

# Archive, Art, and Anarchy

## Challenging the Praxis of Collecting and Archiving: From the Topological Archive to the Anarchic Archive

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all photos by Sam Hopkins

This paper deals with critical perspectives on the archive within the postcolonial and post-structural era. It draws upon an ongoing program of intervention by contemporary artists from Africa within one of Germany's major archives in the field of African Studies—the Iwalewahauss, Bayreuth University. It is neither the archival object, nor the archival index that is questioned but rather the archival process itself. Regarding three art projects by the Kenyan artist Sam Hopkins, the text explores three distinct concepts of the archive: the common institutional concept of archive, the abstract Foucauldian idea, and the vision of an anarchic archive.

In his projects *Not in the Title* (2011), *Not in the Title Too* (2013) and *Mash Up the Archive* (2013–2015) Hopkins critically analyses existing orders within the contemporary museum and archive. The starting point for the first phase of the project is the archive and the collections at Iwalewahauss, the center for contemporary art at Bayreuth University, Germany. As a paradigm the artist chose a collection of Nollywood horror videos: Iwalewahauss holds a body of approximately 200 video tapes that were collected mainly by Prof. Onookome Okome in the late 1990s.<sup>1</sup> In reaction to his research in the archive, Hopkins produced “fake” Nigerian film trailers (Fig. 1) with amateur actors from Bayreuth.<sup>2</sup> The production site—a green screen studio (Fig. 2) and a dressing room (Fig. 4)—was completed by a small cinema (Fig. 3) and became part of the exhibition as the last stage of the first phase of the project and at the same time the freshly produced videos (Fig. 5) were inserted into the archive of Iwalewahauss. The archive's metadata would reveal the artist as producer, Bayreuth as place of production, etc.<sup>3</sup>

*Not in the Title* questions the archive in its institutional sense. As an intervention within the museum it sheds light on museum

and archival praxis, the role objects play as art works and archival goods. The spectator may question what is authentic, what is a copy, and what is fake. But instead of providing answers to these questions, the project disturbs the notion of the originality of the archival object. Observing the perception both within the institution and by the exhibition audience then leads to questions about cultural memory in Africa, the European archive, and the production and reception of the art works. The archive as a theoretical concept came into play, and led to the next phase, *Not in the Title Too*.

*Not in the Title Too* sets out as a film project based in Nairobi, Kenya, and as an exhibition in Bordeaux, France. Once again a “fake” Nollywood movie was produced, this time on the African continent in Nairobi with local actors from the Riverwood film studios.<sup>4</sup> This time, the artwork was a professional film project: Kenyan film director Robbie Bresson (Fig. 6) was commissioned to produce a movie trailer for a Nigerian horror film. Working with a Kenyan cast and crew, Bresson adapted a script he had written earlier to produce *African D’Jinn*. Though Hopkins and Bresson talk about a movie trailer, the seventeen-minute film seems somehow in between a trailer and a full-fledged movie. It is certainly much longer than the usual movie trailer. Still, it shows many characteristics of the latter, such as extremely fast cuts, the advertiser's off-screen voice, and an open, cliff-hanger ending. Since the film is certainly not a full feature film, it could be regarded as a film characterized by short length, a simple, self-contained story, and limited character development. Furthermore there is a movie poster (Fig. 7) and a fifteen-minute making-of video that Hopkins produced with the German artist Sophia Bauer as part of the intervention. The production *African D’Jinn* seems to reference both the ubiquity of Nollywood, together with certain of its stereotypes, like the exagger-



1 Screen shot from the movie trailer *Ralph Cannibal*. Actor: Shiraz. Sam Hopkins, *Not in the Title* (2011)

2 Production shot from *Nurse Virginia*. Actor: Luise Talbot. Green screen studio that later became part of the installation. Iwalewaha, Bayreuth (GER). Sam Hopkins, *Not in the Title* (2011)



ated Nigerian pidgin heard in the movies (wonderfully imitated by the Kenyan cast) or the manifold misconceptions about the “fraudulent Nigerian” and the role of “juju” and black magic. These stereotypes and the Kenyan reception of Nollywood products are addressed in the making-of video (Fig. 8–9). Here, what was a conceptual intervention into the content and concept of the archive is pushed further and becomes, in *Not in the Title Too*, a hybrid replication and, in the format of the making-of documentary, simultaneously a local reflection about it.

In *Not in the Title Too*, the institutional archive is no longer the focus. It seems to be more an archive in an abstract sense. The script is the same: as an intervention, the art project mirrors and at the same time alienates typical museum praxis. There are three phases of archival processes always pertinent in the art project: the production and its conditions before the archive, the processes within the archive, and the reception. *Not in the Title* highlights the processes within the museum and archive; *Not in the Title Too* addresses processes of cultural production that precede what takes place in the institutional archive. The subsequent project, *Mash Up the Archive*, highlights the processes that follow cultural production and the archival treatment of these products, namely the reception and the reading of the archive. This paper considers the idea of the anarchic archive as something that could be envisioned in the third project. If anarchy is understood as the absence of power but not of rules, an anarchic archive could be a space where the distinction between production, archivization, and reception would be fading. A more liquid archive might lose the

aura of the object but could also offer a richer cosmos of information. A major characteristic of this archive being more permeable allows the content of the archive to be connected to and enriched by information outside the archive.

