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Excavating the Photo-Archive: Exploring Memory and Healing through the Creation of Radical Archives

This thesis has been submitted on this day of April 15, 2015 in partial fulfillment of the degree requirements for the NYU Global Liberal Studies Bachelor of Arts degree
ABSTRACT

This project considers the use of photographic archives in works of two contemporary artists, Diego Cirulli and Ayana V. Jackson, because their work results in the production of radical archives. Radical archives depart from traditional archives in curatorial intention, form and function to reveal narratives previously unexplored. Through the analysis of the archival artwork of an Argentine artist and a North American artist, this project explores the radical archive as a mechanism of repurposing knowledge and memory transmission in two specific regions that bear unique histories of oppression. These artists provide alternatives to the often problematic nature of traditional archives. Archival art is best understood by analyzing its construction, performative aspects, and engagement with public feelings. The production of radical archives through archival art has therapeutic effects that enable healing processes in response to histories of trauma and mis-representation not only for the individual artist but for the community. This work is a contribution to the developing study of radical archives in terms of memory and historical representation.

Keywords: archive, photography, radical archive, memory, archival art, public feelings, performance, cultural/collective memory, Cirulli, Jackson
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INTRODUCTION

The photo-archive possesses a dual nature. On the one hand, the material content is weak. The celluloid or paper surfaces are sensitive to light and heat, and thus susceptible to deterioration. Expert conservationists are hired to painstakingly review the material and secure it in humidity-controlled rooms.

Yet these images are also powerful. The archive has been carefully chosen for filing and storage and the images capture fragments of past moments that have been deemed important or worth remembering. They may have been selected because they capture what will soon disappear, or what may have already. Or because they provide visual evidence of a moment that has occurred.

In the archive, photographs are powerful instruments working within a larger historical apparatus or order. In later years, its contents, these evidentiary moments of historical disclosure, will be used to illustrate stories for the future about the past.

As daylight begins to fade on an autumn afternoon in Buenos Aires, lights are plugged in to illuminate decaying photographic material that stretches over a long white table. An entire archive had been thrown into the trash and film negatives had been decomposing quickly in the
humidity of the garbage bags which contained them. Among these photographs were images of Carlos Menem drinking champagne a year before the economic crash of 2001, the riots in the street that followed, and Nestor Kirchner in 2005 removing dictator Videla’s portrait from the Casa Rosada.

In 2008 Diego Sandstede, an Argentine photographer, was asked for permission to use his photographs from the archive of *Revista 21* (Magazine 21) to accompany interviews for a book. When Sandstede got to the storage unit however, the archive was gone. The 500,000 negatives were found in garbage bags, where they had been sitting, unorganized and vulnerable to the moist environment. Since this discovery, under the guidance of conservation experts, students and volunteers have done the tedious work of conservation—sifting through the contents with gloves, brushes, tweezers, and magnifying glasses to preserve what is left of the archive.

What remains between patches of “hongos” (fungus) that has eaten away at the celluloid surfaces, are fragments of images meant to cover the political and cultural history of Argentina between 1998 and 2006, until digital photography largely replaced the use of film. “This archive,” Sandstede explained in an interview, “is our social memory.”

The process of The Recovery and Conservation of *Revista 21* reflects the impulse to preserve tangible memory within institutional archives. You might say that if the photos were left to deteriorate, so would the memory. The impulse to preserve order and record the past is inherent, but with every step towards archivization, we must also ask *why?* What is it about these images that we want to preserve, what stories do they tell and why is it these stories that are saved? Is the archive’s content really the “social memory” of a particular group? These questions
are worth examining especially concerning archives which contain images, often unquestioned due to the medium’s association with truth.

Not only do archivists need to acknowledge the criteria for their selections, these very selections, in order to be communicated to society at large and succeed in defining a collective memory, need recontextualization beyond the archive. Resurfacing photographs outside of the archive transmits memory in a way that engages a present and active dialogue with the past. The recovery of the Revista 21 on one level resurfaced its contents literally. But the recent publication of its contents in photo-books, magazines, and the few photos on display for the 2014 annual show of photojournalism in Argentina, brought its contents into present discussion. This is a process that should occur with more archives, without them having to hit the trash first.

Artists, scholars, cultural theorists, and activists have taken on the responsibility of intervening within or departing from traditional archives to answer questions of mis-representation with the creation of radical archives. Radical archives depart from traditional archives in curatorial intention, form and function to reveal narratives previously unexplored. Radical impulses look to questions like the following: to what extent are we prepared to allow histories to remain or be created within the institutional archive? What are the ways we can unlearn the archive?

By the end of the 20th century contested archival materials began to appear with more frequency in works of art. The artist's intervention into the archive is the primary point of departure for this work. By excavating the photo-archive, artists begin to awaken ghosts buried in the past. My thesis looks into the social, cultural, and historical reasons that trigger the
archival impulse in contemporary art—how do we explain the urge to use archival materials in certain works of art? What drives these artists towards archival materials in each context and in what ways are their works in direct response to archival narratives? Or are they simply explorations in memory—a look backwards to find answers for histories of trauma?

The resulting works of art which employ the use, manipulation, or arrangement of past materials often resemble archives themselves. The process is a transference of materials from one reservoir of knowledge to another, and in that transference the meaning of the materials are subject to change. In this paper I consider these works of art as belonging to the still loosely defined concept of radical archives. Through my study of two artists who follow this process with photographic archives, (Diego Cirulli and Ayana V. Jackson) I want to explore how is it that the archived images original meanings change as they are manipulated, copied, and re-introduced in a new space.

(Right) Photographs from the archive of las Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo, Argentina. (Left) Art Installation, Diego Cirulli: 21 105 significaciones y resignificaciones de los espacios de la memoria
What is the affective response of the transference from the archive to the radical archive? What does this tell us about the medium of photography itself? Upon answering these questions, this project looks to ways in which the radical archive can be further validated as an essential tool for investigating history and memory. Is there more grey area than we think where the archive and the radical archive overlap?

The traditional way of looking at archives leaves a lot to be desired. Recent theories and research in the field proposes a paradigm shift that alters the tradition. The aspect of this thinking that is pertinent to this thesis is a collection of writings that together, provide a new platform from which we can look at the archive. It is necessary to look at the work of archivists Terry Cook and Joan Schwartz first because, by introducing the concept of “self-conscious archivization” they take steps towards upending problematic archival traditions. To begin to form a bridge between notions of the institutional archive and the concept of radical archives (specifically radical archives formed through works of contemporary art) I look then to Anna Maria Guasch, Cheryl Simon and Hal Foster who pioneered the study of archival art.
It is then necessary to cover theories of representation and memory applied to photography, which allows my transition into two case studies (Diego Cirulli and Ayana V. Jackson). Both artists (the first Argentine, the second from the United States) intervene in photographic archives, make their own selections, and present the selection through alterations of their various fine art mediums. These are instances beyond self-conscious archivization in which individuals (not archivists but artists, photographers, human rights organizations and cultural theorists) extract material from the archive and resurface it through a different medium to answer personal and collective questions of identity, memory, and history. Their interventions result in a series of new images, constructions that bring past and extra-artistic material to the artistic realm. The reappearance of photographs in both Cirulli’s installation and Jackson’s exhibition, awakens ghosts locked within the original archive—opening the artifacts to individual interpretations and readings beyond the original archivist’s intention. I argue that the process and product of each work (however different in context and content) taps into both the artist’s and the viewer’s anamnestic tendencies, urging a process of mnemonic, epistemological, and even identity re-significations.¹

I explore Cirulli and Jackson because their work follows a similar formal process, strategy and structure which encourages the examination of archival contents in extra-archival contexts. This recontextualization is essential if we are to encounter storehouses of collective memory apart from the archive alone. I look to scholar Diana Taylor to categorize these works as explorations in performance as a tool to transmit memory and knowledge, and finally using Ann Cvetkovich’s theory on depression, classify the works as radical.

¹ For further reading on these concepts refer to Michel Foucault, Maurice Halbwachs, Anna Maria Guasch, Diego Cirulli, and Diana Taylor.
archives—explorations in memory that open doors to processes of individual and collective healing.

By placing Taylor and Cvetkovich in conversation, I was also able to draw connections between two seemingly isolated contexts—post-dictatorial Argentina (Diego Cirulli) and the devastating legacies of colonialism explored by Ayana Jackson. A portion of Taylor’s extensive work on the Argentine Dirty War explains how the crisis developed not in isolation, but in part from the country’s entry into a global economic system (xi). The same global system, in fact, that Cvetkovich blames as a major cause of depression—otherwise known as the rational response to current global conditions. The work of Diego Cirulli Ayana V. Jackson are radical archives which offer alternative mechanisms of memory consideration within their various contexts—works that explore how the artist as well as the larger community can begin to navigate these depressed conditions.
Chapter I. FROM THE ARCHIVE TO THE RADICAL ARCHIVE

Archivist Terry Cook, affiliated with the Association of Canadian Archivists has done the most work in identifying a paradigm shift in archival science that comes with rethinking the way historical material is collected and why. Cook’s 2002 paper written with Joan M. Schwartz, “Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory” points out the failure of archivists and users of archives to recognize the extreme degree to which the profession possesses power over knowledge, identity, and memory. Schwartz and Cook do not suggest that archivists and keepers of records are in pursuit of possessing such power, however they do claim that the failure of the profession as a whole to explicitly acknowledge this power and negotiate it has dangerous consequences. This seemingly unchecked power has been an object of scrutiny amongst scholars and cultural theorists. Schwartz and Cook explore this critique and demand that it be applied within the field itself. Once the archival field acknowledges this power, they can begin to actively and creatively re-consider their own approach to the accumulation and preservation of records.

Schwartz and Cook bring to light an important issue centralized on the accumulation of historical knowledge and the legitimacy of that knowledge. It is essential that archivists re-evaluate the nature of their profession— the keeping of records rests on the declaration that the accumulation process is neutral and objective, yet it is quite the opposite— subjective and biased. Although in many cases (not all), control over memory/history is not the intention, it is an unavoidable byproduct of the archival impetus to order, understand, or regulate a social phenomenon. Today, while scholars are questioning and debating this power archivists are not,
and regardless of intention the fact that an archive is created demands a reflection of the archivist:

> Archival professionals and archive users have been slow to recognize the nature of archives as socially constructed institutions, the relationship of archives to memory and truth, the role of archives in the production of knowledge about the past, and, above all, the power of archives and records to shape our notions of history, identity, and memory. (Schwartz and Cook, 8)

Cook finds a solution where archival science meets postmodernism. A postmodern approach to the archive would inherently be a “self-conscious” one, in which archivists self-identify as active agents creating historical memory, not neutral keepers of unbiased historical information. Cook claims that if archivists embrace this role, historians and archive users will have expanded possibilities for looking into the past (The Archive is a Foreign Country: Historians, Archivists, and the Changing Archival Landscape, Cook).

While archives are created with the intention of providing evidence for our memories and histories, absent of a self-conscious approach, their function is counter-intuitive. In the introduction of scholar Anna Maria Guasch’s book *Arte y Archivo 1920-2010 Genealogías, tipologías y discontinuidades*, she considers mnemonic processes in relation to the archive. Apart

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2 Published in the 2000 volume of *Archival Science*, Cook’s paper, “Archival Science and Postmodernism: New Formulations for Old Concepts,” positions the archive in the post-modern context, claiming that this context calls archivist to rethink his/her ways. Departing from the birth of the practice in a nineteenth century positivist climate, the post-modern archivist views archival materials not as passive objects to be collected but as part of a larger virtual network that constitutes human memory and history. The paradigm shift he explains here, is the translation from the archive to the archivist or the “record” to the “recording context.” Essentially, he explains the archival field suiting itself to the postmodern context. The postmodernist tone is one of “ironical doubt” which takes no object of series of objects at face value. The postmodernist takes such (perceived/unquestioned “natural”phenomenon) (archives) and declares them to be unnatural.
from *mimesis* (imitation) and *anamnesis* (the act of remembering) the existence of archives themselves actually permits a process of forgetting—*hypomnesia*. The existence of the archive and our willingness as a society to accept the myth that archives are neutral reservoirs of information, actually enables a hypomnestic process. We are sure that our history is recorded in a dusty archive, so why excavate it? Why question it? If the archive escapes the post-modern lens, if it is left unquestioned, how can we resist this collective memory loss?

The extent to which an archive is compiled self-consciously is not correlated directly to its connection to historical truth. Acknowledging that the archive’s neutrality is a myth is the point of Schwartz and Cook’s paper, yet they do little to explore ways in which societies as a whole can deal with this myth other than calling on archivists to re-evaluate the implications of their profession and adopt self-conscious methods of archivization. In demanding that archivists account for their power, Schwartz and Cook claim that the marginalized stories of history might be accounted for. Yet for a society to resist the hypomnesia that the archive seems to enable, the responsibility cannot lie exclusively within scholars and archivists. In the quest for a more neutral and diplomatic account of memory, the task belongs to individuals aside from the archive. Since the late 20th century, artists have taken on this responsibility. The recent impulse to resurface, manipulate, and use archival materials in works of art has provided a crucial and unique memory space hitherto denied by the archives of institutions. It may be impossible to de-institutionalize and neutralize archives, yet the creation, through artistic processes, of an opportunity for the discussion of their material in a space that lies between the memory of institutions and that of individuals expands borders of historical understanding beyond the institution.
Schwartz and Cook explain that archives are generally “seen by academic and other users, and by society generally, as passive resources to be exploited for various historical and cultural purposes…[yet in reality] are established by the powerful to protect or enhance their position in society” (1). While this holds true for many, the claim that archives are always ‘established by the powerful to enhance their position in society’ ignores the creation of archives by institutions who do not occupy positions of power. The creation and accumulation of archives by human rights institutions in Argentina, The Abuelas, Hijos, and Madres de la Plaza de Mayo for example, seek to de-construct the hegemony of past dictatorships and provide evidence for histories that have been ignored. I find the archivization done by human rights institutions, with specific and public missions in mind, is one example of the “self-conscious” approach to archivization suggested by Terry Cook, it may even be a radical approach. In Chapter V, I will explore the notion of the Abuelas archives, and the use of their archival photographs of Argentina’s desaparecidos, in artist Diego Cirulli’s installation 21 105 significaciones y resignificaciones de los espacios de la memoria (21 105 significations and re-significations of spaces of memory).

The problem is the incomplete-ness of self-conscious archivization, the dominance of hegemonic histories, the lack of underrepresented histories, and a solution remains unclear. We do know however, that in response to this phenomenon, individuals have found the need not to destroy the archive or discredit it, but to produce more archives—radical archives. A recent conference at NYU considered the subject to include “archives of radical politics and practices; archives that are radical in form or function; moments or contexts in which archiving in itself becomes a radical act…” (NYU, radicalarchives.net). This notion is similar to Kim Schwenk’s
view that archival methods become radical when they stand for comprehensive collecting or value the underrepresented against a more conventional standard of archiving (Another World Possible: Radical archiving in the 21st Century, 1).

According to Schwenk, “radical” archivization reflects a process of preserving memory and history with the specific intention of representing equality, integrity, and justice by those who create it (1). Without stepping too far away from this definition of radical, for the purposes of this paper, I focus on the notion of archives as “radical in form or function” precisely because of their creation through visual art. That being said, I do think it would be valuable for radical archives to escape concrete definition because their virtue lies in the notion that they are free from any concrete criteria or system. To my understanding radical archives can be anything from a work of archival art to a personal memoir, to a series of interviews, to performances and happenings (processes which compile materials that can expand future understandings of history, not limit them). Most importantly, I propose that we look at the archive—both radical and traditional—as a locus of cultural translation that forever possess the possibility to take on new meaning through cultural exchange.

