6. The alternative collection in the repository (utopia and heterotopia)

Introduction

I am concerned in this chapter with theoretical aspects of how the art world is documented in the library:

- How is the idea of 'alternative' space used, as a different ideological or representational space, as a resource in art practice?

- How have libraries represented alternative art spaces, and how can they do this more comprehensively?

In the first part of this chapter, I review major contemporary art ephemera collections in the UK, in order to give some idea of the scale of material available. I review literature of librarianship, on the collection and management of art ephemera in the repository. Ephemera are recognised to be difficult to manage effectively. However, observations have nevertheless been made by art librarians in museums, galleries and universities about the virtues of art ephemera as a research resource and I note these views and compare them with those of researchers and artists involved in compiling alternative resources. I present some case studies on collections that were intended to collect documentation of the 'alternative'.

I follow this section with discussion of the idea of the library as a 'heterotopia', as the context for ephemera collections and I explore the theoretical differences between collections and archives. I refer to Foucault, Derrida and Benjamin, as originators of theories of the archive most frequently cited in contemporary art theory, in order to

analyse the underlying assumptions about the theoretical space of the library and its role. Throughout this chapter, I advocate an engagement with the concerns of contemporary art, which I think is necessary in order to develop ephemera collections as research resources. In the next chapter, 7, I will consider the related problem of intellectual access to collections, through the catalogue, and how the catalogue represents collections.

Collecting in practice

There has been no overall evaluation of collections of art ephemera in the U.K. at the date of writing, although there are indications of a drive towards such a thing. Beth Houghton's article in the special edition of *Art Libraries Journal* , *Ephemera as a research resource* (ALJ, 2006), drawing on material in Tate library, acknowledges this, as it concludes with the suggestion that "the time may be right for a resource-discovery project" (32). This issue contained a selection of articles in which the values of particular collections, of art ephemera from different periods, were discussed.

I made an informal survey of collections that held contemporary art ephemera as preparation for this research and for the Vektor project in 2003, using the mailing list for UK art libraries, *arlis-link*. The following summary is based on that survey.

Contemporary art ephemera collections in the UK

In England there are many publicly accessible research collections of ephemera and archival material on contemporary art (from 1968 onwards): in national libraries and

archives, in public institutions and in the libraries of art colleges and universities. The following brief account gives some idea of the quantity of material to be considered[1].

The UK National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum has a substantial collection of artist's files on individual artists, which appear on their catalogue as National Art Library Information Files. The Hyman Kreitman Research Centre for the Tate Library and Archive at Tate Britain also has a large collection, and files for individual artists appear on the catalogue. In addition to the ephemera held by the National Art Library and Tate Library, the British Council Visual Arts Library, which has developed to support the curatorial work of that department, holds books and catalogues as well as 2000 files of exhibition announcements, press cuttings and biographies on post-war artists who were either born or live in Britain. These include hard-to-find materials and ephemera. Academic institutions which have developed or accommodated wide-ranging collections of exhibition documentation and artists' ephemera include the Chelsea School of Art Library, which has a particularly good collection of art ephemera and artists' ephemera, discussed in a report on art ephemera in art libraries in New York and London by Elizabeth Lawes and Vicky Webb (Lawes & Webb, 2003). *The Diversity Archive*, formerly the *African and Asian Visual Arts Archive (AAVAA)*, housed at University of East London, was established in 1988 by Eddie Chambers and contains substantial ephemeral material. *Panchayat* is an archive of documentation on contemporary visual artists producing issue-based work around cultural identity, housed at the University of Westminster. The visual arts organisation InIVA intends to bring the work of artists from culturally diverse backgrounds to the attention of the widest possible

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[1] Appendix 2 is a list of resources.

public; it has a library and archive, which contains artists' files and project archives, as well as an online archive. The library and archives at the Baltic contain ephemera, amongst many kinds of documentation, many of which are available on the web. The *Women's Art Library/Make* collection at Goldsmiths contains ephemera in its 10,000 documentation files on women artists. The Royal Academy has artists' ephemera on all of its members, past and present. Each member has a file, all press releases, exhibition material and press cuttings collected or received go into these files, together with some sales information. Also, the Archive contains a comprehensive series relating to its ongoing exhibition programme. This includes all leaflets, posters, press releases and education guides. There are no plans to gain electronic access to the artists' files, however, within the next few years the archive of exhibition ephemera should be on-line. The special collection known as the *The National Visual Arts Library* at the National College of Art and Design, Dublin documents all aspects of twentieth century and contemporary art and design in Ireland and provides public access to a national research resource. A database of some of the material is being prepared and will be available through the Internet. Glasgow School of Art Archives Collects material relating to contemporary artists associated with GSA. The Archive material includes press cuttings, exhibition flyers and handouts, as well as more traditional archival material and complements the published material (particularly exhibition catalogues) in GSA Library relating to such artists. Ephemera is included in the archives at many public galleries, including the Whitechapel, the John Hansard Gallery and The Hayward Gallery library, however, these are generally not publicly accessible and material is collected to meet the research needs of the exhibition curators, or as a record of the activities of the gallery.

The Hayward Gallery library acquires material on modern and contemporary art (British and international). It contains a small quantity of key historic material and the library of the Arts Council of England. However, The library is not able to offer public access and is a last resource reference library for consultation by appointment only. Commercial galleries such as White Cube and Lisson similarly keep archives of exhibitions and files relating to artists that they represent. I have not surveyed these collections, because the scope of my interest is public resources.

From this survey, I found that in the UK, most of the collections of contemporary art ephemera are in London, possibly reflecting the greater concentration of art events, galleries, museums and art schools there. It has been recognised that ephemera collections tend to reflect their local milieu. Reasons for collection have rarely been elaborated, or compared, and strategies remain undeveloped, even though the collection of exhibition documentation in libraries has been the subject of concern amongst some art librarians in Britain for many decades. Clive Phillpot (Chelsea College of Art, MOMA New York and the British Council libraries) is often cited as an authority in this field. His article 'Flies in the files: ephemera in the art library' (Phillpot, 1995) is probably the most widely cited article on art ephemera. Beth Houghton, also a significant authority in the UK art libraries field, was interested in ephemera throughout her career. She described the role of ephemera in the documentation of contemporary art in 1980 (Houghton, 1980). Later on, as Librarian at the Tate, Houghton managed the accumulation of a mass of private view cards, eventually before her retirement in 2006 arranging for these to be sorted (by volunteers) and catalogued as vertical files on the main library catalogue. Her essay *RSVP* from 2006, (Houghton, 2006) *Art Libraries Journal*, demonstrates her

continuing appreciation of these items as artifacts and her recognition of their value for research, especially as documentation of the early careers of artists who later become successful. Various kinds of material have been categorised as ephemera, including pamphlets and even the more humble kind of artists' books and multiples. The collections at Chelsea College of Art, built up by Clive Phillpot, Stephen Bury, who has written extensively on artists' books, and Liz Ward, include important collections of ephemera, which has been used and valued, as well as the better-known artists' books and multiples collections.

