

From the Editors

Interest in “archive” is growing. This is largely due to the spread of digital technology and dematerialization of contemporary art.

The enhancement of searchability using digital technology enables us to discover post-facto utility values by applying search functions without having to exhaustively organize the materials collected in a systematic order. If, furthermore, the deterioration of data can be prevented by means of digitalization, then not only art museums, which possess refined technology for administrative maintenance of physical art objects, but an “archive” for storing documentation concerning art also obtains an important role. Above all, with the appearance of the Internet, data sharing has become remarkably simple, and archived data promotes the secondary use of data.

Meanwhile, as art media diversify and artists increasingly produce art forms difficult for art museums to preserve—such as performances and temporary installations, as well as land art, workshops, and art projects that cannot be preserved inside the museum—information concerning artworks is being stored using other media such as photographs, film, and printed material. In the environs of such elusive artworks, the collecting of such materials arises naturally, or else, an archive function to actively collect and compile them is needed, it being called “archive.” Artworks have also appeared that mimic the archive format, sensing in the unordered compilation of materials the attractiveness of capsizing the orthodox authority.

This special issue explores the theme, “archive.” Through five essays, we endeavor to clarify somewhat the problems that come into view when we examine this situation.

IKEGAI Naoto takes up the example of the Europeana digital library and discusses the conditions for realizing new sharable formats in the digital age. What is demanded, if we are to suitably promote the utility of archival materials, is giving the availability

of open-data to metadata and furnishing an aggregator. The trend forthcoming in Europe is based on the concept of protecting diverse cultural identity in counteraction to global information platforms administered by American IT companies such as Google. That trend casts light on the problem of the authority wielded by the entity managing the archival materials.

The sharing of artwork data by means of digital technology can stimulate new creative exploration, yet it also results in the problem of the rights possessed by individual works comprising the archival materials. **MIZUNO Tasuku**, from the standpoint of a legal expert, examines the legal situation surrounding the collection of artworks and materials concerning them, and on this basis imagines how rights should be handled in the digital age and proposes an approach to archival materials that inspires creativity.

Two of the essays are reprints of essays concerning the historical development of art. One is a text by **Kynaston McSHINE**, who organized the “Information” exhibition held in 1970 at Museum of Modern Art, New York, from the catalogue for that exhibition. “Information” was an epoch-making exhibition that discerned the trend of dematerialization of art in the 1960s resulting from the changing environment of social media and, above all, the spread of film and video. In McShine’s text, the concept of “archival materials” is never once mentioned. Yet, in his translator’s postface, **UESAKI Sen** observes that McShine referred to “materials” as a medium mediating the art object and information. Uesaki sees the art trend presented in McShine’s exhibition as the beginning of today’s archival art.

The other essay is “An Archival Impulse” published in 2004 by **Hal FOSTER**. This essay discusses archival artworks appearing mainly in the 1990s. “Private” archival materials used in the form of an artwork can be seen as counteracting and capsizing normative

“public” archival materials and formalistic artworks possessing an order. Yet, what Foster emphasizes in his essay is that such artworks possess an aspect of connecting materials to one another. In his translator’s postface **NAKANO Tsutomu** positions Foster’s view as indicating a new framework for argumentation that transcends the evaluation of postmodernism by critics such as **Craig OWENS**.

YAMAMINE Junya examines the situation of archival works in the decades since the Foster essay. Upon sorting out various kinds of artworks from the perspective of creative expression and archival materials, he determines two main streams and describes a situation in which the two coexist. One stream consists of artworks that value the voluminous aspect of the materials, and within this, Yamamine discovers the potential for works that promote the viewer’s active participation. The other stream intends artworks that produce new narratives from compilations of unordered materials. The former, we can perhaps say, actively develops the aspect appraised by Owens, while the latter, that appraised by Foster.

This special issue places on the chopping board a number of problems brought to mind by the subject of “archive,” on the basis of historical art developments from the 1960s until today. They include the problem of the authority, power, and cultural diversity; the problem of rights in terms of individual materials; and the problem of the user’s active participation leading to secondary art creation. This special issue, it is hoped, will suggest avenues for thinking about art and archival materials in the digital age, and about their preservation, use, and application.

(WASHIDA Meruro, translated by Brian AMSTUTZ)