I exclusively look into the translation of photographic archives into radical archives because I find that photography as a medium provides the best tools to understand the archive in a post-modern context. I find archived photographs, more so than documents or records, worthy of study because of their ability to speak beyond the parameters of the individual archive regardless of whether or not they have been self-consciously selected. Photography is a transnational cultural practice— it consistently travels across borders, digital domains, contexts, and histories. The photographic object therefore, more so than letters or records which are bound
by language, possesses an ability to speak universally outside of the archive in which it resides. I will look into how artists both revere his power and undermine it through their manipulation of photographs and negotiation of them in the various contexts of their works. My exploration of photographs and the photo-archive as unique can be found in Chapter IV.

Material that crosses borders and carries affective power is a tremendous asset to artists who want to communicate emotion or feeling in relation to both local and global phenomena. Jackson and Cirulli both exploit this inherent quality of archival photos. Given each subject matter— a colonial exploration of the bodies that populate the african continent, and the victims of forced disappearances during the Argentine Dirty War— each archival photograph invites the viewer to recall dark past.

I found that it is worthy to explore how the choice to use archival photographs (a medium often associated with nostalgia, emotion, memory and forgetting) might be linked to melancholy or even depression. Susan Sontag writes that photography “transforms the present into the past and the past into pastness” (On Photography, 77). Once a moment is photographed, it is relegated to the past, yet in the past, it remains forever in a present moment. When a photograph is selected from the archive, while it is understood that the moment is from the past, because it is frozen and furthermore because it has been selected for an archive, the presentness of the moment, not the past, is what is preserved. Maybe it is this paradoxical presentness of past photographs that these artists find to be problematic?
I was led to Ann Cvetkovich’s work on depression and Public Feelings and it became clear to me that the impulse to use archival materials in art in many cases is symptomatic of depressed conditions. Cvetkovich’s work attributes depression not to biochemical imbalances, but histories of oppression, inequality, or injustice. Living in a time where the very source of historical knowledge must be viewed with skepticism, the impulse to dig up and re-present history is a natural instinct, the creative product of which, as well as process, is an exercise in healing—both on an individual and a collective level.

Through the creation of a radical archive the archivist (whether an archivist by profession, artist or any individual) walks through a moment in the past, confronts demons and ghosts, and repurposes knowledge so we might attain a more comprehensive representation of a phenomenon. These collections in turn, if they are shared with and available to the community at large, open doors to collective healing merely by offering an alternative means through which the past can be considered outside of the traditional archive.

Furthermore, I also look to the creation of radical archives in this paper as experiments in embodied performance. The reinscription of static archival objects into present spaces is an active process that offers new possible ways of remembering history. Performance in the work of Diego Cirulli and Ayana Jackson reflects each artist's exploration in healing within the depressed context in which they are working. Diana Taylor introduced the idea of performance as a way of transmitting knowledge and memory in her book The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas. Placing Latin American/hemispheric studies in conversation

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3 Cvetkovich, scholar and professor of Women’s and Gender studies, has produced a great body of work on the creation of counter-archives, specifically by the LGBTQ community in public history. <http://www.anncvetkovich.com/bio.html>
with performance studies, Taylor examines the relationship between embodied performance and knowledge production to open doors that lead away from traditional historical narratives.  

We learn and transmit knowledge through embodied action, through cultural agency, by making choices. Performance, for me, functions as episteme, a way of knowing, not simply an object of analysis. (Taylor xviii)

So what do performances, (acted through, in this case the creation of radical archives) teach us that the archive (or the dominant recorded narrative) does not?

Performance, understood as part of an ephemeral body of knowledge alternative to recorded history, can transmit memory, make political claims, and manifest a group or individual’s sense of identity (Taylor xvii).5 “If performance did not transmit knowledge, only the literate and the powerful could claim social memory and identity” (Taylor xvii). Where then, do the histories of these ephemeral performances, these radical archives lie? Taylor suggests performances are transmitted across a “non-archival system of transfer, the repertoire.” She suggests that while the archive (considering its common function as a power apparatus) denies agency, the repertoire (including spoken language, sports, language, ritual, performance, and dance among other things) requires agency. In other words, unlike the archive, the repertoire requires presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by “being there” for the performance. If we begin to take the function of performances as mechanisms of

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4 Performance studies developed in the 1960s, and thus embodies the conjunction of anthropology, theatre studies, and visual arts. Performance is not universally understood, performances register differently across cultural and societal borders, as do concepts of performance study (Taylor xviii).

5 As it is understood in the English language, “performance” doesn't quite capture the concept. Because of this, Taylor introduces the spanish usage of performance “performatico” or performatic, referring to a performative space (6).
memory and history transmission seriously, we expand the notion of what history itself is, who it belongs to and how it is remembered.

Belonging to either the archive (texts, documents, photographs, buildings, bones etc) or the repertoire (embodied practice/knowledge) all forms of knowledge seem to belong somewhere. The tendency to store knowledge is persistent. As performances that negotiate the transmission of knowledge however, I argue that archival art rests in a space between the archive and the repertoire. Archival art and the creation of new memory spaces, become a point of connection between the ephemeral and the concrete. This found space between the archive and repertoire may open doors to productive contact and transference between institutional archives and radical archives. In this way, radical practices are not necessarily in opposition to traditional archival standards at all. The production of radical archives actually opens new outlets through which we can expand the use of traditional, institutional archives through exchanges and communication.

Placing Ann Cvetkovich in conversation with Diana Taylor allows us to understand instances of memory and knowledge transmission through performance as natural responses to social, cultural or political conditions of a particular place. Performances as well as their subsequent affective responses should be understood as historical realities and must be considered when looking to the past. Furthermore, these two scholars made relevant the important question of how it is people come into contact with or experience memory. Can we participate in the transmission of memory through “being there” at a performance? Can we begin to cope with depressed conditions by engaging in the movement that performance offers while stepping away from the stasis of the archive? In the next chapter I will use a theoretical model to
explain the idea of how we can “come into contact with memory” through the archive.

Chapter II. THE PHOTO-ARCHIVE AND THE STATEMENT

Enunciating the Archive

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Michel Foucault proposes archeology as an analytical method of investigating history, discourse, and language. Foucault's theory is an attempt to explain the complexities of discourse metaphorically through archeology as the method whereby one can accumulate knowledge. By delving, or digging deep into the roots of language, Foucault examines how exclamations, “statements,” ideas and discourses emerge, and how those utterances are given *meaning* or significance.

Foucault uses his methodology to explain the idea of a ‘statement’ (The Statement and the Archive, 79). Statements are crucial elements in language and discourse, they are utterances with *meaning*. A statement occurs “whenever a number of signs are juxtaposed—or even perhaps—when there is a single sign” (84). A scrambling of letters on a page is a scrambling of signs. When those signs are arranged to form a word—Stop! for example, they can become a sentence. Signs only become a statement however, when they are uttered; “Stop!” is a statement made by someone at a particular time. A statement, through its own enunciation, becomes *significant* or meaningful as it actualizes the signs which form it in time and space.

Foucault’s discussion of statements is useful regarding the question of how and when archival material attains meaning. The ways in which archival material is *enunciated* has a direct relation to its significance in a particular context. Without being enunciated in one way or another, the contents of archives are as meaningless as a series of numbers or letters unorganized
on a page. Meaningless in the sense that they are passive—or have no meaning beyond the archive. Through enunciation however, these materials become active. The enunciation of an archive occurs when archival material is extracted from it and presented in a different context or form that is independent from its original meaning. Without enunciation the contents are limited to the singular intention of the archivists upon the moment of selection. The un-enunciated archive is problematic because it is taken too often as historical truth, a selection based on a presumed neutral or unbiased approach.

Foucault describes the ‘enunciative level of the statement formulation,’ as the moment when the statement is articulated. The statement must have a material existence (a voice to exclaim it, a sign to read it) just as an archive must be articulated in a certain way to gain meaning within its present context. With this in mind, the artists I discuss in the later chapters have done the work of enunciating their chosen photo-archive, resurfacing the photographs so they might acquire meanings independent from the original.

**The Photograph Pre-Archive, Archive, and Contra-Archive**

In the last decades of the 20th century, critiques of the archive elucidated the active and biased (rather than static and neutral) status of archives as mechanisms following an intellectually organized rationale, constructing rather than recording history and memory. John Roberts paper “Photography After the photograph: Event, Archive, and the Non-Symbolic” traced the journey of the photograph in terms of this context. Robert’s paper led me to identify three states of a photograph: pre-archive, within the archive, and post or contra archive. The first state refers to period when the photograph is in circulation and use, beginning from the moment
it is taken. The second state of the photograph begins when it has entered an archive, when it is no longer in need of immediate use. The final state, refers to the life of the photograph when it has been removed from the archive for whatever purpose (personal, artistic, institutional etc). The second state, the state within the archive, is a problematic one that often results in the creation of radical archives or counter-archives. This may have to do with the fact that the second state is indefinite—until the photograph is pulled from the archive, its meaning cannot exist outside of its historical a priori.

In Robert’s words, “The archive is what lies waiting for all images, particularly those that achieve no sustained circulation.” In this view the archive is essentially a symbolic void, where photographs rest, it is only when they are removed from the archive that meaning can be assigned or re-assigned to them. The state of the archive however is problematic not only in Schwartz and Cook’s terms in that the conception of ‘rest,’ ‘waiting’ or ‘meaninglessness’ is actually the perpetuation of a very strong and intended meaning that resulted in the creation of the archive, but also considering the fact that the state of the archive somehow robs the individual photo of its own meaning. In this sense, the “life of an image depend[s] on its ability to resist or defeat (however briefly) the inexorable pull of the archive” (295). In this way, the reinscription of photographs of past peoples in a new context impregnates that context with what we might call the “ghosts” of the individuals photographed. Where the ghosts had become irrelevant in the archive, or locked within a particular narrative, the act of extraction releases them, bringing them once again to life.

6 As I use these terms in this paper, “counter-archives” are always radical archives, however not all radical archives are counter archives. “Counter-archive,” as I use it here refers to radical archives that directly oppose a particular archive, or are archived with the purpose of revealing a counter-narrative to a specific original archive. Many radical archies, rather than being in opposition to an original or institutional archive can simply add too or compliment or offer another way of organizing the original material without being entirely in contrast.
The loss of significance within the archive, explains the impulse for re-inscription of the photograph in the contra-archive state. In this way, bringing photographs outside of the archive reflects the urge to give them life or new meaning. If we understand archival contents as objects whose meaning is limited to the context of the archival impetus, then the retrieval of photographs from the archive offers a process of “counter-archiving,” re-negotiating the photograph in a different time and space (Roberts). Counter archiving can be defined as a radical process that opens the doors to extra-archival interpretations of history.

Concerning the portraits of Argentina’s disappeared in the archive of the Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo, I will examine the changes that occur when Diego Cirulli extracts these photos, manipulates them, and then stages them in his installation. While the Abuelas archive does the important work of presently encouraging the consideration of memory in the wake of the Dirty War and in the fight for justice, the notion of the archive itself trapps these ghosts in the past. In Chapter V I will explore how Cirulli’s recontextualization of the photographs outside the archive encourages present discussion about the trauma of disappearance.

Ayana V. Jackson’s work echoes the same process but with different intentions. In Chapter VI, I will explore how Jackson’s retrieval and manipulation of photos from the Duggan Cronin archive in South Africa, serves the purpose of countering a problematic colonial narrative perpetuated by the original photographs. Each artist carefully delivers troubling memory to the present, and their excavations expand how this memory might be remembered outside of the archive.
Chapter III. MEMORY AND THE PHOTOGRAPH: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPROACH

“He who seeks to approach his own buried past must conduct himself like a man digging” - Walter Benjamin

Excavating Memory

In addition to the archive and its photographic contents, here I discuss memory as a third subject which requires excavation. Memory is a thematic and symbolic meeting point between the photograph and the archive—both only exist because of their associations with the past, and they also reflect one’s desire to capture/record a passed moment. Photographs are taken because there is an inclination that the photographed subject, at least in that moment, will never exist again, will disappear. We look to photographs to aid or complete our memories, and often times without question, the photographed image becomes the memory all together.

When the comparison is made between the construction and compilation of the archive and the human memory process, the archive user may understand the limitations of relying on archival material as historical truth. Memory, like an archive, does not dictate the past, rather reflects how we choose to remember the past, in what context, and in what way. Our memories are always selective, always changing. Genuine memory, Benjamin explains, requires a consideration of he who remembers, just like an archeological report not only “informs us about the strata from which its findings originate, but also gives an account of the strata which first had to be broken through” (Excavation and Memory). Memories are made, recorded and remembered in various social contexts, acquiring new meanings within each. As a unique practice, photography is inherently linked to questions of meaning making through memory.
Remembering and the Photograph

According to art historian John Szarkowski, what sets photography apart from other mediums first and foremost is that it is a process based on selection rather than synthesis (*The Photographer’s Eye*, 1966). The photographer is witness to a moment in time and selects when to shoot. The act of selection is crucial because it points to the fact that it is actually what photographs do not show us, that we must keep in mind when analyzing the material. Susan Sontag writes, “Photographs furnish evidence. Something we hear about but doubt, seems proven when we’re shown a photograph of it” (5). The conception of photographs as evidence is complicated; while the photographer selected a particular moment to capture, there is no way to connect the captured moment with a larger narrative.

At the same time, it is the visual and symbolic power of an image that many photographs have in spite of their context or photographer that makes them memorable. This was the case with many images emerging in the end of the 19th century. Beyond their limited intention, these memorable images not only managed to survive through space and time but were reproduced, edited, changed, and recontextualized (Szarkowski).

Among Szarkowski’s characterization of the five features that belong to photographs alone, three are useful here: *The thing itself, the detail, and the frame*. The thing itself refers to the “actual”—the photographer recognizes a real moment in time and chooses to make it permanent. However, the image was always a different thing than the reality itself. The detail refers to visual clues, objects, faces that entice the viewer to construct a story surrounding the image. Rather than making the photograph interesting or belong to a particular narrative, however, the details, because they are photographed, make the story real. Finally, the frame is
the tool the photographer uses to create relationships between subjects that may or may not have existed outside the reality of the photograph. The photographer chooses and eliminates what he/she wishes to create or destroy relationships between. The photographed image then, would “survive the subject and become the remembered reality” (Szarkowski, Introduction).

Considering Szarkowski’s definition, I find the dilemma of the archive can be crystallized when put in conversation with theories on photography. Unlike collections of records or objects, the photo archive is unique in that its contents appear to be real. Concerning memory then, collective memories in particular, the photograph’s understood connection to reality is problematic when it resides within an archive.

**Excavation in terms of Mnemonic practices**

As part of a recent segment on Photography and Memory, National Public Radio explored how the increasingly photographed world of the 21st century is affecting our memories. In “How to stay afloat in your endless stream of Photos,” Kainaz Amaria looks into the paradoxical relationship between photographs and memories. Images trigger memories, but this power is diminished when we don’t “review the pictures.” If an event is photographed, it is more likely to be remembered only if the photographs are studied, looked at, taken into serious consideration as objects and not just flashes of time that connect us to the past. Amaria suggests that in an environment in which we are overwhelmed with digital images, taking the time to physically print them out (rather than looking or scrolling on a screen) solidifies the memory.

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7 Amaria, working with Linda Henkel, a cognitive psychologist who researches how photographs shape our memories, explains that when you're looking at photos you are reactivating in your brain those mental experiences you had (reactivating the neurons that are involved in creating that memory experience). In a way, photographs activate the brain.
Album making, crafting with, sharing, discussing photographs, and studying them opens a space for close consideration of the image. Amaria calls this the “transference of the digital to the analog” a process which is crucial for the notion of remembering. I call these processes (printing photos, making albums, sending postcards etc) *excavations*, analogous the excavation of the archive or knowledge.

