


Behaving badly in the archive: A videographic discussion

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ENG Abstract: Our roundtable emerged from a collaborative video essay *Kiss off*, created for Ian Garwood's *Indy vinyl for the masses* project. *Kiss off* explores the subject of archives with the question: what does it mean to behave badly in the archive? (See the 'Video Essays' section in this issue of *Teknokultura*). The roundtable expands this inquiry, with the participants each reflecting on their video segment and engaging questions of institutional power of archives; accessibility; acts of erasure; our implication in, and resistance to, systems of oppression; and archival materiality in digital research. Over three months, we reflected on making the piece and the consequent questions that arose. Echoing the relay aspect of the video's creation, each meeting addressed one participant's segment in the order of contributions, with sessions spaced akin to the progress of the piece between makers, and each participant leading discussions in turn. This roundtable represents our discursive labour.

Keywords: embodiment; ethics; feminism; video essay.

ES Portándose mal en el archivo: Un diálogo videográfico

Resumen: Nuestra mesa redonda surgió del videoensayo colaborativo *Kiss off*, una contribución al proyecto *Indy vinyl for the masses* de Ian Garwood (2023). *Kiss off* explora el tema de los archivos con la pregunta: ¿qué significa comportarse mal en el archivo? (Véase la sección 'Videoensayos' en este número de *Teknokultura*). La mesa redonda amplía esta indagación, con los participantes reflexionando sobre su segmento de vídeo y abordando ciertas cuestiones: el poder institucional de los archivos; su accesibilidad; actos de borrado; nuestra implicación en, y resistencia a, los sistemas de opresión; y la materialidad archivística en la investigación digital. Durante tres meses reflexionamos sobre la creación del vídeo. Replicando el aspecto de relevo del proceso, cada reunión abordó el segmento de un participante respetando el orden de las contribuciones, con sesiones espaciadas similarmente a las etapas de creación, y cada participante actuando como moderador. Esta mesa redonda representa nuestro trabajo discursivo.

Palabras clave: corporalidad; ética; feminismo; videoensayo.

Summary: 1. Introduction. 2. Vika. 3. Lucy. 4. Dayna. 5. Daniel. 6. Colleen. 7. Data availability. 8. Authors' contribution statement. 9. Statement of LLM use. 10. Acknowledgements. 11. References.

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1. Introduction

Kiss off is a collaborative videographic essay produced in response to Ian Garwood's *Indy vinyl for the masses* project. The project explores the relationship between moving images and popular music through serial collaborative video essays

structured around a shared song (Garwood, 2023). After sharing work in progress, we were chatting on Zoom and spontaneously came up with the idea for a new *Indy vinyl* video essay with 'gestures' as a theme and 'archives' as a keyword. After the video essay was completed, we found we wanted to

talk about it. We met as a group over the course of three months to reflect on the process of making and to think through some of the questions that emerged as a result of our collaboration. In our series of conversations we decided to replicate the relay aspect of the video making, starting each meeting with the discussion of a participant's segment in the order of contributions, and spacing the discussion sessions out in semblance of the time it took to pass the video work from maker to maker, with each participant taking the role of discussion leader in turn. This roundtable is a summary of our discursive labour, both in the making of the video and in the exchange of ideas.

I need someone, a person to talk to
Someone who'd care to love
Could it be you?
(Violent Femmes, 1983)

Colleen: There's a tendency for the *Indy vinyl* collaborations to feel like music videos. We had a conversation about why that might be and how one might achieve a different result. We started with a song lyric, but we didn't have a film in mind. We had to search for one, so we began with the gesture we were trying to embody.

Dayna: We backwards engineered both with the song and this idea of behaving badly in the archive. Vika, you came up with this idea of 'gesture' as a theme and then we had 'archive' as the keyword. But there was also an element of trust that extends past the boundary of what came before in terms of the *Indy vinyl* rules which are very linear. We went outside these boundaries, both in this conversation and within the piece. Throughout, we've been interested in collaboration, archives, behaving badly in the archive, and gestures of behaving badly. As a result, we made the linear process three dimensional.

Viktoria (henceforth Vika): What is an archive? Is it cultural memory, personal memory? Is it a physical space or a completely non-physical space? Is it a suitcase? Is it a room? The world? The Internet? This openness applies to the idea of gesture as well. I think that it was important that the theme and the keyword were not imposed on us, or decided upon by one person in a team; this informed our collaboration as a whole.

Daniel: There's also the way that we behave 'badly' as a team, engaging the parameters of the project with embodiment, especially through the motif of going to the archive and just kind of wrecking things, which introduces the idea of the abuses of archives, institutions of power and those who make archival choices.

Lucy: Citation is its own form of archive. And publications are an important part of inserting an argument into the archive, and maybe institutionalising it (for better or worse) as a result.

It's not enough, it's just a habit
(Violent Femmes, 1983)

2. Vika

Vika: I'd like to begin by thinking about curation since, according to *Indy vinyl for the masses* the person who begins the video is called a curator. What are the

curator's responsibilities? In what ways does the curator frame a project and care for material?

As curator, I divided the song into equal segments and calculated how much time each participant gets. I thought about the order of contributions and about leaving some time for the credits. The line in *Kiss off* by Violent Femmes (1983)—«I hope you know that this will go down on your permanent record»—was definitely a central moment. In our initial conversations, we got very excited about these lyrics, and in particular you Dayna have a special relationship to them. I felt the timing must be such that Dayna's contribution coincides with those lyrics.

Daniel: This process strikes me as an interesting notion of what curating is. A curator in a museum or of a film festival is selecting, setting up conversations between the pieces, making an organic experience. And because our video is a collaborative and serial project, the curator doesn't have as much choice about what is included until the very end. But because of the conversations we had from the beginning, we all had a strong sense of what the vision would be for that overall experience.

