

**A Queer Archival Impulse:**  
***Lineage: Matchmaking in the Archives*** [UNFINISHED WORK-IN PROGRESS]

By Barbara McBane

Since 2009, Barbara McBane has been Head of the Critical Studies program at the Pont-Aven School of Contemporary Art in Pont-Aven, France. Before moving to Europe, Barbara taught in the Women and Gender Studies program at the University of California, Davis, specializing in visual culture studies, film studies, and sexuality studies. She has taught film studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and film post-production at Ardmore Studios, Dublin, Ireland, and the UCLA Department of Film and Television. Barbara also has extensive field experience, and has worked as a sound designer or editor on projects ranging from feature and experimental films to public and studio art projects. Her credits include a number of Academy-Award winning films in her craft specialty of sound post-production. She holds a PhD degree from the University of California, Santa Cruz, in the History of Consciousness.

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*Here we have a man whose job it is to gather the city's refuse in the capital. Everything that the big city has thrown away, everything it has lost, everything it has scorned, everything it has crushed underfoot he catalogues and collects. He collates annals of intemperance, the carphanaum of waste. He sorts out and selects judiciously: he collects like a miser guarding a treasure, refuse which will assume the shape of useful or gratifying objects between the jaws of the goddess of Industry.<sup>1</sup>*

The verbal image of Baudelaire's ragpicker prefaces a live personal presentation on E. G. Crichton's art practice: "For me, this is the description of an artist. I've always been a collector, so I've always done archival work, but I didn't always call archives 'archives'."<sup>2</sup> How she thinks of herself as an artist has changed over the course of her career, says Crichton, as she's moved between solo, site- and situation-specific art, installations, collaborations and working across many media. *Lineage: Matchmaking in the Archives*, a recent project, combines participational public-art tactics with archive-art. *Lineage* is currently being expanded into a travelling international project, *The Wandering Archives*. The multiple facets of these related hybrid archival projects; the number of artist/participants involved; the range of media used; their nomadic and traveling dimensions; and Crichton's own multi-dimensional and interdisciplinary roles, make *Lineage* and its successor works resistant to a concise summary in words; says Crichton:

*I work with an eclectic amalgam of objects, text, images, space, time and people. I play different roles: maker, organizer, historian, detective, curator – and now this new one: matchmaker. How to flatten this out, condense, push these forms into an annotated text that is written, read, maybe published. It's not unlike the way an archive distills a person's life into folders, files, boxes, shelves – a tangible biography (CAA 1)<sup>3</sup>*

Perhaps these same qualities also contribute to the formal queerness of *Lineage*, a project that defies easy categorization, is polymorphously perverse and constantly morphing, partakes of a fluidity and inclusiveness that invites the participation of many, and has a spirit of permissiveness which – within certain parameters – affords a large measure of creative freedom to those who join the fray:

*Lineage: Matchmaking in the Archive is the name of a project I developed as first artist in residence for the San Francisco Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society (GLBTHS). One by one I match the archives of the dead to living individuals, whom I ask to invent a response in any media. The resulting encounter resembles a blind date: I think about chemistry, about demographics and mutual interests, about what might emerge from the vault. There are a few rules: no-one is matched to someone they knew, most pairings cross generations, and the collections I select have not yet been in the public eye... (CAA, 1)*

In realizing this project, Crichton actively conceives and crafts its installation components: she creates large, arresting formal portraits in which participants and their archive-subjects are visually paired, as if they coexisted in the same time and space. She also creates substantial

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Baudelaire, quoted by Walter Benjamin in *Selected Writings*, Vol. 4 (Cambridge: Belknap Press, Harvard University, 2006)

<sup>2</sup> This talk, entitled "What's Left Behind," was given at the Pont Aven School of Contemporary Art July, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> E. G. Crichton, Conference Paper, College Art Association, Chicago, 2010 (referred to as CAA).

sculptural environments for the works: room-size installations that reproduce the physical feeling of an archive, whether in the form of metal scaffoldings and shelves, or as sculptural details and props she makes herself: for example, transparent plastic archive boxes to serve as ‘display cases’ for archive contents, etc. Crichton explains that her role as matchmaker includes, importantly, its own erotic cathexes, in addition to these materially crafted elements:

*Browsing the shelved collections is somewhat like cruising. Threaded with the thrill of chance encounters, the lure of fantasy, the possibility of probing deeper...desire is my retrieval mechanism, or maybe it's the fuel. How to select, dive in, open myself to what is inside, let myself be taken in. There is a distinct feeling of overstepping a boundary (CAA, 1).*

The ‘fuel of desire’ in Crichton’s work generally has led writer Jeffrey Escoffier to describe her installation and site-specific projects as animated by an “archaeology of desire.” In earlier pieces such as *Dark Bride*, *Broken Record* and *Quasi Lapis*, Crichton excavates history and memory in search of the material traces of the repressed and hidden stories of women – especially lesbians – and these traces are then “reconstructed” as “three- dimensional palimpsests.”<sup>4</sup> While ‘archaeology’ is a very apt metaphor for her ways of working pre-*Lineage*, the repertoire of Foucauldian metaphors would need to be expanded in describing Crichton’s recent work to include the notions – and the material artifacts – of genealogies and archives. Her trajectory toward the archive ‘not yet called an archive’ is, however, clearly already present in her early works, even in their naming; they bear traces of both an already-broken and a not-yet-assembled record.

### **1. Broken Records**

The somewhat limited literature on archive art ‘as such’ comprises a few dozen essays and a small number of anthologies and extended studies. These published works generally take Michel Foucault’s formulation of the archive in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* as a point of departure. For Foucault, the work of the archivist is related to that of the “archaeologist of knowledge” who reconstructs the past through its material remains and the archive itself is the setting for this archaeological practice: “that which, at the very root of the statement-event, and in that which embodies it, defines at the outset *the system of its enunciability*” (29).

‘Archive art’ defined as a genre is a somewhat recent phenomenon, even though – as a practice – the history of archival artwork extends backward at least to Duchamp’s ready-mades and the photographic collage-art of early modernists such as Hannah Hoch, Max Ernst, and others. While there is no exact consensus about how the term ‘archive’ should be defined, there is consensus that the idea of ‘the modern’ is delineated, in part, by an *importance* assigned to the archive as a system for storing and retrieving knowledge and historical memory. Charles Merewether summarizes the significance of the archive in his introduction to *The Archive*, distinguishing it from “the collection and the library” as an “ordered system of documents and records, both verbal and visual, that is the foundation from which history is written” (*Archive*, 10). Allan Sekula’s essay “The Body and the Archive” -- a seminal study of the relationships between photography and the archive -- examines the emergence of the archive through the history of photography and

4 Jeffrey Escoffier, “Queer and Uncanny: E.G. Crichton’s Archaeology of Desire,” from *E. G. Crichton, Solo and Site Work: 1994-2000* (self-published monograph)

portraiture. For Sekula, the uses of photography were ultimately part of a “larger ensemble: a bureaucratic-clerical-statistical system of ‘intelligence.’ This system can be described as a sophisticated form of the archive.” While the archive represents an all-encompassing system of administrative discipline, “the central artifact of this system is not the camera but the filing cabinet” (Sekula, 16). From Sekula we learn that archival practices historically developed from police bureaucratic systems designed to name, contain and capture queer and otherwise deviant bodies and to mark them as criminal.