As an art librarian, I am always aware that however many art books, magazines, slides and videos I acquire for the library, more actions, events and thoughts remain undocumented there, I realise that if I do not engage with this problem, not only will I be unable to provide current readers with information on the artists they are interested in, but my collections are likely to divulge only a simplified and reductive version of history, to future researchers. This condition of my work is partly a consequence of the problem described by Clive Phillpot when he stated that "art libraries are perpetually engaged in countering ephemerality" (Phillpot, 1995, 14); a condition which applies especially to ephemera from alternative art events. but this a political issue, of how the otherwise lost, forgotton, or 'virtual' contributions to curating art, to including, or excluding actions are documented. Diverse events may or may not become a navigable history: as Elizabeth Grosz explains "the political alternatives to present domination are not there, simply waiting to be chosen, possible but not yet real. These alternatives, as Bergson recognized, are not alternatives, not possibilities, until they are brought into existence." (Grosz, 2004, 261).

A growing body of literature affirms the value of contemporary art ephemera in documenting ephemeral activities and events that play a significant part in contemporary and innovative art practices. The changing and fluid configurations of the contemporary art environment mean that ephemera collections, built up for many reasons may, as a critical mass, represent the art world but individually they are incomplete, fragmentary records. In her introduction to *Alternative Art New York,* Julie Ault makes a strong case for ephemera as source material, as I noted in chapter 3, and they are reproduced extensively throughout the book. The contributors use ephemera as source material as they recount and analyse histories of the 'alternative' movement in New York from multiple perspectives. I have collected her comments on ephemera as a resource from her introduction to the book here, to emphasise the value she gives it:

> Existing documentation of New York City's highly influential alternative art culture of the 1970s and 1980s is ephemeral, and its circulation is restricted. Writing about alternative art spaces and groups has been largely limited to articles for local newspapers, reviews and overviews for art journals, and self-published documents concerning specific organisations….[I was] Struck by the fragmentary nature of available information, the few books on the alternative arts arena, and the lack of examination of the underlying philosophies of the field" (1)…. Documentation of ephemeral events – protests, meetings, actions, installations, exhibitions, temporary public art and items from the paper trails of short-lived groups – is least likely to be found in library collections…. Because many alternative initiatives are ad hoc, time-based or anti-institutional, documentation is frequently fugitive. Accessibility is another variable. For some long-defunct entities only a meagre paper trail exists – a mention here and there in print. In some cases, material has been saved but remains unorganized due to lack of money, labor, energy, or interest. In still other cases, histories and data have been compiled and packaged. What becomes history is to some degree determined by what is archived. (1-3)

Art ephemera have been collected in libraries because they are evidence of events, and also because of their appeal as objects, the qualities I described in chapter 3: their visual appeal, their charm, see Houghton (2006), Hadley (2001), their frailty, as commodities,

or because they are seen as printed art works. Steven Leiber and Todd Alden in the catalogue for *Extra art* (2001)[2] argue that artists' ephemera has been neglected by critics and institutions, and imply that they want to get it out of library 'artists files' and into the art museum. They suggest that artists' ephemera should be valued as art. In fact, as not only was much of the material included in that exhibition produced as art, for example as mail art or as documentation of conceptual art but artists' ephemera is recognised as art, in art libraries and archives, it does not seem to me that theirs is a controversial argument.

If alternative art activities are to be represented in accessible ephemera collections clear collection policies are needed because organisations, galleries and organisations involved in 'alternative' activities (using this word in the traditional sense as taking place outside art's established institutions, as well as in the complex sense) are often informal, ephemeral and transient. Individuals who take part are often not related to any specific institution, and events take place in many different spaces, where use may change and which do not, therefore, have archives. Those who organise events or programmes may or may not keep an archive of that event, but these are unlikely to be placed in public archives for many years, if at all. When art is made public in some way, there may be an event, there may or may not be a material art work, there may or may not be a catalogue published, an exhibition or other kind of event may possibly be reviewed. Organisers often do not have funding to produce catalogues, this economic limitation is one reason why 'private view invitations' (PVIs)[3] or exhibition announcements have been elaborated to include descriptions or explanations of the event. Cieszkowski (1981, 4) argued that as

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[2] Discussed more fully in chapter 3.

[3] Beth Houghton's term, ALJ 31/4/2006 p.27

smaller galleries often do not produce catalogues. this makes the collection of ephemera even more significant. Art ephemera that are produced as exhibition announcements may be the only printed documentation of passing events.

Acquisition

Collecting in libraries usually relies on routines set up for collection that are sustained by relations between institutions, or between an individual and an institution, so transient organisations and one-off events are less likely to reach the collection. The material is not produced by fixed organisations in fixed locations but by changing individuals or configurations and this means that a collecting policy for 'alternative' art events must take this into account.

 Clive Phillpot observed, that acquisition of ephemera by art libraries had often been 'somewhat passive',

> [T]he document files of most libraries will have a distinct character because they are the result of the somewhat passive accumulation of ephemera that reaches the particular institution, specifically through the activity of the community of art agencies that comprise that institution's unique geographic and intellectual environment. (1995, 14).

However, he points out the positive value of the collections that may develop under these conditions, saying that the resulting collection may give the library a distinctiveness for researchers, as the particular compilation of items as well as individual items within it, may be unique. Terrie L. Wilson and Erika Dowell (Wilson & Dowell, 2003) citing Phillpot, explain how analysis of strengths in the collection can be used by librarians to help them to decide on how to make it more accessible. In a higher education institution, for example, information on faculty artists and local artists and art projects might be

expected. In a case study, they compared the contents of ephemera files on the Works Progress Administration (WPA) held at Michigan State University's Fine Arts Library with ephemera files for the same artist, on the same project, held at MoMA, finding significantly different material, including local press cuttings and letters. Wilson and Dowell argue that when the strengths of the collection and the interests of patrons have been identified, that knowledge should be used to make a clear collection policy. They conclude "In short, find out what is most unique about the library's artists files and build on that strength." Kent Boese (2006) in an article in which he explores the variety of practices in the handling and organization of art ephemera, suggests that criteria be established for the collection of ephemera based on the library's mission, arguing for the importance of preservation in order to maintain collections, and presents a set of recommendations for collection development. I propose therefore that this principle of specialisation should be applied to the development of a new collection, or to plan projects to improve access to existing collections and have provided a model collection policy, Appendix 3.

Ephemera may be acquired item by item, from day to day. An art librarian may put themselves or their library onto mailing lists for galleries. They might also collect actively, by finding out what art events are happening and contacting people or organisations that produce announcements and ephemera and acquiring material from them. This way of operating depends on the librarian being in a certain frame of mind and on being able to make the library hospitable to such a collection and activity. It may be necessary to reformat material, or to re-contextualise it by the way it is to be arranged or accessed and more liaison is required than if collections were received passively.

