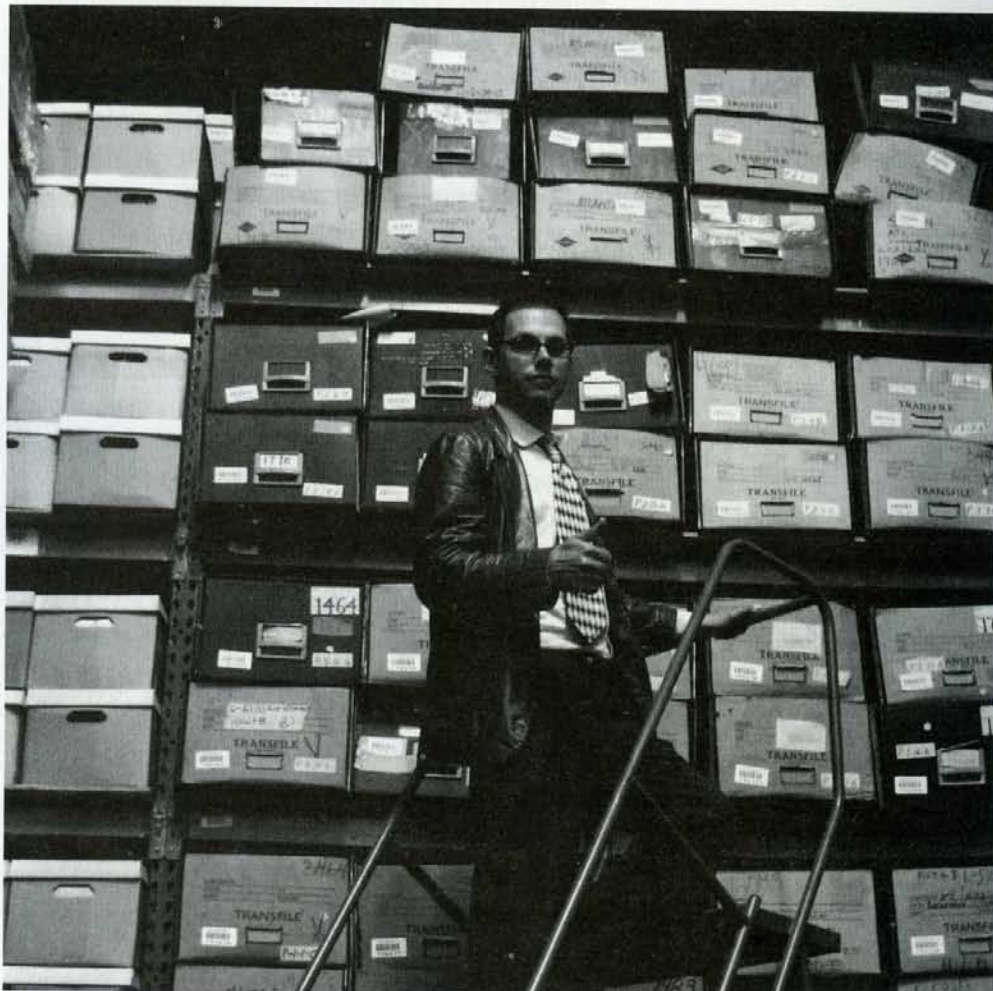
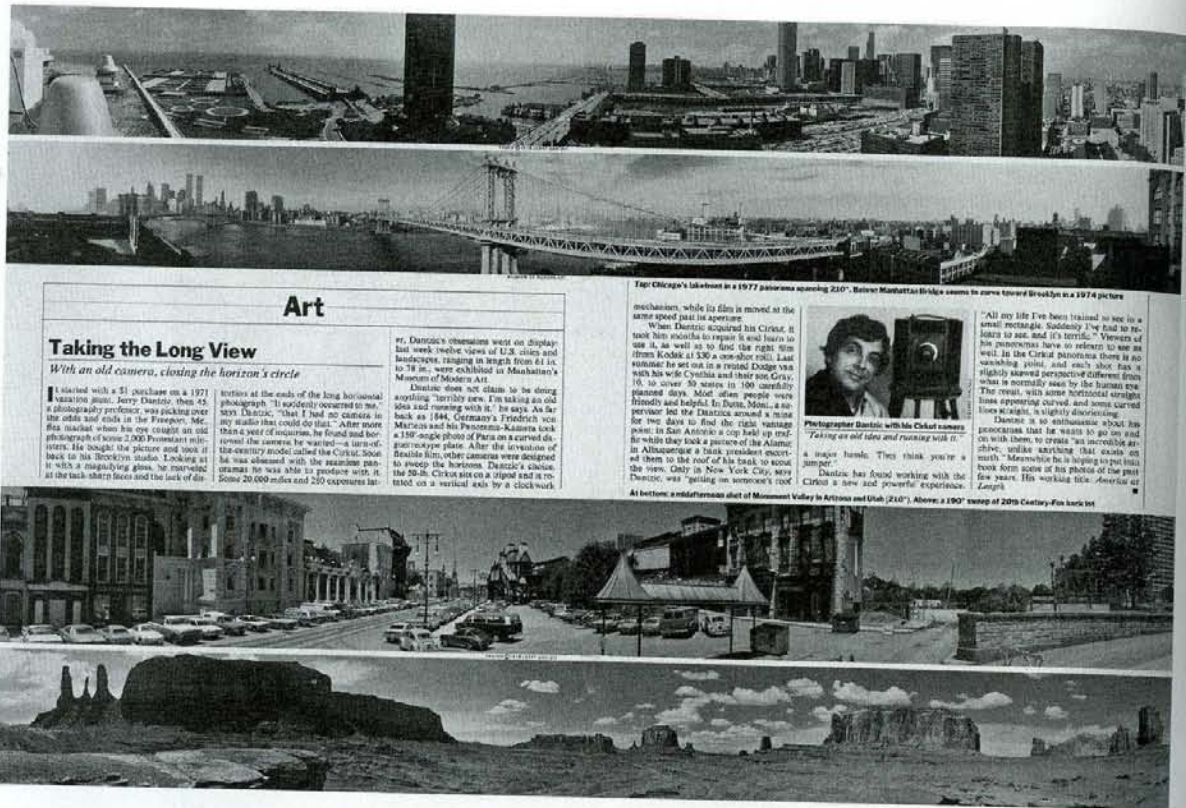