Recent writing on archive art generally approaches its subject through the lens of something like what Hal Foster calls the “archival impulse”: it regards such art as having in common “an idiosyncratic probing into particular figures, objects and events in modern art, history and philosophy”. According to Foster, archive artists “in the first instance seek to make historical information, often lost or displaced, physically present. To this end, they elaborate on the found image, object, and text, and favor the installation format” (4). As ‘impulse,’ such archive art generally itself assumes the form of a reworked archive, often using photography and/or text as primary materials (Gerhard Richter; Christian Boltanski; Tacita Dean, for example). Or, perhaps almost as often, making use of objects, artifacts and built environments, sometimes in combination with still or moving photographic images (Marcel Broodthaers; Susan Hiller; Sam Durant; Andy Warhol; Renee Green). In Foster’s assessment, archive art after WWII was tinged by a melancholia that reflected the legacies of traumatic events such as the Holocaust. By contrast, the new “archival impulse” (Thomas Hirschhorn, Tacita Dean and Sam Durant are Foster’s examples) has “a distinctive character of its own” that turns “excavation sites” into “construction sites” and “proposes new orders of affective association, however partial and provisional” (21-22).

Queer archive art echoes much of this description (for example: it also exceeds an archaeology or excavation of the past in constructing new narratives and new identity formations; and while it retains a melancholic dimension, it also proposes new affective orders and, in fact, makes feeling and affectivity central to its project). But it also takes the new “archival impulse” in even newer directions, and proposes a different set of strategies. Foucault suggests that the archive both sustains and disrupts patterns of temporal and historical ordering. Archive contents are not “inscribed in an unbroken linearity” -- but they also do not simply “disappear at the mercy of chance.” The archive’s location is both discursive and temporal: “the locus of the archive is the gap between our discursive practices...it deprives us of our continuities; it dissipates that temporal identity in which we are pleased to look at ourselves when we wish to exorcise the discontinuities of history” (*Archaeology of Knowledge*, 148).

The archive is a discursive context, a field of operations. Its temporal dimensions can help to illuminate the individual *Lineage* archives where, in Crichton’s words, “The gaps in the story fuel the imagination as one steps into and out of the box, [the record of] a person’s life, this archival surrogate” (CAA, 1). The “archival surrogate” contains a “density of discursive practices” or, in Crichton’s words, an “eclectic amalgam” that makes *Lineage* resistant to verbal summary and, again, call Foucault to mind:

We are now dealing with a complex volume, in which heterogeneous regions are differentiated or deployed...Instead of seeing...lines of words that translate in visible characters thoughts that were formed in some other time and place, we have, in the density of discursive practices, systems that establish statements as events...and things... They are all these systems of statements (whether events or things) that I propose to call *archive* (Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 145).

*Lineage* offers an example of the ways in which queer archival public art can shift and enlarge terms of discourse about historiographies, sexual subjectivities, and public cultures. Here, I’d like to review a few examples of contemporary queer archive-based work, and then look more closely at *Lineage*. I will consider how it performs its queer work as well as its archival work--and will hope, in doing so, to begin to address the relative neglect of queer archive art in the general recent literature on art and the archive. I will suggest that queer archive art is, in fact, particularly germane to the ‘impulses’ that animate new archive art, on one hand, and, on the other, to recent queer discussions of alternative temporalities, histories, and historiographic practices and how these might be embodied and represented. Queer archive art presses against and enlarges received ideas of history, historiography, and historical preservation. If, for Foucault, the archive defines “the system of enunciability” of the statement-event, queer archive

art plays a role in freeing up “the conditions of emergence of statements, the law of their coexistence with others, the specific form of their mode of being, the principle according to which they survive, become transformed, and disappear” (*Archaeology of Knowledge*, 143).

## 2. *Other Queer Archive Artists*

In addition to Crichton’s work, other examples of queer artists working archivally in the U.S. include artist collectives such as John Q in Atlanta, Georgia; Atlanta-based artist and scholar Joey Orr; and San Francisco-based artist, Rudy Lemcke. John Q creates ephemeral, transient ‘memorials’ that source their materials from the archives and collection of the Atlanta History Center. In one recent project, *Memory Flash*, a series of events corresponding to moments of queer history in Atlanta were staged as a traveling public art program. These ‘memorials’ were variously performances, installations, and projections. They were site-specific, beginning in Atlanta’s Old Fourth Ward, moving to Piedmont Park, and ending at Ansley Avenue. Artists in the John Q collective describe their memorializing work as mapping a move from memorials as physical and figurative representations to “shifting moments of public affect and ephemerality.” Their projects reflect the move in public art and contemporary art practice from permanent sculpture to temporary events that “engage the communities in which they are situated.” To explain their approach to archival work and history-making, the collective invokes James Yang: “The surest engagement with memory lies in its perpetual irresolution...the never-to-be-resolved debate over which kind of memory to preserve, how to do it, in whose name, and to what end.” Such memorials can be conceived as “ongoing dialogues that could shift to different locations, taking various forms over time and reflecting divergent discourses generated by a variety of publics” (“Discursive Memorials”).

A second queer history/archive project is Rudy Lemcke’s fabricated narrative of the life of Ed Marker -- created as part of a larger project, *The Search for Life in Distant Galaxies*; both projects are part of a past exhibition, *Chronotopia*, motivated by the urge to look “at temporality in a queer way...through a multi-dimensional, non-hierarchical, nonlinear lens.” Lemcke says he was “tired of re-hashing the past” and “wanted to move forward”; the project “plays with queer time and space” and takes place “simultaneously in the past, present and future.” Ed Marker’s story is of a gay man evicted from his Tenderloin District apartment after 40 years of tenancy. His movements are traced through an interactive Google map of gay bars in the Tenderloin in 1968. Research for the mapping and other aspects of the project were conducted by visiting the SFGLBTHS collection where Lemcke found a scrapbook he assigned to his imaginary character, Ed Marker. A scrapbook retrieved from an archive box served as the basis for an invented archive, which was then returned to the collection where, in turn, it became the the potential source for other, perhaps endlessly-expanding archive projects.