Dayna: I wonder if 'project manager' is more of an appropriate term than 'curator'. No disrespect to you, Vika, or anyone that's curated an *Indy vinyl*. Just hearing you talk, these projects are more about managing files, coordinating with Ian, doing the opening and closing credits, and sometimes selecting contributors. I think we're being pretty generous with curation as a term and actual role. There is absolutely care and trust, as we talked about, but I wonder if curation is right. How do you feel about that?

Vika: It's true, it's not curation in any traditional sense. A curator has more control and a more multifaceted role. Perhaps project manager seems a more fitting description, but I feel that the role in our context exceeds merely administrative duties. I think of curators assuming care over their objects and having an overall vision. So maybe this aspect is more akin to what my role comprised here.

Lucy: The person managing the process is also making an important and creative intervention in setting the tone, in setting up ideas. What you did set me up to do things that I didn't expect to do. That's not just about you using particular clips, but the audiovisual ideas that you set up were very important to how I responded, and that works all along the chain. Obviously, tone is partly directed by the topic, the key word, the song, but what you set up tonally expanded beyond what was established by those parameters.

Colleen: This is an important point that goes beyond our collaboration or the *Indy vinyl* project, which is the problem of terminology. In this practice, we are borrowing numerous pre-existing terms laden with history and they don't quite fit: videographic criticism, videographic scholarship, video essays. In some geographic spheres what we are making are simply called 'films'. These are all contentious terms. It is a tricky pickle.

Vika: A tricky pickle is right. If we stretch the already ill-fitting term further, perhaps we're all curators: we are curating our own segments. I think of curators as having specific expertise. We are experts in our respective fields, which definitely shaped the

form and content of the whole piece. In that respect, we can think of curation here as being spread across all five contributions.

Daniel: Definitely some kind of curation is happening. Curating is also creative. If we pick up on Colleen's point and think of it as a 'film', which is such a collaborative form. Our piece is and isn't a film. But it's a piece of audiovisual media.

Dayna: I didn't mean to open up a semantic debate, but I am sensitive to the co-opting, excavation, stealing, and borrowing of terms of existing arts-based and cultural-based practices by academics. So perhaps not Curator with a capital C, but curation as an action word. As you say, we're each curating our own material in relation to the prompt. And Vika, you start us off with the suitcase and had to get to that choice after confusion (sorry, my fault!) about which Violent Femmes song we were actually doing.

Vika: Right, one of the hard parameters of *Indy vinyl* was that the curator had to start with the film scene featuring the song. We found out that *Kiss off* was in *Rocket science* (Blitz, 2007). The clip was a jumping off point. Fortuitously, the scene has a suitcase. Other considerations informed my selection of the films. Last fall I taught a course Creative Projects in Film History, in which students dive into the New York Public Library's collection of 16-mm films and VHS tapes. It was perfect timing. The first film I screened in this class was Sandi Tan's *Shirkers* (2018). I knew that I was going to include it in my section of the video. *Shirkers* is about reclaiming one's creative expression, one's past, one's archive—in this case, film reels which had been stolen from the filmmaker and her creative partners in the 90s. From the outset, I also wanted to use *The late Matias Pascal* (L'Herbier, 1926). A fabulous scene from it was in my head: a dusty old library where the protagonist tries to get a job, ends up chasing a mouse and creating a mess. Afterwards I realised that *Matias Pascal* had another significance for me: I had written my master's thesis on its star, Russian émigré Ivan Mozzhukhin. At this point I understood that our project on archival gestures was actually personal. I didn't know it until I began reflecting on it for our roundtable. There are also films that I initially thought of incorporating and then realised I couldn't. For example, I love *The watermelon woman* (Dunye, 1996) and often show it in my courses, but for our video I couldn't include it. It wasn't my place to use this media object in the narrative I was creating.

Colleen: I want to hear more about this feeling, about whether or not you have the right or positionality to use a text. But first, can you tell us about the clip you used at the very beginning?

Vika: Thanks for reminding me, Colleen. I wanted to begin with scratched-up celluloid because the words 'film' and 'archive' conjure up the body and materiality of film. I felt it was important to draw attention to the material body of this thing we continue to call film even though it's incorrect in most cases. To make a reference at the start to the well-used body of film was a gesture to cinema history as well. The actual shot comes from the playful short *The private life of a cat* (1946) by Maya Deren and Alexander Hammid, which is also a nod to experimental modes of film practice. What interested me in our project was

how films remember other films. The clip from *Fitzcarraldo* (Herzog, 1982), for example, is quoted in *Shirkers*. When I saw the crazed face of Klaus Kinski in *Fitzcarraldo*, it immediately made me think of Conrad Veidt's face in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Wiene, 1919). I found the resemblance uncanny.

Daniel: That's interesting in terms of archival practice. *Shirkers* is archiving *Fitzcarraldo*. Now this video essay is archiving that quote, so there's this recursive pattern.

Vika: Right! Also, not only is *Shirkers* about the archive broadly understood, its form is very collage-like, creating its body from different pieces—zines, postcards, VHS and film footage. It's occurring to me now that maybe subconsciously I tried to emulate that heterogeneous texture.

Lucy: I was curious about this feeling of what you can and can't use. Can you say a bit more about that?

Vika: It's the feeling of not being able to go there. *The watermelon woman* is a seminal independent film from the 90s. Cheryl Dunye plays a version of herself, a young queer filmmaker who researches Black queer history and Black queer women in Hollywood. Because Hollywood historically excluded these groups, Dunye creates a fictitious archive of a Black lesbian movie star, gesturing toward the huge void. I love this film, but inserting it in the archive I was creating gave me pause. My own positionality came to light clearly.