Grayson Dantzic

Archiving as a Metaphor for Life: A Slideshow

As far back as I can remember, I've been collecting and preserving the past, and always felt a connection to photographs. They provide a flood of memories and connective emotions that direct and shape our lives, pushing us onward, ever forward. They remind us of what has been and allow us to simultaneously compare that with the present (provided we take special care to protect it for the future).





Art

Taking the Long View

With an old camera, closing the horizon's circle

It started with a \$1 purchase on a 1971 auction post. Jerry Dantzig, then 45, a photography professor, was picking over the odds and ends in the Freeport, Me., flea market when his eye caught an old photograph of some 2,000 Protestant missionaries. He bought the picture and took it back to his Brooklyn studio. Looking at it with a magnifying glass, he marveled at the back-sharp focus and the lack of dis-

tortions at the ends of the long horizontal photograph. "It suddenly occurred to me," says Dantzig, "that I had no camera in my studio that could do that." After more than a year of scouring, he found and borrowed the camera he wanted—a curved, late-century model called the Cirkut. Soon he was obsessed with the panoramic photographs he was able to produce with it. Some 20,000 miles and 200 exposures lat-

er, Dantzig's obsessions went on display last week: twelve views of U.S. cities and landscapes, ranging in length from 41 in. to 78 in., were exhibited in Manhattan's Museum of Modern Art.

Dantzig does not claim to be doing anything "harshly new. I'm taking an old idea and running with it," he says. As far back as 1844, Germany's Friedrich von Martius and his Prussian-Kaiserin took a 150°-angle photo of Paris on a curved daguer-type plate. After the invention of flexible film, other cameras were designed to sweep the horizon. Dantzig's choice, the 50-lb. Cirkut sits on a tripod and is rotated on a vertical axis by a clockwork

mechanism, while its film is moved at the same speed past its aperture.

When Dantzig acquired his Cirkut, it took him months to repair it and learn to use it, as well as to find the right film (from Kodak at \$30 a one-shot roll). Last summer he set out in a rented Dodge with his wife Cynthia and their son Gray, 18, to silver 35 meters (100 carefully planned days. Most often people were friendly and helpful. In Paris, Moni, a supervisor for the Dantziges, showed a movie for two days to find the right vantage point. In San Antonio, a cop took up residence at the Dantziges' house for a week. In Albuquerque a bank president escorted them to the roof of his bank to shoot the view. Only in New York City, says Dantzig, was "going on someone's roof



Photographer Dantzig with his Cirkut camera

"Taking an old idea and running with it."

a major hurdle. They think you're a jumper."

Dantzig has found working with the Cirkut a new and powerful experience.

"All my life I've been trained to see in a small rectangle. Suddenly I've had to retrain to see, and it's terrific." Viewers of his panoramas have no reason to see as well. In the Cirkut panoramas there is no vanishing point, and each shot has a slightly skewed perspective different from the next, which is normally seen by the human eye. The result, with some horizontal straight lines appearing curved, and some curved lines appearing straight, is slightly disorienting.

Dantzig is so enthusiastic about his panoramas that he wants to go on and on with them, to create "an incredible archive, unlike anything that exists on earth." Meanwhile he is hoping to put into book form some of his photos of the past few years. His working title: *America as I Long*.