Rather than use this labour-intensive method of acquisition, many libraries 'harvest' ephemera from individuals in their home institution; maybe museum, gallery or art school, who are on mailing lists for galleries and who will be invited to 'private views'. Beth Houghton (2006) gives her view of the role of PVIs as an invitation and describes how this method of collection works, suggesting that "expediency suggests that PVI collections are most sensibly built in the libraries of those institutions which naturally receive them" (31). Art ephemera is relatively easy to acquire in large quantities once sources have been identified, however this may result in large, unfocussed collections which are then difficult for libraries to manage. Another disadvantage of this collection method is that curators may, reasonably, want to keep items that they find more interesting or useful, and not pass these onto the library, with the rest of their accumulation.

Art libraries, as other kinds of libraries do, are also likely to acquire ephemera in collections. Michael Twyman comments that "In the past, the custom seems to have been for institutions to accept collections built up by others for particular reasons." (2000,5) One kind of acquisition of collections built up for particular reasons, is when ephemera is acquired amongst the archives of artists or projects, for example, the Bank group archive was deposited in Goldsmiths library in 2006. It consists entirely of ephemera: of cards, flyers and press releases announcing exhibitions put on by the group. Other small archives in the library include Virginia Nimarkoh's *Indent* project on artists' publications and the *Engaged Magazine* archive which both contain ephemera together with magazine issues and an organisational structure which is itself a manifestation of the project. A

second kind of acquisition occurs when a collection compiled by an individual, and then given or sold to the library when the collector no longer has a use for it.

A third kind of collections containing ephemera are those conceived as independent resources. A number of collections compiled by support organisations for artists from the 1970s onwards are now housed within academic libraries. These may arrive in the library as archives, such as the *Political Art Documentation and Distribution (PAD/D) archive*, which has a political focus, or as libraries, like the *Women's Art Library/Make* collection, which aimed to represent the whole of women's art practice. Both these resources were built up for and by artists, they contain a large number of files holding ephemera, and their originating aims remain evident in the kind of materials they contain.

When collections are acquired, they are de-contextualised. Deposit in the library will re-contextualise the entity. Care should be taken therefore that any meaning which is manifested in the way items are arranged, or were originally acquired, is not lost, and are recorded or re-presented by repository, in order to preserve the meaning of the items.

Case studies: some existing collections on the avant-garde and the alternative

The following selection of collections held in libraries and archives are exemplary collections, which document avant-garde or alternative practices and, as visual and textual material, show the visual strategies and concerns of their times.

Darlene Tong's article on the transfer of the *La Mamelle Archives* to Stamford University library (Tong, 2002) prompted meto decide that the subject should be explored more thoroughly. She describes how the material produced by an alternative art organisation

reflects its activities, and points to issues to consider when these are archived in a library. She stresses the importance of preserving the integrity of the collection. She describes how the material produced by an alternative art organisation reflects its activities, and discusses issues to consider when these are archived in a library. One of the reasons that this article influenced me is that it is inconclusive: those archives remained preserved, but inaccessible, at the time of my research.

The *Jean Brown collection* now held at the Getty Research Library contains a significant, substantial collection of ephemera. Jean Brown collected an archive that includes archives and ephemera from twentieth century avant-garde artists, from the 1920s, through Fluxus to mail art, which took place outside traditional galleries. The University of Iowa's *Alternative traditions in the contemporary arts* unit has collected Fluxus items (ARLIS/NA conference 1991) and, as an academic unit, has researched the art historical aspects of the collection.

The artists' files collection of the Library at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA), which includes significant ephemera, are well known, as is the collection at the New York Public Library (Jones & Hughston, 1989). *Political Art Documentation/Distribution (PAD/D) archive*, now at MoMA is an example of a working resource that entered a library as an organised archive. This artists' collective, conceived by Lucy Lippard in 1979, was active until 1988. For some ten years the group distributed documentation of political art amongst themselves. In 1989, after this phase ended, the collection of documentation was deposited in MoMA library as an archive. PAD/D's stated goal was to:

[P]rovide artists with an organized relationship to society, to demonstrate the political effectiveness of image making, and to provide a framework within which progressive artists can discuss and develop alternatives to the mainstream art system. (MoMA, 2007]

Julie Ault comments that :

The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) library contains subject files on many spaces, organizations, groups, and artists. Although extremely useful, the files are fragmentary. The *Political Art Documentation/Distribution (PADD) archive* is also housed in the MoMA library and is accessible by appointment; it has been tremendously valuable for this book because of its political focus. (Ault, 2002b, 16, footnote 5)

The *Women's Art Library/Make* was established in the late 1970s as a slide library and grew into a research collection on women artists and their work (Greenan, 2007). At the beginning, members sent slides of their work to this artist-run organisation, often accompanied by their own statements or CVs, to be viewed in a public space, by unanticipated visitors. Ephemera such as private view cards and press releases, the artist's statement produced for an exhibition, and photocopies of reviews from magazines, were collected as evidence of the activities of women artists. Ephemera was collected because there was no other printed evidence of the activities of women artists, so to keep the private view cards and press releases, the artist's statement produced for an exhibition, photocopies of reviews from magazines that were themselves not held in established resources was the chosen way to build up a 'library' of information, made by the artists themselves. The work was done at a fine level of granularity, for example every mention of a woman artist in *ArtForum* in the years 1968-1990 was physically tagged and then indexed. The collection includes over 9,500 artists' files on women artists and also files on related institutions. The collection now also has an 'archival' function (it consists of documentation which accrued as a result of the business of the organisation), relating to a

collective of women artists, recording both the wide variety of women's cultural practices and the activity of producing the resource itself. Now that books and journals do record this history, the 'archival' effect of the collection appears more clearly, as an archive of feminist artists, of women's professional art practice, and as a record of a network of people which has acted to alter the idea of what an archive can be. The question of whether this practice was intended either to 'difference' the canon, or to have a counter-canonical effect remained contentious.

The Artists' Placement Group ran from the late 1960s, and organised artists' placements in industry. Anna Harding described the archive, in her essay in the publication to accompany Potential, an exhibition with associated events, which she curated in Southampton and Rotterdam. The archive had not, at this stage, been assimilated in an archival repository, although negotiations were in progress with the archive at Tate[4]. Her account describes a shift from practice to archive:

> Barbara Steveni's performance 'I am an Archive' is a recent departure within Barbara's practice, which she has adopted as one means of representing a body of scarcely known (in Barbara's view suppressed) archival material, the history of APG, the Artist Placement Group…Barbara's position within the body of this ongoing work, APG now O + I, was further endorsed recently when asked to make an oral history recording for the National Sound Archives series 'Artist Lives', she realized "I am the archive". Her specific area of 'research' is essentially pragmatic: lobbying for and implementing a new role and function for art and artist within societies, non-art institutions, organizations, could now be viewed as in the past rather than as an ongoing exemplary practice. (Harding, 2002, 58)

Here, Harding draws attention to the processes of communication and mediation that a curator, or archivist, may engage in, when they are concerned with representation of an

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[4] The APG archive was deposited at Tate Archives in 2004

archive, and also reports that Steveni appears to have taken the position of archivist of her own history, representing the past rather than a current strategy. Darlene Tong, similarly, expressed unease about having had to leave the archive in the archive, where it becomes subject to management processes, like other archives. *PAD/D* and the *Women's Art Library/Make* in contrast are presented as enterprises which worked with the format of the archive, to alter it. Both of these collections show how specific concerns and strategies can influence the form of the resulting resource.