The project *Not in the Title* started in 2010 (exhibition in 2011). In order to explore the meaning and relevance of authenticity in the context of museum collections and archives, a first sketch or hypothesis was drafted, turning the Iwalewaha into a kind of research and exhibition laboratory. What would happen if an exhibition presents already existing “original,” “authentic” objects from the collection together with new entries that were created within the project itself, without indicating which were original and which were not? Later, the new objects became part of the video collection, side by side with the original Nollywood videos. The existing body of videos was the inspiration for the artistic intervention. Intertextuality and inter-iconicity were clear on first sight. The immediate questions arising were about the status of the objects, the found and the newly created, and the bodies that they are embedded in. What is the status of the Nollywood videos? What is the archival object, what is the archive, and how can those be marked off from art? Is the intervention an artform?

One could argue that in this context we only talk about a museum collection and not a archive proper. But where does one draw the line? Michael Fehr (2002) argues that the museum and the archive are not distinct because of their material content but because of their orientation, namely the collection strategies:





idea of mixing original video sequences with manipulated ones, thus challenging the notion of the authentic object. He pushed the whole concept further by creating a complex four-room installation containing a green screen studio, a dressing room, a cinema, and a reception. With local volunteers he recorded a number of imaginary film scenes. Applying semi-professional computer graphics, he edited a number of these scenes into imaginary trailers, which he then inserted amongst real trailers and screened the resulting material in a small cinema, styled with all the chintz and fluff of a 1980s cinema. The reference to a global twentieth-century stereotype of cinema with red carpets, chandeliers, and posters on the wall was quite notable here. Hopkins created a truly imaginary space, as opposed to building an ethnographic showcase that attempted to create a Nigerian video parlour (where Nollywood videos would be typically screened). The same holds true for the miniature reception area, with its chandelier and one wall plastered with video covers. Nollywood videos are usually sold with blatantly desktop-publishing-designed collage covers. These become the blueprints for sign writers,<sup>5</sup> who simply enlarge them to create the posters that advertise the movies in Nigeria. It is a small detail, but it illustrates Hopkins's strategy, a blend of existing and new elements and modes of reception with an artistic statement as a kind of discursive punch line. He retained the original size of the VHS covers, tiling them together as a wallpaper pattern in the way we would imagine a 1980s cinema that might have been, and most probably never has been, in New York, Berlin, or Mumbai. And of course he mixed copies of covers made in Nigeria with

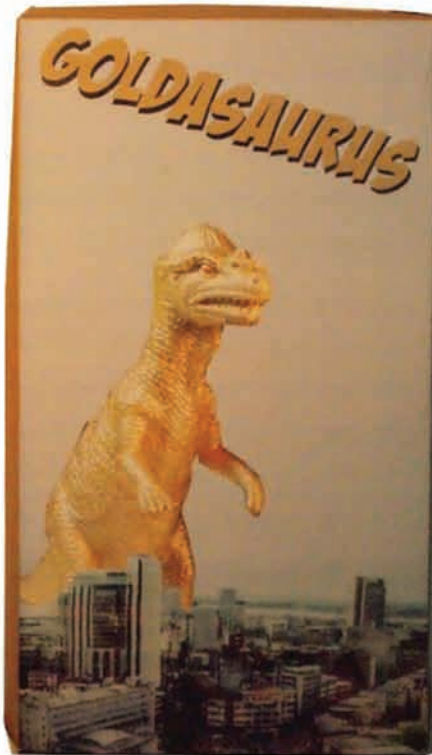
within the archive, material is collected which one expects to be important in the future; in the museum, material is gathered with regard to its importance within a certain history (but that history surely is deemed important to preserve for the future). Both strategies unveil a completely different perspective on the present. Archival objects are collected and preserved because of their status within a certain present whereas objects entering the museum typically already have lost their meaning for the present. With regard to a temporal axis, the collecting strategies of museum and archive have diametrically opposed orientations. The contemporary art museum like Iwalewaha has a unique position in between these two strategies.

With *Not in the Title*, Hopkins set out to explore the triangulation between authentic original, copy, and fake in an Iwalewaha exhibition. Rather than selecting masterpieces from the collection, he chose a collection within the archive of popular culture, namely Nigerian and Ghanaian horror videos. He started with the



3 Installation shot of "cinema" entrance. Iwalewaha, Bayreuth (GER). Sam Hopkins, *Not in the Title* (2011)

4 Installation shot of the dressing room. Iwalewaha, Bayreuth (GER). Sam Hopkins, *Not in the Title* (2011)



his own products. To the visitor, the whole arrangement looked familiar, and at the same time it introduced a view with hybrid elements and, one is tempted to continue, thus created a hybrid reference and reception. As an artwork, it was not supposed to be turned into an ongoing economic venture, it was simply justified by its pure existence. Thus, Bayreuthwood was in itself a finite story.<sup>6</sup>

As the Bayreuthwood studio was an installation and a working studio at the same time, the products themselves were no longer clearly fake. The result was a hybrid product between an installation and a production site. The videos (analogue VHS tapes in card boxes as well as the digitized versions) thus entered the archive as hybrid archival record. Creating new objects within the museum process itself is actually not that far removed from the standard collection strategy. Museums frequently buy works from a show that they have hosted. It is not unusual that the ongoing exhibition activities feed the collection and the archive. Installations and complex conceptual contemporary artworks in particular are often commissioned and at the very least the documentation enters the archive of the commissioning institution.