At bottom: a mid-afternoon shot of Monument Valley in Arizona and Utah (210°). Above: a 190° sweep of 20th Century-Fox hotel in

The fourth slide is one of my father's career highspots, as it is a double page spread from the 28.05.1978 issue of Time Magazine. This story was published in conjunction with his major one-person show at MoMA, at that time in New York called "Jerry Dantzig and the Cirkut Camera." My father won many grants, including two Guggenheim Fellowships and an NEA Fellowship, and as a child I'd spent most of my summers travelling in a van with my parents, photographing every state in the USA. I always remembered this clipping, and when I was living in California in the early 1990s, I bought a copy at a bookstore and it reminded me of the importance of that moment in our lives. I love periodicals!



My fifth slide is of my parents, Cynthia and Jerry Dantzic, me and Christopher Hunt, the director of the Adelaide Festival of the Arts in Australia, taken during the summer of 1979. My father had been hired on commission to create some of his large color panoramic photographs of Australia. Mr. Hunt had been introduced to my father's work the previous year at the MoMA show, curated by John Szarkowski. Note my fingers only on the edge of the image, ever-archival-ly conscious.

These vignettes are among those that became the epiphanies that shaped my life and gave me the direction to become an archivist. And in 1999, when it became apparent that my father's health was getting worse, I quit my job at the Plaza Hotel and dedicated myself to becoming his archivist. After all those years, I was finally allowed to look through his studio.

It was around this time that I started making contacts in the photographic community, and Mary Engel was among those who I consider to be one of my archival "gurus." The daughter of two celebrated artists, I immediately connected to her, and we'd have talks about preservation, galleries and prints. I was also a friend of Morris Engel, her father. We were members of the PAI Photography club that met at the National Arts Club once a month for lunch and a lecture.

Within a few years, our discussions became more focused about archives and our need to connect and collect all of our resources, together with our similar friends with other archives. It was out of this apparent and obvious wealth of materials and excitement that the American Photography Archives Group was born.

There were many important questions to address at the start our meetings with regard to individual archives, such as organization, preservation and rehousing. Conversations between members were meticulous about which recommended archival boxes, mylar sleeves and gloves to use. In addition and in technical terms, how to establish databases, and the initial cataloguing of archival materials.

Further APAG topics ranged from numerous copyright issues to reprints, editions of prints, and gelatin-silver prints vs. digital printing. To ensure the longevity and maintenance of an archive is such a huge undertaking, one that requires a time commitment as well as finances. Integrity is essential to the core of such a task. APAG was formed to support its members and make their work more of a shared experience. With the best of intentions... archives are truly "labors of love."

I've selected five images from a selection of APAG photographers, just to give a glimpse of the type of work that it represents.

I returned to school in 2006, and received my MLS in Archives & Records Management from the Palmer School of Library and Information Science on the very day of my father's funeral. Within a few weeks, I was working at the Atlantic Records Archives, and feeling all too connected to the fact that the president Ahmet Ertegun had died on the same day as my dad (14.12.2006).

I've been working at Atlantic for the almost 5 years now, and last year there was a major article in the *New York Times* about the Warner Music company's archival initiative. I feel very blessed to have my job and be the preservationist for this great legacy of American Musical History. Archiving has been the metaphor for my life, in that by finding my father's past, I was able to find my future.

