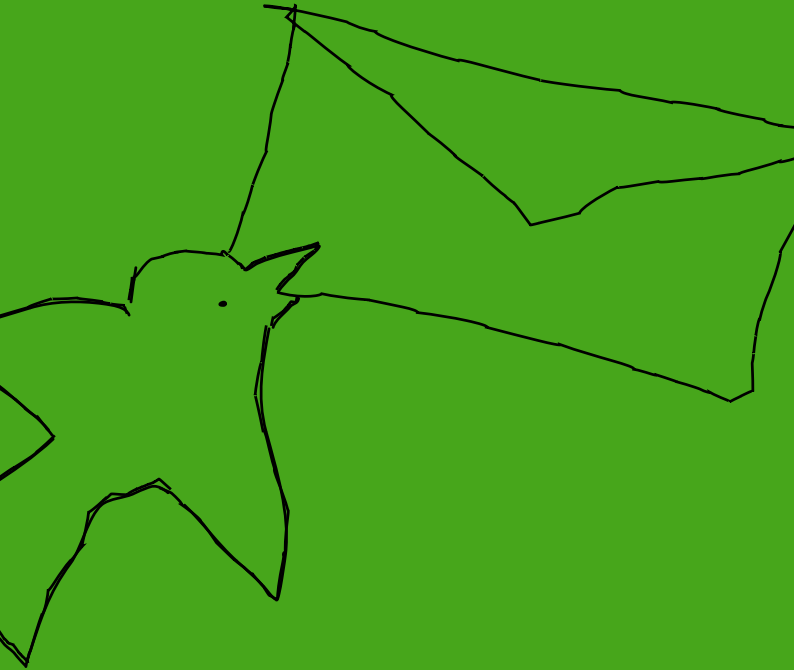


WHAT'S LOVE\* GOT TO DO WITH

# BUILDING ARCHIVES



mail us your artifacts at  
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A NOTE ON COMMUNAL ARCHIVING



WHAT'S LOVE\* GOT TO DO WITH

# BUILDING ARCHIVES

Written by Kitty.

Designed by Trixie and Kitty.

Annotated by you, \_\_\_\_\_ .

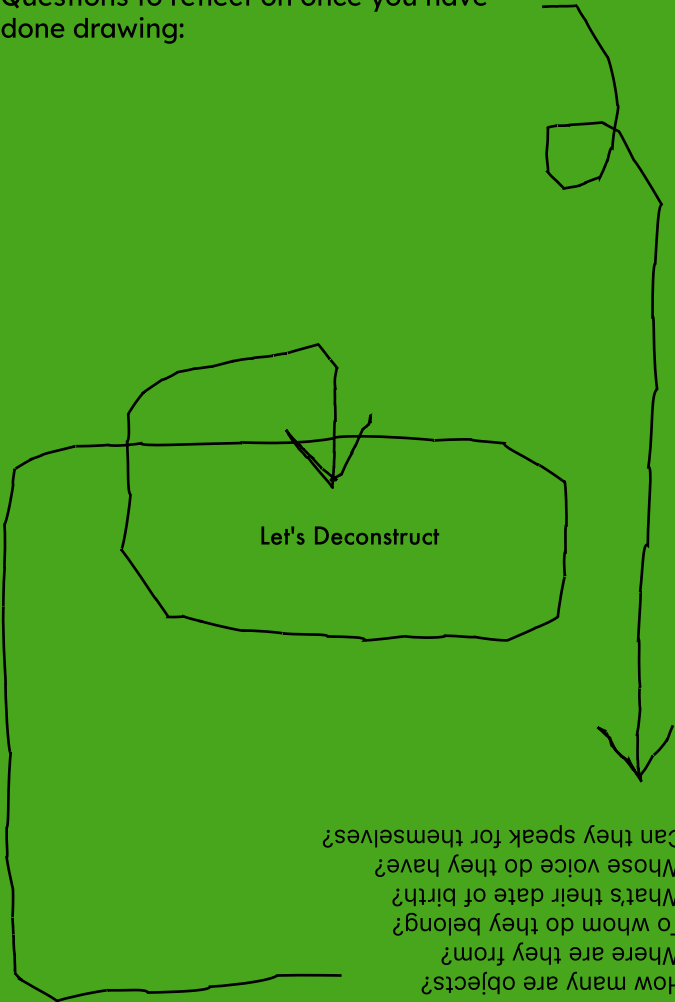
**What's Love\* Got To Do With \_\_\_\_?**

is a monthly series published on *Project Theory Probe*, discovering the many ways that love has been overlooked in our daily lives, then proposing solutions to our intimacy-deprived capitalist existence.

Before turning to the next page:

**DRAW IN EACH BOX  
WHAT (YOU THINK)  
PEOPLE WOULD PUT  
IN AN ARCHIVE.**


Questions to reflect on once you have  
done drawing:



# I have long been an archivist.

Though we rarely hear this  
word claimed in a personal,  
unprofessional context.

Photo: Visiting DOKK1  
Aarhus Public Library  
2022. Source: Kitty.

Its verb, *archiving*, was once reserved for established historians and experts, those who were enshrined inside establishments like The Government, The University, The Museum, The Library.



The faithful beliefs that

(1) archives need  
to be told by those  
in power, and

(2) they represent  
history,

are legacies of the  
colonial project.  
Such a connotation  
is maintained, but  
to the benefit of  
which people?

Kitty: The definition of  
each vocabulary is kept  
to benefit which people?