John Q artist Joey Orr makes observations about queer archive art, and poses questions for its practitioners that resonate with *Lineage*. Alternative archival practices, says Orr, still catch queers up in the same administrative system that marked them as criminal in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. All archival work produces individuals [researchers] “synched to a form of management” or a disciplinary technology. Orr suggests that queer archival work should therefore “be reflective and self-aware,” and ask such questions as the following: “*What can visual and performative methods bring to the practice of queer archiving?*” (Orr: Creative forms of archive intervention echo the de Certeau-like queer ‘tactics’ used prior to the civil rights movement to establish spaces and relations). “*Should ‘interventions’ like Memory Flash or Lineage become the actual practices of archivists?*” (Orr: If queer ‘interventions’ become archival practices, this means not just commenting on, but building archives). “*How do these practices expand or change what we mean by archiving?*”

We can think of Orr, John Q, Lemcke, Crichton and others as performing ‘para-archival’ or reparative archival work that often differs from work done by other archive artists in specific ways. Archive artists have always – Hal Foster points out – used the logic or architecture of the archive as a formal point of departure; however, recent art such as E. G. Crichton’s departs from this crucially in making *direct* interventions into the institution of the historical archive itself. Orr

calls such interventions “recuperative” archival work, and wonders if they should be called ‘interventions’ at all; perhaps they’re “simply another kind of archival practice instead.” *Lineage* inserts artist-participants *physically* into the archive, where the work of a historian (or para-historian) is undertaken. For the queer artist, a certain urgency attaches to the recuperation of neglected archives -- or (to extend Eve Sedgwick’s notion of a ‘reparative reading’) to the ‘reparation’ of a lost history, a skewed narrative, and to questioning and reworking the straight historicizing impulse itself. While the queer archive-art impulse has much potential (if largely unexplored) importance within queer art critical studies – and queer theory – in the most often-cited general accounts of archive art, it hardly gets a mention. When it does, it is usually in the context of the uses of photography in *films*, for example, Cheryl Dunye’s film, *The Watermelon Woman*. Here, I would like to perform a bit of my own reparative archival work by restoring queer archive art to the critical contexts it addresses most dynamically: queer theories of history and time, and general accounts of the ‘archival impulse’ in art.

In conversations, Crichton has said that one impetus of *Lineage* was to *create* archives, just as Orr says the recuperative archivist must do. Among other things, the project was meant to add material to an already-existing collection, and it was important that the added archives be “archives with a difference” in terms of the processes by which they are assembled, the notions of identity and subjectivity that underwrote them, and the narratives that circumscribed the lives they represented. All the archives of *Lineage* rework life-stories and re-fashion individual identities, often as identity ‘clusters’ that retain imprints of many individuals and groups, living, dead, and invented. The impulse of *Lineage* is to reshape notions of what art, history, and identity can be, and to highlight the multiple narratives that can constitute a single subject by boldly fabricating the ways in which a ‘life-story’ might be represented. The subjects of the archive-boxes are reproduced always and only *in relation* to the artist-participants, and to Crichton herself, who says she is “an ambassador from the arts into the archive”:

*I am interested in blurring the boundary between oneself and a life that has passed...Giving participants one archive to focus on, one person, has a unique kind of power. Is it our most accessible way into history? Not through grand narratives...but through a simple one-to-one connection that we partially ‘read’ and partially invent? (CAA 1, 5).*

### **3. Archives and Feelings**

Crichton originally conceived *Lineage: Matchmaking in the Archive* as a public art project in which she would “interact with individuals, organizations, and other archives,” beyond those of the San Francisco GLBT Historical Society. As of this writing, Crichton has involved 21 participants in the project, and responses to archive matches have been exhibited in three shows. The first, *Lineage I*, took place during the first year of the project, and was mounted in what was then the Main Gallery of the GLBT Historical Society in 2009. The second, *Lineage II*, was organized as part of the National Queer Arts Festival, and took place at the SOMArts Gallery in 2010. In finding matches for participants, Crichton says she was most interested in the archives of “unfamous, ordinary people who have died.” I myself was at one point matched by Crichton to the archive of Veronica (né Ronald) Friedman, and began the process of creating a response. Friedman’s archive box consisted of the most ephemeral of ephemera, including such objects as poetry written on fraying paper napkins; re-copied personal diary entries; a chart of significant dates for gender reassignment surgery; a Curriculum Vita prepared for a gender identity clinic in 1981, and one copy of an Ann Landers column. There were no photographs at all, just a small nearly-empty file box with six thin manila folders. In her notes to me at the time, Crichton notes that Friedman was born 10/15/45; was lesbian-identified; started living as Veronica full time in 1981, and gave the impression of being estranged from her biological family.

Crichton’s general procedure is to formally introduce each participant to an archive she has carefully and partly intuitively pre-selected. To do this, she invites participants to come to the offices of the GLBT Historical Society, where they are introduced to the staff and the official archivist. Participants are then introduced to the archive ‘stacks’: a large room of metal shelving

filled with an orderly grid of boxes, and a few smaller rooms containing larger objects or unsorted archives. The box or boxes of the potential match are then brought into a research room furnished with large tables where the participant is given white archive gloves for handling the materials. Following this 'Archive Research 101' crash introduction, Crichton clarifies that she is available as needed as a research assistant and then leaves you alone to sort through the contents of your boxes. Delving into the boxes is a moving – and sometimes disturbing -- process. Inevitably, responses of participants to their matches span a large range of feelings: discomfort; curiosity and speculation; identification; idealization; friendship; a sense of voyeurism and privacy-invasion; dislike and repulsion; longing; desire. Testimonials from participants include the following:

**Bill Domonkos on Helen Harder:** “My experience with the archive was initially very unsettling. I felt as if I had stepped into a stranger’s house and started rummaging through their drawers”

**Gabriella Ripley-Phipps on Sally Binford:** “I had some trouble with this. I don’t feel close to Sally, I feel closer to those who loved her. I am not compelled to learn more, I don’t like her,” But later her tone changes: “Without an understanding of her darkness, I can’t know her. I think I would have liked Sally...I might have had a crush on her too.”

**Laura Rifkin on Jessica Barshay:** “Jess’s suicide left behind a torn piece of fabric in the universe. I continue to stitch my needle and thread into the fibers of it knowing it is work I must undertake, even though it cannot be repaired.”

**Troy Boyd to George Choy:** “How do you admit that you are attracted to someone who died over ten years ago? But there it is...I was immediately drawn to your physical beauty. Is this sick or flattering? I say it is what it is...”