I also want to make the connection here to mnemonic practices and how they are in conversation with photography. Photo-snapping is a mimetic practice, the snapshot is taken to capture a scene and preserve it exactly how it was, a fragment of reality, an imitation. What happens however (especially today considering the ubiquity of cell phone cameras), is that while the camera captures the images, our minds do not. It permits a moment of forgetting. Psychologist Linda Henkel calls this the “photo taking impairment affect.” When we rely on an external memory device, our brains turn off, reducing the natural cognitive processes in experience and memory (National Public Radio: “Take Photos To Remember Your Experiences? Think again” 2014). This is one of the reasons why photographs too should never be taken as moments of historical truth—photographs are better used for their anamnestic quality than their mimetic nature.

Without enduring anamnesis, (the act of remembering), the mimetic replaces reality and gives way to a state of forgetting or impaired memory—hypomnesia. As mentioned in Chapter I,

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8 The notion of making the digital analog is paradoxical in today's digitized world. Today we digitize to preserve our images, no doubt an essential archival practice. However, if the digitized material is never engaged with, examines, or held as an object, it may be forgotten.

9 From the English Encyclopaedia: Mimesis: The imitation of reality in art/poetry. Mimesis: Mi·me'sis noun [ New Latin , from Greek ... imitation.] *(Rhet. & Biol.)* Imitation; mimicry. Anamnesis: An'am·ne sis noun [ Greek ..., from ... to remind, recall to memory; ... + ... to put in mind.] *(Rhet.)* A recalling to mind; recollection, remembering. Hypomnesia:, hypomnnesia, hypomnestic 1. A condition of having a weakened memory. 2. Abnormally poor memory of the past.
the existence of the archive actually permits a collective forgetting as a photograph would on an individual level—replacing reality rather than replicating it. Photographs are not memories, they are tools for retrieving memory.

Anamnesis is especially important in terms of collective memory. In developing the concept of collective memory, Maurice Halbwachs writes, “One cannot think about the events of ones past without discoursing upon them” (53). First, remembering requires a discussion that weaves individuals back through the past. Second, to discourse upon something means discussing it within a particular social framework or single system of ideas. Halbwachs suggests that no memory is possible outside of the frameworks of society, however he also suggests that while the collective memory emerges from a coherent body of people, it is individuals as group members who are the ones doing the remembering (22). With this in mind, the excavation process seems to work by, through digging through the past, striking a balance between the memories of groups/societies and the memories of individuals.

Halbwachs also mentions the importance of image sharing and showing when an individual is called on to remember a specific event or period of time. In this view, photographs are also understood as memory triggers, not memory replacements. Much of the debate about the role of photography and memory occurs in the consideration of histories of trauma. In his collection of essays Memory, Trauma, and History: Essays on Living with the Past, Michael Roth elucidates the importance of excavation in terms photographic memory and the debate surrounding it.

On the one hand there is the rejection of photographic representations of traumatic events entirely, and on the other hand the reverence of them as they provide clues to reconstructing an
incomprehensible past. Claude Lanzmann puts forth the argument that if trauma is represented, its horrors are ignored or perverted. Lanzmann was heard to have said that if he found rolls of film documenting such horrors, he would destroy them (Roth, 193). This view falls alongside the belief that to photograph an event is to fetishize it, where the resulting photograph will create a new memory, one that overshadows, diminishes or perverts what actually happened. On the other hand, Georges Didi Huberman is known for his opposite view; that photographs can be vital mnemonic clues especially in moments of trauma. Although they are not the truth, photos help us comprehend and piece the past together, help us to imagine the past (193).

I agree with Roth in his juxtaposition of these two opposing viewpoints, that in studying photography in terms of memory we need to take both approaches into account. He writes, “we must do the archeological work, we must dig into the images to help us think more precisely, to help us imagine and remember” (193). Understanding photography in its dual nature of offering both vision and blindness heightens our ability to produce meaning from the contents of a photograph, especially a photograph within an archive. In the next chapter, I will explore the impulse to extract archival photographs and recontextualize them, and how this process shows how artists understand the dual nature mentioned above.

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10 This example is from the representation of death and trauma during the Holocaust.
Chapter IV. THE ARCHIVAL TURN IN CONTEMPORARY ART

In this chapter I will discuss the Archival Turn in contemporary art as introduced in the writings of Anna Maria Guasch, Cheryl Simon, and Hal Foster. By drawing parallels between the social/political conditions seen to give rise to responses of archival art and the concept of depression as a public/social (rather than biological) phenomenon introduced by Ann Cvetkovich, I want to suggest that the creation of archival art can be understood as a mechanism for both personal and collective processes of healing. I will introduce two exhibitions of archival art I have chosen which display this idea paying specific attention to each artist’s formal use of archival photographs. I will also expand on my focus of photographs due to the unique position of the medium in terms of historical representation and disclosure, which I will explain with a discussion of photographic ambivalence and itinerancy.

The Archival Turn: Guasch, Simon and Foster

Anna Maria Guasch’s *Arte Y Archivo, 1920-2010: Genealogías, Tipologías Y Discontinuidades* is the most comprehensive and complete study of the points of connection between art and the archive between the 20th and 21st century. Guasch describes her book as her own cartography, and the word explains her work well. Her book is the first to trace the unexplored history and relationship between art and the archive over this period of time. She claims her study is also archeological in the Foucauldien sense, in that her exploration of the subject does not follow linear histories but also works laterally in her application of themes of psychoanalysis and use of metaphor to describe the archive.

Guasch writes that the relationship between art and the archive is both paradoxical and counter-discursive. On the one hand you have the institution, the discourse, the historical a priori
which enable the particular archive to exist, and then you have its encounter with various artistic practices (especially those which intervene and extract) which often prove to deconstruct the original narrative. The archive then, is a site “in which creative productivity occurs in conjunction with dissemination, indexicality and fragmentation” (Guasch, Global Art Archive).  

This paradoxical explanation of archive will be especially evident in Chapter VI when explore how Ayana V. Jackson’s exhibition *Archival Impulse* produces a counter-archive that works to dismantle the archive which inspired it.

Guasch classifies the use of the archive in contemporary art as a third paradigm which emerges out of the following two in avant garde art; the first is characterized by a formal rupture with past techniques, and the second, that of collage and a deconstruction of traditional canons. The third paradigm, “paradigma del archivo,” is distinct in form and intention and builds upon the former two.  

Art following the paradigm of the archive stretches across temporalities engaging an interaction between archival objects and their present viewers and opening a door to reconsiderations of how memory and history might be represented outside of the institution.

*Arte y Archivio,* traces the history of the use of the archive in creative production paying close attention to how the photographic archive was first explored in archival art. She writes:

The idea of photography as a kind of archive is present from the earliest days of photography. In this sense, beyond issues related to documentary, photography soon proved itself as a highly suitable instrument, according to the scientific mind.

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11 On the paradox of the archive: Guasch explains two “machines” of the archive. The first works under the scientific concept of the archive developed in the 19th century (concerned with order and following the principle of provenance) The second machine, makes relevant the “contradictory actions of storing and saving, and simultaneously, forgetting and destroying traces of the past.” Essentially, the first machine follows order, and the second deconstructs that order. Here, Guasch extends her definition of the archive to psychoanalysis; an organism of “preservation” and at the same time one of the destruction, oblivion, amnesia and deletion. (Freud’s “mystic pad”).

12 See Hal Foster below.
of the nineteenth century, for classification, and hence for fragmentation. (Global Art Archive)

Guasch follows Benjamin Buchloh’s first essays on artists using archival photographs in Europe, to August Sanders work in the beginning of the twentieth century. To Sander, among other artists of the time, photographs themselves had the character of impersonating the archive—any accumulation of images of the past has an archival quality. In the years following the second world war, photography became linked to the effects of trauma (discussed in the previous chapter). Then in the 90s, the medium became analogous to a new culture of memory beginning to enter the digital age, part of an ever-expanding archive of visual information.

**Following the Archival Turn: Explaining the Appearance of the Archive in Art**

Cheryl Simon’s 2002 essay “Following the Archival Turn” comes as the introduction to a collection of essays presented at the College Art Association in Chicago in 2001 discussing this shift in both conceptual and material components of contemporary art. The introduction defines the archival turn, as the increased appearance of archival materials in art beginning in the 1990s. Simon contextualizes the movement as a “late-stage manifestation of a postmodernist appropriation exercise” which draws its linguistic orientation from the theoretical writings of Michel Foucault and Walter Benjamin on the abstract nature of archival principles (Simon 100). Exhibiting a similar mistrust of the archive to that of abstractness explored by Foucault and Benjamin, the art of this period hijacks the form of the traditional archive in an attempt to redefine systems of memory and knowledge.
Simon explains the archival turn as a result of social factors and cultural conditions. The social factors include, *fin-de-siecle* / millennial nostalgia, cultural anxieties of post-modern time-space compression, the emergence of an evidentiary aesthetic in the information age, and the expansion of visual culture in both social and institutional life (Simon 102). The radical aesthetic climate of the end of the 20th century reflects the postmodern break with the dominant culture where the questioning of master narratives and metanarratives resulted in a crisis of representation. With the emergence of the digital age and the increasing ubiquity of photographic images, this period experienced changes in the notions of both time and space, as well as the relationship between the two, resulting in cultural anxieties as to how to negotiate this environment.  

The massive expansion of visual culture in this period (not only related to the internet but to advertising and media, left artists questioning traditional methods of representation. These factors extend to an institutional critique which manifests in the artist’s choice to bring archival materials (traditionally in an ‘extra-artistic’ context) into an artistic context. Beginning in the 1990s, this movement, usually involving appropriation, collage, installation, recycling and re-location, is at its core postmodern (Simon, 102).

**Archival Art: Method and Function**

Hal Foster analyzes a variety of artists’ works to reveal the complexities and quasi formulaic processes of archival art. *The archival impulse* that is at work in contemporary art, often translates into the finished work resembling an archive of its own. This art not only uses archival material but is archival in its own construction (Foster 5). Foster’s archival impulse is characterized by the attention to form and intention where elements of pre and post production

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13 The concept of post-modern time-space compression was introduced in 1989 by the geographer David Harvey in his work, *The Condition of Postmodernity. refers to any phenomenon that alters the qualities of and relationship between space and time.*
are as essential as the work itself. The archival artists Foster discusses are interested in delivering historical information to the present by making it physically appear in a space.

Foster looks closely at the work of Tacita Dean, Sam Durant, and Thomas Hirschhorn, categorizing the central similarity between their art as the tencenday to use fragmentary historical material (Foster 5). These materials, he explains, are selected because they call out for human interpretation. Interpretation is essential because it is exactly what is unavailable as long as the object resides within a particular archive. By producing a new archive, artwork such as this underscores the nature of all archival materials as “found yet constructed, factual yet fictive, public yet private” (Foster 5). Essentially, the use of archival material as artistic tools tends to produce a new archive that, because of its alternative form, function, and specific intention, is radial.

The creation of archival art—radical, non traditional, or even private archives—is seen as a reaction to the limitations of traditional/ institutional patterns of ordering historical knowledge that, by virtue of its content and construction, makes viewers both conscious of these limitations and proposes an alternative epistemology.

On the one hand, these private archives do question public ones: they can be seen as perverse orders that aim to disturb the symbolic order at large. On the other hand, they might also point to a general crisis in social law—or to an important change in its workings whereby the symbolic order no longer operates through apparent totalities (Foster 21).

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14 Dean is an English artist, Durant is a north american artist, Hirschhorn is a Swiss artist. All artists are living today.
The archival impulse (among artists) therefore, is born out of a dissatisfaction with the existing order of things and an attempt to disrupt or reconcile that order. The artists are transforming the archives from an excavation site into a construction site (Foster 22). This approach recognizes archival material as having a potential to produce new meaning rather than limited to being an object which can only be excavated within the discourse in which it was created. The transference of an excavation site into a construction site is especially dynamic when dealing with images, as we will see in the section below.

**Photographic Ambivalence as a Defining Factor of Post-Modern Weariness**

Cheryl Simon introduces Walter Benjamin’s ambivalent approach to photography as a crucial example of the post-modern weariness concerning the increasing self-consciousness of modern life (103). This self-consciousness is attributed to the “invention, commercialization, and institutionalization of photography in the late nineteenth century (103). This results in the photographic archivization of our world, our consciousness, and represents the aesthetization of our political life (a process which grows exponentially with the expansion of visual culture in the twentieth century). While Benjamin reveres photographs as “incisive reflections of reality” that cannot be gleaned from the naked eye alone, at the same time he maintains that photography is the “precise expression of [reality’s] demise” (103). Because of its ability to capture things as they are, photographs have gained a particular authority that usurps the power of our own perceptions and especially our memories.15

Adopting an approach to the medium where a strong feeling is coupled by an equally strong yet opposite feeling, the photographed world has left us somewhat motionless in terms of

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15The debate on the place of photography in the wake of or during traumatic events in the field of Trauma Studies is a testament to consistent ambivalent feelings towards the medium. See Chapter III.
ideological understanding. If this ambivalence lends itself to stasis or inertia rather than movement, we might classify this as a depressed state—a condition in which we are feeling stuck in the environment of modern life. How then do we move forward when we are stuck? Or does ambivalence open a door to more of a self-conscious approach—one where we accept the photograph, like the archive, while acknowledging its limitations?

John Roberts explains how photography first emerged as a truth telling medium with the ability to represent the past as historical knowledge. Overtime however, the relationship between photography and historical disclosure has become increasingly complex—today for example, we are more likely to assume a photograph has been photoshopped rather than understand it as an objective image of a past moment. According to Roberts, photography emerged as a distinct medium because it connected the viewer to a singular event—capturing a moment in time that would never exist again.

Today photographs are no longer connected to a singular event. On one level, Roberts claims this has to do with the fact that for the past 30 years or so, much of the debate about photography has taken place within the art world (2). The translation from its position as a truth telling historical medium, to that of artistic production, resulted in the current demise of the documentary image culture which dominated the 1920s-1980s. Within this culture, Roberts argues, the photograph resided in a symbolic space which today has become non-symbolic. The documentary image culture (photographic images that functioned as mechanisms for counter or radical culture, social change, etc) is increasingly replaced with images working within a “a multitude of photographic stylisms internal to artistic tradition” (284). In other words, the symbolic is replaced by the non-symbolic. The non-symbolic contrasts the symbolic photographs
of earlier years in that the images exist without any noticeable connection to external or historical forces. This shift is due in large part to photography’s ubiquitous presence in mass culture, the medium has been commodified—the photographs themselves become generic.\textsuperscript{16}

Roberts explains this in terms of the photo-archive. Today, when a photo is pulled from the archive it is often part of a process of “generic pre-selection” to add to a certain historical narration. Roberts uses the example of how photographs taken during the 1960s in the US regardless of subject, have merged into the non-symbolic imaginary of 1960s pop culture and 60s ness. Images of the moon landing, hippies, Martin Luther King Jr., and JFK constitute a “Generic (U.S.- led) mortification of history” which is absorbed by the general ideological conditions of the non-symbolic (285). Essentially, Roberts implies that in a photograph’s extraction from a particular archive it is automatically added to a non symbolic, manufactured extra-archival discourse, such as the North American idea of what 60s-ness looks like (285). He suggests this is a worrisome phenomenon because once an image reaches the non-symbolic, it appears to be free of the demands of conceptualization, interpretation, and judgement (284).

While this is often the case of a photographs extraction from an archive, I find Robert’s classification of automatic transition into the non-symbolic problematic. If we assume that photographs always exist within a particular discourse or archive or non-symbolic stream, we deny the autonomy of the photograph itself. If we wish to stay afloat in this uniquely post-modern world inundated by the ever-expanding archive of the non-symbolic, we need to

\textsuperscript{16} Writing in 1966, Szarkowski pointed to the “ubiquity” of photography even in the 19th century—by the end of the 19th century, with the invention of the dry-plate process, photography was practiced by thousands who needed virtually no formal training. These photographers evolved into the ‘casual snapshoters’ of the early 20th century. I also want to point out how Szarkowski explains how the history of photography has not evolved in a linear way (from the symbolic to the non symbolic, as Roberts suggests) but rather its movement “centrifugal.” He writes, “Like an organism, photography was born whole. It is in our progressive discovery of it that its history lies.”
dissociate the photo from the archive. Photographs themselves, whether viewed as culturally symbolic or non-symbolic, have proven that they can survive, repeat, be re-inscribed, through time space and culture. This characteristic of photography, or “Photographic Itinerancy” can help to complicate Roberts classification especially when concerning the archive.