In the post-colonial worlds,  
archives are still widely defined  
as governmental or institutional  
documents about history and  
objective facts.

Archiving is a process of storing inactive information for the purpose of preservation across time. Every photo captured, diary line written, memento saved is a testimonial of a life and way of living.

By archiving, we are answering the following questions:

Whose story deserves to be told, remembered, and empathized with? Who will be silenced? Who gets to tell whose story? And in which tone of voice? Whose perspective gets preserved, embodied, materialized?

Dominique Luster: History is a series of strategically curated decisions that have the ability to either uplift some or silence others.

If creativity process offers (an)other discourse from the mainstream, the archiving process proposes (an)other memory framework. The construction of such framework is conscious, strategic, and always produces consequences. Then, through collective remembrances of a certain history, people build tribes, promote ideologies, commit to rituals, and most intimately, they design their ways of being (ontology). In short, constructing past worlds (memories, history) is building new worlds.

When I call myself an archivist,  
I am pointing to my practice of  
capturing, collecting, and  
organizing data that are then  
preserved through the process  
of gathering people, creative  
storing, and disseminating  
ontologies. I strategically work  
with memory and history  
through its records. My point is  
to uplift some otherness.

## **CASE 1: RE-NARRATE FAMILY LIFE | VIETNAM**

Making A Fuss, for example, is  
an archival effort for a  
marginalized people: Using  
personal stories (instead of  
empirical facts) in the process  
of a projection (instead of  
work) to offer a counter-  
narrative to what is usually  
narrated.

Photo: One super low-  
key, last-minute gathering  
to talk about "fusses".

Source: Rem.



Anna Mariana: No  
matter how small the  
space, "invigorating" the  
archive, whether it is a  
verbal, text or other  
material archive, can  
eventually form a  
counter-discourse.



Beyond the choice of content and medium itself, the choice of creators (i.e. who is allowed to involve) also matters.

According to the status quo, the group of people that were invited to author Making A Fuss would be judged unappealing.

Why, they were **young** (not old), **amateur** (not experts), **Asian** (not White), **Vietnamese nationality** (not people of a "developed" nation nor Japanese, which is the dominant language of PTP\*), **lower to middle class** (not rich), **nameless** (not celebrities), **okay-looking** (not exceptionally beautiful), **female** (not male).  
When such accounts are reported, we offer "another" possibility of what deserves resources and empathy.

(\*) Project Theory Probe:  
the explorative journal  
where this booklet is  
published.

Methodologically, in gathering a certain people and engage in a process where stories arise organically from each participant, then piecing them together to **co-find meanings** (instead of dictating meanings), I propose a different framework to history making and history itself. From this small space, we will experiment with translating, disseminating, inviting, reflecting, and archiving other stories. By re-questioning **who gets to archive** (who gets to have their stories remembered) and **how to archive**, we are re-distributing power, and even better, reconstructing what power is.

## CASE 2: RE-NARRATE THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT | INDONESIA

The women's right movement in Indonesia was usually narrated in accordance to Indonesian political periodization. This implied several things:

- (1) the women's movement does not have its own historical periodization,
- (2) it is on the edge of the main narrative,
- (3) the women's struggles made no initiatives of their own.

In 2012, the Vredeburch Museum counter-narrated by revitalizing its archive. They hosted multi-media materials and used aesthetics to make archives more appealing, thus, accessible to the public.



Photo: The Women's and Youth Movement Corner at Vredeburch Museum 2012. Source: private.

Workshops were held to accumulate more diverse documentation about the movement and hold space for broader dialogues. This effort reclaimed the movement from existing historiography and deconstructed the narrative that the movement was mainly organized. Rather, it is "[...] to show the existence of an everyday women's movement, non-elite, even **organic** in its development in the broader community [...] an endeavor to produce **experience-based** knowledge in the Vredeburch Museum [...] and] that to obtain justice and gender equality, it will not merely be given, but must be struggled for."

Since — or coincide with — the Ontological Turn of the 1990s, many efforts to decolonize and redefine the archive have taken place across the globe. We are seeing wider, queerer answers to the quest(ion),

who deserves empathy?

Mediums like blogging, vlogging, front cameras for selfies etc. also facilitate inclusive autonomy\*.



(\*) Although these platforms are still created by — and most benefiting — the colonial and dominant power.

(\*) Although such a discussion is not popular in non-academic, non-West settings...

I don't mean to imply no effort has been taken, or that redefining the archive and history-making is a new discussion\*.

My purpose is illustrating the fact that (1) the building of memories and history can be deconstructed by pointing to the fact that existing archives are biased, they don't represent the whole history, nor they need to be told by those with traditional power; (2) alternative narratives can be organically facilitated no matter how small the effort, and (3) such an activism is only possible through the practice of care, of looking deeply.

Recognizing that there are other histories, other ways of knowing and experiencing, naturally compels us to hold space for and assist their existence. In short, *recognizing* paves the way for *activism: change*.

Silvia Bleichmar: The otherness is not only the recognition of the ontological right of the existence of other, but also the duty / responsibility to provide the other with the means so that the other can perform their existence. The recognition of otherness does not only implicate that I recognize that there are others, who can exist, but that I recognize that I have to provide the means to help the others to exist.

# References

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In (conference) Jornadas sobre Diversidad Cultural by Silvia Bleichmar, 2014.

On Gathering by Mindy Seu.

What's Love\* Got To Do With Making A Fuss by Kitty and friends.