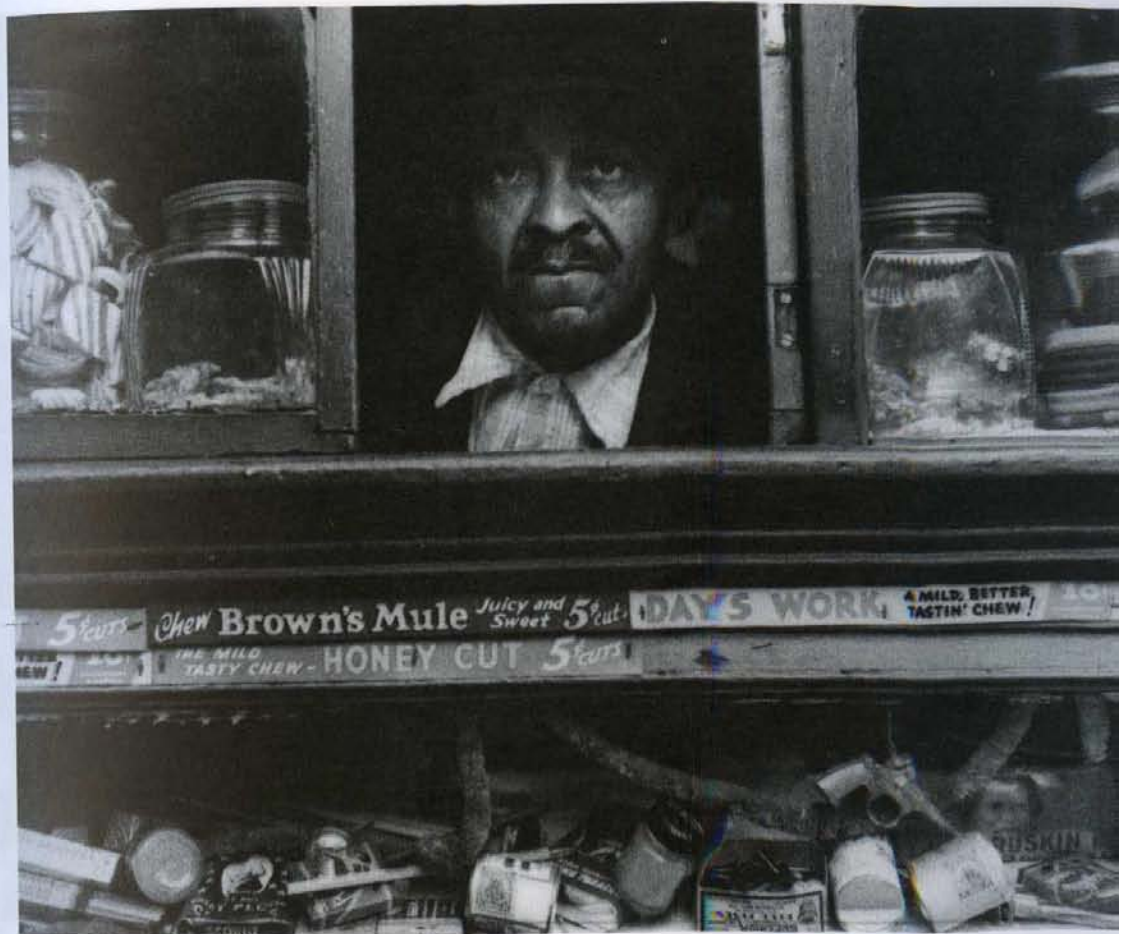




Johnny Ray Fans, New York City, 1950s; photograph by Esther Bubley; © The Estate of Esther Bubley.

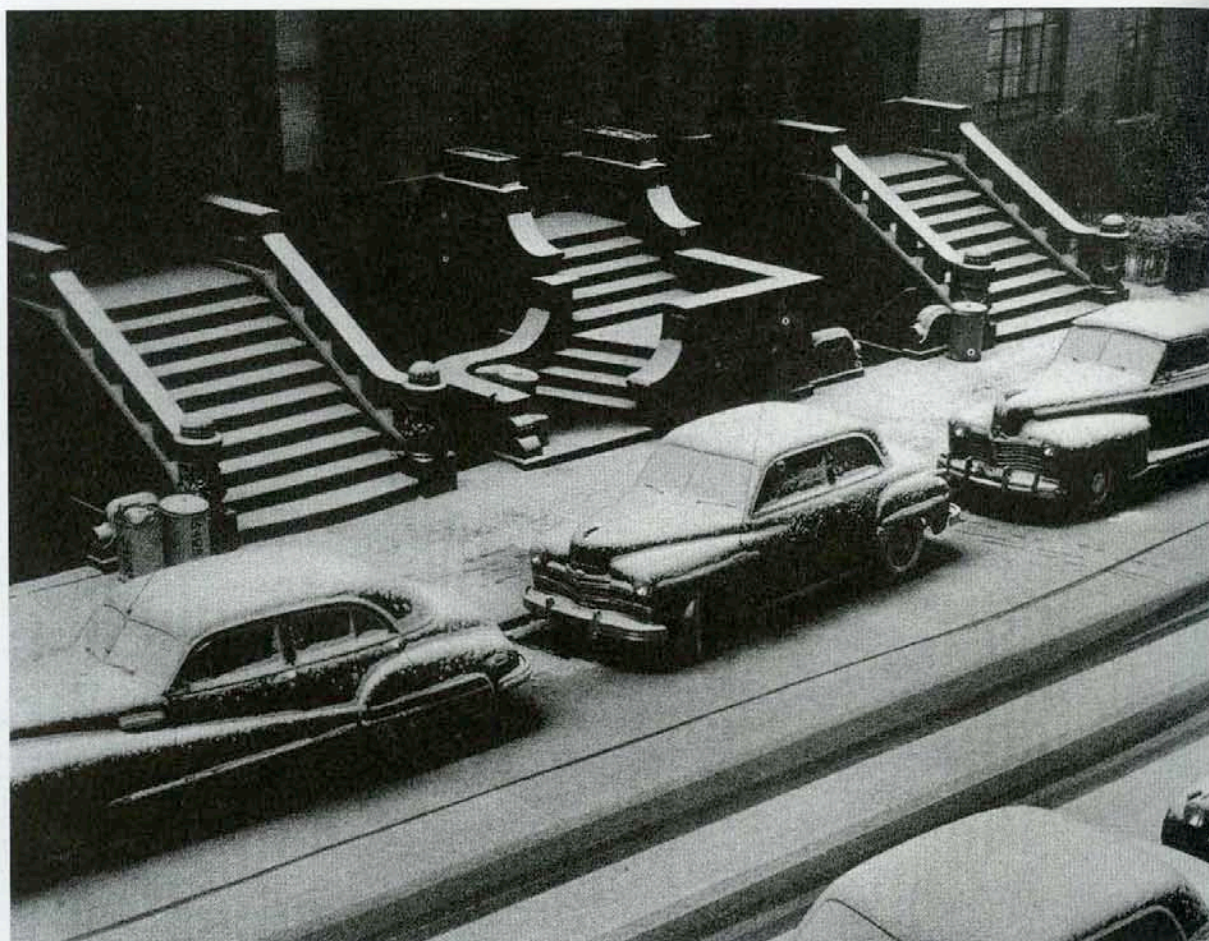
Fani Johnny'ego Raya, Nowy Jork, lata 50. XX w.; autorka zdjęcia: Esther Bubley; © The Estate of Esther Bubley.