In 2013, Eduardo Cadava and Gabriela Nouzeilles began their interdisciplinary project “The Itinerant Languages of Photography,” in hopes of developing a research network between artists, photographers, archivists, scholars, and curators on the international culture of image production. Itinerant languages refers to the various means whereby photographs speak/move across time, borders, and mediums. The central themes of the project include the circulation and exchange of images beyond social, ethnic, cultural, and national borders, the dialogue between photography and other mediums, and the relationship between photography and the archive (keeping in mind the paradoxical condition of the archive, where photographs are both mummified and set free.)

Archival art which uses the photographic archive engages all three themes mentioned above. The artist’s choice to use the material reflects his or her belief that photographs are means of communication, “moving signs” with the ability to travel from one context to another (Cadava). With each recontextualization and re-reading, Cadava and Nouzeille explain, the photograph will take on different significance. Returning here to the question of ambivalence in terms of leaving us feeling stuck with regards to photography, Michael Roth proposes that

\[17\] The project “Itinerant Languages of Photography” resulted in a multimedia installation with selections of photos, exploring their itinerant condition as the viewers move from room to room. Cadava and Nouzeille also published a book with a focus on latin america, speaking to the problematic dominance of american photographs in visual memory. Furthermore, Latin American Photography was chosen as a focus because the diverse body of images from the region are affected by the continent’s histories of heterogeneity as well as the influence of Europe. These histories, often neglected by the euro-american cannon, are made relevant through the focus of itinerant photographs and their transnational nature, concerning representation/authorship and its communication in global contemporary art.
accepting these very complexities of the medium can be productive. Roth argues, that “we should be less concerned with diluting its constitutive tensions than with learning how to live with its conflicted possibilities” (xxxi). Roth’s view on photographic ambivalence echoes my consideration of the archive. In a context driven by the post-modern skepticism that began to deconstruct the archive, how can we embrace complexities of these historical apparatuses in ways that can be productive?

**The Photograph: Pre-Archive, Archive, Contra-Archive**

As I discussed in Chapter III, the third state of the photograph in relation to the archive refers to its life once it has been removed from the archive for whatever purpose (personal, artistic, institutional etc). 18 On the one hand, the photograph may have been called up to add imagery to a preconceived idea or discourse. On the other hand, if upon being removed from the original archive the photo is used in a work of art or used to add to or create another archive, the photograph begins its life in a contra-archive or a radical archive. This form of radical archivization in contemporary art can be seen as the post-modern attempt to re-classify problematic or underrepresented narratives locked within the original archive.

The archival impulse shows us that in spite of the unchanging itinerant condition of photographs, within or outside the archive, artists find that in certain instances the photos need to be pulled out and demonstrated in a different way, resurfaced, or re-communicated. What results might be called a counter-archive, in direct opposition to it’s intended archival classification, or

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18 Three states of the photograph: pre-archive, within the archive, and post or contra archive. The first state refers to the period starting when the photograph was taken and its life in circulation. Once the photograph has entered the archive (the second state) we assume it is no longer in circulation or in need of use. (According to Roberts, the photograph itself has become non-symbolic in this state, and the archive that contains is but a productive machine for potential meaning, an unexcavated archaeological site. Finally, any circumstance in which the photograph is removed from the archive, constitutes the third state (post-contra archive).
simply radical— a collection of materials compiled to a specific end. Essentially, these radical archives attempt to make relevant, problems either caused by, or absent from a traditional archive.

**Solving Problems of Cultural Translation: Archival Art and Public Feelings**

Artists working within the archival turn are delivering archival material from the second condition to the third condition. I interpret this action in part, as an urge to construct identity and memory on national, personal, and cultural levels where institutions have failed. In bringing the photo from the second condition to the third condition, archival artists are resurfacing memory, creating dialogue, and creating a space for potential engagement between individual and collective histories. I want to suggest that the archives created by artists using archival photographs not only signify movement towards a solution for the artist personally, but can also offer insight into how cultures can recover or understand not only the postmodern condition, but also histories of personal and collective trauma by embracing the ambivalent nature of the archive.

Carol Payne and Jeffrey Thomas address the role of the archive in terms of constructing national identity. Thomas writes,

> We can look at the archive as a site of cultural translation within which artists’ interventions have the potential to transform the values and functions of the objects framed by the institution: what was once evidential has become symbolic through these processes of cultural exchange” (Simon 104).
Thomas highlights how artists interventions open the doors to re-significations of the memory locked within the archive. I find his classification of this process as a cultural exchange a positive one, which proposes a mutual interaction between archive and radical archive that valorizes both as legitimate reservoirs that can and should inform one-another. Nevertheless, the impulse to extract, intervene and create, highlights the dissatisfaction with the original archive, which I find to be symptomatic of a larger problem that concerns questions of cultural memory in affective terms.

By looking at the unique histories of oppression that led Diego Cirulli in Argentina and Ayana V. Jackson in the United States to produce works of archival art, I want to suggest that the creation of radical archives is at once a symptom of and therapy to depressed conditions. Placed in conversation with Ann Cvetkovich’s work Depression: A Public Feeling the creation of archival art not only serves to confront the said social factors confronting the end of the 20th century as well as today, but works on an emotive and psychological level to alleviate symptoms of depression. The artists explored in this paper reveal, in the construction of radical archives, an attempt to confront not only the problems which feed into the post-modern factors discussed in Simon’s paper, but also specific traumas that have resulted in depression on collective and personal levels.

The Archival Impulse as Both a Symptom of and Therapy to Public Depression

“Keyword Depression: ...I’ve been looking for forms of testimony that can mediate between the personal and the social, that can explain why we live in a culture whose violence takes the form of systematically making us feel bad.” (Cvetcovitch, 15)
Using memoir, critical essay, cultural history, artistic analysis, and the creation of her own radical archive, Ann Cvetkovich effectively delivers the concept of depression from the private to the public realm in her book *Depression: A Public Feeling*. Cvetkovich’s work rests on the claim that, rather than viewing depression as a biological phenomenon, it should be understood as a social and cultural one. Cvetkovich uses the word/idea “depression” as a way to describe the effects of colonialism, neoliberalism, and globalization, among other things, in affective terms. *Depression: A Public Feeling* forms a cultural analysis that represents depression as “a historical category, a felt experience, and a point of entry into discussions not only about theory and contemporary culture but about how to live” (23).

Drawing parallels between political and social conditions and personal feelings of inadequacy, lethargy, and “feeling stuck,” Cvetkovich explores how the devastating histories of genocide, colonialism, slavery, exclusion, and oppression seep into the daily lives of individuals and manifest in structural systems which privilege some while devastating others. Cvetkovich writes on the result of this unequal social landscape, “These are depressing conditions indeed, ones that make depression seem not so much a medical or biochemical dysfunction as a rational response to global conditions” (25). It is within these global conditions where Cvetkovich investigates the nuances and implications of the affective experiences of human life.

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20 Cvetkovich’s work is part of the The Public Feelings Project, a project which emerged from meetings on the future of gender and sexuality and the question of how to give feminism greater impact in the public sphere. For the purposes of this paper, I will use the more general definition of the project focusing on the exploration the role of feelings in public life.

21 While Cvetkovich work, speaks to global histories and trends, it is important to note that she narrows in on America and the US specifically.
Operating within the affective turn, Cvetkovich’s work examines feelings as concrete objects of observation. The serious consideration of emotive responses caused by political traumas, social unrest and inequality, lends insight into the emotive impulse behind creating works of art that speak to these narratives. I find Cvetkovich’s work on depression and the Public Feelings Project a vital key to understanding the archival turn in contemporary art especially when the artistic product is in direct conversation with problematic historical narratives. She notes how simply attributing the cause of depression to social rather than biological factors is important but offers no solution—because of this, her book, in addition to re-classifying the causes of depression also begins the conversation of how to move forward once this reality is recognized.

An idea central to finding solutions to the depressed condition in Cvetkovich’s work lies in the translation of depression from a inert and private condition into a productive platform for movement and community fostering. Cvetkovich writes, “If depression is conceived as blockage or impasse or being stuck, then its cure might lie in forms of flexibility or creativity more than in pills or a different genetic structure” (21). By deconstructing the most basic quality of depression, and inverting it to find its solution, Cvetkovich makes the idea of healing/cures more available and accessible —something we can achieve without pills or diagnoses. With this in mind, creative actions, generative works of art— the impulses, execution, and effects of which, regardless of whether the individual is conscious of it or not—are inherently healing.

*Depression: A Public Feeling* includes a selection of artworks and installation pieces which make up Cvetcovich’s “The Depression Archive”: a personal archive composed of works

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22 Inspired by the Deleuzian theories of affect as force, intensity or the capacity to move and be moved, the affective turn “made emotion, feeling, and affect, and their differences, objects of scholarly inquiry.”(3).
of art/happenings/installation pieces encountered on her journey to find a “primary authority on depression” (91). As the historical archive of depression is expanded to include art and feelings, among science and psychoanalysis, the idea of what might cure or alleviate these issues is also expanded.

In the following chapters I add two works of art to the Depression Archives; Diego Cirulli’s installation 21105 significación y resignificación de los espacios de la memoria and Ayana V. Jackson’s exhibition Archival Impulse. The former emerged from Cirulli’s impulse to create a work of art that spoke to the trauma of the period of state terrorism between 1976 and 1983 in Argentina, and the 30,000 disappeared individuals. Engaging questions of argentine memory and identity after democracy returned to the country in 1983, Cirulli’s work is in direct conversation with the human rights era that emerged in the 1990s in Argentina, and in its creation opened a space for community fostering and dialogue creation through staging a visual walk through of the past.

Ayana V. Jackson’s 2014 exhibition Archival Impulse re-stages archival photographs from colonial archives to question the representation of the non-white body and it’s entanglement within troubling political narratives. Her work aims to crystallize the experience of african diasporic societies at large through visual representation while tracing on her own experience as a black woman. While different in terms of context, both works are created by artists (like those in the Depression Archives) “whose attention to form and genre might create

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23 This period in Argentina witnessed a reanalysis of the events of the military dictatorship and a recognition of human rights associations, their struggles, and the ongoing search for historical justice. In a publication which accompanies his work, Diego Cirulli takes into account the importance of this context: “Beginning in 2003 in Argentina, the importance of the defense of human rights took on an unedited relevance. This led to a strong commitment, with political character, to transforming the apathy from the years before into a dialogue with the society and their cultural expressions.”
new ways of representing depression” (Cvetkovich 91). In the following chapters I will explain how each artist’s constructive use of the archive, awakens ghosts to create new narratives and represents possible paths of individual and collective healing.

Chapter V. Diego Cirulli: 21 105 significación y resignificación de los espacios de la memoria

“From the conceptual binominal: mother-child, Diego Cirulli proposes the re-signification of spaces through art, considering memory as a fundamental right to construct the collective present and future”

21 105 significaciones y resignificaciones de los espacios de la memoria, 2012

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24 Translation: A partir del binomio conceptual madre-hijo, el proyecto de Diego Cirulli propone la resignificación de los espacios a través del arte, pensando la memoria como un derecho fundamental para construir el presente y el futuro colectivo. Agencia de noticias de entre ríos
In 2012, Argentine artist Diego Cirulli’s installation *21 105 significación y resignificación de los espacios de la memoria*, in its relevance to the themes of historical justice concerning the lives taken by the 1976-1983 Military Dictatorship, was declared a work of art in the interest of the Argentine Ministry of National Culture. Cirulli’s work emerged out of his wish to contribute to the development of a visual and intellectual dialogue between the community and a particularly symbolic space of memory in Buenos Aires—La escuela superior de mecánica de la armada (ESMA). Today re-named as the Espacio para la memoria y para la promoción y defensa de los derechos humanos (Space for Memory and for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights), the complex once functioned as the largest clandestine detention center in Buenos Aires between 1976-1983.

Primarily a painter, in the past five years Cirulli’s work has taken on socially and historically charged themes, including the public education system in the Dominican Republic, prostitution in Buenos Aires, and the traumatic memory of the military dictatorship. In 2010 Cirulli began exploring themes of memory in relation to the desaparecidos after learning news over the radio that the 102nd child born in a detention center in Argentina during this time had been identified and connected with his birth family. The news was a reminder that the destruction and trauma of the 70s and early 80s continues to be relevant and immediate. When a

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*Under what was deemed The National Reorganization Process, Jorge Rafael Videla’s government initiated waves of extreme urban violence directed at anyone associated with the left, specifically the Montoneros or the People’s Revolutionary Army. During this time more than 30,000 people considered to be “subversive” disappeared without a trace. These individuals known as Argentina’s desaparecidos were captured by the military and taken to detention camps where they were brutally tortured and or executed. The years during and after the 1976 military coup in Argentina are marked by unprecedented violence and clandestine state terrorism. Many camps resided within the city, most likely not far from the private homes where they were initially taken.*
friend informed him that the Haroldo Conti space in ex-ESMA was available, he imagined
beginning a project that could speak to the memory of this particular history.

This chapter will focus on Cirulli’s thesis, 21 105 significación y resignificación de los
espacios de la memoria, an installation displayed in the Haroldo Conti space. Cirulli’s
installation consists of his artistic regenerations of photographs from the archives of the Abuelas
de la Plaza de Mayo held at ex-ESMA. The installation occupies two rooms—one where 21
large-scale portraits of kidnapped women hang in a diagonal line, and another containing a box
with 500 film negatives illuminated on the surface. Cirulli worked in the archives of the Abuelas
to select photographs of disappeared women who had given birth in the detention center.
Additionally, he investigated the process of identification, location, and reunification of the
children lost during this process. 21 105 speaks to trauma of the military dictatorship, the
construction of memory of the event and the 30,000 lives lost, and the notion that this memory,
while it concerns the past, is in fact a present phenomenon.

Cirulli’s motivation to speak to a theme that touches Argentines at large exists alongside
personal intentions. In an interview, Cirulli explained how the themes explored in his work are
extensions of—on the one hand what he has experienced personally of the tragedy, knowing an
individual who had disappeared—and on the other hand what was hidden from him or silenced.

26 The Abuelas y Madres de la Plaza de Mayo: the mothers and grandmothers of the disappeared were, and still are the
most unified human rights effort against the atrocities of the dictatorship. The madres took to the streets and public
squares with weekly marches to protest disappearance of their families and to search for the children born in
detention camps. Today the Abuelas are committed to accumulating the absent archive of the dictatorship in their
pursuit of historical justice.
Cirulli comes from a military family, where, he explained, the subject of the desaparecidos is not spoken of.

This was something I lived in my own experience. My family, which comes from the more military culture, we didn’t speak about this; because of this, to me the subject was closed. On a social level, these stigmas continue in the present, and [21 105] allowed me to provide images for what was hidden.27

In the opening of the cultural space in ex-ESMA, Haroldo Conti, and with the relevance of Argentine human rights organization’s ongoing search for historical justice, Cirulli found an opportunity to create a work that could place images not only where they had been silenced from him personally, but where they had been erased or denied from society at large. The declaration of the work in the interest of the Ministry of Culture is a testament to the fact that Cirulli’s work, in its meditation on the memory of the desaparecidos as urgent and relevant, reflected the character of the attention to human rights in Buenos Aires at the time.

