

A Sentient Archive

Investigating the Body as Archive in Museum Motus Mori



Katja Heitmann, *Museum Motus Mori* (2019), Marres, House for Contemporary Culture, Maastricht.

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Master's Thesis
Contemporary Theatre Dance & Dramaturgy
Utrecht University
20-08-2020
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our backs
tell stories
no books have
the spine to
carry

Women of color – Rupi Kaur

Abstract

Archives, such as museums and libraries, preserve documents, photographs and objects that are testimonies of the past. We collect and store material traces to prevent things from disappearing. In our homes we keep things that remind us of our loved ones. But their particular movements and gestures are gone. How can we preserve human movement? *Museum Motus Mori* (2019) by choreographer Katja Heitmann (Hamburg, 1987) is a museum for human movement endangered of extinction. Heitmann proposes to consider movement as a type of knowledge that is stored in the body. This thesis contributes at theorizing *how* we can consider the body as an archive for knowledge. It investigates the underlying processes that result in the body becoming, as proposed by Linda Caruso Haviland, a *sentient* archive. To consider the body as an archive, requires us to rethink the meaning of both the body and the archive. The first chapter explores the western archival logic, which prioritizes the document as the primary medium through which we store past events. Furthermore, it explores how this logic manifests itself in the museum. In the logic of the archive, performance is considered to be ephemeral and, therefore, destined to disappear. Following Rebecca Schneider I argue that embodied practices, such as performance, can be a way of remembering and accessing history. The second chapter delves into the body as a knowing agent. Here I use Maurice Merleau-Ponty's theory on embodied knowledge to support an understanding of the manner in which the body stores, acquires and retrieves knowledge. From this perspective I then offer a detailed analysis of *Museum Motus Mori* to gain insight in the strategies it utilizes to preserve the movement archive. Rather than a static repository, I argue that the body is a sentient archive in motion that generates and stores knowledge. Focussing on the physicality of the body and the archive, this thesis aims to retrieve and validate the knowledge that is stored within the body.

Acknowledgements

My deepest gratitude to:

Liesbeth for her attentiveness and meticulous keen eye

Jolijn for being a listening ear

Anton for his eagle eye and his hips which guard Shakira's legacy

Giovanni for his amazement and comforting noodle soup

Mascha for her uninhibited laughter

Eva for her sharp-mindedness

Ilse for her bearing shoulders

Albertien for her caressing hands

Peter for his critical view

Katja for her determination and patience

Rebecca for thoughtfully embodying and preserving my movements

My hands and fingers that will always try to grasp

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Introduction

In autumn 2019, choreographer Katja Heitmann (Hamburg, 1987) and her team installed their first large scale Movement Museum in Museum Marres House for Contemporary Culture in Maastricht. Only moments before I left the exhibition on a Saturday afternoon in October 2019, my concentration had been gently interrupted by an employee of Marres who requested me to leave the exhibition space. It had been 5 p.m. and the museum was about to close. I had spent more than two hours inside *Museum Motus Mori*, the museum of endangered physical movement.

For six weeks, six days a week, five hours a day, ten dancers and the choreographer set themselves the task to create a new museum for movement endangered of extinction and to show the deep-rooted humanness that resides in the body. The audience was invited to 'donate' their personal movements to the museum. *Museum Motus Mori* focuses on the loss of daily, human movement in an existence that is becoming more dominated by bits and bytes and tech-giants. Mankind is reduced to comparable data and categorical differences, in order to be able to optimize control over our fate. In a society that aspires perfection, is there still space for individuality?

Originally trained as a choreographer, Heitmann explores the intersections of dance and visual arts, performance and installation. With her team, Heitmann creates performance-installations and movement-exhibitions. Her choreographic work comprises of explicit aestheticism, which is sharply contrasted by human frailty.¹ Heitmann combines a radically minimalist style with a signifying, meticulously designed visual language. The works always depart from the recurring question "Who (or what) moves humans?"² In recent years, Heitmann has developed a nomadic practice, in which she searches for new modes of presentation. Located in churches, museums, warehouses or public spaces, the works change and are influenced by the conventions of each space. From 2021 to 2024 Heitmann will further develop and create the archive for movements that are inevitably becoming extinct: *Motus Mori Institute*. *Motus* meaning 'movement' and *mori* referring to 'disappearing' or 'dying' in Latin, *Motus Mori Institute* concentrates on the collection, preservation, display and transfer of movement-heritage.³ *Motus Mori* is a place for process, where every development is shared with the audience during public manifestations. In the upcoming years, the institute will be

¹ Other works in which Katja Heitmann explores this theme and aesthetic are *Siri Loves Me* (2017) and *Pandora's Dropbox* (2017).

² Katja Heitmann, Sander van der Schaaf and Valentijn Byvanck, *Museum Motus Mori*, (Maastricht: Marres House for Contemporary Culture, 2019), 21.

³ Katja Heitmann, "Motus Mori in Quarantine 2: Movement Interview," *Motus Mori* video, 15:55, 2 May 2020, <http://www.motusmori.com/>.

further developed and located in different European cities, presenting the process of archiving in small and large exhibitions and becoming a literally 'moving' institute for the preservation of movement.

In the period preceding *Museum Motus Mori*, Heitmann asked herself: can human movement be exhibited? Dealing with similar questions, a growing number of choreographers and performers have initiated dance exhibitions in museum and gallery spaces in recent years.⁴ The question of how to exhibit movement arises more often in dance, since the discipline does not have a standardized notation system. The body of the dancer is often regarded as the archive of the dance.⁵ Heitmann wonders: is the quotation of the dancers body as an archive of dance, also applicable outside the realms of dance?⁶

Archives and museums collect portraits, objects and writings of events and persons that are important and ought to be remembered. In our homes we keep letters, photos and objects from those we love and wish to remember. But their postures, movements and reflexes, through which we instantly recognize them, are lost.⁷ In 2018, Katja noticed that a museum for movement was missing. Two events prompted the idea to archive movements. During a residency at Tanzhaus NRW, Heitmann and the dancers worked for three months with a group of elderly people (65 - 84 years) living in the social institution and meeting place ZentrumPlus to explore the movements of age. Just before, her father had passed away. On her way back in the train she thought: "Everything is gone now. Can I still recall how he sits, gets up, walks?"⁸

How can human movement be preserved? *Museum Motus Mori*'s invitation to consider movement as a type of knowledge that is stored and can be found in the body, aligns with a growing interest among dance scholars and practitioners on knowledge acquisition and embodiment. In the book *The Sentient Archive: Bodies, Performance, and Memory*, Linda Caruso Haviland, associate Professor at Bryn Mawr College, states that research on embodied

⁴ Deriving from the question "Can choreography be performed in the form of an exhibition?" Belgian choreographer and dancer Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker presented the nine-hour cycle *Work/Travail/Arbeid* (2015) in the context of a museum-like environment. Each hour offered a different choreography and combinations of seven dancers and seven musicians. In 2019, French choreographer and dancer Boris Charmatz staged the performance *10000 Gestures* against the backdrop of Tate Modern's Turbine Hall. In line with other projects of his company Musée de la danse, the work constitutes a choreographic anti-museum that aims to explore the strategies of preservation that are at work in the activity of a dancer. See Roos Gortzak, "Tussen Retrospectief en Repetitie," *Metropolis M* 40, no.4 (2019), 44-48.

⁵ In the past years, iconic performances have often been re-enacted which, according to professor in Performance Studies at New York University André Lepecki derives from a specifically choreographic 'will to archive' This comes from a desire to bring these dances into the present. André Lepecki, "The Body as Archive: Will to Re-Enact and the Afterlives of Dances," *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 42, no. 2 (2010), 29.

⁶ Marres House for Contemporary Culture, *Museum Motus Mori*, accessed 15 August 2020, <https://marres.org/programmas/museum-motus-mori-2/>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Magazine Festival Boulevard, "Katja Heitmann: De bewegende archiefkast," 7 August 2020, <https://magazine.festivalboulevard.nl/2020-vr-7-aug/lijn-73-project-katja-heitmann>.

knowledge includes considerations of the body as a site of consciousness and cognition and its involvement in the retrieval and reenactment of memory.⁹ The book includes the essay “Stalking Embodied Knowledge – Then What?,” in which performer and ethnologist Tomie Hahn asks: “Can embodiment be a process of archiving knowledge?”¹⁰ Embodied knowledge has become a legitimate topic of study, instigating questions on how the body can generate, assimilate and process knowledge and function as an archive which is able to store and reproduce knowledge and memory. Recent research has shown that dancer’s knowledge¹¹ and memories, as well as thought and language, are part of a dynamic cognitive system that operates on the levels of nerve, muscle, and the brain.¹² Simultaneously, the body and the archive are being reexamined as entities which are intrinsically connected to politics and power. Both are capable of shaping and being shaped by historical and cultural influences. What is, then, the relation between the body and the archive?

After witnessing *Museum Motus Mori*, the issue of the body as a knowing agent that is capable of storing knowledge has been occupying my mind and has resulted in more questions: in what ways can bodies function as archives? How is knowledge on movement stored and transferred? How can human behaviour be seen as a type of knowledge? Moreover, I have come to think about the relation between live works and the museum. Why do choreographers and artists choose to present live works in the museum? What possibilities does this offer to their practice and the work? These questions have led to the following research question:

⁹ Regarding the use of ‘memory’ and ‘history’ in this thesis, I will follow Haviland’s usage of the terms. It is relevant to note that memory begins as a person’s neurobiological system responds to an experience followed by the processes, as will be explored in chapter two, that enable recall. Memory is personal, subjective and subject to forgetfulness. It can be externally embodied or recorded, in photographs or writing for example. History starts as memory. History has sought to ground itself in sources which provide objective, confirmable and ‘true’ testimonies or records of past events. History is the investigation of and writing about those accounts or records. For more see Linda Caruso Haviland, “Considering the Body as Archive,” in *The Sentient Archive: Bodies, Performance, and Memory*, eds. Bissell, Bill and Linda Caruso Haviland (Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2018), 1,11.

¹⁰ Tomie Hahn, “Stalking Embodied Knowledge – Then What?,” in *The Sentient Archive: Bodies, Performance, and Memory*, eds. Bissell, Bill and Linda Caruso Haviland (Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2018), 28.

¹¹ The Federal Cultural Foundation, which organised the first ‘Dance Congress Germany’ at the House of World Cultures in Berlin from 20 to 23 April 2006, argued to consider the dancer’s body as an archive for knowledge in motion. They focused primarily on knowledge production in dance and artistic research. See Sabine Gehm, Pirkko Husemann, Katharina von Wilcke, eds., *Knowledge in Motion: Perspectives of Artistic and Scientific Research in Dance* (New Brunswick/London: Transaction Publishers, 2007).

¹² Jens Brockmeier, “After the Archive: Remapping Memory,” *Culture & Psychology* 16, no. 1 (2010), 19-25. See also Bettina Blasing, Martin Puttke and Thomas Schack eds., *The Neurocognition of Dance: Mind, Movement and Motor Skills* (New York: Psychology Press, 2010), and Dee Reynolds, Corinne Jola and Frank E. Pollick, eds., *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research Electronic* 29, no. 2 (2011).

*How can the body function as an archive for knowledge
in contemporary live art in the museum context?*

In order to answer the research question, the following sub questions need to be answered:

1. What is an archive and how can an archive be understood not as fixed but as flexible, as a performance?
2. How are knowledge and memory stored within and transferred through the human body?
3. In what manner do the bodies in the live artwork *Museum Motus Mori* (2019) by Katja Heitmann operate as archives for human movement?