The archive matches often become vividly embodied for *Lineage* artists. Crichton notes: “Each box is filled with the possibility of touch, smell, sight, sounds: the metaphorical taste of one person’s life...The work of *Lineage* participants, the relationship between the archived person and the living person, gives that archive a body” (CAA, 1). The roles of sensation and emotion in initiating the work of creative response to the archives and in formulating alternative life-stories are foregrounded in almost every account: these are the mechanisms for forging relationships that become “a kind of lineage...outside bloodlines and marriage contracts” (CAA, 1). The range of feeling responses clearly extends well beyond the “melancholia” of early post-WWII archive artists; and while the experience of trauma is hardly absent, it is often sidelined or overlaid with other affects, as when disabled writer Dominika Bedanarska responds wrenchingly to the archive of activist, Diane Hugaert, also a lesbian living with disability:

*I feel like I'm invading your space. Part of the reason I decided to do this project was because I knew you were part of Wry Crips. I think of you as a queer disabled radical. Your writing is much rougher going than I expect. Clearly private – the kind of private that we can't share as disabled people with the outside world...We might have flirted if I knew you when you were alive. Now, I'm a kind of extension cord into the present for some kind of work or struggle or insight, and that is something that neither starts nor stops with me.*

Ann Cvetkovich gives a compelling account of the many reasons why an archive of sexuality and lesbian and gay life must “preserve and produce” not just knowledge, but sensation, the body and, especially, feelings. Documenting such “immaterial” experiences as “intimacy, sexuality, love, and activism,” says Cvetkovich, “demands a radical archive of emotion” (*Archive of Feelings*, 241). Gay and Lesbian archives “assert the role of memory and affect in compensating for institutional neglect.” They are organized, among other things, to “address the traumatic loss of history that has accompanied sexual life and the formation of sexual publics” (241). Traumatic experience brings demands to bear, such as the compulsion to be witnessed and retold. Archives of trauma that commemorate the Holocaust, slavery, or war, for example, embody an imperative need to acknowledge a past that can be “painful to remember, impossible to forget, and resistant to consciousness” (241). Recent gay archive art often goes beyond the experience of trauma alone

to fill it out with other kinds of affective experience without altogether over-writing or erasing it. We find such responses among archive artists like Perry, Rifkin, Takemoto and Boyd.

For Cvetkovich, emotional experience and the memory of such experience demand an *unusual* archive – one that can follow the logic of the unconscious. It must resist the coherence of narrative (or at least clear and unequivocal narrative), and is often fragmented and apparently arbitrary. An archive response such as Laura Rifkin’s to Jessica Barshay, composed of a fragmentary constellation of memorializing objects – a poster, a typewriter, a birdcage, a book, etc.-- is such an archive. And while the traumas of AIDS, cancer, disability, racial injustice, incarceration, and more, are never distant from *Lineage*, these are complicated with variously inflected layers of feelings: admiring, playful, performative, ironic, critical, and (often) erotic.

Crichton stresses to participants in *Lineage* that they have no responsibility to ‘commemorate’ their archive subjects, or to create a memorial. By implication, she seems to steer them away from pre-formed or conventional emotional responses, and steer them toward their own more personal and sometimes complicated feelings toward and about their subjects. *Lineage* artists often respond in affect-laden and feeling-driven ways – but not simply so. Their work may be dark and obscure, half-hidden, coded and cryptic, or reflected and indirect. Some responses – especially those involving live performance elements – emerged as more fully-formed narratives, albeit as alter-narratives or lyrical commentaries that could be laid alongside the imagined lives they addressed. In all cases, a logic of the unconscious and a resistance to direct narrative seemed to prevail—a logic in keeping with Cvetkovich’s “archive of emotions.”

As in my own experience of Veronica Friedman’s box, the materials included in gay and lesbian archives often broach the immaterial. According to Cvetkovich, “gay and lesbian archives have disproportionately large collections of ephemera” (*Feelings*, 243). ‘Ephemera’ is the term given by archivists to items that fall into the ‘miscellaneous’ category when collections are catalogued: personal effects such as diaries, letters, and snapshots; miscellaneous objects such as flyers, posters, matchbook-covers, notepads – or, in Friedman’s case, fragile and desiccated colored cocktail napkins on which lines of poetry had been poignantly scribbled, “The stock-in-trade of the gay and lesbian archive is ephemera...Gay and lesbian archives are often built on the donations of private collectors who have saved the ephemeral evidence of gay and lesbian life” (243). Insisting on the value of ephemera, says Cvetkovich, is a way of declaring that, as much as anything, the life of the emotions imparts meaning to artifacts:

*The collectors of gay and lesbian archives propose that affects – associated with nostalgia, personal memory, fantasy and trauma – make a document significant. The archive of feelings is both material and immaterial (243-44).*

The gay and lesbian archive is, above all, a “repository of feelings” stemming from the predominance in gay and lesbian grassroots collections of materials relating to sexuality, leisure culture, and political activism. Gay and lesbian archives are born out of imperatives specific to gay and lesbian life: a “determination to ‘never forget’ that gives archives of traumatic history their urgency”; the need to preserve a record of efforts to combat homophobia; the desire to create a public gay and lesbian culture; the effort to preserve evidence of queer life “before Stonewall” in a variety of forms; and the desire to preserve the remnants of prominent queer subjects, as well as of everyday people (*Feelings*, 242-43).

#### **4. Queer Archival Differences**

The San Francisco Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Historical Society -- founded in 1985 in a home (the apartment of Bill Walker) -- emerged from within a private, domestic space. As it grew, it moved to a public location in the Mission district, and from there, to a larger Market Street location. It then moved to the space of its current offices on Mission Street, where the collection itself is housed. Recently, a museum on 18<sup>th</sup> street near Castro, in the heart of San Francisco’s historically gay neighborhood, was added. San Francisco’s other large



archival collection is maintained at the San Francisco Public Library, in the James C. Hormel Gay and Lesbian Center. These two San Francisco collections represent some generic differences between most existing archives in the U.S. One, the GLBTHS, began as a grassroots and populist collection, it was comprised in great part of the artifacts of ‘ordinary people,’ and was committed to encouraging queer public involvement with the archives themselves. The other, the SFPL collection, is institutionally-affiliated, is supported by wealthy donors and large donations, and focuses on politicians, queer celebrities and ‘exceptional’ individuals.

For queer archive artists, there can be important differences in engaging with the two types of collections. Grassroots archives house more sexually explicit material than their institutionally-affiliated counterparts; the latter tend to screen collections for the general public, and with a mind to answering the needs of fund-raising efforts and the demands of wealthy donors. The two kinds of archives tend to operate on different sets of assumptions. One – the populist archive – is more interested in fostering a queer public sphere, and in training its users in the practices of archival and historical research. The other -- the institutional archive – appeals to a general public sphere, and is interested in conserving and expanding its collections in ‘traditional’ ways -- but not necessarily in inviting the queer public to augment this collection by using ‘creative’ archival procedures.

At certain points in their histories, there have been tensions and competitions between the two kinds of archives; now, their relations come closer to dialogue. Grassroots and traditional archives frequently work in conjunction with one another, and both have important roles to play, says Ann Cvetkovich. As the number and size of gay and lesbian archives increase, it will be “interesting to watch how the collaborations and tensions play out.” It will always be “important to challenge what counts as national history and how that history is told” (251) – and it is in mounting such challenges that queer interventions in the “archival impulse” find traction and urgency. Worth noting apropos of the general lack of attention directed toward queer archive *art*, however, is the fact that Cvetkovich herself, in *The Archive of Feelings* – while she draws from a range of time-based texts, does not take up queer archival art directly. Crichton herself, of course, uses cross-media elements in her work, but these are not the main focus of her aesthetic interests, which are fundamentally non-object-based. In Cvetkovich, we find no accounting for artist’s projects that intervene directly into the historical archives themselves, as Crichton’s does, and that draw tactically on these collections to create queer ‘spaces and relations,’ or that use these collections as a creative resource for re-writing histories. Direct queer engagements with archival institutions are due a more thorough and contextualized accounting in art critical studies.