Harlem Merchant, 1937; photograph by Morris Engel; © Morris Engel Archive.

Sprzedawca w Harlemie, 1937; autor zdjęcia: Morris Engel; © Morris Engel Archive.





Miles Davis and Paul Chambers, 2nd New York Jazz Festival, Randall's Island, NYC, 1957;
Photograph by Jerry Dantzic; © Jerry Dantzic Archives.

Miles Davis i Paul Chambers, 2. New York Jazz Festival, Randall's Island, Nowy Jork, 1957;
autor fotografii: Jerry Dantzic; © Archiwum Jerry'ego Dantzica.

Krzysztof Pijarski

The Archive as Project – the Poetics and Politics of the (Photo)Archive

This project is an attempt at rethinking the archive in a post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe that is still facing the need to work through its 20th century past. Within this process, in the discourse of which such notions as truth and justice keep resurfacing, archives and their uses have come to play a considerable role. In this sense, *The Archive as Project* should be understood as a continuation and expansion of the problematics of the seminar *Archive Fever. The Archives of Contemporary History and Art in Poland After 1989* (Warsaw, 2009), a forum for (art) historians, curators and artists to discuss the topic and problem of the “archive” in the context of the post-socialist transformations of this part of the world.

However, it is above all photographic archives, which seem in recent years to have been going through a phase of great public interest and increasing significance, that are at the center of this book. The question of the role of the photographic archive – not only for the humanities, but also for artistic practice and politics – the perspectives it opens and eventual risks it engenders, is one that seems crucial in the wake of the “archival turn” that we saw taking place since mid 1990s.

Considering the causes for this state of things, there are a few worth emphasising as providing a framework for this project: firstly, the reopening of the question of the archive and its “objectivity” in the aftermath of the Cold War (and not only that – in this context the fall of apartheid seems equally pertinent); secondly, the development of new, exceedingly fast technologies of archiving, and the progressive digitalization of information storage and exchange, resulting in the increasingly visible presence and importance of various “archives” in everyday life and in the explosive growth of visual, especially photographic, archives. It is worth mentioning that the “archive,” taken up in the field of art as a crucial problem of (late) modernity already in the 1960s and 70s, returned with a vengeance in the late 90s. There is also the growing interest, in contemporary scholarship, in the visual sphere – visual anthropology and sociology are a case in point, together with visual culture – which has had its share in the thorough re-evaluation of the archive; the site of secrets has become the site of desire.

The emergence of the “archive” as an object of reflection has been followed by an intensive production of discourse, within which a characteristic split can be observed. A few exceptions notwithstanding, there doesn’t seem to have been a lot of dialogue between authors from the field of the humanities in general, whose interests lay beyond the “literal” understanding of the archive as a site or institution (or who embarked on a critique of its “neutrality”), and professionals working in and on archives themselves, who focused more on the “material” aspects of institution and practice (this, of course, should only be understood as a working distinction). However, the archival turn has also affected the field of archival science and, as it turns out, engendered many changes within it: archivists have realized their own investment in the construction and understanding of history and memory, including identity politics (the “national” archive, etc.) and the fact that theory and practice are not contradictory terms, but “integrated aspects of the archivist’s professional role and responsibility.”¹ Yet it does not follow that this reflection has engendered a shared belief in current archival practice. Hence the specific structure of this book. Although divided into six chapters, it is actually composed of three parts or rather – perspectives.