Through these sub questions, I aim to answer how *Museum Motus Mori* offers alternative modes of remembering and how the body can be considered as an archive for human movement. This research has two goals:

1. Presenting an alternative to see the archive as dynamic instead of a static structure.
2. Contributing to the discourse on the body as an archive for knowledge in the context of contemporary live art.

0.1 Methodology and Theoretical Framework

In approach to the research question, I used a poststructuralist approach informed by phenomenology and qualitative research methods consisting mainly of literary research from different fields of expertise. This research adopts an interdisciplinary approach which includes cognitive studies, archival studies, museum studies and performance studies. For consulting literature about *Museum Motus Mori*, I can exclusively draw upon reviews, articles and the exhibition catalogue of the live artwork. These offer insights into the objectives and strategies of the work, but will not suffice to answer the research question. It is therefore necessary to examine and analyse the work myself. Preceding this thesis, I have explored *Museum Motus Mori* in the paper “Exploring Contemporary Dance and Theatre: The Art of Performer and

Spectator”.¹³ Furthermore, to gain a deeper understanding of the work, I have joined Katja Heitmann in an almost three hour long interview in which we discussed the case study, her artistic ideas and future developments of the project *Motus Mori*.

The body, including its internal processes and neuromuscular- and nervous systems, is strongly connected to how we perceive and relate to the world. My own body is an archive that is shaped by past experiences which colour my perception of the world. This has unmistakably determined the approach of this research. Hence, with this research I attempt to illustrate that we cannot see our body as a separate, independent being any longer. In a world that is becoming more mediatized every day, I intend to provide a counter voice. Shifting back the focus to the physicality of the body and the archive, I aim to retrieve the knowledge, memories and stories that are stored within the body.

In order to see the body as archive for knowledge, requires us to rethink the meaning of both key concepts **body** and **archive**. This research is divided into three chapters. First, I will discuss what an archive is. The first chapter will explore western archival logic and how this manifest itself through processes of selection and categorization in the context of the museum. Then, I will discuss the performative processes of power and control through which we can understand the archive as performative in of itself. Archives always trigger questions about how collections are created and how these choices influence the manner in which we engage with past events. In the book *Transmission in Motion: The Technologizing of Dance*, professor in theatre and performance studies at Utrecht University Maaïke Bleeker states that:

The fact that archival research is performative, in the sense that it is itself constitutive of new objects of knowledge, is not something that only happens with digitalization. The same might be said about analog archives. They contain documents and other traces from the past, books and other resources, all of which can be accessed through the archive in which they are placed. Both analog and digital archive provide access to materials on the basis of which interpretations can be made and things can come to be known one way or another, and this can then result in new materials that can be included in the archive. Important difference, however, is how they mediate; how they afford access to materials, what kind of materials can be accessed, and how interpretation and knowledge production can be performed.¹⁴

¹³ Lotte Hofstraat, “Exploring Contemporary Dance and Theatre: The Art of Performer and Spectator,” (Universiteit Utrecht, 2019).

¹⁴ Maaïke Bleeker, “What if this were an archive? Abstraction, enactment and human implicatedness,” in *Transmission in Motion: The Technologizing of Dance*, ed. Maaïke Bleeker (New York: Routledge, 2016), 204.

The last questions in this quote are particularly relevant as a frame for this research. What does the manner in which we have access to materials and, thus, which knowledge is transmitted, say about the archive?

The preservation of movement in *Museum Motus Mori* seems to present a paradox as movement is considered to disappear once it has been performed. I will discuss the notion of performance as anti-archive which has been central in performance studies since the 1980s. In the essay “Performance Remains Again”, performance scholar Rebecca Schneider opts to see performance as an artform that remains and might function as a type of bodily transmission, thereby challenging the conventional notions of the archive.¹⁵ The essay is an essential departing point to understand the manner in which (live) performance relates to archival culture and can be seen as a mode of remembering.

Chapter two will introduce another theoretical component which focusses on how knowledge and memory are stored in and transferred through the human body, aiming to answer the second sub question. *The Sentient Archive: Bodies, Performance, and Memory*, edited by Bill Bissell and Linda Caruso Haviland acts as a key text providing the general perspective on the body as archive from which I approach the research question. Through essays by various scholars and practitioners from different fields, *The Sentient Archive* explores in what manner the body serves as a repository for knowledge. According to Haviland, to see the body as archive “presumes a *sentient* archive: a sensate structure infused with cognitive potential, inseparable from its archived contents.”¹⁶ Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s notion of **embodied knowledge** as introduced in his book *Phenomenology of Perception*, functions as another key concept through which I aim to see how the body functions as archive.¹⁷

From the perspective of dance, *Transmission in Motion* proposes that dance has to offer relevant expertise with regard to our understanding of the transmission of movement knowledge.¹⁸ I will use Bleeker’s concept of **transmission** as an overarching key concept for the ways in which we think, perceive and archive knowledge. To structure the second chapter, I will present a three step approach of *storing*, *acquiring* and *retrieving*, thereby demonstrating how knowledge on movement is transferred into and between bodies.

The third chapter presents an in depth analysis of the case study and aims to uncover the strategies used in *Museum Motus Mori* to create an archive for human movement. I will demonstrate that the *sentient* archive in *Museum Motus Mori* consists of a *performative*,

¹⁵ Rebecca Schneider, “Performance Remains Again,” in *Histories of Performance Documentation: Museums, Artistic and Scholarly Practices*, eds. Gabriella Giannachi and Jonah Westerman (London and New York: Routledge, 2018).

¹⁶ Haviland, “Considering The Body As Archive,” 1.

¹⁷ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London/New York: Routledge, 2002).

¹⁸ Maaïke Bleeker, introduction to *Transmission in Motion: The Technologizing of Dance*, ed. Maaïke Bleeker (New York: Routledge, 2016), xiix

embodied and *temporal* archive. Through the analysis, I aim to see how we can preserve movement and how the archive for endangered movement can be kept alive.

Through these three chapters I will answer how the human body can be seen as a dynamic archive. In addition, I will suggest opportunities and possibilities the museum may offer to the practices of contemporary dance and performance artists and for presenting live art. Based on my analysis of *Museum Motus Mori* I will draw out possible prospects for future research.

When discussing performance art in the context of the museum, we need to be mindful of the minor but important differences between the type of performance we encounter. In her article “Black Box, White Cube, Gray Zone: Dance Exhibitions and Audience Attention,” art historian and specialist in performance art Claire Bishop has therefore articulated the distinction between *visual art performance* (i.e., work created by visual artists) and *the performing arts* (i.e., work by those trained in theatre, dance, music).¹⁹ In this thesis, I opt to use the term ‘live artwork’ to refer to the case study. In my view, this term is more indicative for works that are neither necessarily presented as performance or visual artwork.

Existing literature that explores the body as archive, such as *The Sentient Archive* and *Transmission in Motion*, includes relevant observations regarding the archive, the performing archive and the body, but mainly focus on movement from the perspective of choreographed dance and artistic practices. The literature on how dancers come to embody movement knowledge, aids my understanding on how our bodies can function as archives, but with this research I wish to shift the focus to ordinary movements which are stored in the body as an archive we embody daily. *Museum Motus Mori* urges us to move away from the idea that movement in live art, only consists of choreographed dance movements. In this world that strives for perfection, ordinary human behaviour is neglected and overlooked. In writing about movement as exactly that which makes us human, I wish to validate the knowledge that is residing in our backs, knees and collarbones.

¹⁹ Claire Bishop, “Black Box, White Cube, Gray Zone: Dance Exhibitions and Audience Attention,” *The Drama Review* 62 (2018), 24.

Chapter 1 | The Logic of the Archive

*In the archive, flesh is given to be that what slips away. According to archive logic, flesh can house no memory of bone. In the archive, only bone speaks memory of flesh. Flesh is the blind spot.*²⁰

– Rebecca Schneider

The established western archival logic has determined the ways we approach knowledge and history. We collect, store and label in order to remember and to transfer knowledge. In prioritising the document as the primary medium through which we store past events, we ignore other ways of accessing history.²¹ When we approach performance not as that which disappears, but as something that can be preserved, we learn that remains do not have to be limited to the document or to the object. This discrepancy between performance and its archiving is not that performance disappears, but that it remains differently. Performance holds possibilities to enact ongoing histories and uncompleted events thereby memorizing history and leaving residue in the bodies who experience or witness the event. We remember through the body, which becomes an archive made up of flesh and bones. This idea that memory remains in the flesh, challenges conventional notions of the archive. Performance holds the possibility to break open the archive's authority over discourses and knowledge production.

How can the archive be understood not as fixed but as a flexible entity, just like performance? In creating an archive of human movement and memory, *Motus Mori* invites us to rethink archiving. To see the archive as a dynamic structure, requires us to tackle the logic of the archive. What is an archive? And how has the archive been conceived? To answer these prominent questions, I will first re-trace the archive and follow the lines of post-structuralist thinking by Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault who questioned the underlying assumptions and processes of archival structures and practices. This will help us understand the logic of the archive and lay the groundwork for chapter two which will discuss how the body itself can be regarded as an archive. The next section will look into the performative nature of the archive and aims to clarify our interpretation of archives as 'performing archives'. In order to understand *Museum Motus Mori's* position as a live artwork in relation to the archive, I will explore the relations and boundaries between live performance and the archive. How has the archive been rethought in relation to performance? In the final section of this chapter, I will

²⁰ Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 39.

²¹ Rebecca Schneider, "Performance Remains Again," 66.

explore Rebecca Schneider's argumentation to see performance as the art of remaining, instead of disappearance. In doing so, I aim to see how performance may function as a form of archiving and how we can regard the archive as a dynamic entity. Using the example of historical reenactment as an embodied live practice, I will demonstrate an alternative mode of preserving the past is possible.

1.1 Archival Logic and the Museum

The archive has long been an intrinsic part of western culture. We understand ourselves and our history through the material traces that remain, and that we accept and understand. We collect and store these remnants of the past to prevent things from disappearing and to resist transience.²² French historian Jacques Le Goff explores this Western cliché. He notes that history requires remains and has therefore been composed of original and tangible documents that give notice of the event since, in his words: "the document is what remains", According to the logic of the archive, what is given to the archive is that which is recognized as remaining, that which can be documented or has become a document in itself. In 1992, Le Goff wrote that the domain of the document has expanded and come to include "the spoken word, the image, and gesture."²³ Yet, the strong relationship between the archive and the document has remained intact.²⁴

Museum Motus Mori was born out of this desire to go beyond the document as the sole form of evidence of the past. The work is situated in a museum space, which can - rather crudely - be seen as a storage facility for documents. To understand *Museum Motus Mori's* position as a live work in the museum, it is imperative to understand the aspirations and preoccupations of the museum as an institute for producing knowledge, archiving and presentation. In *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* Eilean Hooper-Greenhill explains that the contemporary art museum is based on the nineteenth century European modernist museum. The museum created leading narratives through a range of collection-related disciplines such as art, natural history, geology, archaeology and ethnography. The modernist museum was structured in an encyclopaedic manner, intended to draw together a complete collection and to act as a universal archive.²⁵ The museum followed the archival logic

²² Rebecca Schneider reminds the reader that the collecting 'we' of this mode of history in which material remains, is not a universal one.

²³ Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), xvii.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (London/New York: 2000), 124.

of collecting, categorizing and preservation.²⁶ Even today, curatorial meanings of objects and artworks presented in contemporary museums, are still produced through museological processes of selection categorization and preservation. Hooper-Greenhill notes that through these museological processes, the “museum’s objectives, collecting policies, classification methods, display styles, artefactual groupings and textual frameworks come together in articulation.”²⁷ As the modernist museum, the contemporary museum’s aim is to enlighten and to educate its visitors. The information offered through the displays, is that of the academic discipline from which the collections are viewed. For example, in art galleries the paintings are grouped according to a theme or a period in order to materialise ‘art history’. So, the educational aim of the art museum is to transmit information about ‘art history’.²⁸ The museum, as an ‘architecture of access’,²⁹ presents us with physical aspects of historical objects and artefacts, books and glass displays. The museum places us in experiential relations to knowledge.