### **5. *Nested Archives***

When re-imagined and re-written histories are inserted back into the archive to become part of its positive contents, archive, history, and knowledge are reshaped recursively, remolding ideas of temporality itself. Time, history, and archive fold back and re-digest themselves, yielding new mutations, new formal patterns. Queer temporalities and historiographic shapes emerge. Crichton herself makes asynchronous interventions by introducing the archives of her archival projects back into the collection they issue from in the first place. In some cases, too, Crichton invited *Lineage* participants to, first, create an archive for someone not represented in a collection; then, secondly, to create a piece that *addressed* the archive they had created. So, for example, *Lineage* participant Gabriella Ripley-Phipps created an archive for Sally Binford. Ripley-Phipps accomplished this by inviting 12 students her own age to a dinner party. Prospective guests were then asked to imagine themselves as a kind of ‘future dead person’ (in a gesture folding the afterlife into this life) by bringing a few personal objects to the party that would be added to a potential archive box – one by which the invitee might like to be remembered. Each box was then presented anonymously to another guest, who discussed the contents of the ‘archive,’ speculating about its owner. The dinner party itself thus re-enacted the *Lineage*/archive process, and the entire set of interactions was videotaped and shown in the *Lineage I* exhibition as a kind of *mise en abyme* performance-within-a-performance. Other *Lineage* artists also played with notions of archival reflexivity, either by drawing material from other – often online or virtual – public-

access archives; or by identifying and italicizing the alternative-archival practices of their subjects.

Terry Berlier's project for *Lineage II*, 'NFS,' for example, is a multi-media response to the archive of H. Drew Crosby, a "closeted and crotchety" partner of Polk-Street bookstore owner Marion Pietsch. Together, Pietsch and Crosby amassed a huge collection of queer books and ephemera in the 40s and 50s, most priced 'NFS.' The couple lived at 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Lake Street, where they outfitted their home with wooden shutters, which they kept closed. According to Crosby's archive, every night, when they returned to their home, the two women closed their doors and said to each other, "Let's shut the world out." Crosby and Pietsch collected and preserved their own grassroots archive, in the form of the Polk Street store – a kind of queer public-service library. Berlier's clever response is a sculptural installation constructed out of real wooden shutters set into a window frame. When the shutters are opened, a video hidden inside the window is activated, playing a sequence from a public domain documentary culled from Rick Prelinger's online public-access archive. These archives-within-archives suggest the ways that various archival forms can intermingle and grow rhizomatically. If Crosby and Pietsch separated their shuttered home from their public bookstore-archive, a more common practice among grassroots gay and lesbian archivists was to turn the home – or a room within the home --itself into an archive, as did the founder of GLBTHS.

Grassroots archives can contain more sexually explicit material than archives attached to public institutions like libraries. Artist's projects prepared for *Lineage* reflect this difference between types of archives in various ways. Dorian Katz' response to the archive of sex-positive dominatrix Cynthia Slater draws from and capitalizes on this difference in the provocatively and graphically perverse content of her painting for Slater, "So you want to do SM, huh?" Katz' startling and witty painting reflects back the in-your-face sexuality of Slater's life and contributions to the queer community, as a "pro-domme who started the first support group for bisexual women with HIV; and as "the inventor of the Leather community as we know it," and as a "loving, daring darling of sex and sin." Katz' dedication to Slater reflects on their shared 'genealogy': "Dear Devoted Gifted Matriarch of Sadism, Thank you for taking me in as your mentee."

Elliot Anderson, on the other hand, speculates on the compulsion to disguise queer life in a less-permissive era: "How do we penetrate open secrets?" Anderson's archive-subject, Claude Schwob, "never married, he had erotic relationships with men, he shot erotic photos, and yet he worked on the most secretive of military research: the Manhattan Project." Anderson's response, *Unsanitized* is a single-channel video that combines open-access archival material from, again, the Rick Prelinger online archive with original 3D animation. Anderson thus reflects indirectly on the kind of 'sanitization' of lives and documents that public institutions require and enforce (public libraries that demand sanitized queer archives fall into this category).

Indirect reflections on the differences between grassroots and institutional archives – as 'populist' versus 'celebrity' archives -- as well as on utilizing the enfolding archive-within-an-archive approach, are present again in the work for *Lineage I* of Bill Domonkos. Domonkos' lyrical and elliptical video, *The Poppy*, is addressed to the archive of WWII pilot and poet Helen Harder, a.k.a., Eleanor Suggs. Domonkos – like Anderson and Berlier – borrows found footage from the Prelinger Archives, and comments on the aptness of using semi-anonymous open-access material: "The name of the actress is unknown, as are most of the faces you see in these public-domain archive films. I love that aspect about using public domain archive footage...The celebrity aspect is so *not* the point...The actors are mostly celluloid ghosts from the past."

Gay and lesbian archives transform notions of public and private space: private, personal artifacts are made available for public scrutiny; notions of 'publicity' are exposed as also often themselves forms of screening, censorship, and disguise. Questions about institutionalization and tensions about assimilation arise. Often, the histories of archives are "as emotional and idiosyncratic as

their collections”; each of the archives that preserves gay and lesbian history “has a history that itself belongs in an archive,” says Cvetkovich. These questions of archiving archival history – of the reflexive and recursive reshaping and reframing of histories – of reperforming, adlibbing, and adding-back invented archives to already existing collections are particularly queer ones. The always unfinished and self-questioning archive is to some extent a feature of all archives, but in the queer archive these become foregrounded crucial terms or conditions of existence. In one sense, Crichton’s approach to *Lineage* strikes a balance between making radical interventions in the archive as a way of creating queer genealogies where none were necessarily legible, and embodying the idea of ‘lineage’ in its pedagogical dimensions: as the relationship between teacher and pupil; mentor and mentee; a handing-down of tools and traditions. Crichton brings her well-honed skills as a long-term teacher in a public research institution to bear in her art practices: she grounds participants in the material basics – one kind of “density of discursive practices” -- of doing historical research in the archives and, if needed, she teaches non-artists the basics of conceiving, preparing, documenting and exhibiting an art project: both are valuable skill-sets.