Lucy: Even asking yourself that question—am I the person to use this particular piece of media?—situates this as curation. If curation is about selection, it's also about being conscious of those choices and their implications. What you're suggesting is that however much you enjoy that film, being conscious that using it raises this feeling of appropriation comes down to being aware of the media we use, and how we're positioning them.

Dayna: Extending the idea of care to the object itself by not including it, there's a care for and a responsibility to it. As we engage with this project, we each have to think about how much time we have for our section, the song, and there are all these flattening devices that we are subjecting our media objects to, which, in some instances, might be disrespectful. That, in combination with our positionality as white scholars... what does one do with *The watermelon woman*, especially as an indie film? A Hollywood blockbuster doesn't need care. But what is the care that we need to offer indie objects as well as their makers? What are our responsibilities to the makers whether that's through citational practices, context, or scholarship?

Colleen: This conversation raises not only the point of access, but also positionality: who is able to make these kinds of decisions about representation and inclusivity. I think we are all conscious that within our collaboration we are five white scholars. So, then, what are the pathways that brought us together and how might this have been diversified to position more people who can and should speak with authority on representation.

Lucy: This brings me back to the question of tone, as well. Vika was not just setting an aesthetic tone, but also a tone for our collaboration that allowed space for that thoughtfulness. None of us consciously knew that you were doing that, but it comes out of

how the objects themselves are treated and what kind of archive this then is. One possible argument is to include *The watermelon woman* would be to diversify the filmography, the citation that acts as a suggestion for further viewing. What we are describing instead is that there is a time and a place for forms of visibility. It raises the question: what kind of archive is the *Indy vinyl for the masses* project? What is suitable for it? This is not just a question, as with other archives, of who has access and what can/cannot be made visible, but what, within *this* context, is appropriate?

Dayna: What is legible? I love how you've just contextualised that. What does putting a film like that on screen with all these other films arranged and organised by five white people do to that text? Vika, your edit is an act of care. I keep using this word, but in taking care of these media objects through the ways you combine them that amplify and complement their form visually, I felt your love for them. This then led into Lucy's section quite seamlessly because of how Lucy then took up the mantle. Vika's opening is a way of encompassing all the things that we've talked about as a curatorial statement in which you set the tone and style for behaving badly in the archive through gesture.

Colleen: Behaving badly in the archive and yet behaving quite well.

Vika: Behaving badly but ethically.

Daniel: I hope we can continue interrogating this question of behaving badly and ethically in the archive. Behaving badly in the archive is a way of disrupting, but if you're striving to be ethical as well, it's potentially subversive. Bringing to light things that wouldn't otherwise be placed in the archive. Who's policing those boundaries, and how can my bad behaviour in the archive help disrupt and expand the archive?

Behind my back, I can see them stare
They'll hurt me bad, but I won't mind
They'll hurt me bad, they do it all the time (Yeah, yeah)
(Violent Femmes, 1983)

3. Lucy

Lucy: The question of how the archive is dramatised for us, was at the forefront of my mind. In what form does it appear? Who engages with it? Prompted by those questions, I wanted to have *Candyman* (Rose, 1992) and *The silence the lambs* (Demme, 1991) speak to one another, to have the women looking at one another. Following our conversation around the ethics of selection, I was reflecting on the politics of selection and how much my section is about access, especially the gendering of access to the archive—the contrast between Virginia Madsen and Jodie Foster pouring quietly through microfilm and Harrison Ford smashing the floor!

Colleen: I seem to remember that as you were working on this segment, you found a YouTube supercut of women looking at microfilm. If a supercut is an archive, then you certainly entered one.

Lucy: It was about 'sexy' women looking at microfilm! The gap between my understanding of what's happening (women as active, as engaged researchers) and the Internet's understanding of

what might be happening (woman-as-object) is about as wide as it might be. As you say, those materials constitute a certain kind of archive, which packages those moments and gives them particular meanings. You could say that mine is intervening in that archive and its construction of meaning. How are women archived?

Colleen: In my own making, any time that I need to source clips on a shared thematic element, I turn to the Internet for examples, looking for lists and collections. I'm relying on the curatorial work of others that exists as a kind of digital archive.

Lucy: Which raises further questions of the potential unreliability of that archive.

Dayna: There's also an association between domestic space, library space, and film editing in its early days as women's labour. When we talk about the sexy reel of women looking at microfiche, the gaze is quite literally projected onto these subjects which turns them into objects. Can you talk about the split screen and how you're changing the shots with Virginia Madsen and Jodie Foster?

Lucy: Connecting them through the edit works to highlight their shared investigative gaze and situate research as women's labour. Crucially, this is hidden labour—we're not seeing hours of scrolling and trawling through material that results in finding a tiny fragment of information that was previously hidden or not seen as important. Those moments also connect knowledge and mechanisation, processes of investigation and research. You're absolutely right, this connection of women's work and gesture (their handling of images and text) generates a further possible connection between what we're seeing, and other contexts of 'women's' work, such as film editing.

Daniel: There's the question of how the archive itself makes meaning in the way that it is composed. As its own archive, our video is making meaning about what women can and should do—or be—in relation to archives.

Lucy: It's also about the institutions of those archives (the university, the FBI). The women's privileged position within an institution directs their access to that material. The connection between us and these characters means that *they* are our way into it, we understand the archive *through* them. The role of looking in systems of power—who gets to look—chimes with the seminal work of Linda Williams on women in horror, 'When the woman looks' (1984). At the same time, the looking becomes about how they feel about that archive, about processing it. Frequently, this involves a violent act or murder, typically done to another woman. But when they find what they are looking for, there is not a particularly expressive response. Unlike *Shirkers*, where the relationship is tactile and material, here there is a modelling of what research looks like and how we should relate to that material.