Western contemporary museum collections and their knowledge production are created through processes of decision making and selection which derive from the established western archive. In collecting, storing and archiving, the museum gradually becomes an authoritarian institution that holds power over the knowledge that is presented to the public and becomes part of the collective memory.³⁰ The museum as a place for preservation and presentation is deeply rooted in the logic of the archive, but differs in its ability to pick and choose what is shown.

1.2 Re-tracing the Archive

In recent decades many thinkers have investigated the workings and strategies of the archive. Jacques Derrida’s *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* and Michel Foucault’s *Archaeology of Knowledge* are the best known post-structuralist and critical studies that question the notion of the archive, its influential nature and functions within the realms of human knowledge and power. Their lines of reasoning indicate the ubiquity of the archive in theory and in culture in the last three decades.

²⁶ Ibid., 126.

²⁷ Ibid., 126.

²⁸ Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, “Changing Values in the Art Museum: Rethinking Communication and Learning,” in *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*, ed. Bettina Messias Carbonell (Malden MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 520.

²⁹ Schneider, “Performance Remains Again,” 74.

³⁰ This type of decision making is a subjective process, as it concerns a value judgement which is guided by what we in the west consider the ‘right’ manner of presenting and exhibiting.

The western established archive, and its culture, is based on European historical discourses.³¹ Therefore, it only makes it appropriate to European historical knowledge and traditions which descent from Greek antiquity. In *Archive Fever*, Jacques Derrida provides an etymology of 'archive', which derives from the Greek *arkhe* and holds a double and powerful meaning as the point or moment of origin: "where things commence," but also as the principle of commanding or ordering; "there where authority and social order are exercised."³² The word, therefore, directly refers to those who according to Michel Foucault were "considered to possess the right to make or to represent the law" and to uphold "the system of its enunciability."³³ The second word of Derrida's etymological research, *arkheion*, also has two meanings. Firstly, it refers to the physical residency of the Archon, being the head of state. Secondly, it refers to the official 'housable' documents that were stored inside such places. The term 'housable' refers to the acts of selecting, organising and interpreting the documents in relation to the law.³⁴ In his writings, Derrida states that this conflation of archive and power had escaped notice for centuries. The word 'archive' has retained the meaning of both site and its contents and has acted as the verb that constructs both. In addition, Derrida suggested that emerging technologies would undermine any traditional or fixed concept of the archive.³⁵ The inherent power relations that Derrida recognized in the archive, determine what becomes part of history but also how we deal with knowledge.

In the light of this research we should, therefore, be aware that what is included in the archive determines how and which discourses are created. In my further discussion of the archive, we should keep in mind that the ones with authority, either today's museum curators and archivists or the dancers in *Museum Motus Mori*, exert power and control over what is included in the archive and, in result, what discourses are created.

1.3 Performing the Archive

Archival practices of ordering, categorizing, selecting and creating knowledge through selection are processes that create or produce something. From the movement interviews with

³¹ For Michel Foucault, as cited by cultural theorist Stuart Hall, a 'discourse' is: "[A] group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment." Stuart Hall, ed., *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: The Open University/Sage Publications, 1997), 44.

³² Jacques Derrida, "Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression," trans. Eric Prenowitz, *Diacritics* 25, no. 2 (1995), 9.

³³ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 2.

³⁴ Derrida, "Archive Fever," 9.

³⁵ Derrida, "Archive Fever," 57.

visitors in *Museum Motus Mori*, the dancers extract and select movements that become part of the archive. In the creation of this archive, knowledge on these movements is produced. 'Creating', 'selecting' and 'producing' are terms that are performative by nature. Schneider notes that it is through these performative acts that history manifests itself and collective memories are produced.³⁶ To understand how any archive is created, it is essential to recognize that all archival practices are, thus, inherently performative. Helen Freshwater, a scholar specialised in theatre and performance notes that archives, consisting of historical documents, are always created out of a concern for what is yet to come and that they are maintained and protected with an eye to the future.³⁷ Certainly, preserved historical documents are always performative as they are the result of careful collection processes. French historian and cultural critic Michel de Certeau observed in *The Writing of History* that :

*In history everything begins with the gesture of setting aside, of putting together, of transforming certain classified objects into 'documents' [...] In reality it consists in producing such documents by dint of copying, transcribing, or photographing these objects, simultaneously changing their locus and their status.*³⁸

According to De Certeau, this gesture of setting aside and 'isolating' bodies, forms the 'collection' of documents that are, in the words of French sociologist Jean Baudrillard, placed in a 'marginal system'.³⁹ The historical documents and artefacts are exiled from their original sphere of use and instead become 'abstract' objects of knowledge. In the archive, these documents are then ordered according to discursive rules and become the remnants of history. Archives can be interpreted as 'performing archives', meaning they are the result of a process in which human beings create and manage archives. Moreover, this term refers to the manner in which archives influence the shaping of history and collective memory. In western European history, for example, oppressive white voices dominate the archive. By selecting only dominating narratives, other voices have been ruled out and a single sided historical narrative has been created. The manner in which histories are shaped is based on cartesian dualisms. In 1641 French philosopher René Descartes developed this concept which is the conceptual division of something into two distinct parts. Best known for his body-mind dualism, Descartes

³⁶ Schneider, "Performance Remains Again," 70.

³⁷ Helen Freshwater, "The Allure of the Archive," *Poetics Today*, vol. 24, no (2003), 755.

³⁸ Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 72-73.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

rejected any non-rational knowledge.⁴⁰ Ecofeminist⁴¹ Val Plumwood points out that the dualistic character of the western rationality demonstrates that society is based on a patriarchal value system that consists of a 'web' of various hierarchical juxtapositions, such as man-woman, culture-nature and reason-feeling.⁴² In western thought on the mind-body dualism, the mind is considered to be male and superior, whereas the body is considered to be feminine and subservient. In valuing the mind over body, the archival logic suppresses and overlooks the body, and thus the feminine, in the preservation of histories.

The knowledge and memories that are included in the archive give form to the thoughts and ideas in the discourses of a society. Performance and theatre scholars Laura Luise Schultze and Peter van der Meijden identify archives as sites where histories are not simply found, but also created through performative encounters with records.⁴³ In a way, this also occurs in *Museum Motus Mori* where dancers encounter the material which they collect from the participant's body and then perform in the exhibition.

1.4 Archiving Performance

Museum Motus Mori aims to archive human movement, which is considered to be ephemeral by nature. The question of how to archive movement has often been asked in the debate on the relation between the archive and performance (art). Moreover, it has often been asked in relation to the immateriality of performance: how can we document movement? How do we store performance? We can record performances and buy DVD's of live performances, but then we are dealing with the medium of film and the performance's liveness and presence are lost. In the performing arts, the issue of the materiality of remains and the issue of performance as documentable, and thus archivable, becomes complicated and imbricated with the live body. Many scholars have regarded performance as that what resists remains and, thus,

⁴⁰ René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy: with Selections from the Objection and Replies*, trans. John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 40.

⁴¹ Ecofeminism, also known as 'ecological feminism' is a term coined in 1974 by the French feminist Françoise d'Eaubonne. Ecofeminism is the theory and practice of examining and challenging the political, social, historical and epistemological relation between the domination of women and the exploitation of nature. Ecofeminists have developed critiques of the structures in western patriarchal culture that contribute to ongoing domination and oppression, not only women but of nondominant groups of humans, identified according to class, race, ethnicity, and other markers, and of nonhuman nature as well. Their critiques make visible how dualisms 'naturalise' hierarchies in western society. See also Karen Warren, *Ecological Feminism* (London/New York: Routledge, 1994).

⁴² Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 39-41.

⁴³ See Laura Luise Schultze, "The Archive Is Here and Now: Reframing Political Events as Theatre," in *Performing Archives/Archives of Performance*, eds. Gunhild Borggreen and Rune Gade (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2013) and Peter van der Meijden, "This Way Brown: The Archive-Present, Past, and Future," in *Performing Archives/Archives of Performance*, eds. Gunhild Borggreen and Rune Gade (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2013).

cannot be archived. In 1982, professor in performance studies Herbert Blau posited that performance is “always at the vanishing point” and summons us to watch the present pass away before our eyes.⁴⁴ Later, in 1985, Richard Schechner wrote:

*Performance originals disappear as fast as they are made. No notation, no reconstruction, no film or videotape recording can keep them. [...] One of the chief jobs challenging performance scholars is the making of a vocabulary and methodology that deal with performance in its immediacy and evanescence.*⁴⁵

The time-based nature of performance seems to be at odds with the archive's desire to label and store. It is in contrast with its desire for permanence. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Peggy Phelan, then assistant professor in the department of theatre and performance studies at New York University, extended Schechner's take on the un-documentable nature of performance and its ephemerality into a more general association of performance. Through its disappearance, performance is a medium of loss, death and mourning. In 1993 she famously declared that:

*Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations: once it does so it becomes something other than performance. [...] Performance [...] becomes itself through disappearance.*⁴⁶

Blau, Schechner and Phelan have argued that performance is not its own document and, therefore, does not remain.⁴⁷ When archiving performance, it is assumed that performance is dependent on the document in order to be properly stored.⁴⁸ Art historian Amelia Jones

⁴⁴ Herbert Blau, *Take Up The Bodies: Theater at the Vanishing Point* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 28.

⁴⁵ Richard Schechner, *Between Theatre and Anthropology* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago University Press, 1985), 50.

⁴⁶ Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 146.

⁴⁷ Even though these scholars insisted on the radical liveness of performance art, they themselves depended heavily, ironically enough, on second-hand documentations when developing their theories of presence and liveness as constitutive features of the artform.

⁴⁸ Performance scholar Philip Auslander argues in his essay “The Performativity of Performance Documentation,” that the act of documentation is essentially performative, since it is through documentation that a live performance is established as a work of art and circulates within the system of art and academic institutions. Therefore, more attention should be given to the performative gesture of documentation. How past events are documented, stored, classified and culturally organized,

accurately reminds us in her article “‘Presence’ in Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation,” that very few people have actually experienced or witnessed the famous performances in the ‘60s and ‘70s that are today considered landmarks of performance art.⁴⁹ We know these iconic works only through series of black-and-white photographs, videos and material residues, remains that are now exhibited as relics in art museums around the world. This is illustrative for the notion that performance (art) requires material traces in order to remain. The documentary materials are the remnants of the performance that occurred in the past. In result, the remaining materials which circulate within art institutions have become synonymous with the original performance.

What happens if we move past the idea that ephemeral practices do not remain? In the chapter “What if this were an archive? Abstraction, enactment and human implicatedness,” Maaïke Bleeker notes that one may argue that dance movements such as the plié, which are considered to be ephemeral, do not really disappear but persist in the embodied knowledge of both performer and perceiver.⁵⁰ How this movement persists in the body, will be further explored in chapter two, but it is relevant here to understand that there are different types of archives when it comes to performance. Referring to Diane Taylor’s *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, Bleeker writes that the movement of the plié is part of the repertoire that “persists in and through embodied practice and exists in the embodied knowledge” which generates this and other movements.⁵¹ In dance practices, the repertoire of a dance company consists of the choreographies they are able to perform. Knowing the repertoire is given in the practice of the company’s dancers who know how to execute the choreographies. This is also reflected in the practice of transmitting knowledge: how dancers learn the repertoire from one another, sometimes mediated through people who know the dances from the inside out, acting as guardians of the choreographer’s legacy. It is not the dances as fixed objects that are transmitted, but the knowing-how to (re)generate these dances in performance.