The first is a theoretical one, as the title “The Archive in Theory” suggests. Here the reader will find texts by acclaimed scholars – and one curator – from the (former) East and West, trying to rethink or actualise various problematic aspects of the archive. John Tagg decided to go back to the critical debates of the 1970s about the “archive” and try to save some of their original gist, which seems to have gone astray in the current, increasingly metaphorical, uses and appropriations of the term. Wolfgang Ernst devoted his article to the archive’s tempor(e)alities; the various temporal and structural characteristics of traditional and digital archives, their relations to memory, and the question of whether the latter can still be called archives proper. In his contribution, Sven Spieker takes up more broadly the issue of entropy as an immanent aspect of the archive, also touched upon by Ernst, through the work of visual artists George Legrady and Antoní Muntadas. Helen Petrovsky reflects on memory, specifically on the possibility of inscribing a shared memory or experience in photographic images (in this case those of Boris Mikhailov), giving them, as images from without and yet perfectly recognisable, a power to interact with our bodies. The relationship between archives and bodies is a key question of Nina Lager Vestberg’s contribution. She tries to address this issue via the concepts of medium and materiality, using A.S. Byatt’s 1990 novel *Possession: A Romance* and Stephen Poliakoff’s 1999 BBC television drama, *Shooting the Past*, as case studies. For André Gunthert, the key issue lies in the myth of all-inclusive archiving, supposedly enabled by digital technologies. He claims that today more than ever one

¹ Terry Cook, Joan M. Schwartz, “Archives, Records, and Power: From (Postmodern) Theory to (Archival) Performance,” *Archival Science* 2, no 3–4 (September 2002), 171.

needs to remind oneself that an archive is much more than just a pile of archival material, emphasising the need for a critical methodology of photographic archiving. Nataša Petrešin-Bachelez focuses on the contextual part of *Promises of the Past*, an exhibition of post-war East European art that she co-curated, a living archive of sorts that explores the performative potential of photographic documents.

Next up is the institutional perspective, where actual practitioners of the art of archiving present initiatives and viewpoints relevant to this place and moment. Thus Miklós Tamási writes about Fortepan, a quite revolutionary website of his, where he makes his entire collection of photographs freely accessible, in high resolution, for everybody. The implications of taking this approach as a model are worth reflecting on. Zuzana Meisnerová-Wisnerová also presents a private archive, this time as part of a larger enterprise, the Langhans Foundation, one of the very first private initiatives of this kind in the region, through the Langhans Gallery also actively participating in contemporary photographic culture in the Czech Republic. Grayson Dantzic, who is in charge of the archives of Jerry Dantzic, his father and co-founder of the American Photographers Archives Group, decided to present this grassroots self-help organization through a very personal/biographical contribution. Karolina Lewandowska reflects on private-public partnership as a viable strategy to secure the existence of non-governmental archival institutions whose mode of operation requires steady, secure funding. Tone Rasch from the Norsk Teknisk Museum actually presents a working partnership of this kind in the form of DEXTRA Photo, one that might be taken as model for similar undertakings. Finally, Nikodem Bończa-Tomaszewski, director of the National Digital Archives of Poland, devoted his paper to the larger issues connected to digital archives and archiving, trying to stake out future challenges in this relatively new field.

The aim of the third, crucial part of this project was to negotiate between the varying perspectives of theory and practice in the previous sections, and to propose a reflective, (self)critical approach in the form of “archival” artistic practice. It is this part of the book that has been split into four separate chapters, mainly because each of them is an autonomous entity of sorts. For “The Archive Looking Awry” four artists working with archives in their work – two from Poland (Wojciech Wilczyk and Karol Radziszewski), one from Slovakia (Lucia Nimcová), and one from Lebanon (Akram Zaatari) – have been invited to discuss its various aspects and broader implications with four “theorists:” a cultural critic (Iwona Kurz), a queer theorist (Tomasz Basiuk), an anthropologist (Ewa Klekot), and a political philosopher (Ariella Azoulay). Each pair was free to choose the exact form of their contribution, and the results are a dialogue, a critical essay followed by a montaged exchange between the participants, a short introduction with critical elaboration, and two separate presentations working in the same

direction of transgressing political borders and projecting the possibility of new beginnings from two sides of a deep divide. The latter is in fact the description of the chapter composed by Ariella Azoulay and Akram Zaatari, who each deal with civil disaster in their own way, trying to open imaginary alternatives, imaginary in the fullest political sense. Iwona Kurz and Wojciech Wilczyk discuss the archival aspects of documentary photography through the artist's own documentary projects, especially the inventory-like *There is no such Thing as an Innocent Eye* that speaks in a pertinent way about Polish-Jewish memory and the traces of this culture in the landscape. Karol Radziszewski and Tomasz Basiuk's contribution takes up another important topic, that of a possible alternative history of gay culture in (post-)socialist Poland on the basis of an archival find of Karol Radziszewski's that makes such an alternative imaginable, even graspable. Finally, the exchange between Lucia Nimcová and Eva Klekot is a fascinating opening into a reflection on the practice of everyday life and the memory of the body during and after socialism in this part of the world.

Those chapters and perspectives came into being as a result of staking out a number of starting points for this endeavor, thematic threads the reader will find resurfacing in various constellations throughout the specific contributions. Crystallising in different forms, they will hopefully permit the reader to recognise the archive as a phenomenon that is caught up in relations of power, and see its potential to be both a site of dissent and of a repartition of the sensible (in Rancière's terms). Those threads were as follows:

The poetics/politics of the archive. Within the larger "archival turn" itself, two supplementary tendencies can be observed: on the one hand, the blurring of boundaries between institutions such as the library, the museum (including the museum of art) and the archive, and a certain semantic inflation of the term "archive" itself, so that it encompasses ever more distant phenomena. The resulting "metaphorical" or "aesthetic" use of the term, which is becoming increasingly common, could lead to a neutralization of its political dimension. Therefore a certain reassessment of its specific poetics (the principle of construction) and politics (the aims of that construction) seems indispensable today. Of particular interest in this context are the uses of the archive as institution and metaphor in current scholarly and artistic practice.