Vika: Even though they're not misbehaving visibly, like Indiana Jones demolishing the marble floor, there's still an illicit quality in their interaction with the archive, of confronting this institution of power which is also looking back at them. There's an element of danger, of excitement, involved, beyond the genre of thriller or adventure—it's something that I felt when I had to gain access to carefully protected archives in the Russian Federation.

Colleen: Our archives contain, and often obfuscate or bury deep within them, our atrocities. What these films employ is a fantasy, that these women are able to discover or unearth a past that they alone can suture together and 'solve'. This raises the point of privilege, not just of who 'discovers' but who can be discovered. If a history is undocumented, it cannot be traced or brought to light. The horror trope of finding accounts of missing persons relies on the oxymoron that is the documentation of disappearance.

Lucy: This is making me think about bodies in the archive. There is the horror connection where there are bodies contained in the material itself, and then the embodied potential of burying that information—who gets to be archived, who makes that archive publicly accessible and how access is controlled are all questions that relate to bodies, as well as those larger forces.

Dayna: I can't help thinking of the structures of white supremacy. These white women, who are both doing the research and are our reflection of the archive, represent those structures that permit access to some while restricting others. These film depictions reveal who gets access to the archive, who is scrutinised, and who is permitted by those structures to behave badly, whereas, we certainly know from police brutality and violence against racialised people, that those are not necessarily realities for non-white people inside or outside of the archive.

Colleen: When a woman is looking at these accounts of the past, she is also looking at the threat of her potential future. At the same time, she's doing the work that no-one else will do. This work, to uncover the past is also to protect herself; she does this work at her own risk.

Lucy: Even though these moments make me think of the hidden labour of research—we're not seeing hours of scrolling and trawling through material that results in finding a tiny fragment of information that was previously hidden or not seen as important—giving any visibility to that labour is really important.

Vika: Another question about misbehaving: Can one behave in an archive or can one only misbehave? Must an interaction with an archive be confrontational or tension-ridden?

Colleen: Is there any other way to behave in an archive as an ethical investigator other than to misbehave? Especially if you're reading against the grain, an act that is inherently disruptive.

Lucy: This question is related to the question of who made the archive, who runs the archive. If you're behaving in any way that is different from them, then are you misbehaving?

Daniel: What does it mean to behave? What is misbehaving? What is an archive for?

Colleen: Who is it for?

Daniel: And who's included? I keep going back to artifacts pilfered by imperial powers that remain in their museums. How can access to archives provide access to one's own cultural heritage, particularly when the materials in the archive do not mean the same thing to you as they do to the institutions that hold them.

Dayna: Those paternalistic contexts and instincts of empire that say, 'we're taking care of it'.

Lucy: To talk about archives is to talk about power (see Derrida, 1996).

I hope you know that this will go down on your permanent record
(Violent Femmes, 1983)

4. Dayna

Dayna: How are feelings archivable? How do personal archives challenge dominant systems of collection and preservation? How might archives be queered? The «permanent record» line really resonated with me as a cop kid who realised in art school that there is no permanent record. No one cares. After our conversation about behaving badly in the archives, Ralph Fiennes eating a William Blake painting from *Red dragon* (Ratner, 2002) popped into my head. When I put this scene into the timeline, it was like, oh I've just disturbed this really playful image that Lucy's given me—of Katharine Hepburn celebrating in an archive with champagne—with Ralph Fiennes and his violent aggression. When I saw Vika's section that features all kinds of ephemera that characters are interacting with, I flashed to my own archive because I had just moved.

Colleen: When you say «my archives», do you mean the finished works that you've produced so far or is it inclusive of notes and other materials?

Dayna: It's more like notebooks, post-its, images, flyers, physical video formats, projectors, props and everything that I've never thrown away. I wanted to see what happens if I laid all of these photos over the Ralph Fiennes scene. I sped up the sequence to see what would stand out and experimented with different blending modes. I was happy with the illegibility/legibility that this produced.

Lucy: I like this idea of legibility/illegibility being put deliberately in tension. The questions of who is archived, where does the archive sit, or even what are the resources that support it are partly about making that archive legible. For example, who writes that metadata for the archive becomes crucial to how it is understood. I recently attended an event organised by my colleague Glyn Davis, as part of his collaborative project on queer and trans archives in Europe, and one of the discussions there moved from metadata making queerness visible, to the significance of how queerness is described and importance of specific vocabulary in making it legible to a queer community. The nuances of what is being archived can be lost. The work that goes on around or into the archive is absolutely tied to its legibility and illegibility.

Dayna: It's a daunting task with lots of pressure. Over the past twenty-thirty — years, we're seeing queer subjectivity being recouped into archives. And with heavy hearts we recognise a lot of queer archives are filled with boxes from people we lost during the AIDS epidemic. There are very personal artifacts and remnants of someone's life that their family or friends have reduced to a shoebox. There is a weight of being responsible for how to handle and include it.

Lucy: Especially in marginalised archives where the space in which they are being kept is not institutional, but might be a personal or private space. Who is the person who is responsible, and is that sustainable for them? Can they make it accessible?

Daniel: That goes to what Dayna is asking about: emotions. Are emotions archivable, someone's direct experience of the world and their emotions about that and about their work and where their work comes from? Is that archivable? Including in addition the various valences that that object means potentially, and there you get into some murky territory, because, are you writing stories then? To express the emotional weight the artifacts have? And how do you avoid trespassing? Even when we are well-meaning, we might commit some wrongful trespass. It's a tricky business.

Lucy: Yes. In my own work on the letters between George Cukor and George Hoyningen-Huene, I found something Carolyn Steedman's *Dust* (2002, p. 75) that really helped me. The archive is so often about reading letters, but letters that were not meant for you, so there's this intrusion. It really made me think about my intervention. At the same time, as a result of engaging with such an archive I'm very emotionally invested in that relationship. That tension was really interesting to me: putting something in an archive invites that intrusion.