Art ephemera in collections like those mentioned above, which reflect innovative art practices, are closely related to art works and art concepts. The art historical influences of Surrealism, Fluxus, Conceptualism (and dematerialisation) and Mail Art on art ephemera in the twentieth century have been the subject of much consideration. In my next chapter, I will consider how such relationships can be described in catalogues, with the objective of re-contextualising the material and providing better access to the resource

The need for theoretical reflection

At this stage, we should reflect upon some theoretical points about research material itself and the ideological role of the library.

Library as heterotopia (language and space)

With my practice, and collection **Ephemeris**, I am trying to bring 'alternative space' into the space of the library, as a 'heterotopia'. The source of this term is Foucault's essay *Of*

other spaces, heterotopias, where he states that libraries fulfill the fourth principle of

heterotopias, that of opening onto slices of time, which he names 'heterochronies':

> …Museums and libraries have become heterotopias in which time never stops
> building up and topping its own summit, whereas in the seventeenth century, even
> at the end of the century, museums and libraries were the expression of an
> individual choice. By contrast, the idea of accumulating everything, of
> establishing a sort of general archive, the will to enclose in one place all times, all
> epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is
> itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages, the project of organizing in
> this way a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile
> place, this whole idea belongs to our modernity.(Foucault, 1986, 26)

However, as Foucault himself says, heterotopias belong to our modernity because ours is

an epoch of space, and the contents of an academic library such as that at Goldsmiths

college reflect this, holding, as he describes it documents of "the epoch of juxtaposition,

the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed." Foucault says that a

hierarchical space has been replaced by this, a space of sites, heterogenous space:

> We do not live in a kind of void, inside of which we could place individuals and
> things …we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible
> to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another." (Foucault,
> 2002b, 23).

The library, I think, is heterotopic, not only in the heterochronic sense, but in the values

of its contents. Heterotopias, Foucault says, are real spaces:

> ..certain ones that have the curious property of being in relation with all the other
> sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invent the set of relations that
> they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect (1986, 24).

The art work *Changed pressmarks of the private case* by Naomi Salaman, refers to the

movement of early pornographic works from the 'Private Case' of the British Library,

where they were held in the 18th century, in a private collection of the librarian within the

library, because of their controversial content, to the public collection in the 20th century.

The microfilm reproduces old and new shelf-marks, indicating a shift in location, rather than bibliographic description.

Figure 1: Naomi Salaman. Changed pressmarks of the Private Case, 1999, microfilm

Foucault characterises libraries in the seventeenth century as being "the expression of an individual choice", but academic libraries have had a different genealogy, of the model provided by the Bodleian, as repositories for the works of scholars of the institution as well as collections of historical texts, and they are, although in a limited sense, also 'public' libraries. The role of being an 'institutional repository' is currently becoming important again in higher education, under the governmental directive to provide open access to electronic publications that result from public funding, and related imperatives.

In contrast to libraries as heterotopias, I see 'alternative' spaces as having more in common with utopias, described by Foucault as

> … sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society. They present society itself in a

perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces.(Foucault, 1986, 24)

Language and social space

Foucault does not refer directly in *Of other spaces, heterotopias* to Lefebvre's work, although he mentions the work of phenomenologists and structuralists as establishing the idea that space is not a void but made. Language is one of the ways that space is made. In this research I have connected the idea of heterotopia cited above to the idea of the library as a mapping of sets of relations that make up social space, based upon the idea of the interdependence of social space and language found, for example in Lefebvre's *Production of space* (Lefebvre, 1991) and Foucault's Archaeology of Knowledge (1972). Lefebvre defines heterotopias as "contrasting places", "made places…made complete by being filled to saturation point with beings and symbols" (1991, 163-4).

Utopia

Figure 2: Jonathan Adamson. Proposal for an unrealisable sculpture, 1995, A4 paper. In Lefebvre's terms, as I outline in chapter 2, the library is a dominated space because it is public, but it is simultaneously and predominantly an appropriated space, appropriated by the works within it. For this reason, some classification systems, such as the Dewey Decimal System (used in libraries) are mappings rather than ontologies. The library places its collections in a set of relations formed by the catalogue. Language is used symbolically in the library catalogue to indicate this mapping, this representation of social space.

In the preface to *The Order of Things* Foucault gave an account (Foucault, 2002) of the influence a passage of Jorge Luis Borges had on him, leading him to begin the research that led to that book: "breaking up all the ordered surfaces and all the planes with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things", causing him to comprehend that it was possible to research what it is possible to think. The passage, Foucault cites from Borges, was

> from 'a certain Chinese encyclopaedia' in which it is written that 'animals are divided into: (a) belong to the emperor, (b) embalmed, (c)tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f)fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) et cetera, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies (Foucault, 2002a, xix).[5]

He says that "The monstrous quality that runs through Borges's enumeration consists…in the fact that the common ground on which such meetings are possible has

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[5] Foucault does not give the title of Borges' story.

itself been destroyed." (2002a, xix). He uses the word tabula, or "table" to name this common ground, as "the table that enables thought to operate upon the entities of our world, that table upon which, since the beginning of time, language has intersected space."(2002a, xix). He calls the resulting space 'heterotopia' rather than a 'utopia'; like the library, a fragmentation of social space held together, in language.

An interdependence of social space and language is also fundamental to Bourdieu's 'habitus' and I will use this idea to think about my own practice in my environment, amongst the rules and the library catalogue, as a 'space' constructed by language: my 'habitus', in chapter 7. While the archive is both the repository and the authoritative records held within it, the library is both the repository and the collection within it. Considering the library as a heterotopia is essential to the integrity of my research, which is concerned with place, to decide what kind of a place a library is. The collection in such a heterotopic place, is a variable entity.

Documentation and history

Collection not archive

In cultural theory, and in art theory, a collection is a kind of archive, although from the point of view of a librarian, or an archivist, they are very different things. I know that my collection is not an archive, and my authority that of the collector rather than the archivist. In conservative archival theory, archives accrue as the result of activity

'naturally ', collections are formed 'artificially'[6]. I have made a 'collection' of this material, because I have constructed it to support this research and to be deposited as a resource in a library. For an archive to accrue 'naturally' as the result of activity, its future use as research material is not anticipated. Archives usually contain unique items, they are initially cared for, or at least amassed, by the person or institution to whom they belong, and they become an archive when they are no longer used for current business. They may then be deposited in the 'archive', a place where 'public records' are kept, with some intention of permanent preservation. Archival cataloguing principles are intended to emphasise the importance of recording the organisational structure that led to the creation of the documents within the archive. The application of the term 'artificial archive' by an archivist to my collection[7] is a reflection on these conditions, and on the unlikelihood of an actual archive existing of my field of research.

Throughout the period 1995-2005, texts on the 'archive' by Walter Benjamin, Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida were widely influential and which are part of the academic context of my research. Ideas of difference and disorder that undermined the relationship between authority and archives, disestablished belief in the archival document as proof, and loosened the category 'archive', are found in their work. The word 'archive' is often used to name resources that are not archival, have not accrued during the course of the activities of an organisation or person. The term might be used to indicate that a

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[6] This disciplinary distinction is summarised in the first chapter of Pitti (2001) *Encoded Archival Description on the Intern*et and in the standard work, Proctor & Cook,(2000) *Manual of Archival Description*.