Any artwork reflects on and refers to already existing images and texts; it is fed by the collective memory. A thought quite familiar to our postmodern, discursive thinking is the notion of intertextuality. The notion of inter-iconicity is also current, suggesting that new artworks are usually made up to a large extent of the existing iconic archive. To consider almost every text and image as a rearrangement stands in sharp contrast to the notion of the fake and the copy. There is a powerful connection between the museum and “value,” as exemplified in a long preoccupation with notions of authenticity (Benjamin 1991). But there is a consensus, in everyday praxis, in the museum world that copies and fakes

should be kept out of the archive and the collection. But what kind of regulation defines the authentic object in the context of archive and museum? Where to draw the line between original and copy? Will this line always be clear? For whom will it be clear and for whom not? How will it change and affect the content of the exhibition, the archive, and the whole institution as such? And finally, under what conditions does a copy become a fake?

As the artwork unfolded, it somehow found its “finis” only in the moment of dismantling the exhibitions. Applying participatory strategies (e.g., by advertising for actors), the project started to exist as an artwork (and an event) even before the opening of the exhibition. The first two stages took place in parallel: the production of the “fake” objects and the production of the installation. The latter made use of actual production sites, which were turned into a kind of “crime scene” pointing back to the production process. By using the term “crime scene,” Hopkins underlined the aspect of producing “fakes,” forgery being the crime in this case. Even before the actual exhibition, visitors (as the volunteer actors, etc.) had already entered an imaginary Bayreuthwood backstage. Many of the later visitors did take the life-size Bayreuthwood puppet house for real and hesitated to enter the

5 Installation detail. Video cover (each 210 x 150 mm). *Goldasaurus* and *Nurse Virginia* produced for the installation. *Highway to the Grave* is a replica from the older 1990s collection in the digital archive. Iwalewahaus, Bayreuth (GER). Sam Hopkins, *Not in the Title* (2011)





**6** Screen shot from *Making of African Djinn* (2013) Sophia Bauer and Sam Hopkins. Robby Bresson (Director) in interview during the production of *African Djinn* (2013).

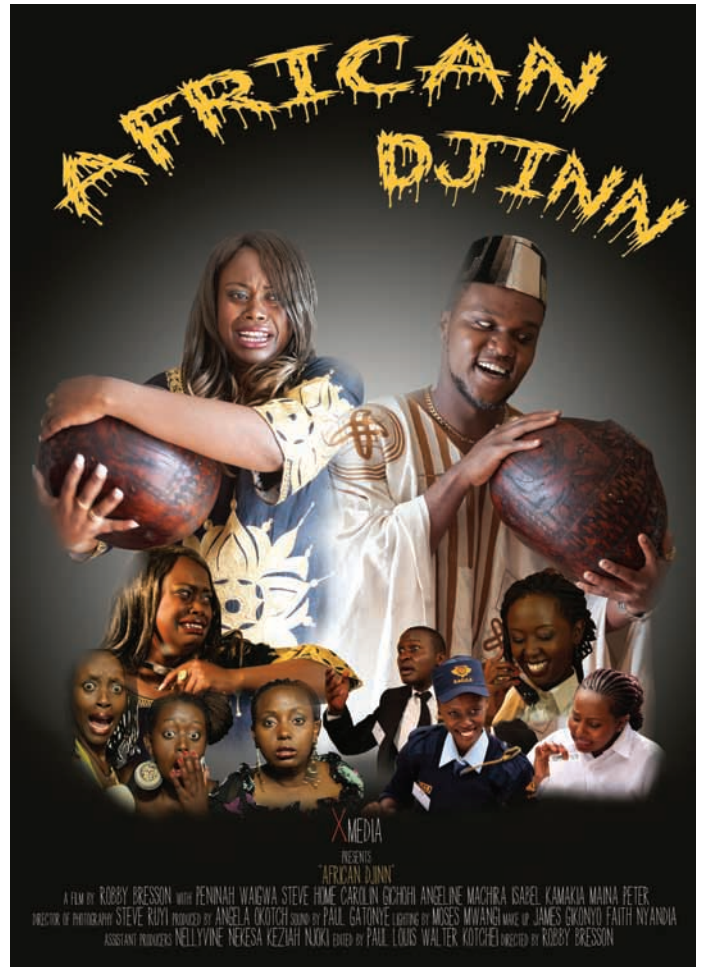


**6b** Screen shot from *Making of African Djinn* (2013) Sophia Bauer and Sam Hopkins. Paul Gatonye (Sound) in interview during the production of *African Djinn* (2013).

**7** Poster of *African Djinn* (2013) designed by Sophia Bauer. Iwalewa—Quatre vues de l’Afrique contemporaine. A cooperation of Iwalewahaus, Bayreuth University, MC2A and the University of Bordeaux. Bordeaux (FR) August 2013.

backstage wardrobe. This created some problems for the reception of the work, since the wardrobe and the adjacent green screen studio also contained monitors on which documentary sequences from the production process were shown. Many of the visitors took the installation for what it had been in the phase before, a studio at work rather than a backstage. The artist was concerned since, in his view, the artwork only could unfold its agency in the encounter with a real audience. Without a clear-cut manual, most visitors were unable to decipher the work in the way the author intended. This also became obvious in the cinema section: most of the visitors were not able to see the differences between the new and the older Nigerian video material. The strategy of disturbing the notion of authenticity seemed to fail because all the images were perceived as Nollywood products and the installation was understood as a three-dimensional, full-size model that you were not allowed to enter. As a result, visitors did not continue to visit the last room (the studio), where a text explained the whole concept. Some alterations were then introduced, such as an extra window to the studio room, which functioned like a three-dimensional exclamation mark proclaiming “this is a showcase.”