Colleen: Dayna, I'm thinking about what you've said about how you've constructed your segment, particularly the way that we self-curate with respect to ethics and context. What you are doing is taking control from the researcher, from the interloper, that creates context through selection by assembling photos of your archive. And it seems like you didn't really manipulate them other than framing them durationally in a condensed amount of time. It's like encountering them in a box, one after another. As researchers, that's what we do. We encounter artifacts or texts one after the other to see what sticks out, from which we craft a narrative. Yet, in your edit, at the same time that Ralph Fiennes is ingesting something, you're spewing out all these images.

Dayna: What does it mean to literally ingest a sacred queer object from the archive? It's a mode of destroying this painting, but there's something about identifying with Fiennes' character that is about transformation. Even though he is the bad guy, we're supposed to have empathy as we see him struggle with his demons. But I was really uncomfortable with identifying with Fiennes' character, and the access he has to the archive. This white middle-aged man is just left alone with a William Blake painting with no real interference until he murders the archivist as he leaves. He sees and identifies with this imagery and his right to access it. This complicates the role of queer archives and people seeing traces of others like them in the world, in the archive where whiteness grants access but is also an exclusionary gatekeeping device for others.

Lucy: While I'm listening to you talk about this idea of uneasy identification, I'm also thinking that it's the ultimate archival fantasy, that you could just eat the object and immediately know/be it. It's sort of like the analogue version of the scene in *The Matrix* (Wachowski and Wachowski, 1999) where Neo has knowledge downloaded directly into his brain. There is something really appealing about being able to comprehend through consumption.

Daniel: Dayna, I saw this movie a long time ago, and I think he's eating the painting because believes that if he destroys it, then it can no longer have power

over him. He's trying to repress something that is a part of himself by doing this kind of symbolic act.

Dayna: To ingest is to know, but to ingest is also to destroy. How many times have we seen that in media, where characters eat documents so no one can get whatever information they hold? Is that active erasure of the archive? This reminds me of anti-trans and anti-queer legislation where queer and trans rights were in the system and on the record (for a time), but these records are actively being removed and erased. I think of the Fiennes' scene and what that eating actually does, especially of a William Blake painting where Blake is a queer icon. What happens if we don't acknowledge him as a queer icon. What if audiences don't know? Is this erasure, ignorance, or omission? We've seen this with other historical figures: 'Oh they were just good friends'.

Colleen: Ingestion, an act of the body, brings us back to the question: are feelings archivable? When you were working with this material and assembling it for us, of course you are spending considerable time with it. So my question is, how did it feel to be working with it on the timeline during assembly? And how about watching it afterwards, in the preview window or once you've exported the file? What does it feel like to see your own archive as a series of images? Is it archived in the final work?

Dayna: There were lots of feelings! The process was an accumulation of packing up my apartment. I had bins everywhere and was surrounded by these objects at all times. When I was renovating from my Montreal apartment, it was all put in storage. It's very hard for me to not have my stuff at hand. Before we were doing this project, I was documenting everything and posting pics to Instagram because that gave me a kind of cathartic relief. Friends remembered with me in their comments, which made the move easier. I carefully arranged images on the timeline to integrate Ralph Fiennes' scene to ease in from Vika's and Lucy's sections. I experimented with various frame rates and tried to see the sequence through a formal lens to ensure visual coherence. Initially, I considered using images of video tapes and cameras, but they felt cold.

Vika: Hearing you describe how you approached working with your personal archive, Dayna, makes me think of control, control you have as an editor, artist, and archivist of your own personal collection. You can do whatever you want with it. And then of course thinking about, okay, what happens when you cede that control to an institution or an entity that is perhaps underfunded or can't provide the type of access that you wish others to have. Or how are they going to curate it? You are now in charge, but when you donate your archive, you give up control.

Lucy: This makes me think about the history of film being built by those who considered it valuable to keep, where others didn't. In a sense we only have a film history because some people thought their work was valuable, and as a result they get to be the people who are remembered. We could view that as not just because they had some foresight about the potential of the medium, but the result is that because you kept the work, you become an important figure in that history. It's also about having the means to save it, too.

Colleen: And yet its ephemerality is also an illusion. I come back to the line, «I hope you know this will go down on your permanent record». It's a punitive statement that harkens back to a previous era. It's a line spoken by authority, teachers and police officers in response to a physical action that will leave a mark; it will haunt you for the rest of your life. But in the digital era, the younger generations are growing up in a context in which most of their actions are documented. And they are increasingly conscious of this and, in many cases, more cautious with the technology than adults. It becomes an effort to conceal, to hide, that which one doesn't want to be part of a public archive. Trying to erase yourself from the Internet is not easy.

I take one, one, one 'cause you left me
(Violent Femmes, 1983)

5. Daniel

Daniel: I decided on *Erin Brockovich* (Soderbergh, 2000) right away because of how she accesses and uses records. Like Dayna, I was thinking about gatekeeping. And Dayna's personal archive superimposed over *Red dragon* struck me as a kind of glitch in the institutions of archives. I'm thinking *Glitch feminism*. One of the powers of glitch, Legacy Russell (2020, p. 81) says, is that «glitch encrypts». There's this fascinating encryption happening, and I wanted to extend that. As Colleen noted, the «permanent record» lyrics evoke the archives' punitive role, so I incorporated themes of institutional uses and abuses of the archive. I thought of Allan Sekula's (1986) *The body and the archive* and the ways archives can impose meaning and authority on bodies—serving one set of people very much to the disservice of others. For example, in *Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind* (Gondry, 2004), artifacts, memories, and the body become signifiers that are manipulated, misused, erased. When you're creating a personal archive as a gesture or trace back to your life, what might future researchers make of it?