[7] E-mail from Jocelyn Gibbs, Archivist at the Getty Research Institute, to the author, October 2003.

collection has some kind of completeness in what it covers, or is more generally a resource, or is a collection of available images that may be re-used.

In the handbook published as a result of the Vektor research project (Reddeker, 2006), Jean-Marc Poinsot[8] analyses the characteristics of contemporary art archives. Not archives in the strict sense, he says, they do collect unpublished material that comes directly from artists "documentation of the works and their preparation or realisation." (Poinsot, 2006, p.66). The link to artists' practice is described in *The Living Archive papers*; where David Bailey and Sonia Boyce write about the focus on the past, as well as the present, in a connected archive (Bailey and Boyce, 2001)**.** Keynote papers from the *The Living Archive* conference organized by the *African and Asian Visual Artists' Archive (AAVAA)* and held at the Tate Gallery, London, in March 1997 are also included in this special section of the periodical *Third Text*.

The ephemera that forms the mass of my collection is fragmentary, and often more of a side-effect of art than its embodiment. In the traditional sense, the 'archive' of 'the alternative' does not exist, could not exist, the 'alternative' is 'anarchival'; very partially represented by a deposit that is so reduced as to be merely a residual sediment. In my project this is a strength rather than a weakness. History does provide material for making the future, but as the feminist Elizabeth Grosz says, as much in its gaps as in its models. This is the theme of the next section of this chapter, in which my consideration of the 'archive' is intended as theoretical reflection on the lack of an archive of the 'alternative',

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[8] President of The Archives de la Critique d'art, Rennes

the relevance of the archival concept of context, and a mapping of theories of the archive current in art criticism, not as an indication that I have made such an archive.

In the following six ways, my collection could be considered an archive: firstly as 'archive' of my research when I am no longer using it; secondly, in archival terms it is an 'artificial archive' created from material which would, if left in its 'natural' state, be dispersed or destroyed, in order to document a specific set of activities; thirdly, it is customary to call picture libraries 'archives', and collections of contemporary art documentation an 'archive'; fourthly, archives have been added to the collection that have been compiled and donated by their originators; fifthly, in the theoretical sense of Foucault, as stated in his *Archaeology of Knowledge*, it is part of the 'archive', the textual documents of culture, the source material of his 'archaeology' and sixthly it is, in a Derridean sense, an archive because there is no archive, it is the trace of an archive.

Jacques Derrida begins *Archive fever: a Freudian impression* (1998) with an account of the etymological origin of the word 'archive' in the Ancient Greek word 'arkhe', meaning both the commencement and the commandment (originary and nomological arkhe) and also the 'ark', the place of consignation of the law. The book has a very specific philosophical purpose, which is beyond the scope of my research. Derrida uses the shared etymology of archive and anarchy[9] to deconstruct the authority of the archive

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[9] In Chambers dictionary (1983) 'anarchy' is described as rejection of authority or law and the etymology of anarchy is given as an-archy, archy from ancient Greek 'arkhe'; 'law' or 'government' and 'an' meaning 'lacking', with the note that 'an' in English is similar to 'un', meaning 'not' or 'against' which, more than mere negation, has a positive force.

and I refer to this deconstructive move in chapters 2 and 6 in relation to the related issue of anarchic and un-archived aspects of the 'alternative'. Derrida distinguished the "archive" as a source of history, from memory (mnesis), and from recollection (anamnesis) saying that the "archive" is exterior, a prosthesis of the mind, "hypomnesic", whilst memory is interior; living. He gives an example "up close to archive desire, from up close to an impossible archaeology of this nostalgia" (1998, 85) that this divided archive is "analogous to that "historical truth" which Freud distinguishes…from the "material truth," a truth that is repressed or suppressed, but which resists and returns, as such, as the spectral truth of delusion or of hauntedness." The archive can be, this 'distorted substitute', "a part of truth remains, a piece or a grain of truth breathes at the heart of the delusion, of the illusion, of the hallucination, of the hauntedness." (88). Derrida deconstructs the authority of the archive through the juxtaposition of 'archive'' and 'anarchy', as the 'anarchival. My collection of ephemera is as material as it can be, it fails to be an archive, and in failing represents that which has no archive, which is anarchic.

Foucault too, undoes the authority of the archive. Due to the influence of his theory of 'archaeology' as an historical research method, intended to break down naturalised knowledge and objectifications, in which he redefines the 'archive' as that which is the source of the history of ideas (Foucault, 1972). The documents which I have collected because of what they say are an 'archive' in his sense. This is particularly so in the context of art, now, when Foucault's theories, with Derrida's, have become primary sources of the dominant discourse employed on art that is concerned with repositories of documents, archives or libraries. Irit Rogoff has called this the "saturated" state of

cultural awareness of "that original austere and self-important site" the archive. (Rogoff, 2002, 681) She comments, "It is in undoing the systems and records of governing, rather than in maintaining them, that the archive becomes Foucault's system of enunciability." (681).

The value of ephemera as a historical source

Non-linear views of history have re-activated archives as resources for its splitting and recreation, as Elizabeth Grosz states, to produce what she calls 'virtual' or potential histories (Grosz, 2002, 247) .So far as it is a historical project, my thesis intended to fragments of such potential histories. Walter Benjamin, who described the unruly quality of a collection of ephemera. There is always an unquantifiable amount of ephemera being produced. Most of it will be literally ephemeral, and of that which is physically preserved the majority will be in private collections. When Walter Benjamin wrote about his collection of 'trash aesthetics' he said that he intended what Baudelaire had called the 'ephemeral, fugitive, contingent' material to speak for itself. He wanted to intervene as little as possible. I empathise with this belief that the material itself represents a complex and often unwritten history. But here, in this thesis, exhibiting is not enough. By keeping ephemera together in the collection I am holding different meanings together, my analysis is intended to define an 'alternative' by tracing the contexts and expressions of the idea, in the period 1995-2005, from this material.

The way that my collection is put together, filed and catalogued all reflect both my beliefs and aims in this research and the path of my progress into it. Susan Stewart in *On longing* says that "the collection replaces history with *classification"* in that the

collection reframes objects "each element within the collection is representative and works in combination toward the creation of a new whole that is the context of the collection itself" (Stewart, 1993, 151. The 'context' created by my collection is not a 'new whole', it is a representation formed of traces, although a collection each ephemeron is a 'souvenir'. It is this quality that appeals to me, even if I did not visit the place. They hold traces of their other contexts, aesthetically and textually, and the process of creating a "new whole" is, in my case, disturbed by my unwillingness to classify. I have instead emphasised representation and context. My collection process has more in common with that described in recent sociological work on material culture; the collecting of second-hand cultural objects. My aim is to collect rubbish (everyday, disposable documents which name all the active artists and places, not just those that are reviewed, criticised, or archived in a valorisation process. Nicky Gregson and Louise Crewe (Gregson, 2003) in a study of collectors of second-hand things found that it is the action of collection that is important, objects are seen as having a 'biography' and the current collection is an episode in that. They can be passed on, or thrown away, when they are no longer needed, they do not become precious.