Before the late 1990s, as Diana Taylor reminds us, “forgetting had become official policy, much against the wishes of certain groups that had vowed never to forget” (13).28 During

27 Translated from Spanish: Algo que viví en experiencia propia, mi familia que viene de una cultura más militar no hablo de eso, …por eso lo cerre. Porque en nivel social estas estigmas seguida al presente….ayudo que pudo poner imágenes (Interview, 2013).
28 Among the entire nation, there was a strong desire to understand, or just to know what actually went on during the Dirty War. The first testimonies of victims began to surface before the war ended, but it wasn't until the publication of Nunca Más: Informe de la Comisión Nacional sobre la desaparición de personas in 1984 that the testimonies were (Taylor 12). The publication of Nunca Más as well as the extent to which it reached the hands of nearly every argentine, reflects the first of what Argentine novelist Martin Kohan describes the distinct patterns of collective memory that followed the return to democracy. The testimonies were extremely impactful in that they exposed the hidden horror that occurred while the military was in power. What they did as well however, was generate another question, what did these people do to deserve this? Without a political or historical understanding of the regimes motives, the testimonies themselves almost legitimized the fact that the victims were taken. They must have done something wrong. What propelled this reading of the trauma was the label “Dirty War.” Yes, Argentina was at war, but the term war to reference the dictatorship served to ideologically justify military actions. Obviously, this notion was extremely dangerous, and needed to be dismantled. It wasn’t until the early 90s, when activists and human rights organizations such as The Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo gained extraordinary predominance in the public sphere, that the next cycle, or work of memory could begin to expand the discourse beyond the testimonies of the victims. The fuel
his presidency (1989-1999) Carlos Menem even pardoned several perpetrators (including Videla himself) who had been charged under the previous president, Raúl Alfonsin (14). The strongest resistance against the policy of forgetting came from the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, who wielded photographs of their disappeared children as they marched around the Casa Rosada, white handkerchiefs atop their heads. In their “spectacles against forgetting” as Taylor calls them, the Madres politicized the notion of motherhood while subverting the policies of ignorance and activating social memory (15).

The portraits of lost individuals serve as symbols for justice in Argentina and point to the photograph as an essential tool in constructing collective memory. In her paper “Fotografías y desaparecidos: ausencias presentes” Valeria Durán explains that photography has been the recurring method of highlighting these absences, and the portraits have become the protagonists of the movement to reclaim truth and justice since the dictatorship (132). These photos, as well as the archived portraits by the Abuelas of the desaparecidos are a direct contact to the past—they are the visual evidence of the lives taken during this period. With this in mind however, the social associations drawn from these images are mimetic—they are imitations, the contact with which brings the viewer to the photographed image and not the reality. The photos, to quote Taylor again, of “smiling, forever youthful faces communicate an image of personal wholeness that elides the decomposed ‘real’ bodies” (142). Unlike these images that capture the disappeared at one moment in time, the images constructed in 21 105 suggest a process of

behind this change was the idea then, that the trauma affected not just the victims, but also the society at large. The new question became, how do we remember this trauma, and what can we do now to continue with the knowledge of our past?
disappearance, reminding the viewer not of the individuals themselves but of the haunting nature of their disappearance.

**Thesis, Intention, and Choice of the Archive**

Cirulli describes his theory for the installation piece as follows:

In my work I consider that:

There is a dynamic relationship with images that each culture constructs. Living footprints that are made present in a physical and temporal space, where each community and viewer in particular develops significations and re-significations.

I consider that to inhabit spaces of memory through an artistic experience, in my case the development of 21 105 in the Cultural Center of Memory Haroldo Conti ex-ESMA, opens a possible path of personal and community re-signification of the said spaces.²⁹

Cirulli’s hypothesis draws from his idea that each person has the impulse or at least the ability to draw symbolic meaning from particular spaces of memory, as well as recognize how that symbolic meaning is subject to change.³⁰ The change, re-evaluation or re-signification of a memory space is facilitated, he claims, by the appearance of visual images within that space. Each culture constructs a “dynamic” relationship with images, and the particularity of the space

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²⁹ Translated from Spanish: Hypothesis: En mi trabajo considero que:
- Existe un relación dinámica con las imágenes que cada cultura construye. Huellas vivas que se hacen presente en un contexto físico y temporal, donde cada comunidad y cada lector en particular desarrollan significaciones y resignificaciones
- Considero que habituar a través de una experiencia artística los espacios de la memoria, en mi caso el desarrollo de la obra 21 105 en el Centro Cultural de la Memoria Haroldo Conti ex-ESMA, abre un camino posible de re-significación personal y comunitaria de dichos espacios

³⁰ The term “memory space” in this chapter and as used by Diego Cirulli, refers to a specific location that has significance in terms of historical and cultural, shared memory of a particular group of people.
where individuals come into contact with those images has certain mnemonic effects. His work “inhabits” the said memory space, thus providing an opportunity for re-signification of that space by the viewer in the distinct cultural context of Argentina.

Cirulli’s installation is a meditation on both the construction of collective memory through the archive, as well as on the deconstruction of that memory when an individual is confronted by memory material re-surfaced through art. Acknowledging how an understanding of history is limited by, for many, the acceptance of the archive as representative of historical truth, I argue that by facilitating the re-signification process of memory spaces through archival manipulation and image making, the artist introduced to the public a radical approach to the archive that is essential in terms of the way individuals come into contact with history. Using art to inhabit ex-ESMA, Cirulli is constructing the conditions for a space where individual and collective memory and *remembering* can occur simultaneously, a space where the memory of individuals meets the memory of institutions.

In a publication accompanying *21 105*, Cirulli acknowledges that the traditional idea of the archive is a set of documents that a) compiles information b) supports the experience of memory in a positivist way and c) supports a narrative of hegemonic history. Contrary to this acknowledgement, Cirulli did not approach the archive as a set of documents with the above functions, but rather opened his approach in that not only did it consider the archive as a whole, but considered the individual contents within it. Archival material, according to Cirulli, has the power to provide feeling and information independent from and at times contrary to the hegemonic or positivist ambitions of the set of material as a whole. Cirulli’s approach to the

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31 Translated from Spanish: “Se mueve un poco de la idea tradicional de conjunto de documentos que recopilan datos, apoyo del recuerdo o experiencia de la memoria en el sentido positivista del término, siendo deposito y sustento de la narrative de la historia hegemónica” Cirulli (33).
archive in many ways frees the material from the subjective and selectionist limitations of the field and made the material accessible ideologically. Once he accessed the independant material however (portraits of the disappeared youth frozen in a lively, youthful state) the desire to resurface it grew stronger.

In a section of the publication accompanying 21 105 entitled, La Huella “The Footprint,” Cirulli describes an essential element to his approach towards the archive. It is necessary to note the archive’s character of constant growth and mutation, while at the same time recognizing the limitations of this archive due to selection of the material. Essentially, although the archival contents have been selected, the archive is never limited to this selection. Drawing from Freud, Cirulli reminds us that selection as well as mutation and change function in the same way as memory itself.32

Memory is a creative action…there is always a selection in what you remember, how you explain it, and in the archive as well: there is a selection in what is saved, how it is shown, and there is also a creative action in what questions we ask the archive to see how it responds. 33

Our personal memories are always selective, always changing. Here, in acknowledging the construction and compilation of the archive as a physical manifestation of the psychological memory process, the archive user understands the limitations of relying on archival material as historical truth. Cirulli considers the archive as replicating the anamnestic process, and the

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32 Translated from Spanish: “Detonando no sólo un carácter de constante crecimiento y mutación, sino también dejando clara la censura propia de su mecanismo en la selection de lo que es dado a integrar al cuerpo del archivo, mismo proceso que según Sigmund Freud, realiza la memoria” (Cirulli, 33).

33 Translated from Spanish: “La memoria es un acto creativo … siempre hace un selección en que recuerde y en como lo cuento, y en el archivo también, porque hay una selección en que guardas, hay una selección en como lo mostrás, y allí hay también un acto creativo en como que preguntas a ese archivo para ver que te responde” (Cirulli Interview, 2013).
construction of his installation magnifies this. When we consider the archive as a process of remembering, we understand that it is inherently selective and exclusive, yet by merely recognizing that this can be natural (although certainly not in all cases) we can come closer to learning how to deal with the complexities and pitfalls of the archive as opposed to discrediting them on the basis of their imaginary-ness.34

The archives of the Abuelas de la plaza de Mayo are the result of more than 30 years of work in the struggle for historical justice in Argentina and continue changing and evolving. In recording the history of individuals kidnapped and killed between 1976 and 1983, human rights organizations attempt to fill the many gaps intentionally left by the perpetrators.35 The series of interviews Cirulli conducted with representatives of the Abuelas during his research permeated with discussions of the deconstruction of history and memory, and addressed the different methods of elaborating the archive in order to come to any understanding of what really occurred. In compiling records of the desaparecidos, and in re-surfacing these records in his art, both the Abuelas and Cirulli reveal their consideration of the importance of making the victims of the past, present in the contemporary fight for justice.

In Cirulli’s definition, an archive has three parts: a) material b) intellectual and c) physical, a place or space. In his case, the materials are the actual portrait photographs; the intellectual the intention of the Abuelas behind compiling this archive, and the physical; their location at ex-ESMA. Expanding the historical knowledge gleaned from the archive beyond the

34 The imaginary or abstract archive draws from Foucault’s conception of an archive discussed by Simon in Chapter IV. By addressing “constant growth and mutation,” Cirulli considers archives in post-modern terms. For an elaboration of this thought, see section Sala 3 Portraits below.
35 As Charles Maechling Jr. points out in his article “The Argentine Pariah,” during the military dictatorship, no records were kept of the victims, abducted people simply disappeared.
contents itself to address b and c above reveals how Cirulli’s consideration of knowledge is born out of the Foucauldian paradigm articulated by David Bate, “The archive is the system, or apparatus that enables the archive to exist, not just the archive—including the actual institutional building itself” (Bate, 3). Cirulli considers the Abuelas’ archive not only as a collection of compiled photographs, but as a product of the discourse on human rights emerging after the return to democracy in Argentina. Further, he considers their location in ex-ESMA to be an extension of the knowledge gleaned from the material. Additionally considering its tripartite body, the archive, according to Cirulli, “constitutes a way of thinking and of thinking about us. It compiles the statements that are given to say and erases, leaving traces, to my understanding, of what stays outside the archive.”

Archives tell us about ourselves, and in this historical self-reflection, not only do we consider what material is present, but what this presence tells us about what has been left outside of the archive or omitted.

Cirulli meditates not only on these components of the archive but also on the processes of their construction. Here, the question of meaning enters the discussion—the notion of archival accumulation in and of itself as a process denies the structure of complete meaning. The archive, Cirulli explained, “shows a precise structure whose meaning is incomplete due to the characteristic of its own construction.”

If the essential element that defines the collection of materials as an archive is the same element that denies the collection of complete meaning, how then do the contents attain meaning? Can they attain meaning? Does simply a recognition of the fact that the meaning of the material is incomplete give its users a green light to use the material?

36 Translated from Spanish: Esto constituye un modo de pensar y pensarnos. Recopila los enunciados que son dados a decir y borra, dejando trazos, a mi entender, de lo que queda fuera de él (Cirulli 34).
37 Translated from Spanish: “Se muestra así como una estructura precisa cuyo significado es incompleto por las características de su propia construcción (Cirulli 34).
and apply their own meaning? When do we need to use the material to undermine or champion a particular meaning/ideology? When working within the archives of the Abuelas, as a step in answering these questions, Cirulli discovered that the images themselves possessed a potential for symbolic production independent of the archive as a whole.

I find that these [images] possess vivid lines that go beyond the aspirations of the archivists. They are boxes full of fruitful images that remind us of the dynamics of appearance and disappearance of the symbology itself.\textsuperscript{38}

The evidence for archival material’s symbolic production independent of the original archive (Explored by the theories of Itinerancy and Ambivalence, Chapter IV) will be actualized in the following section with a deconstruction of the physical structure of the 21 105 installation.

\textbf{The Body of 21 105: Ex-ESMA Sala 3, and Sala 2}

\textit{The Significance of Memory Spaces: Meaning and ex-ESMA}

The location of 21 105 in Sala (Room) 2 and Sala 3 (outlined below) within the larger complex of ex-ESMA is fundamental to understanding Cirulli’s work in terms of themes of signification and re-signification of spaces of memory. What are “memory spaces”? Traditionally they are museums, libraries, archives, or spaces with a “strong symbolic charge,” places like ex-ESMA (9). The memory significance of these spaces is at times natural and inherent, and at times assigned or chosen. Ex-ESMA is both—the historical significance as a site of death and destruction is undeniable, but the re-signification of that space into a specific memory space, home to human rights organizations, and national archives, was assigned.

\textsuperscript{38} Translated from Spanish: “encuentro que esto poseen trazos vivos que sobrepasan las aspiraciones archivistas. Son cajas llenas de imágenes fecundas que nos interpelan e inauguran la dinámica de aparición y desaparición propia de la simbología” (Cirulli 35).
Initially founded in 1924 as a military instruction complex, ESMA (La escuela superior de mecánica de la armada) operated as one of the largest clandestine detention centers during the military dictatorship: a site where over 5,000 people (including the women depicted in Sala 3) were tortured and killed as part of the government’s plan of systematic genocide, The National Reorganization Process. In 2004 under the presidency of Nestor Kirchner, the ESMA complex was converted into the ‘Espacio para la Memoria y para la Promoción y Defensa de los Derechos Humanos.” Today “Ex-ESMA” the complex is home to the National Archive of Memory, and a

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39 Under what was deemed The National Reorganization Process, Jorge Rafael Videla’s government initiated waves of extreme urban violence directed at anyone associated with the left, specifically the Montoneros or the Peoples Revolutionary Army. During this time more than 30,000 people considered to be “subversives” disappeared without a trace. These individuals known as Argentina’s desaparecidos were captured by the military and taken to detention camps where they were tortured and or executed. Among the thousands taken were many pregnant mothers whose newly born children were taken from them.
variety of human rights organizations including the Abuelas and Madres de la plaza de Mayo, and H.I. J.O.S: Por la identidad y justicia contra el olvido y el silencio (For identity and justice and against forgetting and silence).

Entrance to the central part of the ex-ESMA complex, 2014

Image of the entrance to the National Archive of Memory, once the school of navy warfare, 2014
In an interview, Cirulli stressed the importance of displaying 21 105 in a space where all members of society would cross:

The idea of a social crossroads, of a space where people are confronted with historical questions, economic questions, questions of memory, questions of morality, generated what would be an extremely effervescent space, where a collective memory lies, that touches all of us individually in distinct ways, but that also touches us socially.

21 105 was installed in the cultural center named after Haroldo Conti, an Argentine novelist who was kidnapped during the dictatorship. The Haroldo Conti Cultural Center was inaugurated in 2008, and has since functioned as a space of cultural and human rights projects housing numerous art exhibitions and events—opening a space for the social crossroads Cirulli speaks of. The notion of ex-ESMA itself already implies a spatial resignification: Cirulli explains that the process of “re-signification” in Argentina began with the conversion of ESMA into ex-ESMA in 2004, and continues today (Cirulli 89).

Cirulli’s choice to generate images within the re-signedified space permits spectators to form re-significations of their own, and therefore engages not only individual memories but their collective memory and identity as Argentines.

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40 La idea de encrucijada social la idea de un espacio donde se cruzan ...cuestiones históricas de memoria, económicas, morales, genera que sea un espacio como muy efervescente, donde allí está una memoria colectiva, que nos toca todos individualmente de distintas manera, pero también nos toca toda socialmente

41 Agencia de noticias de entre ríos, 2013

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The image, using the operative of art and placed in a memory space such as Conti, can disarticulate time, the narrative of history and its cultural imaginary, by generating new links that enable the re-symbolization of the space. Further, these images, extracted from photographic archives, re-imagined and placed in a memory space, are re-constructed in a way that alludes to the structure of the traditional archival filing system (explained below). In the following sections, I will show how the operative of specifically archival art in memory spaces directly contributes to the disarticulation of time Cirulli aims for as well as the deconstruction of a conventional history narrative supported by the archive.