I'm also noticing how these clips can signify autonomously. Lucy's clip from *Indiana Jones and the last crusade* (Spielberg, 1989) works against the movie's hero trope by pointing out men's privilege. Meanwhile, other scenes—Brockovich dressing-down corporate lawyers, the Tuttle/Buttle error in *Brazil* (Gilliam, 1985)—are not in my clips, yet they still inform the piece. And maybe this is part of what videographic works do? Women tearing a book in *The handmaiden* (Park, 2016) is a synecdoche of the whole misogynistic library they destroy. And that infinite *Indiana Jones* warehouse that seems to hold everything, the archive of everything.

Lucy: What is the possibility of the videographic in evoking the whole through the fragment? Going back to *Dust*, Steedman (2002) acknowledges that the archive can't be everything. It is some things that you planned, and it's also what she calls the «mad fragmentations» that you could not (Steedman, 2002, p. 68). There is a movement or tension between what is/isn't planned, which is the nature of the process we are engaged with.

Vika: I'd like to pick up on the idea of the fragment and signification. There is something radical or counter-archival if we think of an archive as an

institution of power, systematised in a particular way, that professes to have «everything, everything, everything». In the video essay, by using fragments, we re-conceptualise the archive as always already fragmentary, heterogeneous, incomplete. Therefore, there is a potential for expansion and inclusivity.

Colleen: Fragments and juxtaposition. We have *Erin Brockovich* superimposed with *Eternal sunshine* in direct opposition with each other. One is depicting the act of copying, of preserving, the other a process of erasure. They tie together many of the threads we've teased out, including who is erased and who is documented. Meanwhile, we have the lyrics counting down to the singer's self-destruction, with repetition, which resonates with our own repetition and remix.

Dayna: Is a critique of the archive, like our behaving badly, reifying its power? I'm thinking about the bodies the archive is built on, bodies that are then excluded from access. There is this historical fragmentation. Who's included? Who's excluded? What does fragmentation do to how we encounter the archives? We are not taking it all, but a slice that serves our own study, which we've exemplified here by our selections. I didn't remember the erasure of memory in *Eternal sunshine*, so putting that together with *Erin Brockovich* reinforced that idea of copying that Colleen noted.

Daniel: I love that you picked up on that, Colleen, the preservation of something that could be destroyed. In *Eternal sunshine*, Clementine is an unforeseen catalyst for preserving memory. She is the glitch in the erasure process. Brockovich is also the force out of left field, not trained in law, arriving from outside the institutions of power.

Lucy: We can understand that through materiality—glitches as material interventions—but it also speaks to Vika's point about the radical potential of the videographic as a form of mediation. Glitch becomes a way of understanding what we're doing and reflects that notion of behaving badly.

Colleen: What about people in film behaving appropriately in the archive? I suspect artists are more drawn to acts of destroying infrastructure even as they might participate in making or reinforcing it.

Dayna: Now I'm troubled by bad intentions that aren't seen by the perpetrator as bad, like book burnings, censorship, and changing records so as not to reflect badly in an historical document. What do those alterations do? And what about our juxtapositions, and using vastly different sources?

Lucy: It makes me think of videographic gestures. Do you force an equivalence, or is it juxtaposition? How do we understand that movement between fragments? How conscious are we of our videographic gestures, their meaning-making in relationship to history and institutions, but also personal meaning-making? If we reflect on our gestures as makers, how would we conceptualise our narratives about archives?

Vika: What we do is so subjective, right? With the video essay we're not really making anything factually objective, one of the qualities that archives profess to possess. Archives are about strict classification, systematisation. We challenge that order, because what we create with videographic scholarship is personal and organised differently. I think of our

archive as a collage rather than something hierarchical. It's anti-hierarchical.

Dayna: I love this idea of thinking of the archive or the way we're interfering with it as collage. Collage draws from impressions but also leaves impressions in a non-hierarchical way.

Colleen: In a way, the parametric structure of *Indy vinyl* is non-hierarchical. Each participant has the same amount of time, same prompt, same audio. That said, there are inescapable privileges. The project itself is an archive. The individual projects might be hosted on separate Vimeo sites, but Ian Garwood curates them on his website. And, as with all archives, it is subject to hidden power dynamics of infrastructure: who can afford a Vimeo Pro account; whose songs are featured in films; what is the language of the lyrics; and for which masses?

Dayna: I was thinking about glitch feminism and the ideas of the body, the material body, and antibody, and I wonder if we are working on the material body of *Indy vinyl* while simultaneously working on the material body of cinema and media. Can the archive work in the way Russell talks about as glitch? Where is materiality in a digital landscape?

Vika: Working in a paper or film or VHS archive, a big part of it involves tactile experience. In videographic work, we don't physically touch in the same way. Maybe it's similar to Catherine Grant's material thinking (2014)? The only approximation of touch is through characters and their archival gestures. Or Dayna going through her personal archives. Where's that materiality in our project?

Lucy: With *Indy vinyl for the masses*—working with a section of a song forces you to be material. We're all thinking about rhythm and the relationships between media, between image and sound. Yes, it's digital but it's still material.

Colleen: Editing itself is a material interaction with an interface we touch and manipulate. We are *making*. And in the making there is a tactile connection through which we interact with our machines. There's eye strain and back pain. There are visceral, affective responses to successes, surprise discoveries, mistakes, and tech failures. There is a presence of the body and materiality even in the digital.

Lucy: Exactly. Film editors talk about *feeling* where to cut. Walter Murch edits standing up, so that he can feel the rhythm (see Apple, 2004). The digital archive feels different though. Scans are not the same as paper I can hold in my hand. Although I have files on my computer, do I really engage with them, or do I just hoard them in folders? I've been to archives where you can only take notes with a pencil, and I remember things because I've had that material engagement with them. It's funny, in one format I embrace the digital as material and regard it as an embodied experience, but when I'm given other forms of digital archive, I feel I'm missing the tactility.