A particular set of economic, cultural, theoretical, and political conditions influenced the practices I am researching pragmatically, aesthetically and ideologically, but in such different ways and with such different results that I can not and would not want to write a coherent history, which is why I am focussing on specific instances, presenting descriptions rather than classifications of events. These are questions of methodology perhaps, but also ethical and political questions, of what the purpose and effect of history is, and how art ephemera can be used as a historical source.

Ephemera as evidence

My exploitation of the critical, theoretical conflict between the practice of making a resource and 'unarchival' practices is not new: many theorists, artists, curators and archivists e.g. Women's Art Library, have attempted to subvert the system of the traditional 'archive'. The conflict arises from the problematic of documentation as a historical source, from identification of the 'archive' as an 'inert' space holding authorised history, the deposited sediment of 'order' opposed to live, social space, but if history is seen as narratives drawn from the potential diversity of past events, multiple sources have more value. My collection is intended to present items in the collection as evidence of an endless diversity of pasts, presaging a diversity of virtual futures, and histories, however ephemera is suspect as a source of evidence of facts, not only because it is made in advance of events, not after them, but for the strategies used in it.

Clive Phillpot, stated some basic values of art ephemera as evidence (Phillpot, 1995). He noted that exhibition announcements "do *not* generally have a good chance of being preserved or of being made properly accessible" The essay draws attention to the information in exhibition cards and their use value to art historians to verify facts:

> Announcement cards, though notoriously incomplete, may well contain the following essential information: the preferred form of name of the artist or group and of the gallery or museum; the title, dates, and location of the exhibition; and often a reproduction of an art work, sometimes in color, with title and dimensions, or a photo that relates to the artist or the work. These can all be vital pieces of information for researchers when they are investigating the provenance of artworks or when they need biographical information, and especially when they seek to confirm the very existence of an artist not recorded in books and catalogues. (Phillpot, 1995,14)

Such material is not a recording of the actual exhibition or event, but an announcement, an invitation to the opening, as Beth Houghton described, or 'published to accompany' it, or 'published on the occasion of' the exhibition or event (these phrases are often used in the colophon of exhibition catalogues). They are not completely reliable factual sources, frequently the year of the event is omitted, for example. The archivist Nancy Hadley also warned of visual ephemera, that "Like textual information, its accuracy should never be taken for granted." (Hadley, 2001, 49, footnote 2.) She also commented that separation of materials from their original context may result in loss of meaning. Hadley's observations are drawn from her work with visual materials such as theatre and circus posters and party invitations, and her references come mostly from the journal 'Popular culture in libraries' – ephemera has a longstanding role as a source for history of popular culture and local histories, but the observations apply also to contemporary art ephemera.

The practice of collecting ephemera also has the potential to produce evidence of far more than such facts, it can be used critically, as I have demonstrated in chapters 3, 4 and 5. The present site or context of the ephemera will affect how the ephemera functions as information at the event, as information about the event, and in the repository.

Collecting in theory

To return to the problem posed at the beginning of this chapter, I am offering the art library as an 'alternative space', on the grounds of it being a heterotopia; a space of contradictions. Libraries contain within them different time periods, different views, different authorities. Such historical records have the potential to disrupt the present enough to make a different future possible, because they reveal the effects of gaps,

fragilities and dislocations in power in the present. Rather than provide reusable models, choices of alternatives, they show possibilities, virtual effects. "These alternatives… are not possibilities, not alternatives until they are brought into existence", as Elizabeth Grosz concludes, in *In the nick of time* (Grosz, 2004, 261).

I can not claim that academic libraries are intrinsically 'alternative' spaces; whilst public libraries have an ethical history of existing for the public good, academic libraries such as the Bodleian, claimed legitimacy, and are currently increasingly aiming to act as institutional repositories, storing the intellectual capital of the institution, but they have at the same time a commitment to openness, a resistance to the commodification of knowledge. They provide space which is neither completely public or completely private, as has been described as a 'third space'. Their catalogues are free, it is possible to visit them to read printed matter, and electronic content although often reserved for people who have joined the educational system is, under 'Creative Commons' agreements and 'Open Access' directives, becoming publicly available. This heterotopic space can be used for documentation of the 'alternative'. [10]

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[10] A model collection policy for an art ephemera collection is included as Appendix 3.

7. Cataloguing in the repository: context and relationships

Introduction

This chapter looks at the relative values given to ephemera by artists, archivists, curators and librarians and in this context considers integrated catalogues and online guides as means of re-contextualising art ephemera in the library, to consider the question

- How have libraries represented alternative art spaces, and how can they do this more comprehensively?

In the second part of the chapter, I review a selection of recent collaborative initiatives and projects, many of which are cross-domain, that identify and locate artists' files across the UK, Europe and North America. I consider the impact of the digital on the presentation of ephemera in art libraries.

Three methodological models, and three thematic approaches are identified:

Methodological models:

- MARC cataloguing (Object-based standard library cataloguing)

- Collection-level description portals

- Web directories of items, using Dublin Core or archival metadata structures

Thematic approaches:

- Biographical indexes

- Cross-border walks: international, cross-collection and cross-domain catalogues

- Integration of art and its documentation.

De-contextualisation, contextualisation and re-contextualisation

Art ephemera are visually and textually evocative, and are a vast supplement to the documentation contained within art libraries. The potential of these collections of ephemera remains largely unrealised, since description of their contents has been limited, access difficult and circulation restricted, yet they form a particularly valuable source of information on innovative contemporary practices and show different attitudes, methodologies, styles and perspectives employed by artists, curators and other participants.

The material produced by an individual or an organisation reflects its activities, the original context of that material, thus giving a collection an organic form and an 'archival' function, and libraries too may contain within them archives of projects or organisations. They may also contain collections assembled item by item, which will be more shapeless unless organised in the library. There is a turn from use to documentation when ephemera enters the library and is subjected to its rules.

Ephemera have been produced as part of art practices that are not object-based but conceptual, or which are concerned with contexts of art and its presentation, or situation, as I have shown in chapters 3, 4 and 5. In comparison to the more traditional 'primary source' material of the artist's statement, valuable as a commentary on or explanation of art or artists' working practices, this kind of ephemera comments on, or functions as, artwork, or is produced by artists/ curators to mediate the experience of art. The context is considered as part of the artists' or curator's practice and ephemera may document this directly. There has been a blurring of roles between curator, artist, archivist and librarian

and simultaneously between what we would define in a library as 'archive' or 'collection of ephemera'. This crossing of terms and categories is part of the territory. Ephemeral material is both visual and textual, has everyday, direct qualities from being produced at the time of events by those involved, is fragmentary but a valuable source both in its individual fragments and/or as a critical mass, can be produced as art, or as a side-effect of art and art's contextualisation, can form a kind of 'artificial archive' or can be created as digital documentation of art: all of these qualities can suggest ways of re-contextualising the material by arranging and cataloguing it, through metadata and representation.