In *The Archive and the Repertoire*, Taylor distinguishes the archive and the repertoire as two different practices of knowledge transmission. The archive separates the source of knowledge from the knower, in time and space, and works across distance, over time and space. According to Taylor, the archive describes “a public building [...] a place where records are kept,” like “documents, maps, literary texts, letters, archaeological remains, bones, videos,

determines how knowledge is produced. Philip Auslander, “The Performativity of Performance Documentation,” *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, 84 vol. 28, no. 3 (2006), 3.

⁴⁹ Amelia Jones, “‘Presence’ in Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation,” *Art Journal* vol.56, no.4. (1997), 12.

⁵⁰ Maaïke Bleeker, “What if this were an archive?,” 202.

⁵¹ Ibid.

films, CDs, all those items supposedly resistant to change.”⁵² The public building where records are kept can be easily understood as the museum. The repertoire, on the other hand, requires presence and emphasizes the embodied practices that transmit knowledge. It needs participation in the production and reproduction of knowledge by being part of the transmission and enacting of that what is transmitted.⁵³ In result, the repertoire keeps and transforms choreographies of meaning. In the logic of the repertoire, the know-how to move is transmitted from person to person. The archive and the repertoire stand for different practices of knowledge transmission, but they are not mutually exclusive. They usually work in tandem and their relationship is not sequential.⁵⁴

It is in the logic of the archive, as Rebecca Schneider observes in her essay “Performance remains again,” that performance is so ‘in time’ that it cannot dwell in its material traces and therefore ‘disappears’.⁵⁵ By this, Schneider means that the gestures and movements in the performance as an ephemeral event, disappear as soon as they are performed. The objects as remains that are left on stage when the performance is over, give evidence of the event having taken place but the exact movements and gestures themselves have vanished and cannot be stored in the archive. But what if we accept Taylor’s notion that knowledge is transmitted not only through the records that are stored away in the storage rooms of the archive, but also through participating bodies in the enacting of the repertoire. Can we start to see the repertoire, in which knowledge on performance is transmitted between bodies, as a mode of archiving? To echo Schneider who poses that if we approach performance not as that which disappears, but as both the act of remaining, we are almost forced to admit that remains do not have to be limited to the document nor to the object. Schneider wonders if by “privileging an understanding of performance as a refusal to remain, do we ignore other ways of knowing?”⁵⁶ Are there, perhaps, other modes of remembering, that might be residing in the ways in which performance remains, but remains differently? This is exactly what *Museum Motus Mori* invites us to consider. *Museum Motus Mori* can be understood as a plea for the value of different, ‘non-archivable’ knowledge. The seemingly troubling relation between the archive and performance is not that performance disappears, but that it remains in other ways. Hence, performance and its performing bodies become a type of archive in which knowledge is transmitted and hosted by a collective memory, which is precisely what *Museum Motus Mori* addresses.

⁵² Diane Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 19.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Rebecca Schneider, “Performance Remains Again,” 66.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

1.5 Performance as a Mode of Archiving

In the logic of the archive, bones are the index of a flesh that once was. In *Museum Motus Mori*, the human body is used to archive information on the body and movement. How can the body keep memory alive? To further explore this, it is worth looking at the practice of historical reenactment, where memory and history are remembered through the participation of human bodies. This section is a crucial building-block for my argumentation to regard the archive as open and dynamic, rather than hermetic and static.

In *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment*, Schneider invites us to look at the example of historical battle reenactment. When Schneider attended the 1999 reenactment of the 1863 Battle for Culps Hill at Gettysburg, she interviewed Chuck Woodhead, a Desert Storm veteran, who had made the trip in 1999 from Georgia (US) to Gettysburg for the annual reenactment of the Battle at Gettysburg.⁵⁷ “The Civil War isn’t over, and that’s why we fight” was Woodhead’s answer to her interview question “Why fight?.” He told her that he reenacts the Civil War to keep it alive. “Because if we don’t,” he said, “it will disappear.” Schneider concluded that Woodhead lives by a rule opposite to the idea, which elaborately has been explored in the previous section, that live performance disappears. For Woodhead, the live performance of historical reenactment is the ideal mode for refusing to disappear. When an event is left to remain in the artifact and document alone, it vanishes. “Artifacts are dead objects,” he said. “You don’t get that feel.”⁵⁸ His phrase “The Civil War isn’t over, and that’s why we fight,”⁵⁹ suggests that historical events, such as wars, are never completed. Schneider says:

*They carry forth in embodied cycles of memory that do not delimit the remembered to the past. For many history reenactors, reenactments are more than ‘mere’ remembering but are in fact the ongoing event itself, negotiated through sometimes radically shifting affiliation with the past as the present.*⁶⁰

If the past is never completed, ‘remains’ might be understood not only as objects or documents, but also as the immaterial activities and movements of bodies that are engaged in that incomplete past. For example by carrying a replica nineteenth-century musket on a historic

⁵⁷ Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 39.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 32.

battlefield, crying to arms, taking position, or even standing witness. Old memories are reconstructed: adding to what is remembered and attaching memories to spaces and objects. This experience disrupts the present with the past, but also the past with the present by projecting memories onto today's landscape. Embedded with contemporary interests and feelings, such memories are always produced in the present. This is an essential observation in regard to *Museum Motus Mori*, where memories on human movement are projected onto new bodies in the present, which will in turn house information on these memories of the past. Woodhead's remarks illustrate that historical reenactment of war, as an uncompleted, ongoing event, is to be experienced, or 'felt', by those who reenact the event in the present. In remembering and participating in the event, both reenactors and witnesses take part in a phenomenological and affective reenactment of history. Events in themselves are documentary, as they leave residue within the mind and bodies of those who witnessed the encounter. Danish dramaturg and scholar in theatre and performance Solveig Gade strikingly notes that, in agreement with Schneider, we could say that within the context of such embodied performance practices, where information is transmitted from body-to-body, the body is temporarily turned into an *archive of the flesh*.⁶¹

Challenging the traditional opposition of the archive versus performance, Schneider refers to repeated practices of popular folk performances and addresses American author, poet and playwright Gertrude Stein's concept of 'syncopated time', which refers to the disjunction between the time experienced by the audience and the time of the play.⁶² Using this concept, Schneider proposes to consider the body as a type of archive and host to a reappearing collective memory. Furthermore, she says that the archive is "given to remain for potential future production," and that it is "a house of and for performative repetition, not stasis."⁶³ Gade points out that in Schneider's view the *arkheion*, as a place of residency which Derrida refers to, is not necessarily made of bricks and stones and bones. It does not house documents and objects any longer. Instead, Schneider opens up the possibility that the archive houses performative practices that are repeated over time.⁶⁴ Performance as a flexible and repetitive practice seems to challenge the established hegemony and political power, which Derrida ascribed to be inherently present in the archive.

It is in the logic of the archive that western modernity has come to cherish the document over the live event and human memory, causing other memories and histories to be lost. But in its

⁶¹ Solveig Gade, "Performing Histories: Archiving Practices of Rimini Protokoll and The Atlas Group," in *Performing Archives/Archives of Performance*, eds. Gunhild Borggreen and Rune Gade (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2013), 390.

⁶² Gertrude Stein, *Lectures in America* (New York: Random House, 1935), 94.

⁶³ Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 108.

⁶⁴ Gade, "Performing Histories," 390.

seemingly refusal to remain as object or document, performance inheres a political promise to rupture the archive's authority over discourses and the production of knowledge. It is, therefore, in the enactment of the repertoire and the transmission of knowledge between live bodies that we can start to understand the body as an alternative, equal to the document, dynamic archive for knowledge.

Chapter 2 | The Body as Archive

*The body never stops accumulating... every gesture, every word involves our past, present and future.*⁶⁵

– Trinh T. Minh-Ha

Taking up the idea that the body transmits knowledge and holds experiential residues, thus, becoming a fleshy archive, this chapter investigates *how* we can consider the body as archive. In explorations of human memory, it is presumed that memory is retained in different layers of the mind. But if we look past the assumption that we memorize only with our mind, we can see that the assumed capability of the mind to hold memory and knowledge is, in fact, intrinsically linked to the body. Through sensorimotor systems, the body allows us to perceive objects and abstract information and to experience the world. Through repetition and training, the body acquires knowledge which, then, becomes imprinted in the complex structures of the brain, the neuromuscular systems of the body and the behavioural movements generated at the intersections of its biology and culture. Therefore, knowledge that resides in the body is grounded in action and experience. Without deliberating, the body unconsciously performs or behaves accordingly to any situation because it has become habituated with the actions. The body like any archive, acquires, stores and reproduces its history.

Each human body inheres a 'map' of movement and behaviour, as the body acquires information on how to act within its environment. In *Museum Motus Mori*, the participant's movement map is transmitted and stored in the dancer's body. *Museum Motus Mori* demonstrates that the body is more than just flesh and bones. It can hold memories and transmit knowledge. But how does the body 'know' and remember? Which underlying processes are present in the transmission of movement knowledge and result in the body becoming, as proposed by Linda Caruso Haviland, a sentient archive?

When discussing the concept of 'knowledge' in relation to the body, it is relevant to note that there is a crucial difference between knowledge and cognition. This distinction can be best explained using the French words *connaissances* and *savoir* which both can be translated as 'knowledge' in English. Cognition is the result of a process in which one maintains knowledge (*connaissances*) while knowledge is a piece of information or a science (*savoir*).⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Women, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 122-123.

⁶⁶ Stuart Elden, *Mapping the Present. Heidegger, Foucault and the Project of a Spatial* (London/New York: Continuum, 2000), 98.

In order to gain a clear understanding of the manner in which the body knows and holds knowledge, this chapter is structured according to a three-step approach which I have developed to dissect the process of transmission, which functions as an umbrella term in this research. This three-step approach consists of three phases: storing, acquiring and retrieving. The first section will briefly explore Maaïke Bleeker's ideas on dance practice as an alternative mode of knowledge transmission. After which I will present the relation between this and the involvement of the body in *Museum Motus Mori*. The second section explores the phase of *storing* through theories of cognitive psychology, thereby demonstrating how our memory works and, thus, how we remember. The third part of this chapter, investigates how the body *acquires* knowledge on movement through repetition. In order to understand how knowledge becomes imprinted in the body, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's concept of 'embodied knowledge' will be investigated. The last section follows the phase of *retrieving* and aims to demonstrate how knowledge is manifested in the body. Thereby, I will argue that we should consider our lived past experiences as a type of intimate knowledge that leaves residue in the body and manifests themselves in our behaviour and motions.

2.1 Transmission

In the chapter "What If This Were an Archive?," Bleeker addresses archives and dance and discusses alternative approaches to knowledge transmission. She argues that "dance's resistance to fixation (...) inspires alternative approaches to knowledge transmission."⁶⁷ Bleeker considers dance as a practice of doing, thinking, and transmitting movement.⁶⁸ It is mediated and performed through the liveness of the body, justifying its inclusion in the mediums of transmission.

During the movement interviews in *Museum Motus Mori*, the dancers learn and acquire movements that are intrinsic and personal to each participant. Each human body inheres 'a repertoire of movements', as Heitmann calls it⁶⁹, which we can understand as a personal choreography of movement. This choreography concerns daily motions and behaviours, which will be further specified in the course of this thesis. The manner in which the participant's movement repertoire becomes part of that of the dancer's, is a similar process to how dancers learn scripted choreographies from each other when creating new performances. Transmitting movement from one body to another always requires committed learning and repetition.

⁶⁷ Bleeker, "What If This Were an Archive?," 202.

⁶⁸ Bleeker, introduction to *Transmission in Motion*, xviii.