### 6. *Media, Medium, Matchmaker*

Crichton’s roles in the *Lineage* project are multifaceted. Beyond the general role of the artist as a ‘ragpicker,’ or selective collector and recycler of cultural debris, she describes herself variously as “matchmaker,” “visual artist,” “midwife,” “ambassador,” and “organizer.” She also functions, as already mentioned, as a teacher as well as a historian, portrait-maker, curator, exhibition designer, event-coordinator, photographer and documentarist. She is also an ‘intuitive’ or general medium for the project. Ultimately, Crichton identifies the part she plays as fundamentally interdisciplinary -- beyond any single or collective role at all: “I’m not just a maker of meaning” she says “but the maker of a *framework* through which meaning emerges through a group process.” For Joey Orr, this aspect of the queer archive artist’s work qualifies it as a “relational art form”: “this kind of work falls into the category of relational aesthetics ... or what I would call relational scholarship.” Orr suggests that because queer archive art combines an aesthetic project and a social project with a mode of knowledge production, it is understandable as “relational art”: it re-conceives the function of the artist as a meta-role: a generator of ‘frameworks’ and ‘contexts’ in which meanings may also be produced by others. According to art critic Claire Bishop, relational art seeks to “set up encounters between people in which meaning is elaborated *collectively* rather than in the privatized space of individual consumption” (Bishop, 116). Audiences of relational art are envisioned in the plural, says Bishop, and “in many of these works we are given the structure to create a community, however temporary or utopian it might be” (116).

The social/conceptual framework Crichton suggests as the ultimate ‘medium’ of her art is such a structure, though the forms and materials through which she realizes it are carefully considered and highly crafted. The “temporary or utopian community” she assembles is a queerly defined and uncanny one that bridges social and ontological divides often kept separate:

*...for each matched pair I created a portrait in which the living and the dead occupy the frame at the same time. Each photo shoot lasted 2 hours or more. My living models frequently spoke to their projected matches, as well as with me and whoever else was in the room. Laughter, discomfort, conversation, and technical distractions all mingled with a bit of the uncanny and felt like community (CAA, 1)*

In her role as ‘matchmaker,’ Crichton sometimes describes herself as, if not performing a critique, then proposing an alternative to the current forms of homonormativity that take legalizing queer marriage as their privileged civil rights objective. Crichton wonders how “one-to-one relationships with the other side” might function to queer such investments: “Is the timing an accident? Do we still need a non-normative and destabilized approach to the erotic? Something outside our ‘normal’ queer lives and loves?” (CAA, 5). *Lineage* stages sites and rituals for

generating non-normative affiliations and affective kinships, and in this way produces its “temporary utopian community.”

Facilitating communication with the ‘other side’ – conjuring ghosts and ghostlinesses, invoking spectralities, consorting with the undead – are widely recognized as queer activities and forms of queer figuration. Spiritualism, mediums, and séances are often written about as social formations that – in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries – enabled the eventual consolidation of emerging but still-unnamed and unrecognized non-normative erotic relationships and gender identifications. Molly McGarry, for example, in *Ghosts of Futures Past*, details this history in relation to U.S. Spiritualism:

*Spiritualist practice reveals social formations that even in their time were considered transgressive...The amorphous sexual matrix offered by Spiritualism so emphatically blurred contemporary categorical distinctions that sexual couplings of Spiritualists may be the least strange thing about them...The boundaries that Spiritualists crossed – or momentarily bridged – produced a unique set of affinities through a radical collapse of temporality” (159).*

McGarry elsewhere notes that “Spiritualism held enormous appeal for women and men who inhabited gender and sexuality in transgressive ways” (154). McGarry’s account has intriguing specific resonances with the responses of some *Lineage* artists to their archives. For example, one gender-transgressive medium in McGarry’s account is a “Spiritualist superstar” named Jesse Shepard who channeled the singing voices of sopranos while in a trance-state. Shepard was able to produce “an uncannily high voice that was credited to the spirits that sang through him” (164-65). Such diva-turns of mediumship are eerily echoed in *Lineage* participant Luciano Chessa’s commemorative response to Larry de Caesar’s archive. Chessa’s ‘aria’ (“Prayer of an Aspiring Musician”) -- performed by male soprano Don Tatro -- was staged live at the opening of *Lineage I* (and recreated as a video installation by Crichton), where Tatro’s astonishing soprano voice -- soaring up over Chessa’s piano accompaniment – did indeed have the spine-tingling effect of a ‘voice from beyond’ channeled through the living from the dead.

Recent understandings of 19<sup>th</sup> century Spiritualist practices often understand these practices as emerging forms of transgressive erotic and affective affiliations, or as not-yet (or differently) categorized deviant social relationships – forms of queer ‘matchmaking.’ Crichton and her artists take up these discourses in *Lineage*: “It was in the photo sessions that I was reminded of 19<sup>th</sup> century séances. I thought of all those spirit photographs graced with ghost-like apparitions, or the ones that revealed ectoplasm emanating from the body of a ‘medium’” (CAA, 6). The spectral eroticism of the of triangulated relationships channeled through the ‘matchmaker’ are consciously cultivated:

*There is plenty to get off on. In the age-old tradition of middle-aged women who engage in this service, and as a lesbian in my promiscuous late middle age, I help launch relationships and then get to see and hear every detail of how they evolve. It is a kind of archive-mid-wifery, a highly voyeuristic, undoubtedly manipulative, and totally magical experience (CAA, 1)*

Crichton’s staging of the archive as a site for communication between the living and the dead that affords multiple possibilities for non-normative erotic entanglements has a rich context of related commentary – especially in lesbian-themed critical discourse, where it is associated with the fundamental conditions of lesbian representability in literature and film. Other transgressive groupings in *Lineage* that have the effect of queering relationships and temporalities include the fluidity with which cross-generational connections are negotiated. Lucian Chessa comments after his photo session with the image of Larry de Caesar:

*Larry was not my type, yet I was historically intrigued. The only moment in the process in which something took place at a physical level was during the photo session. This is when I actually had to deal with the fact that Larry indeed had a body...Before I knew it, I was flirting with Larry's projection. At times we needed to look each other in the eyes. For some poses Larry was my age and we made a nice couple. In others Larry was an older gentleman with southern sideburns and we played out a daddy aesthetic (sideburns ARE sexy) with me as the younger lover (CAA, 6)*

For Chessa, an erotic fluidity is activated that assumes the form of imaginary time-play during his photo sessions with Larry's image. Like Chessa's, Elissa Perry's *Lineage* project turns on an imaginary pairing that has a fluid intergenerational dimension and a shiftingly queer temporality. Perry responds to African-American poet Pat Parker, who died of breast-cancer in the 80s (and in the process creates a new archive-box for Parker where none had existed). As a 13-year-old girl, Perry had idolized Parker and written about her in her teen-age journal. Perry's project involved inscribing the contents of this journal on sheets and bedding, which she then mounted as an installation for *Lineage II*, creating a dialogue between her young self and Parker's mature poetry. Other intergenerational affinities emerged within *Lineage*, such as a cluster of links between World-War II-era gay and lesbian archive-subjects and project participants. Bill Domonkos created a cryptic lyrical video response to the archive of Helen Harder, a flight instructor in the Woman's Army Air Corps during WWII; Elliot Anderson offered an experimental video response inspired by Charles Schwob, a chemist who worked on the Manhattan project; and a third WWII-themed project comprised the installation and performance works created by Tina Takemoto in response to the archive of Jiro Onuma, as she imagined Onuma's experiences as a gay survivor of a Topaz, Utah WWII Japanese Internment camp.