Sala 3, Portraits: Transparency and Dematerialization of the Image

The primary physical body of Cirulli’s installation occupies a large rectangular room in Haroldo Conti. In the space, 21 portraits of women hang in a diagonal line sequence that stretches across the majority of the room. The portraits are transparent and deconstructed—each face is made up of five layers of tarlatan, 236 x 100 cm, where the face is painted to varying degrees of completion with black latex. The five sheets hang together to compile a transparent yet three dimensional image of each woman, and as the viewer circulates around the exhibition from different angles, the portraits seem to appear and reappear in the space.

Through his archival investigation, Diego selected 21 photographs of women who not only were kidnapped and kept at ex-ESMA, but actually gave birth to their children in captivity.

42 “La imagen, mediante la operative del arte y puesta en un espacio de memoria como Conti, puede desarticular el tiempo, la narrativa de la historia y su imaginario cultural, generando nuevos vínculos que posibiliten la re-simbolización del espacio”. The “Disarticulation of time also recalls an exploration in post-modern time-space compression mentioned in the previous chapter.

43 Translated from Spanish: “Sala 3 trabaja con la transparencia y desmaterialización de la imagen”
Pregnant women made up 3 percent of the disappeared population, and were “often abducted, raped, and tortured simply because they were pregnant” (Taylor 85). In her book *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina’s Dirty War*, Diana Taylor elucidates this disturbingly ironic nature of the proceso—in the name of preserving traditional, patriarchal values (the church and the family unit both cornerstones) the military systematically annihilated families, while targeting women and in their torture methods, reducing them to their sex (Taylor).

These images were taken from the online archive of the Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo. They resemble the images Cirulli chose to recreate.

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44 Numbers in the installation also significant: 21 represents the average age of the desaparecidos kidnapped and killed during the dictatorship, as well as the legal age in the country during that time.
In his analysis of English artist Tacita Dean’s work (see chapter IV) Hal Foster notes how archival materials used in art have the power to recall lost souls. In the placement of physical images of these women in the space they once disappeared, memory and history of these lost souls is reexamined, their ghosts are summoned. Awakening ghosts of specifically pregnant woman tortured during the proceso places an anti-narrative of the Dirty War within ex-ESMA, not only in terms of the politics of forgetting but in terms of gender.

Durán comments on the difficulty of representing the past precisely because there is no single “past” that can be represented, especially if fractured by trauma. A single and authentic past, she writes, does not exist. What does are multiple memories that allow the past to be activated in the present, and through this activation multiple identities are constructed, both individual and collective (135). The layers of tarlatan highlight the process of these women’s disappearance while evoking the very notion of what disappearance has meant for the collective identity of Argentina since 1976.

The spatial layout of Sala 3 is of utmost importance, both considering the room as whole and each portrait in particular. The viewer is invited to walk around and in between the portraits hanging in an ordered sequential line. The order replicates that of an archival filing system, yet the unfinishedness of each portrait undermines that systematic order. In addition to evoking the process of disappearance, the work reminds us that we cannot rely on the content of archives, on these images alone. In our spacial interaction with them however, we are forced to reconsider, to re-signify this memory, this space, these individuals and what they represent. The piece plays on scale as well, is as if the viewer is shrunken and walking through an archive, unable to read all of the words, and inhibited from understanding the story the archive attempts to tell. The structure is an argument for a particular consideration of history and knowledge that combats traditional narrative structures. Drawing from Foucault, Cirulli writes, “You can’t understand history simply as a narration of events... you need to approach it in relation to man himself and his similar creatures with the world, his mode of being, thinking and feeling.”45 The viewer in this case conducts himself not like a historian following a linear story made evident by a collection of materials in the archive, but like a “man digging” in the present through the past.46

The installation includes identification information for each mother, with her name, date of the disappearance, and how many months pregnant she was at the time. Cirulli choice to highlight the women’s pregnancies magnifies the notion that the photographs within the archive are incomplete as they appear with regards to meaning. The social associations drawn from the original images are mimetic—they are imitations that bring the viewer to the past. Viewing a

45 Translated from Spanish: “la historia no puede entenderse simplemente como narración de los acontecimientos, sino que también debe abordarse en relación del hombre con el mundo y sus semejantes, su modo de ser, pensar y sentir (Cirulli, 14).
46 The notion of a man addressing historical information to construct himself like a ‘man digging’ comes from Walter Benjamin’s piece, “Excavation and Memory.” (see chapter II)
mimetic image, a portrait of one woman without inquiring into the story that surrounds her, is a misuse of the archive. In the artistic process of manipulation and resurfacing, combined with the choice to include details of the women’s pregnancies, 21 105 effectively triggers an anamnestic response from the viewer. Walking through the exhibition in Sala 3 the viewer not only walks through personal and shared memory but takes into account both the archival attempts to retrieve that memory, and his or her own process of mnemonic recall.
In the framework established by Cheryl Simon’s introduction “Following the Archival Turn” (Chapter IV), *21 105* is an example of an “appropriation exercise” which draws its “linguistic orientation” from theoretical writings of the 1970s (Simon 100). Cirulli’s open approach to the archive (see *Diego’s Thesis, Intention, and Choice of the Archive*) is akin to Foucault and Benjamin’s consideration of the abstract nature of archival principles. Not only does Cirulli’s eagerness to manipulate and resurface archives imply his consideration of them as abstract and not concrete, in their very manipulation he questions archives as a mechanism of cultural, historical and mnemonic power.

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47 Both Foucault and Benjamin consider the archive as an abstract mechanism of cultural power. Archives possess extraordinary power over knowledge, yet this knowledge, because it is gleaned from a selection of facts that operate within a particular discourse, is abstract or imaginary. When a historian chooses to gain knowledge from an archive, his or her work is limited to those particular parameters and therefore can only be seen as an extension of that discourse.
Cirulli effectively creates his own archive, a radical-archive. 21 105 is archival in terms of Foster’s description since it not only draws from the archival material collected by the Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo, but produces a new archive of the same material. Cirulli not only selected these images and arranged them creatively, he duplicated, magnified, and manipulated them. The images produced in Sala 3 are “found yet constructed, factual yet fictive, public yet private” (Foster 5). 21 105 is the physical embodiment of the artist’s approach to the archive as constantly mutating and changing. 21 105 presents archival materials as active, open to revisitation and re-signification in a present context.

Cirulli’s choice to use photographic materials while at the same time exhibiting an eagerness to manipulate and reproduce them, echos Walter Benjamin’s ambivalent approach to photography.48 Cirulli respects the representative and mnemonic power of photographic images, yet it is clear to him that this representative power is too easily accepted by viewers in their quest of memory. In light of the latter view, Cirulli took it upon himself to add meaning to the photographs by deconstructing them and making a virtue of this deconstruction.

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48 Simon points explains the ‘famous ambivalence’ of Benjamin's approach to photography in that as he views photographs as “incisive reflections of reality” that cannot be gleaned from the naked eye alone, he also maintains that photography is also a “precise expression of [realities] demise.” (103)
Cirulli’s choice to deliver the documented past to the present by his manipulation and creation of images suggests a dissatisfaction with the way the past is traditionally communicated. If his aim is to create an opportunity where an individual can form significations and re-significations of memory spaces, he believes that this space does not exist naturally, and within this space it is necessary to encourage individuals to meditate on the meaning of their memories—both personal and collective.

With this in mind, we can understand 21 105 as an example of Simon’s “late-stage manifestation of a postmodernist appropriation exercise” in which Cirulli (working in 2012) draws from the epistemological studies of Foucault and Benjamin to empower the creation of his radical archive (through recycling and relocation) which brings extra-artistic materials into an artistic context as way to critique institutional historical knowledge (Simon, 102). In this way, 21 105 might also be read as an example of the cultural anxiety associated with archival art, although I find the display of his installation to reflect a more nostalgic, and ghostly, even
romantic tone rather than an anxious one. The sheets of tarlatan that make up the palimpsests of these women evoke the haunting nature of their disappearance and in their incompleteness point to the fact that a cloud of uncertainty still surrounds the years of the dictatorship. Cirilli transformed the archive of static images from an excavation site into an active construction site, revealing the artist’s recognition that the material has a potential to produce new meaning independent of its placement within the archive (Foster 22).

*Sala 2 Caja: The embodiment of the negative towards the image*49

The second, smaller room is occupied by a box Cirulli constructed to replicate the boxes in the Abuelas’ archives. The box occupies much of the space; in this room the viewer's presence is obvious and static, whereas the viewer in the previous room moves freely around the

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49 Translated from Spanish: “Sala 2 trabaja con la corporización del negative hacia la imagen (Cirulli 13)
installation at the same time as others. The top of the box contains a glass surface, illuminated from underneath like a traditional photographic lightbox. The light illuminates a series of 500 strips of film, each containing a self-portrait of Cirulli. In this room, numbers again are significant; 500 is the number of total children considered disappeared by the Abuelas, and at the time of the installation in 2012, of the 500, 105 had been identified and returned to their families. The identified 105 are represented as the positive images on the lightbox, while the remaining 395 are negative.

Cirulli evokes another condition of the archive in Sala 2—the viewer isn't looking at individual identities and portraits, but rather the amount of lost children as a group, or a set of information. The lightbox illuminates the portraits that appear on the surface, only to reveal repeated portraits of the artist and not the lost children. This choice speaks to the loss of identity.
experienced by these children, or the stolen nature of this identity.\textsuperscript{50} Cirulli explains the idea behind including himself in the images was his way of standardizing the image. The trauma he explains, “touched all of us” and by putting his image in the exhibit he is highlighting this fact, “This requires all of us, we have to act.”\textsuperscript{51}

Sala 2 is a visual testament to the fact that in the struggle for justice, it is not just these children or the Abuelas who have to carry the weight of the trauma, but every Argentine. Sala 2 opens a space for the consideration not only of the pasts of the mothers of these children, but on the future of the remaining 395 children who have yet to be identified. In this instance, the installation effectively bridges temporal gaps between past, present and future; the residual effects of the trauma have not drifted away, but are still profoundly affecting Argentines on both an individual and collective level.

\textbf{21 105: Conclusions}

“Together with scholars and researchers, artists are necessary protagonists of the process of memory” - Agencia de noticias entre ríos

\textit{21 105 significación y re-signification de los espacios de la memoria rests comfortably within the archival turn in contemporary art introduced in the previous chapter. This global artistic context, parallel to the heightened relevance of human rights a policy of memory (rather than forgetting) in Argentina towards the end of the 20th century is crucial to the development and execution of Cirulli’s installation. It is not a coincidence that during the same years archives and the archival profession as a whole received particular scrutiny by scholars and academics on}

\textsuperscript{50} Many children taken were re-distributed to military families who did not ask questions. Today, the organization HIJOS as well as the Abuelas, work towards “the demand for justice, the need to reconstruct personal histories of families broken, and the demand for the restoration of the identity of our appropriate brothers” (HIJOS).

\textsuperscript{51} Translated from Spanish: “La idea de ponerme a mi como imagen era un poco estandarizar la imagen … Nos toca todos… esto nos Interpela todos y tenemos que actuar” (Diego Cirulli, 2013)
a global level, contemporary artists increasingly approached the archive as a unit of material possessions individual and independent creative potential. 52 21 105 is a product of the artist’s consideration of the archive in terms of historical interpretation, mnemonic function, cultural and personal identity, and meaning in regards to context.

Cirulli highly considers the power of images to construct identity, both personal and national. Photographic archives therefore, possess the power to construct not only memory and historical knowledge, but identity as well. In an interview Cirulli comments, “Through the image, people can recognize themselves.” 53 Images are mnemonic triggers, mechanisms for communication, and tools through which we visually associate ourselves with others. The archive of hundreds of black and white portraits of the disappeared, compiled by the Abuelas de la Plaza de mayo, through its excavation and enunciation through art is a testament to the potential of the archive as a site of cultural translation. That is, the archive is infact a mechanism for cultural exchange, however if unexplored (through intervention) this potential is never realized. Cirulli’s intention was just that: an intervention of archival photographs, relocated, to impregnate an already institutionally symbolic space with new meaning. 21 105 proposes, through art, that one can re-signify the institutional manufacture of symbolic paths which create our identity.

21 105 is the product of social factors and cultural conditions of a time where see a strong revival in memory consideration in Argentina. At the very core, Cirulli addresses the connection between mnemonic function and historical interpretation—ideas explored by Aby Warburg in

52 See Chapter I for further explanation of: Joan M Schwartz and Terry Cook: Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory, 2002
53 Translated from Spanish: “A través del imagen la gente puede reconocerse”
the 19th century. Cheryl Simon points out that in its use of photographs, Warburg’s *Mnemosyne Atlas*, demonstrates both his faith in the mnemonic function of photography and the possibility of historical interpretation (106). Cirulli takes a step in evolving this idea by approaching the archive and the photograph with Benjaminian ambivalence; Cirulli values the mnemonic function of photography yet expresses that its’ mimetic analysis is not conducive to the disclosure of historical truth. Essentially, how we interpret historical materials depends on how we conceive their *value*, their meaning, and rather than assigning particular meaning, by replicating the anamnestic process in both structure (a disembodied archive) and function (inviting the spectator to walk through their own memories) *21 105* opens the space for both individual mnemonic and historical interpretations often absent from untouched photographic archives.

Cirulli used Anna Maria Guasch’s *Arte Y Archivo, 1920-2010: Genealogías, Tipologías Y Discontinuidades* as a methodological background. Operating in the third paradigm, Guasch shows how artists construct a point of union between memory, art, and historical material, opening a fertile territory for theoretical and historical critique. Cirulli comments, “Artists who use archives develop an active discursive system that establishes new relations of temporality between past, present and future. They convert historical information, displaced or lost, into the physical present.”

Through this very process, *21 105* is radical archive that, like the work of Tacita Dean as described by Foster, “is an allegory of archival work—sometimes melancholic,”

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54Translated from Spanish: “Desarrollan un sistema discursivo activo que establece nuevas relaciones de temporalidad entre pasado, presente y futuro. Convert la información histórica, a menudo perdida o desplazada, en fisicamente presents. Crean un lenguaje, a partir de esto, mediante una operative artistica 36.
often vertiginous, always incomplete” (12). 21 105 is as incomplete as the archive it drew from, and it is ever changing.55

Cirulli’s formal process and strategy reveals he reveres the archive while at the same time is interested in dismantling its accepted function in terms of historical narratives. Opening a space in which institutional memory and individual memory could occur simultaneously in light of a national trauma was essential, and does not exist with the archive alone. Through his intervention and manipulation of the archive, Cirulli created images to trigger and facilitate a present memory transmission.

In her exhibition Archival Impulse explored in the following chapter, Ayana V. Jackson follows a similar formal strategy of intervention, excavation, and manipulation to transmit memory and knowledge outside of the archive. However, Jackson’s work considers another set of problems and dilemmas in relation to the archive from a very different location. While splitting time between South Africa and New York, Jackson meditated on complexities of visual representation and the information we glean from images, especially images within the archive.

55 As more children are identified, Cirulli adds positives to the lightbox in Sala 2. 21 105 becomes 21 210 and so on, being displayed in various locations around Argentina, such as Entre Ríos. http://www.apfdigital.com.ar/despachos.asp?cod_des=229277
Chapter V. AYANA V. JACKSON: ARCHIVAL IMPULSE

“The through line of Archival Impulse thus arises as an investigation into the fetishizations of otherness born from the white European psyche and how this outlook has shaped ethnographic photography, portraiture, and broader visual culture.”- Lia Wilson, for The Daily Serving, 2014

Ayana V. Jackson’s exhibition Archival Impulse seeks to revisit the devastating narratives of colonialism that have shaped the way the black body is seen and understood. Inserting herself as the subject, Jackson’s photographs restage archival images of the global south from the late 19th and early 20th century. These images, in their circulation through Europe and the west in this era, are responsible for shaping the initial collective understanding of the non-white body as well as in cementing that understanding in the collective unconscious for the years that followed. By appropriating these images and re-staging them, Jackson confronts roots of racism from the starting point of an analysis on how it is people are taught to read and interpret images, and how these images teach individuals to see the non-white body.