There are several aspects that made the artwork difficult to decipher for a local audience. First of all, the whole cultural phenomena of Nollywood and its genre of horror movies were unfamiliar to most visitors. If one is not aware of the rules underlying the construction of the initial set of material, how could one possibly understand the modifications? But even if one didn’t get the full story immediately, which perhaps signifies that the work leaves one with plenty of layers to unfold, the whole work





unfolded like a tight and multifaceted whole, whose components somehow fitted and yet didn't fit. Every juncture functioned cohesively and at the same time revealed itself as an interstitial space. Even those who started to read the installation as a mere presentation of archival material left the installation with a feeling of disturbance; something was "wrong." To some visitors who lived as expatriates in Nigeria in the 1950s and 1960s, even the original Nollywood videos were "wrong—not showing the real Nigeria." The new videos might have been read as "fake" but, at the same time, the studio site itself surprised most visitors when they found out that it was in fact "real" and had been at work. The topography as major reference in the archival process turned into a room of mirrors.

This room-of-mirrors recalls strategies applied by African artists like Ruth Sachs (South Africa), Angela Ferreira (Mozambique), Délio Jasse (Angola), or Sammy Baloji (Democratic Republic of Congo). By using footage, archival records, and existing texts as basis for their artworks, they create a sentiment of certainty and familiarity with the texture on first sight, which quickly starts to erode as the interstitial spaces dissolve. They reveal, unfold, and create new units of knowledge, but they do not give finite answers. As complex conceptual works, they continue to unfold even beyond the initial appearance and are often reinterpreted both by artist and audience in subsequent shows and artworks. What Hal Foster (2004) calls "archival art" makes up a substantial part of contemporary art in Africa in the last decade.<sup>7</sup>





10–11 Screen shots. *African Djinn* (2013). Actor: Peninah Wagwa. Director Robby Bresson.

Though we are somehow used to the dislocation of the artwork, the same cannot be said for the archival object. The latter is still ascribed with all the attributes that the auratic artwork used to have. If we read *Not in the Title* as an evolving text, its denouement is the annulment of the authentic and, as I have shown, the auratic archival object. We are confronted with our own belief in the authenticity and originality of the archival object. Hopkins draws our attention to archival processes and subsequently reveals the underlying, and rarely questioned, rules/structures of the creation of the archival object.

But demystification is not his only intention. Hopkins retains the need for an archive and suggests a constructive and playful way to operate the archive. He introduces an anarchic archive that is quite distant from those imposing nineteenth-century buildings with their neoclassical portals that Mbembe (2002) so wonderfully describes, the archival records hidden away behind marble blending stones, thick walls, a dignified entry hall, down some stairways, behind yet more iron doors. There, on endless shelves in acid-free boxes, one will find the archival records. Guarded by grey, mouselike archivists who will only allow you to put your hands on them after you have filled in some forms and insist that you wear white cotton gloves when removing them from the boxes because—and that is what makes them distinct from library books—the archival record is unique and precious. Spieker (2008) defines the archive as both a depository of actual material and the organizing fantasy and principle underlying any bureaucratic state.

Collecting as practice in archives and museums refers to a complex procedure including admittance, storage, preservation, arrangement, and editing. The basic principle of arrangement of archival records is the principle of provenance; thus, the archive is not structured according to subject groups artificially established by the archivist, but instead records originating from the same source remain together. In a museum collection new entries would be channelled to respective departments with subgroupings like region or epoch, etc., and put next to other objects following the established logic of the collection; in the archive, the objects would be kept together with other objects



from its place of origin (an institution and its production or an individual's estate found in places X and Z), hence the term “topographical archive.”

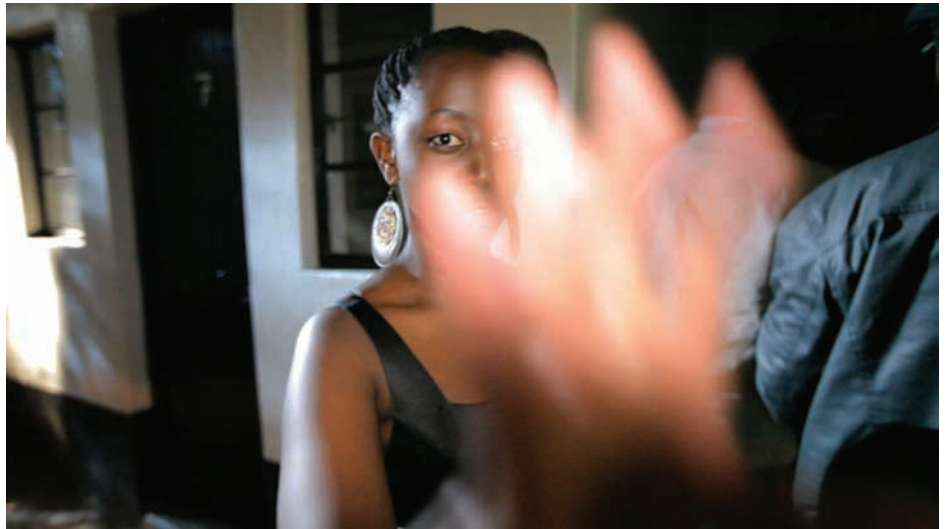
The classical archive seems only on first sight not to be directly related to power, as such; Mbembe and others have shown that it is primarily the product and exercise of a specific power and authority (Mbembe 2002:20). In the case of the institutional archive, it is related to bureaucratic units by the topographies to which its arrangements refer. More generally it is related to constellations and topographies outside and previous to the archive. Although this distinction might sound like a minor detail, it bears some interesting consequences concerning the codes one has to accept in order to understand and use the archive. It ascribes a privileged role to the archivist as gatekeeper. Thus the archive represents and justifies power, not only by its contemporary topography but also by its reference to a topographically concrete past. Whereas the art work as museum object has been heavily questioned as an auratic object, the archival object has not.