⁶⁹ Katja Heitmann, Sander van der Schaaf and Valentijn Byvanck, eds., *Museum Motus Mori* (Maastricht: Marres House for Contemporary Culture, 2019), 11.

As transmission describes the whole process of moving information from one body to another, it is the key process in *Museum Motus Mori*. Using the three-step approach of storing, acquiring and retrieving, the following sections will explore how knowledge is transferred and deposited in the body, turning the body into an archive.

2.2 Memory and Storage

How does the body remember? Theories of cognitive psychology identify three main categories of memory that can be differentiated by the duration of retention and, thus, its capacity to remember. Sensory memory is short-lived: only some hundreds of milliseconds. Our sensory memory refers to very brief retention of auditory or visual impulses. Working memory (WM) appears as a temporary workspace in which material is active while being used. For example, in a performance context this includes mentally retaining a sequence of movements rapidly called out by a choreographer. Lastly, long-term memory (LTM) is long-lasting and has seemingly infinite capacity. Information is transferred from WM to LTM only after elaboration and repetition. The more deeply we process the material, the more likely it is to be retained in the LTM.⁷⁰ Contemporary thinking in the field of cognitive psychology, suggest that the WM is not a separate and distinct neural system, but draws on a temporary activation of, for example, movement material that is already stored in the LTM. In other words, the WM brings conscious awareness to the knowledge that already exists in a person's long-term memory, such as a particular movement vocabulary or the structure of a dance piece.⁷¹ Within LTM, theorists distinguish two types of memory, declarative memory and procedural memory. Declarative memory is the 'knowing that' and refers to semantic memory or concrete knowledge of events and facts.⁷² We can consciously use it whenever we want. On the other hand, procedural memory, is not available to conscious awareness. Procedural memory is the 'knowing how' and refers for example to our usual ways of moving and responding.

But how can all this function as an archive, how can our body remember?

⁷⁰ Catherine J. Stevens, "We Dance What We Remember: Memory in Perceiving and Performing Contemporary Dance," in *The Sentient Archive: Bodies, Performance, and Memory*, eds. Bill Bissel and Linda Caruso Haviland (Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2018), 90.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁷² Endel Tulving, "How Many Memory Systems Are There?," *American Psychologist* 40, no.4 (1985), 385-398.

2.3 The Body Acquires Knowledge

Understanding how the body functions as an archive, requires us to trace back Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology⁷³ and thinking on embodied knowledge, which is a type of knowledge where the body knows how to act. Merleau-Ponty regarded the body and the world to be interchangeably connected to each other as our bodies determine how we perceive the world around us. His 'phenomenology of embodiment' makes the physical being the site of the psyche. He demonstrates this with the example of riding a bicycle. Those who ride a bicycle simply know how to do this without going through all the procedures that are required to get the bicycle going; getting on the bike, placing your feet on the pedals, moving the legs up and down simultaneously while keeping balance, etc. When we were younger, we practised and repeated these steps until we managed to keep the bicycle going. The knowledge of riding the bicycle has become imprinted in our body.

In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty explains the notion of embodied knowledge using the example of knowing how to blindly touch type:

[T]o know how to touch type is not, then, to know the place of each letter among the keys, nor even to have acquired a conditioned reflex for each one, which is set in motion by the letter as it comes before our eye... It is knowledge in the hands, which is forthcoming only when bodily effort is made, and cannot be formulated in detachment from that effort.⁷⁴

What Merleau-Ponty described as 'knowledge by the hands' is a particular type of knowledge which is not explicit, conscious or articulated. When practiced it is, however, well known by the body or through the body. Knowing how to ride the bicycle and how to touch type, are manifestations of the knowledge that is stored in our bodies. Phenomenologically, this knowledge is lived by the hands or by the body. Merleau-Ponty also refers to this type of knowledge as 'knowledge bred of familiarity' (*savoir de familiarité*).⁷⁵ Such knowledge concerns movement which we have familiarized our bodies with over a longer period of time. Therefore, what we remember is the result of repeated practice. Once this knowledge is acquired and repeated, it becomes a body memory, also known as muscle memory. We can

⁷³ Phenomenology refers to the philosophical movement that concerns itself with the foundational role of perception plays our ways of understanding and engaging with the world.

⁷⁴ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 144.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

compare this with the process in which an athlete trains his body to excel on the running track or a dancer who learns a sequence of ballet steps through practicing. For people who are not trained athletes or professional dancers, like me, we can relate this example to more daily actions like riding the bicycle. Once you have learnt to do so, it is unlikely you will ever forget how to ride a bicycle.

In the article “The notion of embodied knowledge,” professor in phenomenology and psychology Shogo Tanaka explains that embodied knowledge is similar in concept to the procedural knowledge which is stored in the long term memory as seen in cognitive science and is contrasted with declarative or explicit knowledge.⁷⁶ Like embodied knowledge, procedural knowledge concerns the behaviours and modes of being in which knowledge is clearly invested in our bodies and is performed unconsciously. It is that which can only be acquired in the procedures of demonstration and practice.

The ‘knowing-how’ of procedural knowledge that resides in the body, is strongly related to Merleau-Ponty’s notion of the body schema (*le schéma corporel*). The body schema is determined by our perception and sensory-motor abilities according to which the body functions in the world. In psychology or neurology, the body schema is often explained as the visual image of the body, or the mind’s awareness of the body. Through the body schema, we know the spatial positions of our body parts and are we able to recognize our posture and movement.⁷⁷ Our awareness of our body parts is generated by how we perceive and relate to the world around us. For example, when we see a chair, we know that is meant to sit on. When we sit on the chair, we are aware of the waist, the hips, the legs, and their spatial connection to each other. The body schema coordinates these body parts into action and organizes the necessary behaviour for being seated on a chair. The body schema can be expanded with objects, as each body relates in a specific way to surrounding objects. People that are blind know the world through the white cane, which helps its owner navigate through the world. The body can skilfully respond to a situation which causes a direct association to be established.⁷⁸ As a pre-conscious system of bodily movement and spatial correspondences, the body schema also enables a reflexive kinaesthetic awareness of its own movements.⁷⁹ The body is a permanent part of one’s perceptual field. Even though one cannot experience all of it directly, the body has what Merleau-Ponty calls ‘double sensations’.⁸⁰ For example, as when one hand

⁷⁶ Shogo Tanaka, “The notion of embodied knowledge,” in: *Theoretical psychology: Global transformations and challenges*, eds. P. Stenner, J. Cromby, J. Motzkau, J. Yen and Y. Haosheng (Concord: Captus Press, 2011), 150.

⁷⁷ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 148.

⁷⁸ Tanaka, “The notion of embodied knowledge,” 154.

⁷⁹ Ted Toadvine, “Maurice Merleau-Ponty,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last modified 26 February 2019. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2019/entries/merleau-ponty/>.

⁸⁰ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 106.

touches another, one hand always takes the lead as the material manifestation while the other becomes the material object that is encountered.

Bleeker notes that according to Merleau-Ponty, “embodiment as encompassing both the body as lived, experiential structure, and as the milieu of cognitive mechanisms” is intertwined in how humans make sense of what they encounter.⁸¹ According to Bleeker, this is why we are capable of seeing a movement as a whole rather than a blur of diverse sensory impressions. To explain how we perceive the things around us, she then refers to *Action in Perception* by the American Philosopher Alva Noë, who gives the example of a rectangular box that we feel in the dark. Touching the surfaces of the box itself does not inform us about its rectangularity. To grasp the rectangularity of the box, requires one to grasp the relationship between one's various senses. The same goes for seeing objects and space around us: we do not only perceive the surfaces of objects directed towards us. We perceive three-dimensional objects. We do so because of our experience with the procedure, and thus our procedural knowledge, with how sensations co-vary with actual or possible movements.⁸² Because of our previous experiences, we are capable of grasping relations between sensations and this way our perception of objects, movements, and space becomes lived, or embodied.

How we perceive the world around us, contributes to our body schema. Together, this determines one's awareness of the body and how or why we perform a concrete action in response to the surroundings. We know our own body through actions. This is a tacit type of knowledge as we do not need to be aware of the internal processes that are required to perform a certain task or movement. Performer and lecturer in dance at the University of Bedfordshire Louise Douse notes that the dancer often does not ‘know how’ the individual movements become habitual. She relates this to the body schema and says:

*There is a dependence on the individual's knowledgeable body for its practical meaning. The body schema is thus an implicit procedural knowledge encoded in the body, and flow is tacitly anchored in bodily modes of action and reflection.*⁸³

⁸¹ Bleeker, “What if this were an archive?,” 200.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Louise Douse, “Flow in the Dancing Body: An Intersubjective Experience,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and Wellbeing*, eds. Vicky Karkou, Sue Oliver and Sophia Lycouris (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 278.

The more skilled and habituated the action is, the less aware we become of the manner in which our bodies perform the action.⁸⁴ The body schema is the result of practice and familiarization, and is therefore intrinsically linked to the way procedural knowledge is stored in the memory and enables our body to inherit an archive of habitual movement and action.

2.4 Retrieving Knowledge from the Body

For most ordinary, automatic or habitual behaviours, we do not consciously move or control our bodies. The circumstances induce the body to move accordingly and we simply move our bodies as the situation demands us to, although we do remain aware of our behavioural goals. Tanaka notes that: “There is a prereflective correspondence between body and situation and the body moves almost spontaneously, just following the affordances provided by the situation.”⁸⁵ We do not move the body, the body moves by itself because it knows how to act according to the situation. This may be because the situation requires us to perform the action of sitting on a chair or the situation that is perceived summons a habitual response. Noë gives the example of how we “spontaneously crane our necks, peer, squint, reach for our glasses, or draw near to get a better look.”⁸⁶ However, such seemingly insignificant motions are not a matter of reflex. The body often moves outside of awareness, but it does accordingly to our intention of behaviour.⁸⁷

In Merleau-Ponty's view, we are embodied beings, as opposed to Descartes who regarded the mind as the essence of a human beings, we are situated in this world and are always engaged in concrete activities: walking, sleeping, eating food, talking with others, riding a bicycle and so on. One woman explained in a movement interview that because of her epilepsy she, often without first realizing, walks in a fast and goal oriented way as she tries to steer clear of superfluous impression to prevent herself from experiencing epileptic episodes. We all behave and move in a personal manner as result of the conditioning of our bodies, either by our own inner worlds or through social conventions on how we ‘should’ behave or act. Hence, the knowledge we embody is not only concerned with motor skills and habitual actions, but also with perception of the environment, spatial behaviour, sense of self and nonverbal behaviour.⁸⁸ As I will show in chapter three, *Museum Motus Mori* demonstrates that this knowledge also includes behaviour and body movement induced by memories and experiences from the past. Memories leave traces, and manifest themselves in our behaviour,

⁸⁴ Tanaka, “The notion of embodied knowledge,” 154.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 153.

⁸⁶ Alva Noë, *Action in Perception* (Cambridge/Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2004), 1-2.

⁸⁷ Tanaka, “The notion of embodied knowledge,” 153.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 152.

motions or postures. Even though such intimate knowledge might not be visible to others, it is still present in the body. Memories become 'encoded' in the body memory and are retrieved when something in our surrounding triggers them. Linda Caruso Haviland notes that "prior experiences are retrievable, but never as static facts."⁸⁹ Actions are called up through our bodies which are dynamic and always evolving.