Over the past decade there have been a number of large-scale projects that map or showcase these collections in order to re-contextualise them more effectively, to facilitate access and promote their use and appreciation. This chapter reviews some of these projects and factors that influenced them. These factors include: firstly; increasing appreciation by curators of ephemera as a source, particularly a recognition of the relationship between art ephemera and 'alternative' and avant-garde practices; secondly the development of digital technology for managing online databases, images and other digital objects in catalogues including, for example, functioning hierarchical structures which will enable us to draw out the relations between an ephemeron and other entities; and thirdly, the sharing of knowledge between libraries, archives, museums and art itself, both in practice, in projects which cross borders between these domains, and theoretically, in influencing our strategic approaches to our role as art librarians.

Relative values

Art ephemera have frequently been shown as supporting material in art exhibitions, and as the material continues to be appreciated by the curatorial world, there have been many exhibitions consisting of ephemera, or which represent the process of its accumulation. In the London section of *Century City* (Dexter, 2001), although larger works were shown, ephemera was also displayed. Steven Leiber and Todd Alden used the term 'artists' ephemera' to define printed matter that functions, to greater or lesser degrees, in the manner of artworks (Leiber & Alden, 2001) The exhibition/project *Interarchive*, of the Kunstraum der Universit at Luneburg in co-operation with Hans-Peter Feldmann and Hans Ulrich Obrist, |(1997-2002) accumulated a vast amount of ephemeral and archival material (Bismarck, 2002); the *Bankside Browser* (1999) project curated by Andrew Renton to accompany the building of Tate Modern in London, consisting of archive folders from local artists to represent their work (Renton and Scott); and the project called *B+B Archive*, by the curatorial team B+B, in which they collect and sometimes show material they have collected 'in order to map emerging practices and to investigate strategies to re-present process-based projects'; are just some examples of many which show explorations of ephemera as the basis of an exhibition. Curatorial projects such as those above demonstrate concern with presentation, process and mediation, archival projects show concern with description, provenance, preservation and surrogates, and librarians, as reviewed in chapter 6, with access to resources as documentation.
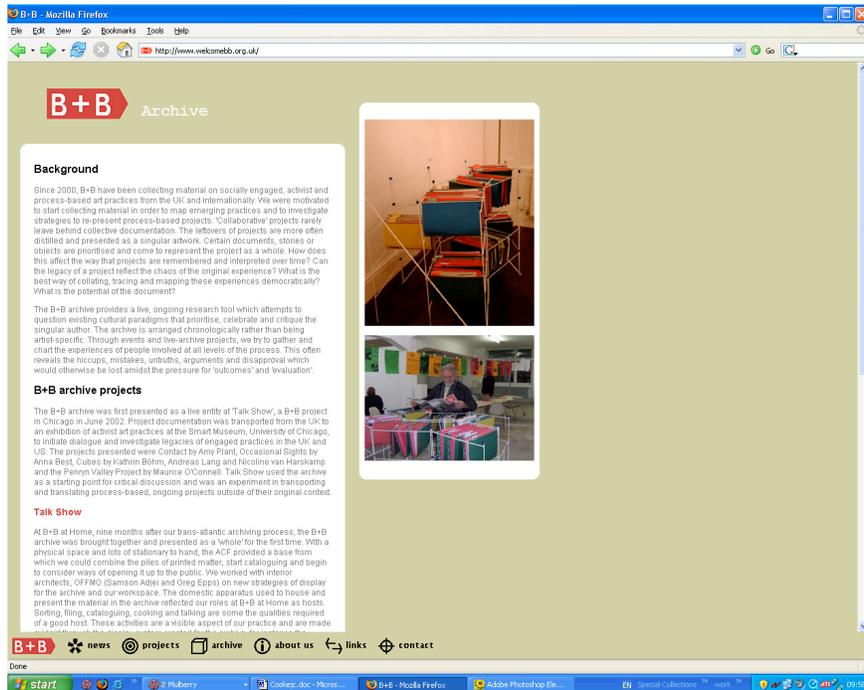
Figure 3: B+B 'Archive', c.2005, web page

Library catalogues

The library collects material that documents how society reproduces, or regenerates,

itself. The catalogue can be seen as a representation of the library's collections. A library

catalogue is a 'symbolic' kind of database. They are permanent institutional databases

creating exchangeable information. 'Symbolic' databases characteristically use

conventional representational languages; for example words or numbers, to represent

conceptual works and their contents. In construction and development of the rules of

cataloguing pragmatic justifications are given, for what is, actually, I suggest, a kind of

'habitus', an inhabited social space.

Structure and functions of library catalogues

A library catalogue has two main functions: to describe particular manifestations of a

'work' accurately and unambiguously, and to give potential researchers access to the

'works' in the library. Historically in libraries, subject access has been provided by indexes of subject headings and/or by shelf location. There are different systems and sets of rules for subject headings included in catalogues and for the positioning of the items in the physical space of the library. These can both be seen as an intersection of language and social space.

In order for the structure of the catalogue database to be used as a medium for exchange of information, standardised sets of metadata fields are used. The MARC format used in library catalogues structures information in fields, some of which are based on underlying principles that developed when manual card catalogues were used. The language used to describe the manifestation is taken from the item itself. There are some problems associated with cataloguing exhibition documentation in this format. The concept that there will be a 'main author' of a work is represented in the structure of the record, and the rule is that information must be taken from the title page, which is problematic as in many art exhibition catalogues it is an artist, not author, who is named on that page, but whether their name is there as part of the title of the exhibition, or as being primarily responsible for the concept of the book as a 'work' is a matter of interpretation (concerning whether their name is before or after the title, relative font sizes etc.), and of gathering information from elsewhere (is there a main author named in the colophon, etc. These concepts of hierarchy and authority are naturalised in the system, but they are revealed in practice, or when the library system of cataloguing and its rules (currently MARC21 and AACR2) are compared to other systems, for example the Visual Resources

Association's *Cataloguing Cultural Objects* guidelines (VRA, 2006)[11]. The 2nd edition of the *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules* will, however, be superseded by new generic rules, in the near future.

To facilitate subject searching in the catalogue, the words or numbers used must belong to a shared vocabulary, so standardised vocabularies, or thesauri, are used; termed 'controlled' language. Subject headings such as the *Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH)* and the *Getty Art and Architecture Thesaurus* (Getty Institute, [2007]) are used. Headings can be assigned to describe techniques, materials, practices, periods or movements. New words are used to describe precise new concepts, but cataloguing vocabularies take longer to ingest such terms.

Panizzi's rules of 1841 are the first printed guide to book cataloguing, they appear in the introduction to the printed catalogue of the British Museum. The second printed guide was by Cutter (1876) who said that "…The preparation of a catalogue must vary as it is to be merely an index to the library, giving in the shortest possible compass clues by which the public can find books, or is to attempt to furnish more information on various points, or finally is to be made with a certain regard to what may be called style." Cutter described the possibility of placing books in a library according to their subject, using classification; a method which is still used (Dewey Decimal System, for example), but which works best if your library stocks documents on what Cutter called "distinct subjects" and if your readers are also interested in "distinct subjects".