Interpreting *Not in the Title Too* (Figs. 10–15) as a “non-site”<sup>8</sup> (in the tradition of artists like Robert Smithson) that references an authentic place outside the archive sheds some light on the aesthetics of Hopkins's work. With regard to the objects collected in the archive, the Bayreuth installation distracted the

12 Screen shot. *African Djinn* (2013). Actor: Angeline Machira. Director Robby Bresson.

13 Screen shot. *African Djinn* (2013). Actor: Peninah Wagwa. Director Robby Bresson.

13 Screen shot. *African Djinn* (2013). Actor: Steve Homes. Director Robby Bresson.



viewer and attention was drawn towards the question of the topographic site. The archive gains its justification by a space outside the archive, which in turn gains authenticity only by the archive. Within the non-site, the original site is reconstructed and constructed for the recipient by means of different media and representation formats. In the end the authentic doesn't exist within its original sphere but only within the non-authentic non-space. Hopkins exemplifies a process in which, according to Spieker (2004), the digital, globalized archive loses its exterior.

Could the object occupying the archive be regarded as an (authentic) original? What kind of questions are we able to ask about authenticity in the technological age, where, following Baudrillard (1994), the simulacrum precedes the original and the distinction between reality and representation vanishes? The case of the Nollywood video collection is quite telling. During the time of its creation, copies were added. They came from a contemporary market that contained many more copies. The original copies fade and degrade because of their technical makeup as well as a result of their handling. Over time, the binder that holds the recorded media to the tape degrades, causing magnetic particle instability and deformation. More than







**15** Photo of the event “Natural Selections” featuring remixes of field recordings from Burkina Faso by DeeJay Raph from Nairobi, within the framework of the first Mashup the Archive festival, coordinated by Sam Hopkins and Nadine Siegert. Glashaus, Bayreuth (GER) 2013.

Photo: Lukas Richthammer

two decades after the copies came into existence, one can assume that almost all the copies have deteriorated. Thus, the digital version produced within the archive as a copy of one of these “original” VHS copies will, in the long run, be the only remnant of whatever the original might have been. If we accept that one of the characteristics of the archive is that it only contains originals, and not copies (regardless of all the difficult implications that one might think of), there is almost an automatism that slowly turns any collection of multiple copies into a collection of unique originals. Finally the object will be authentic and unique and thus the structure that contains it turns from a collection into an archive proper. The archive is the site where copies turn into sources to generate originals. But this process also turns the space of origin into a non-space. In both stages of *Not in the Title* Hopkins revealed the archive as a fascinating preservation space for otherwise highly disputed concepts of the authentic or the auratic object. In *Not in the Title Too* he pushes the thinking about the archive much further. Now he addresses the archive in a different way that seems to be distinctly inspired by Foucauldian thought.

So far we have only looked at the archive in its institutional sense, but by pushing his art project further, Hopkins points at yet another aspect of the archive—the archive in the Foucauldian sense: an archive beyond any institutional reference; an archive which is preformatting/conditioning the potential (*condition de possibilité*) and the practice at the same time. In his famous book *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), Foucault binds the archive to an omnipotent discourse, inseparable from it and, in its totality, undeniable. What he calls “archive” is the totality of all discursive formations. The archive is defining a priori what can be said, it preformats every discursive formation: all systems that govern the appearance of statements (whether events or historical statements/things) (Foucault 1972:126.). In this sense the archive structures the particular expressions of a particular period—it supplies the terms of discourse.

This model is exactly the archive that Hopkins points to in *Not in the Title Too*. He creates a puzzle picture of ambiguous figures in between Nollywood videos, the regimes of knowledge they are embedded in, and the specific Nigerian archive that Hopkins mirrors in the Kenyan archive. The artist enacts a performativity that



**16** Film still from the video work “wrapping 001” by Otieno Gomba and Kevo Stero. From the exhibition “Yesterdaytoday,” Within the framework of Mashup the Archive, coordinated by Sam Hopkins and Nadine Siegert. 2013.



17 Installation shot of Kevo Stero's *Untitled* (2013) in the exhibition "Yesterdaytoday," within the framework of the first Mashup the Archive festival, coordinated by Sam Hopkins and Nadine Siegert. Schokofabrik, Bayreuth (GER) 2013.

can already be found in Foucault's thinking about the archive. The latter is to be understood not just as a repository in which historical statements (Foucault calls them "things") format into a sediment waiting to be reactivated as history, but as Hopkins reveals in *Not in the Title Too*, by pointing at the contemporaneity of these systems of statements, the performative aspect of the project points at and questions the archive as a system of statements as events. Where *Not in the Title* was mainly concerned with the archive as a system of statements (things) as such, addressing questions of the real, the fake, the copy, *Not in the Title Too* engaged with the Foucauldian archive, a reading that is not about things (the statements) as historical facts, but rather about the system that contains the preconditions of what can be said, stated, etc. In its performativity, the work reveals, if not the character, then at least the condition of statements about cultural identity, stereotypes, aesthetic production and its reception.

