioning as counter-archives whereby the institutions operate more as facilitators than as repositories or proprietary organisations.

Key words

Audiovisual archives; Research projects; Border cinema; Migration cinema; Vulnerable communities; Outreach.

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ARCHIVOS EN CONSTRUCCIÓN, COMUNIDADES VULNERABLES Y MIGRACIÓN: TRANSFERENCIA E INVESTIGACIÓN INNOVADORA EN PROYECTOS Y ASOCIACIONES AUDIOVISUALES

Resumen

La sección *(Des)encuentros* reúne cuatro proyectos de investigación y una asociación comprometidos con la preservación, generación y remediación de archivos, fundamentalmente audiovisuales, vinculados a fenómenos migratorios y comunidades subalternas. Este diálogo mantenido con los/as investigadores/as de iniciativas transnacionales afincadas en Italia, Canadá, Reino Unido y Bélgica recorre los orígenes de estos proyectos y explora sus objetivos, aspectos teóricos y éticos, las relaciones con comunidades de base, las actividades de transferencia y las dificultades de preservación de unos materiales, per se precarios, en el entorno digital. En líneas generales, estas propuestas parten de una aproximación crítica al archivo, configurándose como contra-archivos en los que las instituciones operan como entidades facilitadoras, antes que como depositarias y propietarias.

Palabras clave

Archivos audiovisuales; proyectos de investigación; cine fronterizo; cine de migraciones; comunidades vulnerables; transferencia.

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