With no formal training in visual arts or photography, Jackson’s background lies in her study of race relations in Latin America and the Caribbean from which she also produced a large body of photographic work addressing afro-caribbean, mestizo, and european communities in Latin America. In a talk given in her home city at New Jersey City University in February, Jackson explained how she wanted to use the “power of the visual,” of photographs, to communicate her ideas rather than academia. In using photography, Jackson found a medium through which she could “see eye to eye with people” and develop a visual language that would engage/ produce a visual activism.

Splitting time between continents, Jackson has had the ability to experience the range of the african diaspora and meditate on its complexities. Part of her personal activism, she explains
has been to “decentralize the US- American black experience in favor of a more global black experience”—and she does this by thinking about imagery associated with the black body, the african continent and the non-west in general (Jackson).

The primary goal of this “visual activism” concerns a recognition of the fact that the doctrine of colonialism has taught/ outlined nuances of superiority/ racism/ otherness through a visual language in the 19th century—photography being a most problematic means of communication. Once this is explicitly recognized, viewers might look to the same images and begin to unlearn the problematic doctrine. Juan Naranjo’s recent article “Photography and Ethnography in Spain,” although concerning the representation of indigenous peoples in the americas by spanish photographers in terms of the fields of anthropology/ ethnography at the time, outlines this phenomenon clearly. “Photography with specifically anthropological aims developed in Spain, as in other western countries, within a colonial and expeditionary context” (75). Much to the same functions of the 18 and 19th century orientalist paintings, photography was used to reinforce stereotypes that classified the non-european subject as the exotic other. Yet while paintings maintain illusionary qualities of the brushstroke, photography permitted the consumption of these representations as historical fact.

Jackson’s photographs engage viewers in a different kind of curriculum. Jackson draws inspiration from Foster’s idea that in confronting the archive, new systems of knowledge can be created. By resurfacing these images she confronts the visual representation of non-white/ European bodies locked within the archive and reminds us to revisit the colonial specter which, although at times forgotten, still haunts.
Although the medium itself is photography, Jackson explains that the exhibit is at its core performance-based work. In this chapter I will explore a selection of photographs from the exhibition as well as the intersections between archival art and performance, drawing from Diana Taylor’s, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Seen as individual performances, each photographic work in the series represents the creation of a space where new historical narratives might emerge—this created space is a counter archive, a radical archive. With each re-appropriation, the performed, counter-archive complicates the memory cemented in the original archival photograph and thus takes steps towards subverting the clichés born in the redistribution of these images in the 19th and 20th century.

Reviewing the 2014 exhibition in New York for *The Daily Serving*, Lia Wilson suggests that although Jackson’s confrontation of problematic historical narratives is clear, it is unclear what new systems of knowledge are being created in her work. This vagueness is a worry the artist expressed herself—by re-staging these images was she adding to the narrative she wished to dismantle? Unwanted or unintended interpretations such as this are always a risk with visual art, especially in exhibitions like *Archival Impulse* which may eventually be taken apart and sold, reproduced in various contexts. When understood with Jackson’s intention in mind however, I find the worry of vagueness to disappear and the new systems of knowledge which emerge to be quite explicit.

By closely reading the following photographs from *Archival Impulse* and situating them within the archival turn in contemporary art, I attempt to clarify the explicitness of the artists intentions. I will also consider the intention, production, and exhibition of Jackson’s work a model of a therapeutic experience that can add to Ann Cvetkovich’s archive of depression as a
public feeling. I want to suggest that the affective responses which proliferate as long as the black body remains tangled up in a problematic political narrative, constitute a depressed condition, one that Jackson seeks to work through in her intervention of the archive.

**Intention**

Jackson’s work responds to the role that photographic images played not only in constructing racial identities and racial awareness in the late 19th and early 20th century during the scramble for Africa, but how this has evolved into the visual culture of today. *Archival Impulse* began with Jackson’s project *Poverty Pornography*, in which she explored the representation of the black body by the west, as always in relation to either violence, death, or destruction. These representations inundate not only western media but the rest of the globe, and navigate a dangerous space, Jackson explains, between seduction and repulsion. Jackson began to ask herself why it was only these narratives that she could access—although she knew alternatives existed, the image of the black body that remained was a photographic image of violence, need, and destruction.

The expansion of photography and image circulation could not have come at a better time in the colonial landscape. The 19th century perception of photography as a truth telling medium worked to solidify and justify a superiority complex—a white supremacist logic. A European presented with a photograph that contrasts a well dressed upright white man with a sitting or kneeling usually naked native from South Africa, internalizes not only that the color of his skin gives him power over the colonized, but is reminded (because of idea of photograph as a truth-telling medium) that this contrast is *real*. Jackson’s photographs call up the central irony of
the medium that is a testament to John Szarkowski’s definition of what makes a photograph a photograph. A problem with photography and representation is that in its unique ability for historical disclosure, it usurps our actual memories and ability to see. While the camera captures “the thing itself” (see Chapter III) we cannot forget that it is a selected reality. However candid, the photograph presents a fragment of time that exists only in the reality of the photograph.

Today, the infiltration of the non-symbolic visual culture into everyday life has changed the way photographs are understood. Once windows into history, photographs are manipulated, edited, photoshopped, transformed. But has anything really changed? The public’s perception of photographs as windows into reality in the 19th century does not change the fact that the photographs were themselves manipulated, tailored ‘photoshopped’ within the parameters of the colonial mindset—yes these individuals existed in front of the camera, but their positions were selected, and their poses dictated—forced into a primitive, subservient condition.

*Poverty Pornography* takes a look at images from this time up to more recent images, suggesting that this view of the non-white body still prevails. Questioning the constant association of the non-white body with death, violence, disaster, and poverty, Jackson explained that the project was an attempt to get to the root of a phenomenon that is deeply ingrained the the human psyche—that the non-white body is one that needs to be civilized, the savage, one in need of help. *Poverty Pornography* stands on the idea that this objectification of non-white bodies by the media for another’s pleasure or consumption, is essentially pornographic. In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag writes that we have a tendency to be comfortable with other

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56 The non-symbolic is explained with a discussion of John Roberts in Chapter III
57 Jackson references media such National Geographic, or pulitzer prize winning photographs that make the cover of important news publications—these are images that pull the reader in and are hard to look away from.
peoples pain while we are not with are own, and Jackson’s work directly engages this phenomenon through photography.

Jackson restaged iconic images with her own body as the subject, critiquing the distribution of these image for the messages of the non-white body they perpetuate. Selections from *Poverty Pornography*, below.

*Disaster, 2011*

Pulitzer Prize winning photograph, Eddie Adams: Vietnam, 1968

*Dis Ease (2011)*

Pulitzer Prize winning photograph, Kevin Carter: Sudan, 1993
This work of photo-performance is done in the same way for *Archival Impulse*. The stereotypes that color the dominant imaginary are problematic and, she explained, “require a revisitation of our collective memory.” Jackson began excavating the Duggan Cronin photographic archive in Kimberley, South Africa, re-visiting the colonial memory on her own. Throughout her search she identified recurring tropes in the work of largely unknown photographers who set out in this era to capture the black body, and performed the images as she did for *Poverty Pornography*. The choice to use her own body is central. She explained that, from the outset, she realized that this work was about *her* body, *her* history, *herself*. Jackson explained how the choice allowed her to investigate how she could “ultimately feel better about herself,” at a time when she was trying to negotiate her own black body and identity. This notion classifies *Archival Impulse* as a work with affective intentions, where the artist (in a state in which she felt bad) imagined that though the process she might experience an a positive transformation, one that would make her “feel better,” or begin to explore healing.

**Archival Impulse: Selections**

The construction of Jackson’s photographs show *Archival Impulse* is also an exhibit about the inherently theatrical quality of photography. Her images are implicit reminders of a photographer’s ability to capture the subject as they exist in reality, while at the same time *re*-presenting this subject in a way that is far from reality. The photographs in *Archival Impulse* are explicitly theatrical—a counter representation of the original photographs from the archive which were theatrical, yet perceived as fact. To capitalize on this tension of representation, Jackson often juxtaposes her portrait against negative, mirror image, or patterned backgrounds which point to the image’s fabrication.
Jackson’s *Demons/Devotees* reproduces the below image from the Duggan Cronin Archive, an image which circulated Europe in the 19th century. Many images from this time depicting the black body were almost classical in their execution, employing compositions of famous paintings, possibly to make their contents more legible to the European eye (Jackson).

The archival image depicts a well-dressed white woman standing at the apex of a pyramid of half-clothed or naked black bodies. Employing the pyramid to direct the viewer’s gaze upwards, the elegantly dressed woman towers over the clothesless intertwined bodies, enforcing contrasts of order/disorder, white/black, civilized/primitive.

The photograph is an explicit representation of the black body as a resident of the permanent underclass—A message communicated in the visual language of its composition. Imagining the perceptions that may have been taken from this photograph when circulated throughout Europe,
one sees how even the least powerful, or poorest of whites (if encountering the black body for the first time in this photograph) might identify with the idea of having power over this body.

I find Jackson’s *Demons/Devotees* direct response to this original image to be the most clear example of her intention. Exploring the viewer’s ability to read an image, Jackson replaces the white woman as well as the crouching bodies with her own.

![Image](Demons/Devotees I Archival Pigment Print 112x112 (2012))

The image’s large scale makes every face readable and every expression unique. Although Jackson’s body is repeated several times, each pose, the graceful placement of each limb, reclaims the autonomy that is stripped from the nude/ half dressed figures in the original image.
While in the original photograph the white woman almost floats like an angel and the black bodies blend into the surrounding foliage/earth, the figures in *Demons/Devotees* stand out from the abstract background. Although the structural hierarchy remains, each body’s humanity is accentuated with her varying expressions.

Jackson also created variations on *Demons/Devotees*, substituting herself for a white woman in one photograph, and substituting nude white men for her repeated poses in the second. Each image seems to be mocking imitations of one another, each a response to the original archival image.
In *What will you tell them about me?/ Do you feel pain?* the artist directly positions herself as the object displayed in Europe as a spectacle for observation. This image alludes to the human zoos of the 19th century. The concept of the human zoo or “ethnological exposition” epitomizes the dehumanization of the black body that Jackson confronts (*Colonial Exhibitions, ‘Völkerschauen’ and the Display of the ‘Other’, Dreesbach*).

In the titles of several pieces in the exhibition, Jackson creates an unspoken dialogue of exchange between the photographer and the photographed subject. *What will you tell them about me?/ Do you feel pain?* suggests two voices, separated by a backslash, which highlight the photographer’s supposed instructions to the subject (packed with intention as to what he/she might have wanted to portray) and then the thoughts in the mind of the subject (responses to these instructions and...
insight into personal reactions). In this case, Jackson, embodying a woman on display for the colonizer, questions the implications of her spectacle, while her audience/photographer might be asking, “can this creature feel?” This interaction alludes to the often violent interaction between photographed and photographer—where the subject is stripped of agency and vulnerable to the wishes of the one with the camera. ‘Do you feel pain?’ might also suggest the subject’s thoughts looking to her onlookers, wondering if in fact they too are of a different species. By giving a voice/thought to the subject Jackson gives her the agency that would have been stripped when the photograph was originally taken.

Jackson’s expression in this image seems simultaneously judged and judging, stoic and full of intensity. Her eyes, as they engage the audience contribute to the theatrical quality of this image, along with the negative fabricated background. In her review for The Daily Serving, Lia Wilson comments that this choice works towards “invalidating any interpretation of it as truth or authentic record.” I agree with this conclusion, especially when Jackson’s reproduction is contrasted with the original photograph (below). Although theatrical in quality, the original image does not engaging the viewer, and the background/subject are seamless components to one scene.

Archival Impulse publication, Jackson: Image from the Duggan Cronin archive (7)
*Prototype/Phenotype* (below) directly references the development of the scientific study of race in the colonial period. Drawing from the work of Susan Sontag on elucidating the role of photography in scientific racism, Jackson positions herself as the black subject, photographed as if belonging to a different/other species.

Unlike *What will you tell them about me? Do you feel pain?*, *Prototype/Phenotype* is staged against a neutral background. The frontal and profile exposition of her body against the neutral background is typical in scientific studies of organisms—prototype (an early sample, or the first model of something) and phenotype (the composition of an organism’s physical characteristics). Displaying the other against a neutral background was not uncommon in photographs of the 19th and early 20th century, as the subject was intended to float in a non-socialized space. In his article on photography and ethnography in Spain introduced above, Juan Naranjo mentions this
in an example of the contrast in photographs of Spaniards at home and natives of the colonized/explored territories in the New World. Referencing a photograph entitled “Man of the Canary Islands” he writes:

The subject is not elegantly dressed and surrounded by accessories—painted backgrounds, columns, tables adorned with luxurious fabrics, curtains and markers of success [image, left]...instead the portrait of the man from the Canary Islands is naked, in half-profile and with a neutral background, his physical rather than social character predominating, centering the viewer’s interest accordingly [image, right] (73).

(Left) Unknown photographer, Portrait of Juan Bruguera, daguerreotype, Madrid, 1843. 11x 8 cm. Courtesy of the Collection of Angel Fuentes y Cuca Pueyo.  (Right) Bisson, Fils, Man of Canary Islands Descent, daguerreotype, c.1842 18x13 cm. Courtesy Sabun Berthelot Collection, Musée de L’Homme.
Like the photos above, the original photographs that Jackson’s *Prototype/Phenotype* allude to the intentional othering of the non-white body that has historical precedent in the colonial 19th and early 20th century. Jackson reminds us that this process continues today, with the hypersexualization of the black woman’s body and the demonization and criminalization of the black man’s body in visual representation. With this in mind, Jackson found that it would be “inconceivable” to use another body in her work because she too would be subjecting an individual to this problematic gaze.

**Performance in *Archival Impulse*: Embodying Cultural Memory**

Apart from the fabricated backgrounds and direct eye contact with the viewer in many strong images, I find the performative aspect of *Archival Impulse* to be most vivid in the *Case 33* series. *Case 33* is the title to a series of headshots/close up portraits of Jackson. *Case 33* references Saartjie Baartman (Sarah Baartman), a woman from the Gamtoos Valley in South Africa who was exhibited around Europe in the human zoos, freak shows, and museums in the 19th century. *Case 33* refers to her study number in scientific journals/drawings—often grotesquely exaggerated to highlight the “exotic” nature her features.58 Staging herself as the case-study, through her own body Jackson creates a present-day dialogue between her own performance and the figure of Baartman as a spectacle.

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58 Sarah Baartman’s image appears in the work of many African diasporic artists as they engage in the visual language of the black female body that was designed in the 19th century in scientific terms. *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story and a Biography*, Clifton Crais and Pamela Scully
In the reenactment and performance of images for *Archival Impulse* the artist essentially re-lived the experience of the subject. Lying on display for *What will you tell them about me/Do you feel pain?* may have been an experience in which while she evoked Baartman emotions, she needed to maintain her own pride enough to look into her own camera. Jackson explained how many of the experiences were traumatic—in *Death* from *Poverty Pornography*, Jackson recalls the feeling of the noose around her neck, while knowing that the situation is associated with a soul, thousands of souls who lived that experience.
Expanding on why she chose herself as a subject, Jackson remarked, “I didn't want to traumatize another woman’s body.” Here she reminds us that this is extremely personal work, that she is responsible for their re-creation.

On this note, it is important to address how each individual photograph lends itself to personal interpretation of the viewer, interpretations Jackson may not have intended at all, and has no control over. *Archival Impulse* was critiqued for in some ways reinforcing the cliches/images the artist is trying to undermine. To deal with this the artist had to on the one hand, claim sole and responsibility for the project as something she did for herself, and on the other hand turn away from it, knowing that when the pieces are taken apart and sold, she no longer has control over their significance. Although the series has no formal structure Jackson’s *Case 33 VI* (below)
is intended to close the exhibition. Jackson explains this image as representative of her “turning away from the project, closing the chapter.”

