

## Performing the Accidental Archive

### CALL FOR PROPOSALS:

### PAPERS, INSTALLATIONS, PERFORMANCES, MANIFESTOS, AND WORKSHOPS

**Deadline:** January 16, 2015

**Symposium Date:** April 17, 2015

**Performing the Accidental Archive**, the fourth annual York University Theatre and Performance Studies Graduate Student Symposium, invites submissions for papers, installations, performances, manifestos, and workshops. In recent years, much theatre and performance studies work has been devoted to investigating, critiquing, and expanding upon the embodiments, objects, places, and practices that comprise the archive. **Performing the Accidental Archive** is a call to further these discussions by imaginatively exploring the places, practices, objects, and events that are archival despite themselves and that point towards the unintended and incidental remains of our everyday lives and actions. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines **accidental** as “not essential to the existence of a thing,” and as something relating to or occurring “by chance, unintentionally, or unexpectedly [...] or produced by accident.” “**Accidental Archives**” then refers to the non-essential, the contingent, the secondary, the subsidiary places, objects, and actions that are unintentionally archived, or that remain in different, transformed, and stubborn, immutable ways.

Possible topics for proposals might be:

- 1) **Theatre and Performance:** How does one archive an accidental performance and how does one perform an accidental archive? How might accidental archives be used to reconsider and re-analyze moments of the unexpected, the uncanny, or failure that arise during live performance and/or through audience-performer relations? How does the accidental archive question, alter, and impact the historical theatre canon?
- 2) **Material Culture:** Do the ‘accidental’ objects, locations, and practices involved in accidental archives retell the “story of objects asserting themselves as things” and reconfigure the “subject-object relations” in this story (Brown 4)? How might the notions of contingency, instability, and unintentionality lead us to rethinking an object’s aura and/or its use value? How does looking at accidental archives through a performance lens enliven what remains when *things* are tossed aside?
- 3) **Embodiment, Temporality and Ephemerality:** How does the body archive performance and experience in unexpected (and accidental) ways? How do accidental archives affect notions of temporality, permanence, and ephemerality? How might notions of “non-essentiality” and “by accident” further discussions of archive and repertoire? How might performance reframe an accidental archive—one that lives (on) in the unlikely spaces/places of the material world and of embodied experiences?

- 4) **Dominant, Resistant and Counter Politics:** Who decides what is accidental and what is intentional? What groups and institutions (and symposia) have the power to determine what remains, what is forgotten, and what remains to be forgotten? How might accidental archives (and their objects) generate an alternative politics that contest and rupture dominant/majoritarian logics? How can accidental archives challenge and/or produce alternative forms of organization, curation, and historicization? Do accidental archives point towards legacies of (economic, political, performative) failure and impermanence while also speaking to alternative political outcomes?
- 5) **Eco-Criticism:** How might performance be used to make manifest the accidental archives that result from human connections to, interactions with, and ideologies about the more-than-human world? How might a focus on the accidental and the unexpected reframe and illuminate the waste products of contemporary globalization and neoliberalism? How does thinking about the non-essential, incidental, contingent, and subsidiary remains behind human activity critically reflect on our human relationships to the other-than-human?
- 6) **Popular and Digital Culture:** How do photographs, film, and other media (digital, YouTube videos, etc.) archive bodies in accidental ways, and what are the political ramifications of this – including in terms of surveillance or celebrity? How might everyday performance accidents (or accidental performances [from wardrobe malfunctions to corpsing on stage] alter a performance or practice in different ways?
- 7) **Queerness and Gender:** Drawing on Sarah Ahmed’s development of Queer Phenomenology, what bodies/things do we orient ourselves towards, and what do we turn towards accidentally? What people, bodies, or things take up the mantle of ‘accidental,’ as foils for the legitimacy of the (authorized) archive? How might performance (dis)allow or (re)frame normative heterosexual/societal ‘accidents’ in terms of archives?

Beyond these suggestions, we are very open to any proposals that bridge the above topics or address issues related to “the accidental archive” that you feel are worthy of examination and exploration.

**Please respond to this call by submitting your 200-250 word abstract and a 100-word bio to [yutpsgsa@gmail.com](mailto:yutpsgsa@gmail.com) on or before January 10, 2015.** Given the nature of the topic, we strongly encourage submissions that step outside of paper-presentation norms in order to explore concepts of alternative archival practices in both content and form. Standard papers will still be accepted. Please clearly indicate whether you are proposing a paper presentation, performance, manifesto, or workshop, and make sure to include your technical requirements (within reason). Paper presentations and performances are limited to 15 minutes with the exception of durational performances and installation pieces. Manifestos are limited to 5 minutes and workshops to one hour.