For many museum visitors, art museums are the places to see exhibitions. On the other hand, the enormous collections hidden from visitors play an important role in the museum as a cultural apparatus. This fact is often forgotten yet has a very significant meaning. With the recent technology of digital archives, we are given opportunities to reconsider the art collection act itself. Digital archives are not mere databases of collected artworks and materials. The archives of digitally processed images and text-based information involve issues of authorship and reproduction, and completely different qualities from the act of collecting artworks in actual space. Thus, the digital archive reveals a reverse projection of the perceived spaces created by art museums as storage facilities for art collections.

For instance, one of the basic duties of curators is to research the countless artworks existing in the world. While curators have strong intentions to collect the best works, they are destined to face the dilemma of not being able to investigate all the artworks. Therefore, they often try to understand the collection policies of other museums and create guidelines in order to collect the type of works that fill the gaps of what have been collected. This, in a broad sense, is an appropriation of what has been created by others. As a result, gaps existing in various places are constantly being filled. However, artworks are continuously created everywhere and the spaces for artworks keep expanding, like the repetitions of cell division in microcosms of the universe. Because of constant inventions of new themes, media, and techniques, the aggregate of contemporary artworks becomes a compound, a chaotic mixture of objects and phenomena, not following any clear classifications.

Michel Foucault defined Manet's works (fig. 1) as the first "museum paintings" because they were painted based on the premises of past aggregates of artworks[i]. This involves the issue of appropriation, a common method often used in various fields outside of the art world as well. For instance, I am appropriating what has already been said by others as quotes in this essay. Quotes are often used in magazine articles to refer to what has been said by others. A broader sense of appropriation includes the newspaper articles offered by news agencies and product designs very similar to popular models. The original

meaning is thrown into new contexts, and new meanings are constantly recreated. Only differences are emphasized, and the original texts and products are obviated. As a result, the sequences of differences establish their own identities. This phenomenon, magnified by the modern factor of incredible technological development in the fields of communication and reproduction, has become an absolute fact often used to describe contemporary social transformation. Naturally, recent museums cannot be exceptions to this trend.

In order to grasp the artworks as such aggregates, the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage has promoted a project called The International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (INCCA). This project tries to build information networks on contemporary artworks, necessary in cases where they must be transported for traveling exhibitions and restoration. This type of information is crucial, in genres such as installation, photography, and media art, which have been presenting many challenges to restoration and preservation experts. Paintings may need to be simply moved from wall to wall, but installations using various materials would require detailed directions for their exhibitions. How can we preserve and transfer such information? INCCA tries to solve this problem, for instance, by recording interviews with artists speaking on their materials and techniques. Of course, this was made possible by the incredible database developments in digital information processing technology, transforming various information such as texts, images, and sound into standardized "bit" data. INCCA registers into its database the kind of information that used to be impossible to record and exchange. This database is invaluable to the museum, as cultural apparatus in the digital networking era.

The contents of what are exhibited in actual museum spaces are also expanding from traditional genre called art to music, video, and performance. On the other hand, when we understand the functions of museums in the light of archival technology, we realize that those functions have been limited by epistemologies in each age. Artworks that have been unnoticed at the time of their creation can be reevaluated later. Therefore, in order to discuss the currently topical digital

archive, we should consider how to designate borders in every possible phenomenon, including what we have considered "art," before emphasizing that digital technology can set us free to go across any genres.

Border designation involves issues of every choice made in the world, such as: what information a newscaster chooses to read at the beginning of a TV news program; why one has chosen the destination of his vacation in a particular island in the Mediterranean; why certain languages are not spoken anymore; why one doesn't wear yellow clothes; and so on. We have to pay attention to how artworks are titled, classified, and collected in relation to the establishment of the modern art systems, consisting of museums, artworks, and artists. These complex factors produce visionality, how we perceive the artworks of our time. The artworks later referenced in this essay were part of the transformation and reorganization of museums as archives, shaking up the establishment from within.