Dayna: Perhaps because it doesn't have your bodily trace? When we do those scans, what are we actually remembering? And when you repeat a story over and over, you remember the last time you told it. You don't necessarily remember the original incident. I wonder if that's similar to an experience with the archive. Even though you didn't get to be Jodie Foster touching the microfiche, we are all Jodie Foster touching the microfiche.

Vika: Our body mediates when we create a videographic work. And I feel exactly as Lucy does about working in a physical archive. Tactility and memory are connected.

Daniel: Does embodied videographic work allow for some experience of touching something real, something material, via the digital?

Lucy: Before I started making video essays, I was reading people like Catherine Grant describe this closer understanding and feeling that, as someone whose whole approach is formed from close analysis, I already had this close engagement with film. But when I put something into an editing platform, actually being able to move frame-by-frame *is* closer, the gestures you make as an editor, that makes a difference.

Dayna: This brings us back to embodiment and how we touch the digital: It's through our devices, computers, and keyboards. But what is embodiment in relation to the scholar making the video essay as well as to visual and audio representation? I talk about embodiment as presence. What does it mean to be present while engaging with the senses? How can we engage the embodiment of the viewer? Are we just archives of our own experience? For me it's about positionality, experience, and re-embodiment those modes of representation. Trying to access other people's archives of experience to relate, make an argument, communicate, and engage.

Daniel: There's the vulnerability of presenting yourself to viewers. It's different from the Kogonada voice-of-authority (even if voiceover is embodiment). Putting yourself into the piece invites an engagement beyond the intellect alone.

Lucy: And the thrill of engaging an audience. Daniel mentioned the ways embodiment opens up possibilities for play. I've been surprised how pleasurable sharing videographic work can be. It's scary, but being in a room and showing work, and people responding in ways you either anticipated or didn't, it's thrilling. Presenting work that expresses something about yourself, you're able to reveal things that maybe you couldn't otherwise.

Colleen: I'm inspired by Dayna's comment about being aware of one's own mediation once transformed into a digital state, and a maybe hyper-awareness of voice. I suspect we used the phrase 'handing off' rather than 'digitally transfer' when talking about sending the work to the next person. Perhaps there is something about the conditions of this collaboration that, even as we are working far apart, we are working together in a digital facsimile of proximity. A second misconception is that print scholarship can't contain humour, which is historically not true. We put a great deal of stock into these fabrications, but we are relieved of these pressures in videographic form.

Lucy: Colleen is right. We can't pretend that scholarship hasn't already been doing these things, but perhaps it's been easier to hide. The videographic forces you to reckon with the fact that you are a person with a body. My perception of voiceover has changed. Rather than rejecting that audibility of yourself, there can be an intimacy with voiceover, which can be powerful.

Daniel: True. I have a middle-America, white, male accent, with all the history associated with it, which

can be a kind of prison, like Malkovich in the reification of Malkovich.

Colleen: Perhaps videographic scholarship doesn't provide as much opportunity for the maker to hide, although there is quite a deal of choice and technique behind the extent of that visibility.

But nine, nine, nine for a lost god
And ten, ten, ten, ten for everything, everything,
everything, everything
(Violent Femmes, 1983)

6. Colleen

Colleen: I wanted to behave badly in an *Indy vinyl* by breaking already established conventions of using clips from film or television. I knew that I wanted to remix your contributions and highlight your work as makers, specifically with regards to this ever-expanding archive of videographic scholarship in which we actively participate. However, I was not sure about how to remix your work or how to highlight our connections to each other as a community. Ultimately, the gift of your work informed my own. From Vika, it was the materiality of film projection. From Lucy, the role of an investigator. From Dayna, the personal archive. And finally, from Dayna and Daniel both, the aesthetics of opacity and layering.

I hoped that this would result in some tension between our vulnerable exposure as makers and how we're safely connected in a community. With regards to the former, I was uncomfortable with putting myself in the video throughout, particularly the direct address juxtaposed with the lyrics «a lost god». I like this moment as a comment on the often 'invisible' yet authoritative role of the maker, but I also felt that this moment was a theft of the collaborative process. I was also nervous about incorporating screen recordings of your respective Vimeo sites, which I did without permission. I hope that you saw that inclusion as it was intended: a visible honouring of your work and your individual catalogues within this project that was about archives.

Lucy: It surprises me that you felt conflicted about this, as we've talked about trust being a part of passing the file between us, and how the project itself builds on our shared history of collaboration. I wonder if there's something about that discomfort, particularly for those of us who are new to making, that is about traversing the combination of scholar/maker. Why is that such an uneasy relationship? Is the catalogue of our work on Vimeo—as opposed to something peer-reviewed—different in a space untethered from academia?

Colleen: This seems to be an issue for many people new to videographic scholarship: a level of discomfort about mucking around with texts created by other people. I don't generally have that qualm, but I think I did in this case because we strive, between us, to model consent.

Dayna: Yet you trusted we'd say yes. I think scholars often do not account for this kind of permission and accountability. An early lesson from art school was to not use other artist's works that were independently produced; instead, use existing media for their legibility and recognition. But I'm thinking about how Ariel Avissar's 'My name is' (2020) went viral across several platforms and how his

authorship got lost in the exchange, likely because of the familiarity of the source material. Remix becomes un-citational practice on social media. That said, as remix practices become more widely acknowledged and accepted, source legibility and recognition is becoming more niche, especially in videographic scholarship. Nevertheless, there is an educational aspect of remix practice that wasn't necessarily there before, to bring awareness to lesser-known media texts.