The totality/fragmentariness of the archive. Considering the fact that the universalist ambitions of the archive have already been subject to repeated criticism – in the guise of collecting a totality of knowledge and constructing an all-encompassing narrative, both intimately tied to issues of power and empire – this problem seems to belong to the past. At the same time, however, in spite of the ever-growing potential to store digital data and consolidate archives (i.e. Corbis, The Library of Congress), with the arduousness of proper digitalization straining the promise and ease of universal access, and the costs

of storing the abounding numbers of “originals,” the problem of selection recurs. The questions pertaining to that problematic are the following: What should archives archive, and what part of their collection should be made accessible, on what terms? What should the criteria of selection be, and who should enforce them? Should we be concerned about private archives that do not disclose their politics of acquisition and publication? If so, in what ways and to what extent? How do we understand the construction of an archive?

Memory, history and the question of technology. Many things have also been said about the memory structure of the archive, the archive as a supplement of memory and its status as source for history. The acknowledgement that the event is being produced in the process of archiving to the same extent as it is preserved also compels us to recognize that changes in the technologies and strategies of archiving may fundamentally redefine our understanding of the possibilities of evoking and narrating what is past. Thus the question of if and in what way our understanding of event, document and documentation has changed since the “archival turn” is doubtlessly one worth posing. Is it not time to reconsider our view of the archive as a site and its function as a repository? Or, to phrase it differently, will or can digitalization fulfill the promise of universal access? What conclusions can be drawn from these questions for new institutions with archival ambitions?

Photography in the archive – questions of acquisition, research, and publicity. This set of what would appear to be purely practical questions should be tackled in the context of the above theoretical issues, trying to establish as close a relation as possible between the theory and the practice of the archive. At the same time, the archive’s double status as mnemonic device should be stressed, that is, on the one hand, as a certain technology of representation (and so construction, fiction, death), on the other hand, revealing its relationship with a certain modality of the past that constitutes its material basis. This double status seems to require further reflection, the more so because, interestingly, the archive seems to share this indexical-representational character with the photograph – which could turn out to be a productive analogy.

The archive holy/unholy – the archive secret/public. One of the essential features of archives used to be their inaccessibility. With the feasibility of digital representation, however, new modes of public existence were conceived for archival collections, simultaneously rendering rare originals all the more inaccessible. What seems most interesting in this context is the process whereby private collections, very often stored in unfavourable conditions or still being actively used, are withdrawn from the sphere of use and sacralized in such a way that their preservation for posterity seems to sever them from this posterity in the same gesture. Thus the question needs to be posed, to what extent can the contemporary archive be exposed to profanation (understood as a returning to

free use)? This question is directed especially towards the artists invited to participate in this project, for whom the archive as a notion, institution and site is part of their artistic practice.

Hopefully all of these thematics and their different interrelations will be clearly legible in this book, permitting us to seriously consider the question, is possible to identify and neutralize the automatisms (and bad faith) at work in archival practice? The aim of such a critical gesture is to strive, not for the archive's even more perfect transparency, but towards a conscious, explicit conception of its construction and politics, towards an understanding the archive as a p r o j e c t, a certain potentiality, a challenge for the future.

503-8 3/4

REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE No. 503-8 3/4

ISSUED AT LONDON

Name (Surname first in Roman Capitals) DANTZIC Myer

Left Thumb Print (if unable to sign name in English Characters)

PHOTOGRAPH

Nationality Russian

Born on 1872 Crislawa

Previous Nationality (if any)

Profession or Occupation Rabbit Skin dealer

Address of Residence 60 Upper Pitt St. Liverpool

Arrived in United Kingdom on 1893

Address of last Residence outside U.K. Oshtroff

Government Service

Passport or other papers as to Nationality and Identity

Signature of Holder Myer Dantzig

15 NOV 1923

503-9

REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE No. 503-9

ISSUED AT LONDON

Name (Surname first in Roman Capitals) DANTZIC Leah

Left Thumb Print (if unable to sign name in English Characters)

PHOTOGRAPH

Nationality Russian

Born on 1872 Volyn Russia

Previous Nationality (if any)

Profession or Occupation Household

Address of Residence 31 24 Pitt St.