During the interview with Katja Heitmann, she refers to Marcel Proust's autobiographical novel *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* and explains how memories are triggered in the body. This novel contains one of the most iconic descriptions of memory that is recalled through external impulses.⁹⁰ Proust famously describes how vivid memories of his childhood are invoked after sipping a spoonful of tea mixed with soaked crumbs of a 'petite madeleine', a sweet buttery French cake, which his mother had once provided on a cold winter's day. He recalls this moment when visiting his invalid Aunt Léonie in her bedroom on Sunday mornings as she would offer him a madeleine soaked in tea:

I raised to my lips a spoonful of the tea in which I had soaked a morsel of the cake. No sooner had the warm liquid mixed with the crumbs touched my palate than a shudder ran through me and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary thing that was happening to me. An exquisite pleasure invaded my senses.⁹¹

This memory, seemingly invoked by tasting the same in tea-soaked madeleine, then brings forth a flow of memories from his childhood. Proust's description of how the sight and the sensation of the tea-soaked crumbs touching his tongue, illustrates how the retrieving of memory is induced by movement and perception. Our bodies inhere similar 'madeleine moments' but they may as well concern a stroke on the head or the touching of skin. According to Heitmann, such memories and movements stored in our body are all utterly personal and, therefore, the most intimate knowledge one possesses.⁹²

The flesh to become imprinted by memory and intimate knowledge is procedural and takes time. The idea that knowledge is transmitted and becomes imprinted in our bodies through repetition and action has been so often reiterated that it must have surely become

⁸⁹ Haviland, "Considering the Body as Archive," 1.

⁹⁰ This phenomenon is also known as involuntary memory. See also John Mace, ed., *Involuntary Memory* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 1-19.

⁹¹ Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, vol. 1, *Swann's Way: Within a Budding Grove*, trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (New York: Modern Library, 1992), 60.

⁹² This notion of intimate knowledge was reinforced by Heitmann when I presented my findings from this research to her in July 2020. Lotte Hofstraat, Interview with Katja Heitmann (Tilburg, 17 July 2020).

stuck in one's memory by now. We learn with our senses, through listening, smelling, tasting and touching. We gain knowledge from our surroundings and the people around us, who share their knowledge with us. This way we learn from dance choreographies and how to ride a bicycle. Still, how our bodies remember and understand movement is largely depended on the personal body schema and the affordances of the environment. Each individual's movement repertoire is unique because the knowledge that is transmitted always differs slightly from each other, simply because we each have different bodies of different shapes and sizes that are built in their own way with their own implications. To realize that each body inheres personal memories and movements, as intimate knowledge, is essential in the analysis of the case study. The effects of our inner world on our outward expressions and motions are significant for the human movement.

The three-step approach of storing, acquiring and retrieving presented in this chapter, functions as the foundation of how to understand the process of transmission and the body's working as an embodied archive for knowledge. If we recognize the body to be capable of transmitting and inhering knowledge, the body is to be understood as an essentially cognitive agent. With the acquired knowledge from chapter one and two, I propose that the body as *sentient archive* is composed of three types of archives. Firstly, the *performative archive*, as it is in the archival logic that archives are always created through performative processes of selection and power. Secondly, it consists of the *embodied archive*, since it is the body that functions as depository for knowledge and memory as they have become part of the body, mind and neuromuscular system. Lastly, the sentient archive is a *temporal archive*, by which I refer to the ephemerality of performance, movement and flesh.

The only certainty in life, being our ephemerality.

Chapter 3 | Museum Motus Mori : Analysis

*A choreography for belly fat, a dance of belly button and rib cage, the anatomy of a sigh...*⁹³

The cycle of transmission can be divided into smaller categories that are significant for archival processes. These categories of storing, acquiring and retrieving determine the dynamics of the transmission that takes place. This chapter will analyse how the bodies in *Museum Motus Mori* function as an archive for movement knowledge. To understand how the dancer's body acquires knowledge of movement during the interviews, I will refer to Merleau-Ponty's ideas on the body schema and procedural knowledge. Through examples and observations from the movement interviews and the exhibition, I will explore how intimate knowledge and body memory are manifested in our bodies. As *Museum Motus Mori* concerns a moving live artwork, we should take the ephemerality of both elements into account, but also be reminded of Rebecca Schneider's proposal that performance can remain, but differently.

How does *Museum Motus Mori* function as an archive that keeps past memories and movements alive in the present? Through the performative, embodied and temporal archive, I aim to clarify the workings of the body as a sentient archive. I will use these three types of archives to structure this chapter. I will first explore the work as a performative archive and explore the three phases of the work: the movement interview, the notation system and the exhibition. Based on the movement interviews and the movement language of the dancers, I will then discuss how the dancers' and the participants' bodies function as embodied, sentient archives. The last section will explore the work as a temporal archive, exploring the creation of the archive as a durational process in relation to the conventions of the museum space as a place for time and attention.

3.1 Performative Archive

Movement interview

Museum Motus Mori starts with the movement interview in which visitors can 'donate' movements. The interview between me and dancer Rebecca Collins took place on the ground floor. The two connecting exhibition spaces have turned into interview spaces where all the research is done. The spaces are grey and of minimalist design. They have a clinical

⁹³ "Katja Heitmann. *Museum Motus Mori*," E-Flux, last modified 13 September 2019, <https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/273486/katja-heitmannmuseum-motus-mori/>.

atmosphere. The white lightboxes produce a sharp, bright light. Grey cubes and bars functioning as seats, are placed in the otherwise empty space. The public is free to walk in and out as they please, to see the interview and archiving process in progress.

The interview is a combination of asking actual questions and attentive observation through which Collins researches the personal, habitual movements and gestures that are part of my 'movement repertoire'.⁹⁴ "How do you usually sit, stand, walk around? Do you cross your legs? What is your usual sleeping position?" Collins shares her observations during the interview. "I see your shoulders are quite held, one is slightly lower. You tend to draw one leg closer to your upper body when you sit." She also mimics my movements, the way I sit down on the ground, the way I stand when I'm in 'neutral'.

During the one hour long interview, the dancers observe and ask the donors about movements that are significant for their body and behaviour. The participant is often not aware of the manner in which the body moves as these are habitual actions. Fragments of earlier conversations have been recorded into an audio loop. Willem (69) used to play hockey and always hunched over when playing. Diny (71) takes the faces of her two sisters in her two hands as she greets them with a kiss. Orpheus (3) relaxes and falls asleep when his mother gently strokes his nose with her index finger. The movements are arbitrary, daily and sometimes even unconsciously performed. But they are very personal and a unique part of each individual human being.

It is during the interview that the transmission of knowledge on movement starts and movements become part of the archive. Collins acquires knowledge on my motions while observing them. She takes notes and mirrors the movement with her own body. She meticulously copies how I sit down, how I lift my shoulders and how I rub my thumbs against each other. She then tries to incorporate them into her own body. She consults and fact-checks if the movements are correctly performed. This fact-checking is an embodied practice. Repeating and rehearsing are embodied ways of repetition through which the body learns movement and remembers. In *Museum Motus Mori* repetition is crucial for processes of storing and acquiring since it enables the transmission of knowledge and the creation of the archive to occur. The movements may be arbitrary but they are selected, rehearsed and practiced before they become part of the archive. Both selecting and embodying are inherently performative processes. The movements that the dancers embody and then become part of the work and thus the archive, are carefully curated.

⁹⁴ Heitmann, Van der Schaaf and Byvanck, *Museum Motus Mori*, 11.

Documentation

Using scores, a specially designed notation system based on the anatomy of the moving human body, the dancers transfer their notes from the interview onto large, squared pieces of grey vinyl. Short notes and a notation system of stick-like figures indicate the specific motions and mannerisms of the person whom the movement belongs to: a hunched back, feet that are turned slightly inwards, a drifting gaze. The scores help the dancers in the process of learning, remembering and acquiring the donated movements. The continuously growing number of scores is stored and presented in a chamber that resembles a traditional, static archive. The floor is littered with dozens of grey squares that testify of the movements that have been donated to the archive. However, the notation system functions merely as a supporting aid. *Museum Motus Mori* is based on flesh, rather than documents as bones. The notation helps the dancers to remember and learn movements and is a means through which movements are preserved. The movement archive is not stored in this archive room. The grey vinyl squares merely testify to the event of the movement interview, preceding the scores as document. They show the intermediate stage of archiving movement and provides insight into the process of knowledge collection.

Movement exhibition

Based on the movement interview and scores, the dancers distillate and study the movements they find unique for each donor. In the upstairs exhibition, the performers translate and embody the personal movements into carefully composed choreographies (fig.1). The archive of endangered physical movements is stored in the dancer's own medium: the body itself. In presence of the visitors, the dancers move through the museum space wearing nothing but grey briefs. Their hair is spray painted grey and tightly held together in a bun. Heitmann often works with dancers who are very young and can perform what she looks for: being natural in uttermost concentration, not acting, no unnecessary movement, without finery and without intentions.⁹⁵ The dancers, or 'choreographic sculptures' as Heitmann calls them, are divided across four rooms.⁹⁶ They move slowly from pose to pose, from space to space. Each gesture is highlighted in meticulous, slow-motion detail to show the anatomy of the movement. A foot is set down one toe at a time. A dancer may take an hour to move from one room to the next. Even the eyes of the dancers become watery and red, from blinking extremely slowly. In the exhibition, bodies exhibit the movements they have received and collected during the

⁹⁵ "Katja Heitmann," Plan Brabant, accessed 14 August 2020, <http://plan-brabant.nl/makers/katja-heitmann/>.

⁹⁶ "Museum Motus Mori", Marres House for Contemporary Culture, accessed 15 August 2020, <https://marres.org/programmas/museum-motus-mori-2/>.

interviews over time. These motions and movements are here composed into 'kinetical portraits'.⁹⁷ Instead of painted or carved out in marble, these portraits are created through choreographies of movement that are stored in the dancer's body.



Fig.1. The Movement exhibition, *Museum Motus Mori*, photo: Hanneke Wetzer.

In her practice, Heitmann works closely together with Sander van der Schaaf, whose sound- and light designs add to the atmosphere in which the works move. Van der Schaaf created a continuing hypnotising soundscape which accompanies the choreographic sculptures and accentuates the intensity of the work.⁹⁸ The soundscape offers the spectators an emotional layer which contrasts with Heitmann's controlled movement language. The soundscape evokes a sense of calmness and supports the dancers in creating movement compositions. Simultaneously, the soundscape allows visitors to loose themselves in the sounds and to undergo the exhibition as a transcendental experience.⁹⁹ Visitors are invited to treat the space as a museum and closely look at the dancing bodies. But they are not static

⁹⁷ Katja Heitmann, "Motus Mori in Quarantine 3: Movement Interview," *Motus Mori* video, 11:00, 3 May 2020, <http://www.motusmori.com/>.

⁹⁸ Van der Schaaf created the soundscape using old snare instruments, for example the mandolin of Heitmann's deceased mother, which he electronically edited. Although barely recognizable, the soundscape contains parts of compositions by Johann Sebastian Bach but also philosopher and amateur composer Friedrich Nietzsche (*Das Fragment an sich*).

⁹⁹ Valentijn Byvanck, "Interview Katja Heitmann," in *Museum Motus Mori*, eds. Katja Heitmann, Sander van der Schaaf and Valentijn Byvanck, (Maastricht: Marres House for Contemporary Culture, 2019), 17.

sculptures. Every fold or crease in the skin is worth looking at. In the cycle of donation, notation and presentation, *Museum Motus Mori* presents the fragility of human movement.

3.2 Embodied Archive

Movement heritage

When learning movements in the movement interview, the dancer looks for the 'anatomical neutrality' in the participant's body.¹⁰⁰ This anatomical neutrality refers to the way the body is built which determines the neutral posture from which movements derive. It forms the base for the dancer to see how and why someone moves in a certain way. This anatomical neutrality relates to Merleau-Ponty's body schema which coordinates body parts into action. Dancer Wies Berkhout explains that adjusting to this neutral position, helps her to understand the participant's body and to see where movements are generated in the body.¹⁰¹ Where does the tilt of the head start? Being aware of the body's anatomical neutrality, enables an awareness of the position and movement language of the participant's body.