Collecting the Unknown

Most research indicates that artwork began to be collected and exhibited, removed from their original domains, from the time of the Renaissance to the Age of the Great Voyage, when mankind discovered "the unknown." When European royals and aristocrats conquered new lands, they discovered artifacts that they had never seen before. They collected and exhibited them according to their interests, in museums such as: the Uffizi Museum in Florence, established in the 16th century; the Ashmorian Museum in Oxford, established in the 17th century; and the British Museum, founded in the 18th century. However, the premiere milestone in the history of archival technology came when Le Musée des Républiques, later called the Louvre, was established in 1793 in Paris. Le Musée des Républiques collected and exhibited for the first time using museology in order to classify and systematize their art collections. It became necessary to apply this methodology when ownership of royal families and aristocrats' personal belongings were transferred to the sovereign people of the Republic. These were

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exhibited to the public after the French Revolution. For the first time in history, the idea of public museums passing on cultural heritage from generation to generation began to be recognized in the area of archival technology. As the general public wrested sovereignty from dictators, museums had to establish classifications and systems that would satisfy the public instead of personal tastes and interests. Museums became national authorities for filtering aggregates of artifacts, which were created in various places and times for diverse purposes, in order to educate "healthy," "sensible" citizens.

The age of the international exposition began in the middle of the 19th century. For the Art Treasures Exhibition, Manchester in 1854, Dr Gustav Waagen, director of the Royal Picture Gallery in Berlin, collected works by the "Old Masters." Melvil Dewey, who saw the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia (1876), conceived the decimal classification system for library materials by observing the audience's movements at the exposition. Upon exposure to the gaze of an international audience, curators defined the outlines of their collecting policies in accordance with the standards of people's republics. Technologies of collecting and classifying art were thus developed.

The historical origins of museums teach us that people have been involved in designating identities of artists and their audiences through categorizing and systematizing artifacts. Like referring to credible encyclopedias to find out meanings of the unknown, museums have played roles to classify artifacts and phenomena in our world. Exhibitions in museums have shown unknown objects to the audience. When each object was exhibited and the audience imagined it in its original context, far-away lands became familiar places, and the wisdom of science, that rapidly changes our lives, was eloquently explained. Those exhibited objects surrounded the audience like transparent maps, and revealed the supposed forms and appearances of the world. International expositions were received with much astonishment and interest. They represented an age when mankind was trying to place itself in a subjective position, to look at the world with a curious gaze, with the help of modern politics and science.

Such appearance of a curious public is revealed in the artwork of the 1920s, when urban culture flourished after the development of technologies such as photography and moving pictures, technologies for mass-producing images, and communication technologies encouraged by scientific discoveries such as radio waves and electronics in the 19th century. During this period, the Museum of Modern Art was established in a new nation of image, the United States of America. The first director of the museum, Alfred H. Barr Jr., drew his famous chart describing art history (fig. 2). It was inspired by the anonymous will to provide order to expanding images filling historical and graphical spaces, conceptualized by new technologies rather than by Barr's individual pursuit of art history. Barr Jr. was also but one member of the urban crowds in Times Square, surrounded by advertisements and skyscrapers. Then, what was the active subject that made Barr draw that diagram? It was the general public/citizens who needed to map the aggregates of artworks in the expanding geopolitical space, just like international expositions tried to map the world.

This leads me to think of the objects exhibited in *Wunderkammer*, a cabinet of curiosity that existed before modern times. I can imagine those objects interacting with one another, generating fascinating movements to warp the sense of space among the audience. The outlines of the universe created by individual collectors, according to their personal standards, are difficult to define. While the objects exhibited in W*underkammer* were deprived of their use values, artifacts in museums are intended to be exhibited. Museums have the mission to collect art within the structure of the national public, and to designate the core of the aggregates accordingly. In order to define this core, we try to form borders around the collection. As a result, the absent signifier called "the people" created closed and static aggregations.

