

Lecture &  
Discussion

Thursday  
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In English

Between order and disorder, finite and infinite, dispersal and arrangement, accumulation and categorization, memory and oblivion, useful and useless, a tension pulses in recent mutations of collecting and archiving. Should this 'archive fever' be seen as an archive inflation expanding the reign of commodification? Is a new form of archival time emerging? What do the nonconformist collecting and archiving practices adopted by contemporary artists say about the possibility of a different relationship to history, memory, and cultural heritage, that is, to the present and the future?

An obsessive preoccupation with the archive pervades the arts, criticism, and curatorial practice. In everyday life, digital data storage has turned the contemporary user into a potential archivist, taxonomist, and collector, relying on cloud services and social media networks as storage places for the safekeeping, sharing, and manipulation of even the most intimate facts and images of life. But the same technologies inspire a widespread archive dystopia: an exhaustive melancholic state that fuels the current efforts for 'impossible archives', that is, counter-archives which question the idea of an all-encompassing repository of personal and collective information and knowledge.

# Impossible Archives, Infinite Collections

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