Participants are often not aware of the manner in which the body moves as these are habitual actions. Through our lives, people carry an incredible movement history with them. Gestures and motions from our childhood still reside in the body as it grows older. Our bodies are full with movement heritage which consists of immaterial, intimate knowledge that is stored in the body. During the interview with dancer Ornella Prieto, Francis (71) sits down, folds her hands together and lays them against her belly. She remembers how she used to pray as a child. She would put her hands together, her fingers intertwined and the palms pressed against each other. Concentrating deeply, she would lift her shoulders and either look down or up to God. The gesture of praying that she learnt as a child is still visible in the gestures and posture of her hands. Prieto understands that "someone's body is an archive of its own. And in this archive, years of knowledge is stored."¹⁰² Francis' praying hands demonstrate that memories are not only triggered by impulses from outside, as suggested in Proust's famous 'madeleine moment', when he eats the tea-soaked madeleine and remembers moments from his childhood. Instead, memories dwell in the body and can also be triggered through movement generated by the body itself. Memory is imprinted deeply in the mind, brain and body, and can be recalled in the moment of the movement.

In *Museum Motus Mori*, the dancer taps into a living, somatic archive. The body of the participant is a collection of memories and functions as an archive in itself since our corporeal

¹⁰⁰ Heitmann, "Motus Mori in Quarantine 3: Movement Interview."

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

system enables an archive of habitual movement. Information from the participant's archive is transmitted to the dancer who is the vehicle for external storage and retrieving. Simultaneously, the dancer's body has its own movement heritage. Heitmann notes that dancers in general often think that they are only an object. However, she keenly argues that:

It is not only Gertrude's hand that slides over the tabletop, but also the dancer's hand that rubs over the table. You are building a second archive within yourself.¹⁰³

Whereas in most performances the dancer is executing an existing choreography, she is here confronted with her own body and repertoire. She is not merely an object, but also subject. In the process of knowledge transmission between donator and dancer, the dancer's body becomes a double archive over time. Since acquiring movement knowledge is an embodied process that takes time, the body as a sentient archive is a conflation of both the embodied and temporal archive.

Learning other people's movement is an ongoing process which continues outside of the museum space. Berkhout recalls to lay in bed one night, finding herself lying in a sleeping position that belonged to someone she interviewed. "The studying of movement, continues at night", she says. "Then, I'm lying in bed and I think that I cannot turn around yet, I have to hold onto this movement."¹⁰⁴ The movements dwell in the dancer's body and are as present as her own movement heritage.

Movement language

In the choreographic sculptures in the exhibition, Heitmann zooms in on details of human motricity using a meticulously designed movement language to unravel it into patterns, sequences of structures, and seemingly eternal loops. The strategy of this language is based on two principles.¹⁰⁵ The first strategy is the use of a slow tempo which makes the motions that the movement is composed of literally visible. For example, the articulation of the arms is showed through slow and detailed movements of the fingers, thumbs, wrist, elbow, and shoulder. Enabling the hands to twist and grab something. The second strategy is the isolation and fragmentation of movement. Body parts are isolated and brought into motion. The hips are

¹⁰³ Hofstraat, Interview.

¹⁰⁴ Joost Goutziers, "Katja's museum van de imperfecte mens," *Brabants Dagblad*, 30 August 2019, <https://www.bd.nl/tilburg-e-o/katja-s-museum-van-de-imperfecte-mens~a82cb6a1/>.

¹⁰⁵ Katja Heitmann, "Motus Mori in Quarantine 2: Movement Interview," *Motus Mori* video, 15:55, 2 May 2020, <http://www.motusmori.com/>.

tilted, the leg lifted, driven across the space in a mechanical manner.¹⁰⁶ The concentration of the dancers is visible in their eyes. They are wide open and barely blink, causing them to become dry and forcing tears to roll down their cheeks. At times, the dancers appear to look you straight in the eye. But in reality, they focus on a specific spot to avoid the spectator's eyes. The red and watery eyes may suggest an underlying emotional meaning, yet this is not the case. The dancers' movements are only a mode of documenting movement which always depart from the body. There is not a deeper underlying emotional story to the performance, except for the stories of the thousands of movements.

While performing in the exhibition, the muscles in the dancers' bodies are constantly taut. Flesh folds, muscles tremble, sweat slides down chests and mucus drips from noses. The bodies are subject to greatest physical exertion and the intensity of the dancers' efforts is compelling. What does this say about the archive? In general, archives are always subjected to processes of change, pressure and growing. There is an ever prevailing tension present in the archive. The extreme endurance of the dancers hints at the efforts it takes to maintain archives.

Anatomical dissection of movement

In the movement language of *Museum Motus Mori*, every detail of the movement is articulated. These movements are each divided in quadruple time, also known as a four-four rhythm that can be recognized in the soundscape. This rhythm allows the dancers to reposition the fragments in time and in relation to one another. When the dancers are working with the movement materials in the exhibitions, they combine movements from different people and search for new connections. This to avoid similar and repeated sequences of the same people and movements. Heitmann asks the dancers to challenge themselves to create new movement cycles and choreographies. During the interview, she says: "You do notice which people combine beautifully with each other, Wolfgang and Ranti for example. The old man and the young child. Children are round and flexible. The old man wants to sit up straight, but he can't because his body has grown that way."¹⁰⁷ Through this process of 'indexing', as Heitmann calls it, new links are created.¹⁰⁸ As the dancers were working with the movement material, it turned out that different people share similar movements, or movements that can be easily connected. Heitmann says: "At first glance, you wouldn't relate the pregnant woman to the elder man. But because of the position of the belly and back, the person changes."¹⁰⁹ By only changing on

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Hofstraat, Interview.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

thing in the posture or body part, someone else's movements become visible in the dancer's body. Hans' continues into Albert who changes into Orpheus. This strategy is purely anatomical. Breaking down, and thus dissecting, movements in smaller parts shows the complexity of each human movement.

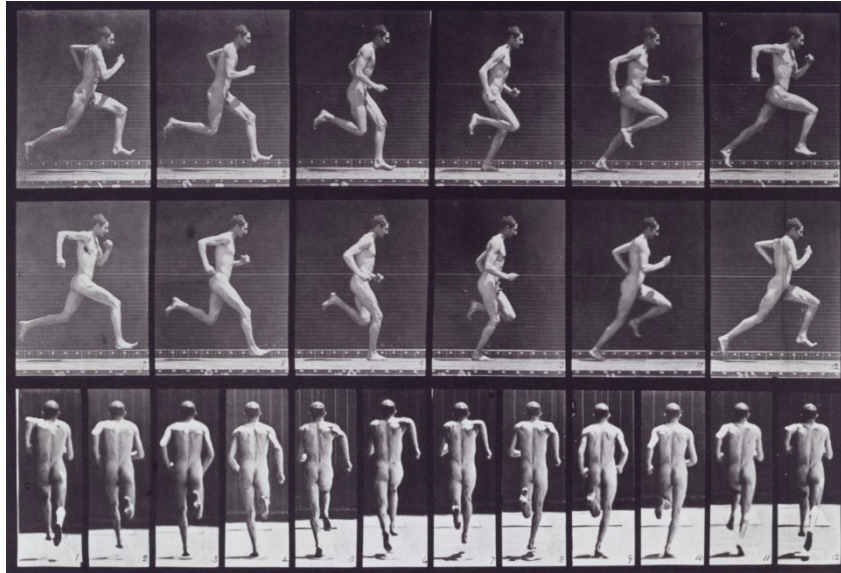


Fig. 2. Eadweard Muybridge, *Plate Number 62. Running at full speed*, 1887, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

This anatomical dissection of movement is a similar process to categorization in the archive. In the famous late nineteenth-century photographic experiments of Eadweard Muybridge, for example, movements are cut up in a succession of isolated moments fixed in time and space. Muybridge's photographs captured bodies in a succession of moments of one continuous movement, for example running (fig.2). The photographs illuminate the relative position of the various body parts at these fragmented moments. In the chapter "Martin, Massumi, and The Matrix," in *Anatomy Live: Performance and the Operating Theatre* Maaïke Bleeker writes that for Muybridge, the "freezing bodies in movement through photography was a means of analysing the relative position of body parts in successive stages of a particular movement."¹¹⁰ Bleeker uses Muybridge to illustrate that we think of movement as a sequence of positions, instead of movement as a whole. She says:

¹¹⁰ Maaïke Bleeker, "Martin, Massumi, and The Matrix," in *Anatomy Live: Performance and the Operating Theatre*, ed. Maaïke Bleeker (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), 156.

*Dissecting movement into discrete events, provides us with a means of imagining where each part of the body is at successive moments. Thus, the photographs suggest a particular understanding of what movement is. Movement here appears as change or transformation from one position to the next. [...] What we see is not movement, but positions, poses. Movement is what is not in each one of them.*¹¹¹

Dance choreographies are often learned through positions. The ballet dancer moves from the plie to the arabesque, but what do we call the moment in between? Regarding movements as a sequence of fragmentary motions, says something about our understanding of movement. It seems that in order to store, and thus archive movement in the body, it needs to be isolated and cut into smaller pieces. But according to Heitmann, this presents a paradox. “The moment that you preserve and make them static, it is not a movement anymore. In *Motus Mori*, the archive which resides in the body of the dancers, literally remains moving.”¹¹² The project *Motus Mori* is not about the dissection of isolated motions and different positions. Nor is it about the ‘outcome’ of our movements. As the projects evolves, Heitmann has come to wonder what is in between these positions which we, when combined, call movement. *Motus Mori* does not seek to answer what movement is. Instead, movement itself is the outcome. Heitmann says: “You don’t want [the archive] to become static, therefore, you don’t want an answer [...] but if we frame [movement], we do understand it better.”¹¹³ Indexing and anatomical dissection are primarily means to archive movement in the dancing bodies. But as they keep moving, the archive is maintained dynamic.

3.3 Temporal Archive

Double archives of embodied memory

The archive for movement in Marres is created over a longer period of time. For movement knowledge to become part of the dancers procedural knowledge takes time as repetition and rehearsal are needed. Both are embodied, but also temporal actions. The temporal archive does not only manifest itself in the dancers’ bodies but in the participant’s bodies as well. Willem’s arched back and Francis’ praying hands testify of knowledge that has been residing in their bodies for years. The collection of motions and movements in our bodies has been

¹¹¹ Ibid., 153.

¹¹² Mirjam Raaphorst, “Museum van uitstervende lichamelijke beweging,” *IP vakblad voor informatieprofessionals*, September 2019, 23-24 <https://informatieprofessionals.nl/resources/uploads/2019/12/IP2019-nummer-9.pdf>.

¹¹³ Hofstraat, Interview.

accumulated over years and is constantly growing and developing. Our movement heritage consists of a lifetime of knowledge as we carry information in our bodies from our childhood until our death.

In *Museum Motus Mori*, there is a third embodied archive in addition to the knowing bodies of the donators and dancers: the body of the spectator. In the upstairs exhibition, information on the donated movements is retrieved and shared with the spectating bodies. The performer transmits a sensory experience that consists of information on someone's movement heritage. *New York Times* critic John Martin argues that the viewer, on witnessing the dancing body, feels equivalent kinaesthetic sensations.¹¹⁴ This process, which he calls 'inner mimicry', is grounded in a fundamental physical reactivity: we pucker when we witness someone eating a lemon. We feel similar impulses when they yawn or cry.¹¹⁵ Choreographer and scholar Susan Leigh Foster argues that: "The dancing body's 'contagion' can impel our bodies [...] to mimic its movement, and, as a result, feel its feelings."¹¹⁶ In *Museum Motus Mori*, the viewer witnesses the tension, endurance and pain in the moving bodies. Although the spectators are not practicing the movements themselves, they are influenced by the dancers' impulses. By being present, a small piece of Francis, Willem, Diny, Orpheus and the dancers' movements are transmitted into the spectator's body and memory. This third archive is less profoundly embodied since it did not involve any deliberate practice. Therefore, it is less likely that the information will be properly stored in the long-term memory. Since this third archive came into being due to the spectator's presence, it is dependent on the time the spectator has spent observing the dancers. The visitors take their double archives with them which will then exist beyond the walls of the museum, as long as they continue to remember.