Eugenio Donato has stated that the same type of ideology which believed that libraries can completely textualize the world as in encyclopedias has been applied to museums. He said,

"The ideology that governs the Museum in the

nineteenth century and down to the present has often been equated with that of the Library, namely, to give by the ordered display of selected artifacts a total representation of human reality and history. Museums are taken to exist only inasmuch as they can erase the heterogeneity of the objects displayed in their cases, and it is only the hypothesis of the possibility of homogenizing the diversity of various artifacts which makes them possible in the first place."[i]

Donato asserts that a conviction that each artifact repositioned as a sequence would give a certain perspective to the world creates arbitrary "fabulation." Without this fabulation, "there is nothing left of the museum *but bric-a-brac*, a heap of meaningless and valueless fragments of objects".[ii] These words remind me of an art critic, Shuzo Takiguchi's emotional comments on the *12th Yomiuri Independent Exhibition* (1960), a series of exhibitions known to have created many avant-garde artists, including the Neo-Dadak group, lasting from after World War II to 1963, the dawn of modern art museums in Japan.

"What will be left behind after numerous divisions and assemblies, and transformations? That is, like it or not, the remembrance of each artist, individual sign of his existence left behind after the severe test of time. Art is transient and ephemeral. But hundreds of artworks will leave their remembrances, accumulated and preserved!"[iv]

What Takiguchi saw back then was the way that the self-proclaimed avant-garde artists formed various organizations and announced their "manifestos" based on various differences between them. The manifestos were their ways of inscribing the significance of their activities in art history using text, which had universal qualities of expression, rather than by their artworks themselves. Here, we have the answer to the mystery of history, where many avant-garde artists easily become part of the museum system supported by the legitimized establishment. It is because both artists and museums share common epistemology of "origin" and "meaning," which are required to establish what Donato called "series".

Furthermore, Donato calls such epistemology of museums an "anthropocentrism" of "meanings." This is because museums try to comprehend and describe the objects in relation to the viewers rather than by the objects themselves. In order to see the world anthropomorphically, we must conceive of ourselves as subjects viewing the world. We can see the same kind of perspective in art museum exhibitions prepared for the national public and expositions viewed from foreign countries as described in the above. The world is filled with unknown objects of unlimited complexity. That is why humans have tried to provide comprehensive order and representations though the wisdom of classification.

Uncanny Shadows

Now, I would like to mention two artists who broke away from the European traditional perspective drawings that developed various ways of drawing shadows in order to represent the actual world: Kazimir Malevich and Giorgio de Chirico. Malevich's *Suprematism* rejected these descriptive characteristics of paintings. De Chirico warped the linear perspective of space by his unique way of painting shadows. These two artists exposed the uncanny insecurity of human existence as subjects to view the world, which had been comprehensible through the method of retinal representation.

Andy Warhol was another artist who represented the image without shadows. His well-known silkscreen portraits of celebrities were created in brightly colored double images. The original image of these figures with their "doubles" came from copies of images that were commonly available in the mass media. His portraits were the most eloquent descriptions of insecure existence floating around in media. Warhol also produced self-portraits depicting a vague existence without shadows, as subject to mass media consumption (fig. 3).

Johann Casper Lavater's physiognomy is known as an interesting experiment in the relations between representation and object in the 18th century, the age originating encyclopedia-museum classifications of objects. Lavater traced the outlines of faces against a light source in order to draw silhouettes (fig.4). His idea was that human essences could be revealed in their silhouettes, which cannot be seen in their external facial expressions. He collected various silhouettes and tried to indicate psychological problems through features such as the shape of noses or of chins.

As Lavater was a protestant minister, he pursued physiognomy with a conviction that the silhouettes purely reflected the human psyche from ethical point of view. On the other hand, the shadow that he was attracted to, was an convenient way of preserving changing reality as a permanent figure. Thus, it was fundamentally different from the type of shadows seen in Renaissance and post-Renaissance paintings, which often used shadows as a technique to reproduce three-dimensional perspectives, providing the sense of existence in tableaux. Lavater was captivated by flat shadows as the pure subjects to ethical judgment, detached from our world. Lit by Apollo's light, the familiarity of the facial expressions were removed. There, Lavater saw otherness which the owners of the silhouettes themselves were not aware of. Without the ostensible information, the inside of the outlines were filled with black. Even now, shadow-plays and Indonesian shadow puppet theaters inspire people's imaginations with black shadows of people and animals. The silhouettes, projected shadows, without stable meanings attract people by inspiring fear and deep anxiety toward representation, and interestingly create transformative images.