In this image Jackson draws from the afro-futurist idea of ‘walking backwards into the future’ in acknowledgement of the history that preceded it. ⁵⁹ If we consider Jackson’s collection of restaged images her own counter-archive to the Duggan Cronin Archive, the last image is an embodiment of “self conscious archivization.” ⁶⁰ Jackson physically turns away in the acknowledgement that she too chose to compile, create and bring to life this history, beginning a difficult discussion. In The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the

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⁵⁹ Afro-futurism engages mostly with the aesthetic, and is aimed to develop a culture concerned with a re-examination of the culture of the past and the african diaspora through a lens of technoculture, historical fiction, and science fiction.

⁶⁰ Thomas and Cook, Archives Records and Power
Americas, Diana Taylor notes how “Performance carries the possibility of challenge, and self-challenge within it” (15). The possibility of self-challenge is crucial in the creation of radical archives if we want to open the possibility that they can be used productively in the future creation and analysis of histories that do not reside in the institutional archive.

In a publication of Poverty Pornography and Archival Impulse Achille Mbembe writes, “The real work of this series does not exist in physical form, it exists in the imaginary; in the space between Ayana V. Jackson’s reference images, the spectator’s private thoughts /memories/associations, and the reenactments themselves” (3). The impact of Jackson’s work resides in the in between, the space between observer and observed, where it can do the work of releasing these colonial spectres from their cages and confronting them. In this way, performance gives her work an ephemeral quality, characteristic of performance art.

Embodied performances, according to Taylor, have always played a central role in conserving memory and consolidating identities. “Performances function as visual acts of transfer, transmitting knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity through reiterated, or what Richard Schechner has called ‘twice-behaved behavior.’” The Case 33 series for example, exemplifies this action of embodied behavior to transmit a new knowledge. Taylor also makes the clear distinction between performance/embodied action, and theatre. Theatre, implies a script, characters, and a plot—a formulaic construction of an event. To Taylor colonialism itself is theatre—the same white male oppressors dominating the same brown or black colonized individuals. “Colonialism is theatrical... the pattern of exploitation and dominance can be repeated, the same characters in each play” (13-14). Performance on the other hand, is
different—it implies choice, and cultural agency, and Jackson’s performance responds to the devastating colonial script that is perpetuated through the photo-archive.

Jackson’s work resides not in the archive but in the *repertoire*. The repertoire, introduced in Taylor’s book, is the reservoir for embodied memory, gestures, languages, dances, performances. While concrete objects, letters, and photographs, can remain in the archive untouched, unexperienced, the repertoire allows for individual agency because it requires presence, “people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by ‘being there’ being a part of the transmission” (20). If we take performances seriously as events of memory and knowledge transmission, then by studying them, the problem of cultural authority that constricts the archive is avoided.

Jackson finds her response to the critique that she adds to the a problematic archive in her own performance. In her talk at New Jersey City University, she explained that to use a body other than her own would be “mimetic.” If she photographed another woman’s body, she would have occupied the powerful position while her subject (regardless of intent) the powerless subject. Choosing to perform both positions herself, she avoids the problematic risk of mimesis and, creates a situation that might provoke an anamnestic process in the viewer. This element connects Jackson’s archival art to that of Diego Cirulli explained in the previous chapter. In restaging and performing the images, she invites the viewer to journey through memory, to question it, and not through pedagogy but through experience.

More often than not, a journey through memory evokes feelings. The affective responses of both *Archival Impulse* and *21 105 significaciones y resignificación de los espacios de la memoria* were strong not only for the spectators but for the artists. The exhibition of *Archival*
Impulse at NJCU, impregnated a small gallery space with emotions, memories, tears and recalled histories. The affective anamnestic nature of Diego Cirulli’s work takes effect while the viewer walks through the ghostly archive, and in the second room when the viewer is confronted with the repeated self-portrait of the artist, an allusion to the lost “hijos.” On the one hand, the artist performs the role of the lost children with his own portrait, and on the other, each viewer, in his or her “andar” embodies his performance of walking through traumatic memory. Performance evokes feelings, evokes memory, and most importantly, bridges the personal experience to a collective experience, creating a new space for shared feelings.
Conclusions. ADDING TO THE PUBLIC FEELINGS PROJECT

21 105 significaciones y resignificaciones de los espacios de la Memoria and Archival Impulse are projects that prove the strong connection of making archival art to individual and collective processes of healing. In the impulse, creation, and presentation of each work the artists sought to deliver past material to the present in a creative and performative way that could open the doors to new processes of memory and understanding. In spite of the obvious contextual differences between the post-traumatic human rights climate of Argentina in the recent decades and explorations in the colonial narrative with regards to the black body across time, both artists, in their choice of material gained access to archival ghosts and released them.

The choice of the photographic archive in each case was crucial as the artists engaged processes of image production and memory transmission in the wake of histories of trauma and oppression. What is it about the original photographs that need to be released? Are they becoming forgotten? Are they problematic? In what way did each work reflect the artist’s journey in remembering and did this inspire viewers to embark on the same mnemonic journey? In what ways are these works radical? The emotive effects of the works provide answers to these questions and situate them as works which explore Public Feelings.

In the creation of the radical archive, through the transference of a photograph from one condition to another, the artist's use of performance (including flexibility and movement) produces therapeutic effects. Inviting viewers to physically walk through the disappearing archive of 21 105 encouraged a collective meditation on memory and the nature of Argentina's disappeared after over two decades of state-sponsored policies of denial and forgetting, while at the same time serving as a personal outlet for Cirulli to speak to a phenomenon that was silenced.
in his family. Similarly, Jackson’s re-staged photographs allowed her to explore her own identity and experience in a black body while at the same time negotiating problems of representation that affect all populations of the african diaspora in a time where the colonial past remains present. In the exploration through memory as well as the creation of new memories, the creation of radical archives is a step towards finding a solution to the problem of the archive. Through what we might call *radical archive therapy*, the artist explores a creative process of healing that responds directly to the original archive as well as the conditions or context which enabled the original archive to exist.

In order to accept the notion of radical archive therapy, it is necessary to follow two requests— one from Ann Cvetkovich and one from Diana Taylor. The first involves “taking feelings seriously,” and the second involves “taking *performance* seriously” (Cvetkovich, Taylor). If we open our conceptions, first and foremost to what depressed social conditions might be, then we open the possibility for an “expanded understanding of therapy and healing as manifest in the way people seek to make themselves feel better at both the micro level of everyday life and the macro level of organized collectivities and politics” (Cvetkovich 110). The creation of archival art is one of those possibilities.

Taking performance seriously as a valid system of “learning, transmitting, and storing knowledge,” allows us to expand what we understand by knowledge (Taylor 16). When we take performance seriously, we legitimize Taylor’s notion of the *repertoire* as an equally, if not better mechanism through which knowledge and memory is transferred from generation to generation. The repertoire, unlike the archive, allows for individual agency, because it includes the recipient, or discoverer of the performance, whereas the archive is limited to the historian or the archivist.
In the following sections I wish to add *Archival Impulse* and *21 105 significaciones y resignificaciones* to Ann Cvetkovich’s archive to show how they legitimize the two requests above.

**The Depression Archives: *Archival Impulse***

On *Archival Impulse*, theorist and political scientist Achille Mbembe writes:

Posing herself as the Other, she re-walks the path of those who have preceded her, and adds her image to theirs. The artist exhibits her stylized body with immodest reserve; its fine contours radiate beauty and grace. There is no need for metaphor, even when semi-nude or staged with sensuality. These pictures of a body—a Black body—provoke a logjam of feelings. The viewer is inclined to feel seduced while faced with fundamental ambiguity. (Excerpt from *Archival Impulse* Exhibition pamphlet)

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the emotive effects of Jackson’s photographs are strong. While the images are themselves beautiful, the artist's gaze looks upon the viewer as if questioning them, What do you see when you look at me? How do you see this black body? The “logjam” of feelings that the project provokes among the viewer might be similar to the feelings experienced by the artist in her process. Jackson’s desire to get to the root cause of racism and racial oppression reflects an attempt to address, therapeutically, these factors which contribute to depressive conditions on a grand scale.

Cvetkovich proposes that the causes of depression are long term effects of racism and colonialism rather than biochemical imbalances (Cvetkovich 24). The core issue that drove Jackson to create this work was the idea that this racism and the colonial mindset are perpetuated
through the archive. To find out how she could overturn or make sense of this, Jackson looked to the source. While walking through the past, walking through memory, the process of healing and reflection could begin. Jackson’s work touches what Cvetkovich calls, the “affective life of racialized existence,” where connections are made between racism and low-level feelings, such as depression and self alienation (116).

In a recent talk at Washington State University, Jackson explained how growing up in the United States in the 80s and 90s where the only representation of black bodies were in relation to death, disease, or destruction—she was hungry to find other narratives that she knew existed. Yet because it was photographic representations which crowded out all other narratives, she decided to find a way in which she could “repopulate the image bank” herself. Where there wasn’t an archive, she sought to create one that would allow her to explore feelings of self-alienation and personal and racial identity. This process echoes the work of Jacqui Alexander introduced in the chapter entitled *Racism and Depression* of Cvetkovich’s work. Where the available archive “is inadequate to do the task” of writing, Alexander drew from her own spiritual practice and memoir to capture the lived experience of slavery for her work “Pedagogies of the sacred” (135).

**The Depression Archives: 21: 105 significación y resignificación de los espacios de la memoria**

In an interview Diego Cirulli noted, “Beginning in 2003 in Argentina, the importance of the defense of human rights took on an unedited relevance. This led to a strong commitment, with political character, to transforming the apathy from the years before into a dialogue with the
society and their cultural expressions.” The human rights culture that emerged in Argentina reflects a drive towards movement, away from a trapped history and policy of forgetting and towards a future armed with memory and justice. The new culture that emerged out of grief and loss is characterized by the human rights efforts of groups like the Abuelas, Madres, and HIJOs (Sons and Daughters for Identity and Justice Against Forgetting and Silence) to serve historical justice. A product of his time, Cirulli was working in a political climate that drove him to meditate on the construction of history and memory as well as the representation of that memory. The re-signification of ESMA is an evident marker of the fight for historical justice in Argentina. ESMA was already re-signified when Cirulli began his installation, but his work explicitly addressed the re-signification, made it visible to the public, and magnified it.

Cvetkovich writes, “If depression is conceived as blockage or impasse or being stuck, then its cure might lie in forms of flexibility or creativity more than in pills or a different genetic structure (21).” The very essence of the installation 21: 105 significación y resignificación de los espacios de la memoria is flexibility and movement itself, the “andar” the walk. Creating a radical, constructed archive that makes faces appear in the context they once disappeared and inviting the public to physically walk through the new archive is inherently therapeutic not just in terms of confronting traumatic memory but in acknowledging the ever-present nature of the ghosts of the disappeared in the Argentine reality. Furthermore, Cirulli’s installation opens a space for the consideration of the notion of Argentina’s disappeared apart from the mimetic portraits of youthful, happy faces which reside in the Abuela’s Archive.

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61 In beginning to define the “performance” Taylor found words from indigenous languages in the americas to be best suited. Olin meaning movement in Náhuatal “is the motor behind everything that happens in life, the continuity with time and space” (14). The performance in Cirulli’s work is Olin —employing movement to encourage memory transmission and discussion.
The notion of re-signification of memory spaces is also crucial in terms of Taylor’s and Cvetkovich’s work. Housing the installation in ex-ESMA transformed a symbolic space into a social crossroads, a site of memory transmission. Cvetkovich writes, “Depression...can take antisocial forms such as withdrawal or inertia, but it can also create new forms of sociality, whether in public cultures that give it expression or because, as has been suggested bout melancholy, it serves as the foundation for new kinds of attachment or affiliation” (4). The experience of “being there” in ex-Esma walking though lost souls, is undoubtedly an ephemeral experience that not only unifies the viewers in that particular space, will continue to travel in another space, encouraging a continuing discussion of memory.

The artists that I have explored employed performance (in terms of movement and embodied behavior) as a mechanism to transmit both memory and knowledge in a way the archive itself could not. As they explored the dilemmas of their chosen archive, or the context which surrounded its creation, Jackson and Cirulli developed a similar formal process, strategy and structure which encourages the examination of archival contents in extra-archival contexts.

While I first drew the primary connection between two geographically distant artists to be their formal processes, by placing Diana Taylor and Ann Cvetkovich in conversation, I was able to draw deeper connections between their seemingly isolated contexts. It soon became clear that both impulses to excavate the archive, to take control of or facilitate new memory transmission, are rational responses to the histories of neoliberalism, colonialism, and oppression that, much like the photographs which illustrate them, are not constrained by borders.
In the previous chapter I mentioned Diana Taylor’s classification of colonialism as theatrical, — a repeating pattern of exploitation and dominance with the same characters. In *Disappearing Acts*, Taylor refers to the Argentine Dirty War as theatrical as well. Referring to the “script” or the master narrative used by the military, Taylor writes, “The entire scenario of ‘national reorganization’ set in motion by the military was highly theatrical” (184). The narratives follow a problematic script, their histories are told and ideologies perpetuated within the archive, (or the absent archive in the case of Argentina’s disappeared). Each artist developed a project aimed towards deconstructing these problematic theatrical narratives by confronting the very notion of archive. In Jackson’s case deconstructing and hijacking the archive of colonialism, and in Cirulli’s case, extending the Abuelas archive through visual art, making the archive visible where it had been erased by policies of forgetting. Both works, by delivering archival material to the present, highlight the complexities between past and present, memory and forgetting, and invite the viewer to explore those complexities.
In Case 33 (above), Jackson draws from the afro-futurist idea of “walking backwards into the future” in acknowledgement of the history that preceded it. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, this last image is an embodiment of Thomas and Cook’s claim in *Archives Records and Power: The Making of Modern Memory,* of “self conscious archivization” in a radical context. Her poised torso turns away from her camera in acknowledgement of her choices as well as the problematic images from which she drew inspiration. I find this image to be exemplary of the common ground between the archive and its radical counterparts— the notion of any archive, radical or not, as they operate parallel to systems of memory, are inherently selective and always biased. Without this acknowledgement, without the performance coming to a close, how can future collections of materials learn from one another? Adopting a self-conscious approach to the archive and pushing the boundaries of our conceptions of the archive opens new possibilities, ways of conceiving history, and of finding resolutions. In the postmodern world, the creation of radical archives can be viewed (along with depression) as a rational response to global conditions. Radical archives offer both the possibility of engagement with past materials of the archive, as well as with individual and collective healing processes for the future.

By taking performance, feelings, and radical archives *seriously,* history can begin to write itself not just by the powerful, the archivist, or the historian, but by the artist, the cultural theorist, the activist, the scholar and more. Rather than understand the seemingly incongruous nature of archive and radical archive as a setback, we should embrace the divergence as a valid resource for creative production, one that encourages processes of extra-archival memory and knowledge transmission on a global scale.
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Acknowledgements

I want to thank Professor Christopher Packard for supporting my project from the beginning, and equipping me with the many tools needed to complete it.

I want to thank Professor Luis Ramos for his position as second reader, and for introducing me to the work of Diana Taylor which was influential for my project.

I want to thank Diego Sandstede who pioneered the Recovery and Conservation of Revista 21, for including me in the process while abroad in Buenos Aires.

Diego Cirulli’s work became the first inspiration for my project. I want to thank him for taking the time to share it with me and for welcoming me into his studio.

I want to thank Ayana V. Jackson her for her willingness to engage with me and understand my project. Jackson’s work is an inspiration and I will continue to track it.

I also want to mention Professor Jill Magi, and her recent project of gathering poets, artists, and scholars to visit and respond creatively to the Robert F. Wagner Labor Archive held at NYU Tamiment Library. With the exhibition of this project, Professor Magi proved that the excavation of archives is not only already happening, but has already offered expanded notions of history and memory transmission through the arts.