Relationships bridging – and producing -- temporal ruptures and social and ontological divides; spectral pairings; triangulations and 'trouples' channeled through the artist-as-medium; groups that form uncanny – and eroticized – 'communities': these are all forms of radical queer lineage-making, affiliation, and genealogy-generation. In her written notes on the project, Crichton takes particular interest in Jodie Medd's account of the triangulated relationship between Radclyffe Hall, her living lover, Una Trowbridge, and her dead lover, Mabel Batten. This 'threesome' was negotiated in the late teens through séance sessions conducted with a medium, Gladys Leonard. Medd makes the argument that the late 19<sup>th</sup> century fascination with spiritualism and its methods of channeling voices from the 'other side' indicated a contemporary interest in alternative modes of forging unconventional human intimacies:

*"The occult offered these lesbian relationships a remarkable form of courtship and affiliation that escaped the heterosexual matrix – the prevailing structure of human intimacy – to achieve paranormal allegiances that resisted cultural constraints on ways of loving. ..The literal 'ghosting' of Batten sustains and multiplies Hall's same-sex intimacies, while constituting a fascinating lesbian threesome" (Medd, 205).*

Molly McGarry, writing about Hall, as well as Walt Whitman, says that subjects like Whitman and Hall "made sense of their own queer time through spiritual theories of embodiment and forms of memorialization that offered what secular science refused: transfigurative affiliation, consolation, and connection," the same forms of commemoration and connection yearned for and animated within a project like *Lineage*. Of McGarry and Medd, Crichton says, "These authors and others address history through the lens of queer theory as a kind of haunting that comes back and informs the present"; archival work, too, "opens one up to possession, a haunted, enchanted and ...erotic state" (CAA, 6). At this point, I would like to pursue further the position of queer archival art in the ongoing current project of queerly re-thinking temporalities and historiographies.

## **7. Queer Time and the Archive**

Since the 1970s, lesbian and gay historians have attempted to account for what had been "hidden

from history,” especially in the years before the 1969 Stonewall rebellion. These back-histories have had to be understood with whatever hermeneutic was at hand: conjecture, fantasy, poetic intervention, ephemera. As Tirza Latimer puts it in her introduction to *Lineage I*, “Historical research on ‘invisible minorities’ engenders unconventional strategies, hones specially adapted skill sets, and relies on resources that may not qualify for conservation in traditional archives.” Elizabeth Freeman observes that gays and lesbians have often been figured as “having no past: no childhood, no origin or precedent in nature, no family traditions or legends, and, crucially, no history as a distinct people” (162). This temporal and historical erasure has prompted what queer theorists call “a queer desire for history” or “historical emotion.” Freeman says of this desire that it has “manifested in valuable archival work”; work done by queer archive artists like E.G. Crichton and others makes distinctive contributions to a broader queer project of re/constructing and theorizing histories and temporalities: a project connected to how we can understand current ‘archives’ in an expanded Foucauldian sense.

In *Lineage*, these methods enlarge and change as Crichton invites participants to explore strategies of their own invention and fold them into the expanding project. On the parts of participants and exhibition audiences alike, *Lineage* invites “leaps of imagination, projections that illuminate invisible zones within official accounts of historical and biographical events” (Latimer). ‘New Queer Archive Art’ performs important work in innovatively reclaiming lost pasts that are “hidden from history”; but at least as important is its modeling of new forms of knowledge-production and history-making that resonate with queer theories of temporality. In the conceptual encounter between queer archive art and temporality theories, queer archive work takes on a broad interdisciplinarity that intersects with the projects of critical race theory and postcolonial studies in the understanding that “what has not entered the historical records, and what is not yet culturally legible, is often encountered in embodied, non-rational forms: as ghosts, scars, gods” (159).

New Queer Historians claim improvisatory methods for conducting historical research for which “‘dreaming’ is a placeholder” (Freeman, 162). Improvisation and dreaming have also been the basis for queer historical research of the kind Joey Orr conducts under the rubric of the “recuperative” archive. Queer historical scholars often use what Raymond Williams calls ‘structures of feeling’ as bases for their practices: they favor “eclectic, idiosyncratic, and transient archives including performances, gossip, found objects, and methods (or anti-methods) that rely on counterintuitive juxtapositions of events or materials” (162). Often, historical work using queer research tools investigates histories of emotion and feeling of the sort detailed by Cvetkovich; it also takes up histories of “sensations that do not even count as emotions” such as “feelings of uncanniness, untimeliness, belatedness, delay or failure” (163). These ‘sensations’ are consistently at the forefront of accounts by *Lineage* participants when they describe their encounters with the contents of their matched archives.

Queer theory draws on many models of time and history to propose non-normative temporalities; the most frequently encountered, perhaps, are those found in the writings of Walter Benjamin, post-colonial theorists like Homi Bhabha, and Jacques Derrida. Benjamin’s model in “Theses on the Philosophy of History” -- which critiques time conceived as a flat plane -- is perhaps the most frequently cited. Benjamin suggests a recursive temporal model that “wrinkles and folds,” so that, for the queer historian, materials of the past might find uses *now*, in a future they could not imagine. Jacques Derrida’s temporal model in *Spectres of Marx* is a source for speculations about queer spectrality, ghosts, and hauntings, as in Carla Freccero’s in *Queer/Early/Modern*. For Freccero “queer spectrality” is a relationship to historicity that accounts for “the affective force of the past in the present, of a desire issuing from another time and placing a demand on the present” (163-64). Such stake-claiming, for Freccero, necessarily has an ethical dimension: the past stakes a claim, and this produces in us an ethical obligation to that past. This reciprocity is what “queer spectrality” *is* and why we are *haunted* by others differently located in time. The stake-claimings at work in *Lineage* function similarly: the dead subject stakes a claim on the artist, and this operates reciprocally. As Camille Norton says of her response to Nancy Stockwell, “My poem

speaks to the process of waiting to find a way into a poem about Nancy, in other words, the difficult process of writing a poem worthy of her. The poem is about the two of us, poet and subject, and the topic of breath in poetry and in life” (CP2, 4). The ethics of haunting, of queer spectrality, is reversible and gives us a sense of how it is that queer temporalities “address the porosity, permeability, and recursivity of queer studies as a whole at its best” (Freeman, 159).