In the 20th century, images after images exchanged and rearranged without any firm positions created perceptive spaces for humans. Italo Calvino, known for his extraordinary novels, wrote about destabilized images of the "author," just like Warhol's self-portraits. It seems odd that I am writing about a literary work now, however, if one has any interest in this author, he will immediately understand that this novelist was attracted by expanding and diffused images of his age. In his most famous novel, *Invisible Cities*, Calvino speaks in the voice of Marco Polo about the huge empire that cannot be fully grasped even by the emperor himself, in a style of showing a catalogue of fractional cities. In *The Castle of Crossed Destinies,* Calvino used tarot cards to explore his net-like cross-writing. In the following novel, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler,* the (supposed) author of the book shares the role of the author with one of the characters who is the male reader of the novel. This complex plot forces us only to follow the text itself. The reader has no choice but to stare at the surface of what is happening in the novel.

What is in the background and behind the background? Although his readers ask these questions to themselves, since it is obvious that any conclusion cannot be reached in a straightforward structure, they have no choice but to stare at the superficial texture. In Documenta X, held at the end of 20th century, the century of images, Gerhard Richter's *Atlas* (fig. 5, 6) left us with the strongest impact, because we could not look away from the images, which appeared to be mere family pictures or mountain landscapes taken by non-professional photographers. Our gaze kept wandering on those images. At first, we tried to see if these orders in which they were exhibited had some kind of principles. Then, the sequences of highly detailed descriptions of objects gave us a sense of extreme largeness and smallness, dazzled us, and left us to go on to the surface of image after image.

Collecting Remnants

Reproduction and communication technologies developed in the 19th century surrounded urban dwellers with diffused reflections of flat images. We, however, must find something in the images, instead of getting lost in them.

Eugéne Atget photographed fast-changing Paris in the early 20th century. He captured the images of ordinary shop doors and back streets that used to be considered worthless to photograph (fig. 7). After Atget died in 1927, more than ten thousand photographs and approximately two thousand plate glass-negatives were found in his studio. These photographs described by Walter Benjamin as "scenes of crime," were looking for traces of existence, which might never have existed.

Genpei Akasegawa used the thousand yen bill as

a motif of his artwork (fig. 8, 9), transgressing the border between "artwork," which has invisible excess inside, and "monetary bill," which has specific exchange value. The value of bills acknowledged by everyone is only valid when they are used. Akasegawa reproduced this bill as artwork only to be exhibited.

Becoming aware of something found in the details of everyday life requires rearrangement of already established values. The question of what creates different values in objects has been repeatedly posed. After Akasegawa was confronted with a lawsuit regarding the suspected counterfeiting of currency with his thousand yen bill, he was drawn into the issue straddling the gap between use value and exhibit value. This led to his collection activities, including one entitled *Thomason*.

Ray Johnson's collages are collections of daily objects, revealing the ways that the objects are represented. Johnson's mail art, however, was a completely reverse method from accumulation. The mail art is required to leave the hands of the artists and be received by others. They come into the invisible domain of mailing and might conceivably be mailed to wrong addresses. What are sent basically cannot be relocated. In the same way that Akasegawa's *Thomason* was collected according to a completely personal standard, discounting the public standard, Johnson's mail art was intended not to be exhibited to the open public. They were intended to become personal properties. Johnson is known for not wanting his artworks exhibited in museums. Only two girls witnessed his last "performance," jumping off the Brooklyn Bridge. Johnson, who was superb in visualizing the relationships between objects and people, was well aware that museum archives would imbue artifacts with something different from their original essence. He paid consistent attention to what is usually considered as remnants, looking at the objects themselves, separating them from human value judgment, while museum epistemology presented objects in relationship to the viewers.

