

[CFP: Shaking the Archive - Reconsidering the Role of Archives in Contemporary Society](#)

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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: Papers, Presentations, Performances, Reflections

Shaking the Archive - Reconsidering the Role of Archives in Contemporary Society

A multidisciplinary Conference that Interrogates the Power of and in Archives

The last decade has seen an exponential rise in scholarly work on archives and preservation. Certainly, the contribution of archival research and practice has brought about individual and sometimes heroic efforts to safeguard the future of a little-known or under-explored history and its ephemera. This approach is relevant to most disciplines: culture, the arts, healthcare, sociology, and governance expend significant energy on archives, archiving, and safeguarding past objects and knowledge.

Questions around the role(s) of cultural memory and archives in the present challenge sectors to reflect on how we can collectively rethink the (opportunistic) use of these individual and institutional archives. These physical materials are increasingly pertinent in the face of the ubiquity of our digital world. The questions we want to ask are: Where is 'history' located if we're constantly looking to the future? How can contemporary communities engage with 'old' ephemera? What is the 'correct' form of an archive? What is the role archives play in remembering? How do institutions make visible *and* accessible their archival materials? How can personal, national, and global archives better act as a collective memory? What *is* collective memory? What are the gaps in knowledge and how do we deal with unknown histories? What practices and methodologies are in place to engage with the vulnerable materialities of and in archives? How do we ethically deal with ownership and how do we effectively decolonize archives? How do we deal with the embodied memory of the past in the form of living and vulnerable archives? How can embodied memory shape archive? What tools would allow us to engage and interact with the polyphonic documentation of archives? How can archives better serve the specific communities of which they are the cultural product?

This 2-day conference will be hosted by **Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh on 23-24 June 2023**. It aims to engage with diverse sectors and subject areas to explore how archives can be interrogated, reimagined, and represented. We invite a deeper reflection around elements that are left out of mainstream historiography and expand knowledge beyond the surface of the visible. We effectively want to challenge, deconstruct and expand the power dynamics inherent to general or institutional knowledge.

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We invite international scholars and practitioners to propose individual papers, panels of 4 presentations, or artistic/creative responses to the theme of “shaking the archive.” Deadline for proposals is Monday 9 January 2023. Alongside the presentations, we will organise an exhibition, a film screening, and an excursion to a local archive for delegates attending in person. There is a small delegate registration fee of up to £50, to help fund the running of the conference.

To submit a proposal or for any further information, please contact Dr Stefanie Van de Peer on svandeppeer@qmu.ac.uk by Monday 9 January 2023. Please send 300-word proposals + 100-word bios.

Organising Committee: Sana Bilgrami, Rebecca Finkel, Andy Henry, Karl Johnson, Bianca Mastominico, Anthony Schrag, Stefanie Van de Peer, Linnea Wallen

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