In the discussion above I have interpreted *Not in the Title* and *Not in the Title Too* with the help of two theories about the archive. Now, as a complementary third perspective also inspired by Foucault's idea of the archive, I will consider archives as exemplifying a repository of cultural memory.<sup>9</sup> Following Assmann, cultural memory comprises the specific inventory of texts, images, and rites through which a society conveys its own self-conception. It thus not only shapes the collective ideas

of the past but also a society's identity (Assmann 1992). Cultural memory is rather distinct from everyday experiences and marks a long-term time horizon that reaches beyond an individual's lifetime. In contrast to this cultural memory, a society's communicative memory functions as the contested battlefield for negotiating what is still bound to individual memories and experiences. Memories washed to the shores of communicative memory may disappear or may find a place in our cultural memory where they are forgotten (in the sense of not being part of any ongoing communication) but not dead; they can be reactivated and reread. Their inherent dignity stems from having survived and from connecting to the past.

What is the difference between cultural memory and the cultural archive? Is not the physical archive a materialized form of cultural memory? Furthermore, is there any cultural memory without material form (as an artifact)? A history of cultural memory is not congruent with a history of abstract concepts or rational ideas. Cultural memory tends to be preserved in concrete form like the physical archive we deal with, or in image figurations in oral history and poetics (Blamberger 2013, Vierke 2011). The role of archivization processes in this nonphysical layer of cultural memory requires further reflection. Here, we return to the role of the auratic object and its place in the archive, since the archive is the place where things can be forgotten (and become extinct from the communicative memory), without being lost. The archival process can be described as the compartmentalization of communicative and cultural memory. With mere basic care, objects and images hibernate until they are reactivated and become part of communicative memory again. They can be reactivated and reread at any time. Assmann gives national archives as an example of an institution in which cultural memory is stored. But the pro-





**18** Installation shot of Otiemo Gomba's installation (Untitled) in the exhibition "Yesterdaytoday," within the framework of the first Mashup the Archive festival, coordinated by Sam Hopkins and Nadine Siebert. Schokofabrik, Bayreuth (GER) 2013. Photo: Sam Hopkins

cess of storing is an active process, a process that can be divided in three phases: entry, hibernation, and reactivation (or extinction). There are certain entry regulations, like "uniqueness" or "relevance," and during storage the objects should be "cared for"; as for the exit, not only is there an unwritten rule that there is no way out, it is also part of a set of stated bureaucratic rules that museums openly adhere to. After having been integrated in the archive, archival objects do not change their position and their registration is not apt to be deleted. Whereas it seems quite clear what happens to the object, it is rather opaque whether the object itself retains agency,<sup>10</sup> as the term "hibernation" implies. Nevertheless, whilst the actual agency of the archival object may be difficult to verify, it seems obvious that it is generally perceived as maintaining agency throughout the archival process. But if we replace this agency with the quality of being auratic, then we can see the archival process as an inversion of mechanical reproduction; rather than destroying aura, the archival process actually constructs it.<sup>11</sup>

The current rules governing entry into, and exit from, the archive are largely premised on a manageable flow of information and based on the rational thinking of the glorious days of the Enlightenment, although Diderot and his contemporaries had already failed in their attempt to capture human knowledge in a finite number of books. Today, seemingly visionary projects like Wikis end up in the same trap, because it is not the quantity of information but the quality of knowledge that matters. Subsequently, it is of utmost importance to be aware of the structures that underlie archival processes and to be aware that the status of the archival object is as questionable as the auratic artwork. Hopkins points exactly at these two facets of archival praxis and reception.

Whereas the archive as a physical site is related to cultural memory, the nonphysical archive refers to our communicative memory. The archive is not only about memory in the sense of being a repository but also about the work of imagination (Appadurai 2003). Given that the archive is the major function

of both communicative memory and cultural memory, the idea of archive is vital, in most processes shaping identity and the contours of culture in general. Achille Mbembe (2002:21) calls it the archive's power as "instituting imaginary" that stems from its co-ownership of dead time (the past or, in the terminology we have been using, the cultural memory) and living time (communicative memory). If we understand the archive as the reservoir of text and images that make up our collective memory, we are reminded of the Foucauldian concepts. For further discussion about how the virtual archive and the rules underlying it could be grasped in connection to the artistic work of *Not in the Title*, I suggest the term "anarchic archive," which is useful not so much for describing what exists, but rather as a vision of how to think about the archive in the future.

It is striking how closely related the etymologies of "archive" and "anarchy" are. It is in the Greek verb ἄρχω (*arkhō*), "to rule" that both words have their roots. In ancient Greece, the archive was synonymous with the ἀρχή (*arkhē*), the building where governing happened as well as the government itself. Anarchy seems to derive from ἀναρχία (*anarchia*), signifying the absence of a leader but, it should be added, not the absence of norms or rules. Kant describes anarchy as the state of "law and freedom without force" (1983:331). By suggesting the term "anarchic archive," I thus point at the existence of norms underlying the virtual archive as part of communicative memory and the absence of leaders in the sense of archival experts who are so important in the case of the archive. It is helpful to assume that both conceptions of the archive are phenotypes of the same genotype. Therefore, understanding archival praxis in the sense of cultural memory allows us to deduce how virtual archives work. The imaginative archive, as part of our communicative memory, is not just an arbitrary, chaotic flow of images and text but is organized according to certain rules that may be called the freedom of flow. If we understand these rules, we will be better able to understand the whole process of culture as well as the modes shaping identities.

