



# SHAPING THE ARCHIVE

*Shaping the Archive* focuses on what Hal Foster has defined as the ‘archival impulse’: artists’, scientists’, and architects’ urge to collect, select, order, and make public large amounts of material. Although their starting points are similar, these projects differ both in intention and execution. Some archives are meant as traditional ‘collections’, whereas others are contemplations on the ‘order of things’, or serve as autobiographical reconstructions. In all cases, however, the organisation of the material seems crucial. In Andy Warhol’s *Time Capsules*, Gerhard Richter’s *Atlas*, Tacita Dean’s ‘collections’, and Sam Durant’s ‘combinations’, to name just a few archival projects, the meaning of the archive lies in its form.

Of the myriad of forms archives take on, a few are explored in the issue that lies before you, as well as the different ways in which artists actively order their material. We begin this issue therefore with two polemic academic reflections on ordering systems. Roel Griffioen addresses the distrust of ‘order’. Ordering systems are necessary to perceive the world, but the epistemological grounding of these systems is debatable. Is the world really comprehensible? Griffioen suggests ordering systems are often used as instruments of power, as ways of controlling reality. Jeroen Smid, however, considers this sceptical attitude dysfunctional. ‘Anti-realism’ has led the humanities down a dead end street. The archive as a concept, he claims, is misused by the art world in order to argue that ordering systems are merely constructs and do not relate to the real world.

Perhaps inspired by this supposed anti-realism in the humanities, many artists and theorists have taken the archive as the object of their research and practice. They reflect on, for example, the bureaucratic origins of the phenomenon, the hidden power structures that become manifest in archives, or on the tension between concealed information and the public realm. In ‘Between Paranoia and Counter-memory’ Veronica Tello discusses the relations between the archival impulse and counter-memory through Dierk Schmidt’s triptych *Xenophobe, Freedom and Untitled (Louvre)* (2001/2002). These works deal with the sinking of the SIEV-X, a controversial maritime disaster in which most of the refugees on board of the ship drowned. As well as Tello, Stéphanie Benzaquen discusses the counter-narratives produced by various types of ordering systems. In ‘Behind Bars’ she examines how the meaning of mug shots change when they are appropriated into artworks.

The archive represents not only a system on which artists can reflect, but it can also be the physical result of the production process of an artwork. In the case of ephemeral works such as *happenings*, the archive is often the only aspect of the work that remains. Exhibiting such work evokes questions as to what role archives should play in exhibition concepts. Imara Limon critiques how this question was dealt with in the recent Allan Kaprow retrospective at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven (2007).

Many artists and architects have concerned themselves with the systems present in their own work as well. Ioanna Angelidou describes how the concept book can function as a means of mediated archive for architects to order their oeuvre. The selection and analysis of existing concepts and projects can moreover lead to unexpected new insights and ideas.

Ragna Manz discusses amateur-documentalist Horst Ademeit’s archive. After Ademeit purchased a Polaroid camera in 1990, he spent the last twenty years of his life photographing the world around him on a daily basis. Documenting his observations was a way

for him to create his own order in a hostile world that, so he felt, was plagued by 'cold rays'. One of his many manic reports is shown on the back cover of this issue.

The documentation of the living environment also plays a role in the iconic photo series *Exactitudes* by Ari Versluis and Ellie Uytenbroek. Inspired by various social groups' dress codes, the Rotterdam duo has over the past years compiled an impressive collection of group identities. Jesse van Winden and Roel Griffioen interviewed Versluis and Uytenbroek about the formal way of portraying their subjects, the anthropological connotations of the work, and the recurring positioning of the project within the tradition of the 'objective photography' of August Sander and Bernd and Hilla Becher.

This issue's art section is dedicated to designer Ruben Doornweerd's project *alfabet, herkomstland, kleur, hoogte, vorm* (2010), in which Doornweerd arranged his personal possessions according to various ordering systems. In the seemingly arbitrary collection of everyday objects, one stumbles upon an unexpected order. A fragment of a picture of Doornweerd's arrangement of his possessions based on height is shown on the cover of this issue.

We would like to close with the announcement that during the making of this issue, there have been changes in the editorial board. After a year and a half of inspired leadership, Daniël van der Poel has stepped down as editor-in-chief to make way for Ragna Manz. Additionally, the editorial board would like to welcome Evelyn Austin and Lisa Goudsmit.

On behalf of the editorial board,  
**Roel Griffioen, Minke Walda**