Body in Search

On the WWW, mere rumors from unreliable sources and news distributed from world-class media are listed equally side by side. It is tiring to browse these layers of information without any order. Some say that the WWW is filled with useless information, which is probably true. It is, however, the reality we live in. As I previously referred to the various things done in the method called appropriation, the world is filled with rumors; someone said this and that. It is rightly said that the world consists of rumors.

Children learn languages through TV games. We get to "know" what is happening in the world through the picture of global media simultaneously distributed around the world. Just like Warhol's silkscreen portraits without shadows, just like Luc Tuymans' figures, the outlines of our existences are becoming vague (fig. 10).

As Donato rightly explained at the end of the above-mentioned text, Gustav Flaubert's *Bouvard et Pécuchet* had a historical perspective based on the metaphors of thermodynamic decay, decadence and corruption rather than Newtonian physics based on differences, origin, and temporality. There is no end to the vanishing point supporting a perspective space; in the same way we impute endless rumor into our consciousness. In Doug Aitken's *I am in You* (fig. 11) sequences of the image of a girl repeatedly appear and disappear like one's sub-consciousness, suspending the audience in a state of constant erasure of origin and floatation. Furthermore, there is no single perspective overlooking all the five screens. We keep walking through this girl's sub-consciousness. The only impression we are left with is the sense of our body movement as we try to take in the five screens from different angles.

Donato's equation of the library as an encyclopedic model is based on the book search method of handing an index card to a librarian to look for a book you need. However, recall the experience of walking through the open shelves of a library and feeling the joy of perusing a book placed next to the book you were looking for. Aby Warburg, who created the image atlas *Mnemosyne* in order to search the prototypes of images from ancient to modern times, kept rearranging his vast book collection according to his "Good Neighbor Principle" He did this so that he could unexpectedly look into other related books than the ones he originally sought.

Warburg's archival technology, exploring vast cultural history beyond the framework of art history, captured the detailed images repeatedly appearing as typical expressions throughout different times, places, and media, which have not been paid much attention before. Without depending upon art history terms such as authorship and the work, his eyes roamed freely through the images. The same thing can be said about Andre Malraux's *Museum Without Walls*, which is often discussed in regard to its foresight in digital archiving. He actively used reproduced images to reevaluate artworks by Piero della Francesca, El Greco, Georges de la Tour and Jan Vermeer. Both Warburg and Malraux entered into the vast sequences of objects and phenomena without any borders, and kept exploring and conceiving without placing themselves in the subjective positions of preconceived perspectives. Photographic reproductions of image and information shown on screens are flat sequences of data. Compared to the original artworks in crates strictly protected in museum storage, they appear to be quite insignificant. However, when those data are rearranged and placed right next to something totally different, they sometimes acquire new meanings. Therefore, while the aggregates of database are often categorized merely as collections of certain museums, or under titles such as "Old Masters," "Minimalism," or "Latin America," the role of the meta-database to cross over those categories will be crucial. The borders should be more and more obscure. The current reorganization of museums is following these interactions and blurring of borders.

Standing in the ruins of museums, illusions imagined through people's nations and capitalism and submerged in the chaos of flat images, we need the museum as a borderless database. The digital archive is not a convenient tool to instantly look over all the images of artworks. It is a modest yet sure tool to liberate one's body in searching through the overwhelmingly vast sea of data.

(Translated by Setsuko Miura)

[i] Michel Foucault, edited with an introduction by Donald F. Bouchard ; Language, counter-memory, practice : selected essays and interviews, translated from the French by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon., Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1980, pp. 92

[ii] Eugenio Donato, "The Museum's Furnace", Textual Strategies, J. V. Harari ed.,Cornell University Press, 1979, pp. 221

[iii] ibid, pp. 223

[iv] Shuzo Takiguchi, Collection: Shuzo Takiguchi , vol.7, Misuzu Shobo, Tokyo, 1992, pp. 70, translated by Setsuko Miura.