*Not in the Title* reveals the potential of the anarchic archive as well as the processes inherent to both memory and archive. It starts with the original videos as part of popular Nigerian culture. They draw upon and, at the same time, feed the visual archive of contemporary Nigeria. In an amalgam with what Krings and Okome (2013) call Africa's first independent cinema aesthetic, these images are transformed into something new that stimulates local discourse and communicative memory. Within the European collection they become part of the cultural memory. But whose cultural memory? That is another question Hopkins poses by addressing the question of who is entitled to create (new) Nollywood videos. Is this allowed only to Nigerians, to Africans, to artists, to filmmakers, in Africa only? In other words, he asks the question, "Who shapes which memory, by which means and rules?" In *Not in the Title Too* he engages with exactly these questions, creates new statements, new "things" in the Foucauldian sense, and subsequently pushes these concerns to a new level of discourse. An aspect that Hopkins is not addressing directly is the question of translation: what happens when cultural memory is not shared across cultures or times, and how does the translation or mistranslation work with regard to the imaginative archive? The vision of an anarchic archive, I suggest, would make it possible to monitor these processes of translation within the archive.

In *Not in the Title* Hopkins is far from simply exploring "hobby horse" strategies to substitute collection strategies at so many museums and archives. He does not take a collection of Nollywood horror videos as something exotic or question its entry in the archive. It is neither the archival object, nor the archival index that is questioned but rather the archival process itself. In *Not in the Title Too*, Hopkins's parodist strategy is on modes of cultural sedimentation and reception that are no longer reflected as such. He plays with culture's visual sediments, focusing on how we look at the flotsam and jetsam of images, of things in a broad sense of statements.

Revealing the apparatus (*dispositifs*) of the archive and carefully regarding its content should enable us to envision appropriate manuals for how to use the archive. Looking at Hopkins's oeuvre, it becomes obvious that he actually started with projects that deal with a praxis in which large parts of the society are deprived from shaping the archive. Projects like *Slum TV* are about artistic strategies that empower those at the margins of archival discourse to actively engage with it—to write their histories or imbue sites with their own cultural memories (Hopkins 2013, Cippitelli 2013). Social artworks like *Slum TV* are the predecessors that brought him to projects like *Not in the Title*, in which he took a step aside, analyzing the conditions in which his previous social art works unfolded, only to almost simultaneously push it further with another project that needs to be mentioned here: *Mash Up the Archive* (Figs. 15–16).

*Mashup the Archive* is yet another project dedicated to activating and making visible the archive. It started in parallel with *Not in the Title Too*. The project, funded by the German Federal Cultural Foundation, was to work with young artists-in-residence from the African continent in a series of mini-festivals. The intention was to explore and investigate the modes of making use of the archive. If *Not in the Title* took account of the institutional archive and *Not in the Title Too* looked at the conditions of the archive, *Mashup the Archive* is about what interfaces within and beyond the art world might look like, within the specific constellation of a globalized Africa. At the heart of the ongoing project is the idea that a key to making this archive both relevant and accessible is to open it up for artistic as well as academic research. The contemporary approach is also manifest in the idea of displaying the new artworks in mini-festivals of two to three days, held in alternative spaces like off-scene cultural centers and concert halls (Figs. 17–20). The project thus tries to create new physical and imaginary spaces to reach new audiences and enable or empower them to read the archive that is usually hidden and presented in exclusive spaces. The essence

19 installation shot of the exhibition "Yesterday-today" by Otieno Gomba and Kevo Stero, within the framework of the first Mashup the Archive festival, coordinated by Sam Hopkins and Nadine Siegert. Schokofabrik, Bayreuth (GER) 2013.

Photo: Sam Hopkins







20 Installation shot of Kevo Stero's installation (*Untitled*) in the exhibition "Yesterdaytoday," within the framework of the first Mashup the Archive festival, coordinated by Sam Hopkins and Nadine Siegert. Schokofabrik, Bayreuth (GER) 2013. Photo: Sam Hopkins

of the project is not merely to exhibit, but to make the archive available for a young generation of African artists to develop new works from it. This "practice-based" artistic research is very different to, but works in tandem with, the academic research. After having worked on creating new physical interfaces to the archive, a subsequent second phase of the project called *Mashup the Archive—Interfacing the Archive* invited software engineers from the African continent to work on new web-based, object-oriented interfaces. This follows the observation of how artists (like the members of the artist collective Maasai Mbili from Kenya) in the first phase of the project manoeuvred the archive, demonstrating the importance of image-based search modes. Although we have software solutions that offer manifold options to access the archive beyond the text-based corridors, hardly any of these have yet been implemented. Even the much-praised virtual archive remains a text-based and more or less exclusive academic venture. *Mashup the Archive* offers new perspectives, positions, and insights into artworks (things) in the archive. This combination of artistic and academic enquiry is a sanguine and current approach to the study and display of African art today.

An archive that is more open to the flux of information characteristic of the contemporary world will have permeable boundaries and connect to spaces outside its physical walls. The most common strategies are targeted at the new virtual spaces of the digital archive. With *Mash up the Archive*, Hopkins brings this idea back into the physical world and explores its potential. Even more intriguing is his suggestion to think about new modes of reading the archive. The creation of new interfaces in physical and virtual space enhances the quality of reception of the archive. It seems astonishing that, decades after the pictorial turn in theory, we still have to shift from a textual reading to the image. Working with artists from the African continent, some of them without academic training, it emerged that one of the restrictions of accessing the archive was its extreme textual bias. Even in the case of pictorial content, the archive's metadata and the subsequent structures are expressed in and follow textual logics. Even though IT technologies provide the technical facilities, we hardly apply them in shaping the interfaces of the archive. Image-based research, for instance, should go hand-in-hand with text-based search.