In interviews, Crichton says that her interest in queer lineages and genealogies springs from her sense of being abandoned, ‘orphaned,’ and effectively disowned by her own biological family shortly before first coming out. The queer psychology of the ‘orphan’ or ‘foundling’ – a subject-positioning outside the heterosexual matrix of the couple and the nuclear family– resonates with Christopher Nealon’s notion of a ‘foundling’ literature where kinship relations are re-imagined along lines that avoid the heterosexual marriage plot, and kinship relations turn instead toward “affect-genealogies” that generate a “lineage of invisible kin” (Nealon, 14). For Nealon, Willa Cather’s novels and Hart Crane’s poetry show a tension between “solitary exile and collective experience”; a wish to transform “isolation and privacy...into narratives of more public collective life.” In doing so, they demonstrate “an overwhelming desire to *feel historical*” (8). Among the texts toward which Nealon directs his attention are physical culture magazines of the 1950s. These attempted, in their own way, to take up questions of “feeling and affiliation” common to foundling literature. Muscle magazines played an important role “in a mid-century struggle over how to read the relationship between individual male bodies, on one hand, and an invisible gay public that might or might not turn out to be the source of some historical change” (15).

Tina Takemoto’s response to the archive of Jiro Onuma (1904 – 1990) for *Lineage I* brings to mind the ‘muscle magazine’ texts studied by Nealon, as well as strongly resonating with Carla Freccero’s notion of a “queer spectrality” that places an “ethical demand” on the living by the dead. *Lineage I* exhibition notes describe Onuma as:

*...a Japanese man who immigrated to the U.S. in 1923. He lived as a dandyish gay bachelor in San Francisco. During WWII in 1942, he was incarcerated in the Japanese American Internment Camp in Topaz, Utah. He was a collector of male physical culture magazines.*

In a moving response to Onuma’s archive, Takemoto hand-fashions the objects she imagines to be appealing to a gay man like Onuma, using the carefully researched craft techniques and materials actually available in Japanese internment camps: a tarpaper wallet, a cigarette holder, “gaman-style” carved bird cufflinks and tie clip, a muscle man hanafuda card set, and a homemade “progressive exerciser” device with a chart to record progress. Takemoto says of her ‘care-package’ for Onuma:

*I grew up hearing stories about the Japanese American Internment Camps, but no one ever mentioned the gay and lesbian experience of imprisonment. I try to imagine how Jiro Onuma survived the isolation, boredom, humiliation, and homonormativity of internment as a dandyish gay bachelor obsessed with erotic male physical culture magazines. From Onuma’s archive, I discovered he enrolled in Earle Liederman’s 12-week correspondence Physical Culture School program. Was Onuma receiving letters from Liederman and following this program in camp as a way to keep his queer imaginary alive?*

Takemoto’s speculations about Onuma’s wish to “keep his queer imaginary alive” through his obsession with muscle magazines and his correspondence with Liederman echo Nealon’s argument that male physical culture magazines spoke to an invisible gay public bound together by unspecified affective affiliations – kinship or lineage lines -- and a desire to “feel historical.” This desire, for Takemoto, becomes further entangled with the desire to bring into historical legibility – using ‘unconventional’ methods of historical research and re-performance -- not just the largely unpublicized experience of Japanese internment, but her own imagination of the gay and lesbian

specificities of that experience. Takemoto says, “Jiro Onuma is my gay Japanese American role model, queer accomplice, and friend.” Her response embodies a queer spectrality or haunting informed by Freccero’s ‘ethical imperative,’ and built out of a thickly materialized and personal ‘porosity’ to past lives. It responds to multiple traumatic histories: of immigration, of incarceration in a Japanese Internment Camp, and of gay life in the U.S.A. decades before Stonewall. Moreover, Takemoto continues to develop and breathe life into the ‘ghost’ of Onuma, even after the closing of the *Lineage* exhibitions, by creating several additional performance pieces in which she re-embodies imaginary aspects of Onuma’s experience.

Writing is one medium for speculating about queer time, and one mode for responding to the call for more embodied forms of queer historiography. But the theoretical writings – by Benjamin, Derrida, post-colonial theorists, and others – that are drawn on by queer theorists in developing alternative modes of history-making have only an oblique relationship to the body erotic. According to Freeman, we therefore still find ourselves, as queer theorists of time and history,

*in the process of creating...a historiographic method that would admit the flesh, that would avow that history is written on and felt with the body, and that would let eroticism into the notion of historical thought itself (164).*

It is perhaps exactly in response to Freeman’s call for “an *écriture historique* along the lines of an *écriture féminine*” that projects like *Lineage* become most interesting for queer theory. While I don’t mean to argue that *Lineage* necessarily epitomizes a queer *écriture historique* in all its dimensions, it does contain striking features appropriate to a wished-for historiographic method modeled on the assumption that “history is written on and felt with the body” – a method that would admit “eroticism into the notion of historical thought itself.”

In answer to the question, “What might this look like?” Freeman says it would consist of “erotically affective narratives or performances of human belonging where life forms, although porous to one another across time, do not seem exchangeable through a third term of equivalence such as sexual identity” (164). This is an entirely apt description of the historical work performed by *Lineage* and similar queer archive-art projects. For Freeman, the looked- and hoped-for *écriture historique* can be compared to drag performance:

*a non-narrative history written on the body, in which the performer channels another body, literalizing the permeability to which Chakrabarty refers and making this body available to a context unforeseen in it’s bearers lived historical moment...belonging is a matter of pleasurable cathexis across historical time, as well as across the space between stage and audience. What takes place between the performer and the object of her performance, or between an audience member and her performer/alter-ego, can be some mixture of identification, disidentification, arousal, contempt, longing – but cannot be reduced to common belonging under the sign of ‘gay’ (165).*

But drag is only one possible example of what such a “nonnarrative history written on the body” might look like; another is spirit possession, and this can be extended to include forms of mediumship. Other obvious examples, too, are the performances for *Lineage* by its participant-artists, and the performance of *Lineage* as a whole by/through Crichton herself: each “channels another body” and literalizes the kinds of “permeability” here in question. In her capacity as matchmaker, Crichton embodies and is subject to “physical possession shot through with sexual energy, yet unassimilable to contemporary understandings of lesbianism...” (Freeman, 165). Crichton says:

*I already have become aware of my own historical promiscuity...becoming familiar with ghosts opens one up to possession, a haunted...and – yes – erotic state, The process of opening an archive box, allowing what is inside and what you imagine to haunt you, brings back a person’s life queerly...A neat linear sequence of time*



*becomes disordered as you relate to the person at all stages of their life (CAA, 6).*

Adopting the roles of medium and matchmaker and folding them into those of historian and archivist is a queer way to stake claims on time and on history; embodying these roles as an artist, and then redefining 'artist' as a 'maker of frameworks' for a potentially unlimited kind and number of respondents and responses stakes queer claims on much more. In queer theory, lip-service is often paid to the value of body-based, erotic and affective knowledge-production. Queer archive-art such as *Lineage* strongly models the ways that queer knowledge forms can break out of language-based discourse to become, materially and immaterially, embodied and affective. Crichton's project is unusual in mobilizing a wide range of media, strategies, concepts, and subjects in order to *actually* activate the erotics, sensations, and feelings of embodied knowledge directly, and unusual in directly penetrating the space of the archive itself.

[UNFINISHED WORK IN PROGRESS]

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