Arrived in United Kingdom on 1893

Address of last Residence outside U.K. Oshtroff

Government Service

Passport or other papers as to Nationality and Identity

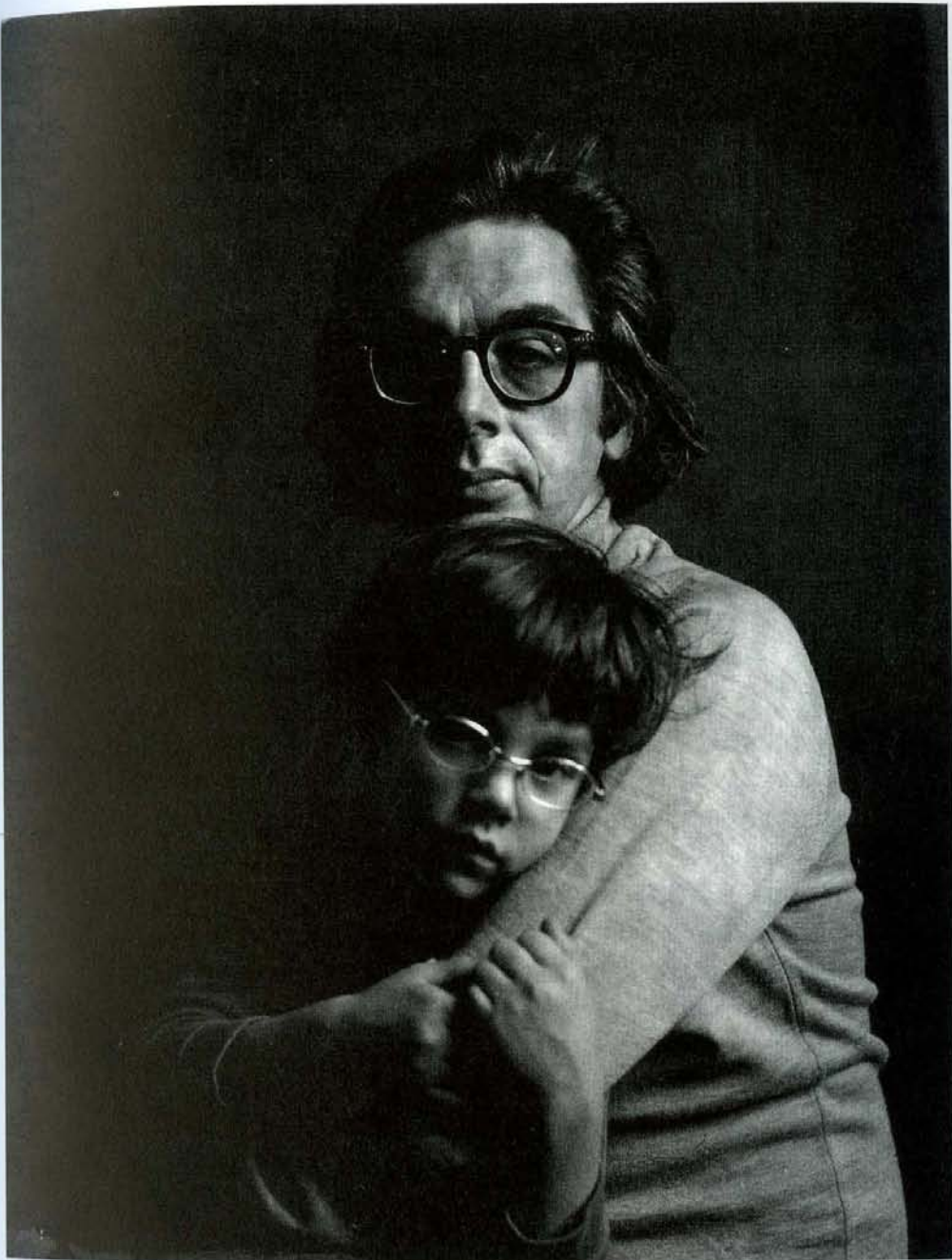
Signature of Holder

15 NOV 1923

My first slide is of my great grandparents' Myer and Leah Dantzig's certificates of registration and it is stamped 13.11.1923. These old documents were given to my mother by my late Aunt Rae (on my father's side). They are an important part of my identity, where my family tribe has been. I've always wanted to visit Gdańsk, which used to be called Danzig, and I consider to be my ancient hometown. Hopefully on my next trip to Poland, I will be able to go.



The next slide shows me being pushed in a baby carriage by my mother at age two and pointing at my father's image of nuns walking by a destroyed old church in New York City. It was included in an important ASMP photography exhibition called "The City Seen" at Bryant Park in 1969. It was my first archival moment, and I seem to be saying "why isn't this great photograph in a frame and behind some protective glass?!"



The third slide, taken by my father a few years later, is a powerful self-portrait of us in his studio on West 33rd Street at the time. It is one of my favorites, and you can see that I'm holding onto him with both hands as I missed him already. He was always busy working with his photography, sometimes on assignment, or printing. It was only years later, when I realized how much I didn't know about his life, and through the unfortunate illness that claimed his life in 2006, was I able to have the time to ask him about his life and gain some closure.