Hopkins's projects shed light on a complex archival culture and the rules underlying the archive as work of imagination. Challenging the existing forms of imagination, Hopkins confronts them and intertwines them with his artwork. His new archival indexes force us to look carefully at where the boundaries between "old" and "new," "invented" and "original," or between European, African, Nigerian, and Kenyan might be.

We won't find them; instead we are confronted with a disturbing interstitial space. We oscillate between either sides of this "in-between"; on the one hand noticing, and enjoying, the extent to which the existing archive had in fact already been a work of imagination and, on the other hand, recognizing that archives, in whatever sense, are shaped by human agency and how tightly these processes might be bound to actual discourses of power. We can engage with a playful and sophisticated game of deception with images and spaces in the artistic process. In most of his works Hopkins shares his wonderful collections of flotsam and jetsam imagery with us, inviting us on an intellectual journey

that inevitably disembody into central discourses of contemporary society. The passage he takes us on is surprisingly long and rich: reflections on the agency of the objects, the nature of objects and their indexes, and above all human agency are on our navigation chart as well as some awkward questions about the very nature of the archive.

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## Notes

1 As a museum for modern and contemporary art, Iwalewahaus looks back on more than three decades of collecting. As within most other museums, there are three departments that have been fed by the collecting praxis: the library, the art collection, and the archive. The Nollywood videos could be regarded as copies, multiples, or archival objects. Indeed, the collection of Nollywood videos has been claimed by the university library, but it was argued that these objects mainly make sense as a complex body of the video tapes together with other objects like posters, photos, etc., and thus should be part of what is called the archive. The library's claim to the Nollywood video tapes was legitimate, since they are copies like printed books; hence, it is not a quality inherent in the object as such that defines its ascription to one of the three departments. However, classifications of objects change: what could have been regarded as a copy that might be replaced by another copy of the same video, turns into an original. It is this particular object that has been acquired at a particular time and place by particular person and that even shows certain individual marks like labels, signatures, etc. The process of acquisition and inventorying into the collection turns it into an original.

2 There was a call, distributed mainly at the university, and a casting from which students of African and European origin were chosen to act, all staging Nollywood characters.

3 In this context, the decision to open the archive up to interventions was the first self-reflexive act. At the 2011 conference Archive, Laboratory, Utopia: Contact Zone Iwalewa, three artists were invited to contribute art projects; the Kenyan artist Peterson Kamwathi (Hossfeld and Vierke 2011) and the Angolan Yonamine, along with Hopkins. They were invited to elaborate on the conference's topic, engaging with the archive and collections to produce three simultaneous exhibitions: Hopkins's "not in the title," Yonamine's "Trash Anthology—Anthology Trash," and Kamwathi's "Ordinary Rendition."

4 Kenya has developed a film industry, Riverwood, based in River Road, downtown Nairobi. Independent filmmakers produce and sell videos locally on DVD and DVC. Besides Nollywood movies from Nigeria that have inspired this Kenyan low-budget film industry, there are local traditions like comedy movies (mainly in Gikuyu), but also a substantial overlapping with the high-budget film production that has recently gained international awareness through films like Wanuri Kahiu's *Pumzi* (2009), Hawa Essuman's *Soul Boy* (2011), and David Githonga's *Nairobi Half Live* (2012).

5 Signwriters who usually design the advertisements for shops are also the ones crafting the video posters. They are the size of printed posters (A3 or A2) but are unique acrylics on canvas, rather than mass-produced prints. The motifs on the video cassette are enlarged but the arrangement (usually a DTP computer

design) of the computer graphic is kept.

6 I refer to a biological understanding of hybridity that includes the aspect of bareness/effeteness and not to the scholarly concept as it is used, for example, in globalization debates (Hannertz 1997). Any artwork is hybrid in as much as it follows the Kantian dictum of *Interesselosigkeit*.

7 Beyond Africa, archives since the 1980s have been a major trope for contemporary art and art history: from Thomas Hirschhorn, Sam Durant, and Tacita Dean (in Hal Foster's famous 2004 essay "The Archival Impulse"), to Group Material cofounder Julie Ault's personal art collection from the 1980s and '90s, Fiona Tan's film of the Sir John Soane Museum's antiquities collection at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (echoing Alain Resnais's 1956 documentary of Paris's national library, *Toute la mémoire du monde*), to Okwui Enwezor's 2008 "Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art" (which references Derrida's 1995 *Archive Fever*).

8 Spieker (2004:11) rightfully points at the value of Robert Smithson's (1996) concepts of "site" and "non-site" for the understanding of the archive.

9 Assmann (1992) developed his concept of cultural memory drawing upon Halbwachs's (1950) concept of collective memory.

10 For many authors like Mbembe (2002:21) the agency of the archival object is central and it is most tempting to elaborate on Gell's (1998) reflections on the art(ifact) and agency in this context.

11 Benjamin defines aura as "einmalige Erscheinung einer Ferne, so nah sie sein mag" which is characterized by distance, authenticity, and uniqueness (Benjamin 1991:479).

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