Daniel: Many video essays are an homage of sorts to previous video essays. Colleen, are you thinking differently about it here than those video essays that do already cite and quote other video essays.

Colleen: Within videographic scholarship there are certainly un-cited conventions. The opening rhetorical device of 'I can't stop thinking about X' comes to mind, regardless of whether or not the video maker is directly referencing Christian Keathley's 'Pass the salt' (2006) or Catherine Grant's 'Un/Contained' (2016) or is even aware of these predecessors and is drawing on echoes thereof. But otherwise, there are direct citational gestures. There are parody videos, response videos, recuts, and remixes. And there are curatorial video essays for special issues. Plenty of video essays engage with other video essays, but the citational expectations are not what we experience in print scholarship, especially when it comes to mechanics and formal choices. Additionally, we have yet to really see makers engaged in scholarly conflict. Perhaps it's because this is still such a small community, but there is an aspect of, I think, care between makers. Even parodies are done with an element of either reverence or respect that I don't see in print scholarship, so there's something about this form, or maybe the community, that values kindness. I hope that continues.

Lucy: I would credit Catherine Grant, as one of the pioneers of the field, as an important figure in shaping that aspect of the community. But this does raise an interesting question about the future. What directions will emerge as the community grows larger? I would hope that we learn the lessons of how not to behave with regards to citations or peer-review, which we've witnessed with print scholarship and the systems that work around it. With a new community, it doesn't make sense to repeat bad, old histories.

Vika: In terms of new ways and practices, when I saw Colleen's section, I thought, 'Wait, I didn't know we could do this!' It was a bit of a shock. And seeing my name was definitely slightly awkward because I suddenly saw myself and my work so exposed. I thought, 'Oh my god, I'm here and I'm Vika'. But also, this intimacy made me feel like a part of this community.

Lucy: So, what does it mean to behave badly within the constraints of a form and in a practice? It makes me wonder about the relationship between thinking and behaving, and how that translates as 'scholarly'. The *Indy vinyl* premise is absolutely connected to scholarship, Ian's and our own, but it's also fun. We didn't set out to make something for peer review. So how did that situation transform our behaviour? Coming back to Vika's surprise, it is also about feeling 'I didn't know I could behave like this'.

That's certainly been part of my experience of videographic work.

Daniel: Perhaps because of this, many videos are so compelling and entertaining; there is fun happening. That said, is there any conflict with the kind of intellectual and scholarly valence that you can lean into?

Colleen: There's something about working in this form in which we can ask ourselves an important question: why should anybody watch this? I think the answer is that it should do what good print scholarship does: stimulate ideas, not just about content but about ways of thinking, particularly through form. You see this sometimes in print, especially if the author clearly loves to write and is a bit of a rule breaker. Conversely, if the medium takes over the message, especially something 'fun', we run the risk of forgetting our scholarly training and the critical apparatuses we are collectively honing. There's a danger in that, too.

Dayna: I've battled this as an artist, and the difficulties of comedy as scholarship. I see this in videographic criticism as well. Perhaps similarly, one of the critiques of the community is that it's exclusionary, despite how welcoming and friendly it might feel for its members. How/are we mindful of this, of extending those literal connective red lines on Colleen's conspiracy board? What can or should we think about with regards to questions about ethics and inclusivity?

Lucy: One aspect of the videographic community I've been thinking about is how it brings together scholars who are working in different fields. For example, I might never come across Colleen's work because I don't work on Japanese cinema, but the videographic connection brought us together. A range of areas are being connected through this methodology and medium. It makes the scholarly part of the community different from other academic networks, and I wonder how that reshapes the ways in which we do and do not overlap.

Vika: This speaks to how the Academy loves separation; it puts us in very particular subfields and wants us to stay there. This is related to the rules of behaviour and performance: we are conditioned to behave in a certain way when we write and we behave differently when we create videographic scholarship. Perhaps our making compels us to break the rules of written scholarship and encourages us to change the way we think about more traditional research production on a broader scale. Since I am an expert in Eastern European and Soviet cinema, I feel responsible in print for the archive of the materials that I am working with as someone who is working in a somewhat marginal and marginalised area. But as a video essayist, I feel much freer to expand the range of material with which I engage, to broaden my working archive outward to all kinds of images and sounds that have nothing to do with my usual geographic and historical scope. I feel liberated from that kind of siloed thinking.

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Dayna: How, then, are we gesturing to bodies of our own work in videographic practice? How are we gesturing to the videographic scholarship of others? Colleen physically put herself in the work but goes beyond a simple guest appearance. She is performing analogue editing for us onscreen. We've talked about cuts and edits and interference and remix within these media objects, but here's Colleen literally putting the red strings between us, enacting a live editing process that I find compelling. She is touching media for us on screen and makes visible these connections. The red line is an illustration of editing cuts and the materiality of editing that links the screen to the body of the maker.

Colleen: Bodies of makers, plural. There is keen interest out there in videographic collaboration, with many questions about technical limitations regarding file access and software issues. Underlying this is the desire for collaborators to work on the same video file. But, what about creating collaborative processes that aren't necessarily about multiple hands in the timeline? Perhaps we can also make alternative structures, conditions, or methodologies. Why not create workspaces and networks in which we generate and refine ideas, acknowledging our individual efforts as works of a group rather than as the fruit of single authorship.

7. Data availability

The study data is available in the article or its supplementary material.

8. Authors' contribution statement

Lucy Fife Donaldson: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review and Editing, Visualization.

Colleen Laird: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review and Editing, Visualization.

Dayna McLeod: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review and Editing, Visualization.

Viktoria Paranyuk: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review and Editing, Visualization, Supervision.

Daniel Pope: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review and Editing, Visualization.

9. Statement of LLM use

This work has not used any text generated by an LLM (ChatGPT or other) for original writing

10. Acknowledgements

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