Embodied knowledge and ephemerality

In wishing to preserve movement through live performance, as the art of death, loss and mourning, *Museum Motus Mori* seems to present a paradox. Through the preservation of endangered movement, it aims to keep memories alive. These memories and movements are kept alive in the body of the dancer. In the sense that knowledge is transmitted from body to body and movements are repeated, *Museum Motus Mori* can be compared to practices of

¹¹⁴ The sensory experience provided by corporeal elements is often referred to as the kinesthetic sense, For more, see Susan Leigh Foster, "Movement's contagion: the kinesthetic impact of performance," in *The Cambridge Companion to Performance Studies*, ed. Tracey C. Davis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

¹¹⁵ John Martin, *Introduction to the Dance* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1939), 47.

¹¹⁶ Susan Leigh Foster, "Movement's contagion: the kinesthetic impact of performance," 57.

historical reenactment as explored in the first chapter. In both practices, memories are attached to new bodies and projected onto new contexts. Movements, like past events, are kept alive through repetition and enactment. It is in the re-appearance or 'reparticipation', as Schneider calls it, that movements do not disappear but remain in the body of the dancer.¹¹⁷ The architectural structures of Marres and *Museum Motus Mori*, as an archive in the sense of the Greek word *arkheion*, house bodies that in turn house performative and repetitive embodied practices. Simultaneously, the exhibition itself is another example of 'that what remains' as it offers re-appearance of movements to every visitor and provides the context for memories and movements to become attached to new bodies.

How sustainable is the archive for movement? The body of the dancer is ephemeral. At a certain moment, the dancers will pass away and then the movements will disappear. How do we preserve the archive? According to Heitmann, this a question that is also applicable to libraries and archive institutions: paper, photographs and digital data also have a limited life span. Preserving objects and information in a sustainable way is a challenge. However, Heitmann sees an important difference between a physical archive and a movement archive. "Paper, photographs, etc., are a representation of the human. The body is the human. Therefore, it is an honest archive that is ephemeral and subjective."¹¹⁸ With 'subjective' Heitmann means that not all movements in the archive are preserved exactly as they have been donated. Sometimes, movements slightly change over time as they have become more familiar to the dancer. This does not mean that they are completely different movements as their core is still present. Rather, it is comparable to how oral histories are passed on from generation to generation in which stories change over time. According to archivists, "you lose a lot of history" through such body to body transmission.¹¹⁹ But *Museum Motus Mori* demonstrates that it is through the body that knowledge on movement can be transmitted and remembered. To say that 'a lot of history is lost', would be unjustified. In the object based archive certain histories are always lost, because in the process of selection, not all memories and histories are included.

During the museum's opening hours, the dancers work to keep the archive alive. Even on quiet days, when there are no visitors, the dancers are moving. They do not dance for the audience and the applause, but for the sake of the archive. The museum is a temporary institute where movement is constantly being archived and where this process is shared with the public. To present a live work for six weeks in a row, is a unique opportunity. Visitors are invited to treat the space with performing bodies as a museum. They can sit or move wherever

¹¹⁷ Schneider, "Performance Remains Again," 71.

¹¹⁸ Raaphorst, "Museum van uitstervende lichamelijke beweging," 24.

¹¹⁹ A comment made at the panel 'Documentation in the Absence of Text' during the conference 'Performance and Text: Thinking and Doing', Department of Theatre Arts, Columbia University, New York, 2-4 May 1997. See also Schneider, "Performance Remains Again," 67.

they want and spent as much time in the museum as they wish. This is impossible in the theatre as it expects audience to remain seated in the dark for a predetermined amount of time. The exhibition offers the spectator more time to experience the work and its process than a performance, being often a finished product, would. The freedom of the museum allows spectators to really 'zoom in' onto the detailed motions of the moving bodies. As was noted in the introduction of this research, this evokes the feeling that time slips away. For the dancers, the long-term residency in Maastricht and working in the same space for multiple weeks aided the dancers as they had less distractions and could connect to the work on a deeper level.

In Heitmann's nomadic practice, the search for new modes of presentation is as important as the movement research itself. The duration of the project, the publicly accessible working process, the layered role of the visitors and the dancers: all these elements resulted in the 'nomadic institute for movement heritage' with Heitmann and the dancers as 'movement curators'.¹²⁰ But Heitmann realizes that their ambition to preserve movement will not be realised, because movement is not static by definition.¹²¹ Nevertheless, *Museum Motus Mori* is a plea for the pure, fragile human body. It does not aim to achieve an archive for the eternal preservation of endangered movement. Rather, it is a conceptual proposal which invites us to re-think the manner in which we preserve and store intimate knowledge and to regard the archive as dynamic and in constant motion.

¹²⁰ Francine van der Wiel, "Katja Heitmann: haar werk is pleidooi voor het pure lichaam," *NRC*, 8 January 2020, <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2020/01/08/katja-heitmann-haar-werk-is-pleidooi-voor-het-pure-lichaam-a3986082>.

¹²¹ Heitmann, Van der Schaaf and Byvanck, *Museum Motus Mori*, 17.

Conclusion

Towards the beginning of this research I was particularly inspired by *Museum Motus Mori's* proposal that each body inheres an archive of unique movements which are a testimony to the experiences one has endured during a lifetime. *Museum Motus Mori* confirmed a feeling that our bodies know more than we think they do. When I began to explore how we can see the body as something that is capable of holding knowledge, I rapidly landed upon the concept of embodied knowledge. Excited by the discovery and curious to explore it further, I soon realised that this topic was already well discussed in performance and dance theory. But I felt that *Museum Motus Mori's* proposal to archive ordinary human movement was different from other dance practices in relation to embodied knowledge. Linda Caruso Haviland's invitation to regard the body as 'a sentient archive' resonated with me and linked to the archive of moving bodies in *Museum Motus Mori*. I was encouraged by my professors to follow this instinct, but to move beyond my own personal fascination, eventually leading to what would become my thesis topic. At first, the archive and the body seemed to be two separate entities, but as my explorations continued their relation became more apparent and I discovered that they are in fact inextricably linked.

Many of the questions, innovations, thought approaches this research explores, I came across in the thought process of writing this research. Part of the issues and difficulties, I discovered in the hurdles of the research. Because the body and archive are so often discussed in relation to each other, I fell into the trap of losing the main focus of the thesis and realised that numerous things can be said about the archive and the body. Another trap I found myself falling into was that in writing about selection processes and dominating histories in the archive, I overlooked the dualistic approach that is still prevailing in western society. I realised that in valuing the document as that which can be preserved and the body as what disappears, we still hold onto a patriarchal value system that is based on hierarchical juxtapositions. Therefore, I combined the theory on performing archives in chapter one with ecofeminist theory to demonstrate that dualisms are inherently present in discourses and archival thinking. Recognizing this, opens up the possibility to break with such dualisms and to regard the body as a knowing agent.

In chapter one and two, I explored the archive and the body in relation to the research question: how can the body function as an archive for knowledge in contemporary live art in the museum context? In archival logic, the archive describes a public building where records are kept and where the source of knowledge is separated from the knower. From a performance perspective the repertoire, as a type of archive, requires presence and produces or transmits knowledge. The body stores, acquires and retrieves knowledge within and from

the repertoire. The bodies repertoire allows us to consider the body as a knowing body: a sentient archive. Because this archive involves embodied knowledge, we are dealing with a conflation of Schneider's archive, including embodied practices, and the repertoire. Through the analysis of *Museum Motus Mori*, Chapter three illustrates that the sentient archive manifests itself in the performative, embodied and temporal archive. To acquire and to maintain knowledge requires time and embodied practice. Through action and repetition, knowledge from the spectator's archive is transmitted into the dancer's archive and included in the movement archive. A third archive arises as the dancers transmit a sensory experience, which contains information on someone's movement, onto the witnessing bodies. To acquire and store knowledge, first and foremost, requires presence. Rather than a static repository, I argue that the body is an archive in motion that produces and stores knowledge. As embodied knowledge is personal and unique for each human being and in constant motion, I view the body as a dynamic, sentient archive for intimate knowledge.

Museum Motus Mori is a conceptual proposal to open the thinking on the preservation of knowledge. In its attempt to preserve movement, it invites us to regard the archive as dynamic while movements can only be preserved as long as they are kept in motion. When movements are fixed in place in time, they become static and can no longer be called movements. At the start of this research, I was intrigued by the preservation of movement as I envisioned this to present a paradox. Instead, I came to realize that my writing about movement and seeing *Museum Motus Mori* as an outcome of movements is the greatest paradox of all. Movement is the outcome. This thesis is the result of a process, which it only partially shows. It excludes my moving fingers across the keyboard, typing and erasing sections, the doubt and, most importantly, the movement. Ironically, this document is more appropriate to the logic of the static archive than the archive it argues for.

At the start of this research, I asked what possibilities the museum has to offer to choreographers and artists. Being a live artwork that is presented in the context of a museum, *Museum Motus Mori* has freed itself from the conventions and restricted duration of theatre. The visitors can spend as much time inside as they wish and are free in the manner in which they treat the space. Of course, when the opening and closing times of the museum are taken into consideration, the museum is only accessible at determined times. But these are much more flexible. The codes of the museum determine how the audience perceives and relates to the work. The museum has its own pace in which the tempo is slower and visitors can choose their own path, direction and order of succession. They have the ability to choose if they sit, stand or walk and how fast or slow they move through the space. They can move closer or distance themselves from the work, creating more dimensions and perspectives of looking at the work. The museum provides an invitation for dialogue between the spectator and the work. But what we encounter in the museum, has been carefully curated. The above described

opportunities are similar to the conventions we encounter in the archive, in the sense of the *arkheion*, where we are also confronted with objects and documents that are subject to selection processes. Perhaps, the museum offers insight in how we manage and relate to the archive. In both contexts, our bodies, as archives in themselves, determine how we relate and interact with what we encounter

In order to develop this research I propose to continue to follow how *Motus Mori Institute* and the movement archive will develop in the upcoming years. During the first part of the project, it has already transitioned from one-person portraits to portraits that include multiple people. As a result, the movement archive will increase and expand. The focus has shifted from one's individual characteristics to relational movements, family patterns and movement that concerns intimacy between people. This will add an extra dimension to the humanness which *Motus Mori* aims to preserve and will deepen the meaning of the project. In addition, Heitmann started to experiment with the location where the movement interviews are held during a residency in Dusseldorf in July 2020. She and the dancers visited people in their homes and explored how their bodies had adjusted to their living conditions. The movement archive will continue to grow and expand with new knowledge that is already dwelling in our bodies.

Our bodies carry, guide and move us throughout our lives. The body speaks of what it has seen. It is for us to listen, and to remember.

[15,468 words]

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Figure 1. The Movement exhibition. *Museum Motus Mori*. Photo: Hanneke Wetzer. Accessed 17 August 2020. <https://marres.org/programmas/museum-motus-mori-2/>.

Figure 2. Muybride, Eadweard. *Plate Number 62. Running at full speed*. 1887. Photo: National Gallery of Art, Washington. Accessed 17 August 2020. <https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.166565.html>.