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[11] Maria Oldal, of the Pierpont Morgan Libray gave a presentation on this, at the ARLIS/NA in 2005 conference. Proceedings are unpublished.

> The expression 'distinct subject' had more meaning to Cutter (1876) and his contemporaries than it can have to us. At that time knowledge still consisted of a number of accepted spheres of thought, each comfortably separate from the others. 'Subjects' were islands of thought separated from each other by oceanic voids…In our day the various islands have become so interconnected that it is often very different to see any ocean at all. (Coates, 1988, cited by Read, 2003).

An example of such interconnection is the concept of globalisation: impossible to place on a subject 'island' as although primarily an economic term, it is also used to describe a global culture.

Contemporary computer catalogues are able to provide keyword searching, so that every word in the catalogue potentially becomes an 'access point'. "Consistency; 'authority control' or the use of standardised terms are valued as what separates a good catalogue from a mediocre or bad one" (Read, 8) and is therefore seen as 'quality control', but both the technical possibility of keyword access and the "politics of cataloguing" work against maintaining consistency. Jane Read refers to the 'politics of cataloguing' shown in reflexivity to changing terms. An example would be a transition in terms from the 'oeconomy' of Tristram Shandy, to the 'political economy' of the beginning of the nineteenth century, to contemporary 'economics'. This 'politics' appears in the existence of culturally specific terms, e.g. the term 'art museum' from the U.S.A.'s Library of Congress Subject Headings would be 'art gallery' in the U.K. There are 'Art museum curators' but there are no 'Art gallery curators' in this set of headings. The term 'alternative space' from the same set of subject headings is contentious, I reflect on this in chapter 2, but contentious issues are different in London in the late 1990s than in New York during the same period. In this research, I have found that the term 'avant-garde' was by far the most effective search term to retrieve material about 'alternative' spaces,

particularly in the library and archives context, even though I understand there to be significant differences between the alternative and the avant-garde.

In a contemporary art context, the words that individuals use to categorise their work are considered important, they are associative and have subtle inflexions of meaning. In the *Bankside Browser* project each artist was asked to define their own work to produce the list of subject headings. This produced headings that were intuitive and particular, but the terms were not necessarily known to potential searchers. Standardised headings are used to share content and cross-search databases, and because this is a constant aim in libraries, more generic headings are used, but this means that shifts in the meanings of categories are not described clearly enough.

A third function of library catalogues recently brought into focus by the report the *Functional Requirements of Bibliographic Records (FRBR)* is that of indicating relationships between different manifestations or expressions of the same work, and of a work to other works. For example to link the record for a book with that for a translation of that book, or a printed and electronic version of that book's text. While links have traditionally been made through language (through using standard subject headings, through using 'authority files' for names etc., they can in future be made in the structure of the catalogue, so becoming more flexible.

Classification as a mapping tool

Some may see the ordering classification of the library as the imposition of a system of unified order, a ready-made example of the work of a controlling power, I see it as a

pragmatic mapping of different existing systems of ordering knowledge, that can be changed. Further to that, I see a library as potentially enabling the undoing of systems by facilitating exchange and development of ideas. Library classification theory recognises that categorisation is an intellectual process, the purpose of which is to apply an illusion of order, rather than describe an order which is intrinsic to 'reality.' It recognises too that language itself is dynamic. Library categorisation is not ontological, although it might superficially appear to be, it is a form of mapping of knowledge, of superimposed series of mappings. A system of subject headings would fail to reflect a specific time period due to the slow accretion of terms into it. I surveyed existing subject headings for 'alternative' and artist-run galleries, and associated art contemporary art practices[12]. This mapping of terms shows changes in the way language is used. "Fringe" and "alternative" galleries both exist simultaneously. The classification employed in a library is an epistemology, the library is not a 'utopia' where everything has its place, but a "heterotopia". Foucault's description of the concept in the introduction to *The order of things* as "the disorder in which fragments of a large number of possible orders glitter separately in the dimension, without law or geometry, of the heteroclite" (Foucault, 2002, b, xvii) could describe the various classifications and arrangements represented in the library, in a relatively incoherent mapping. Not only that but "heterotopias… desiccate speech, stop words in their tracks, contest the very possibility of language at its source; they dissolve our myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences." (Foucault, 2002b, xviii). A library catalogue has a similar effect upon language, by breaking it into subject headings, by subjecting it to the rules of metadata construction, by using rigid systems of

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[12] see Appendix 2: subject headings and keywords table

punctuation and syntax. I have used the identification of a library as a heterotopia to analyse the effect of cataloguing and to show how the catalogue can represent different spaces, although it may fix them or misrepresent them too.

Artist's files and ephemera in art libraries

Art ephemera have remained a largely hidden resource in libraries. This is reflected in allusions to the elusive quality of the material in the titles of some projects which aimed to reveal their extent. The Research Libraries Group of the US had a project with the descriptive title *Inaccessible Domain* in the late 1990s, proposed titles for an ARLIS/NA project, discussed in 2006, to produce an online directory of art ephemera were 'Lighting the dark path', or 'Illuminating the invisible'. They have been called a "neglected material" (Docampo, 2001) and were referred to as ;Buried treasure' at the ARLIS/NA / VRA conference in 2002 (ARLIS/NA / VRA, 2002). I used the title *Finding lost relations: locating art ephemera* for an article (Cooke, 2006), both to evoke the relationships between this and other more easily accessible printed resources, and the possibility of using catalogues to make links between them which would contextualise collections and to allude to the personal, family history-like path of research in art ephemera. This 'hidden' state applies to ephemera collections in general, not only to those of art ephemera, Michael Twyman said that "we don't event know what collections of ephemera there are in the UK, let alone how we should catalogue them. But the importance of the 'stuff of history' is being increasingly recognised in the curatorial world" (Twyman, 2002, 4). The national catalogue of ephemera collections, since

published on CD by the Centre for Ephemera Studies at Reading (2005), lists collections, but does not identify art collections within them.[13]

Many articles on the subject of art ephemera in libraries have called for joint action to increase intellectual access through catalogues and descriptions, although a substantial body of literature, much of it describing work on particular collections, now exists, and expertise on how to look after them is shared, the collections are not used as much as those who curate them would like. The winter 2006 issue of *Art Libraries Journal, Ephemera as a research resource* (ALJ, 2006) for example includes articles on conservation of ephemera by Liz Yamada of the London Metropolitan Archives, organising and cataloguing ephemera, by Stephen Lowther, based on his work on the ephemera collection at the Wellcome Institute, along with articles by Martin Andrews introducing printed ephemera, and a description of the collection of ephemera at the Bibliothèque Forney in Paris, by Frèdèric Casiot. The value of contemporary art ephemera is addressed in the *Viewpoint, Ephemera: an undervalued resource in the art library* by Elizabeth Lawes and Vicky Webb, and by Beth Houghton in *RSVP… the strange life and after-life of the private view card*, these last two articles recommend improving access and mention the new area of e-mail ephemera as a new challenge for art libraries. The final article was a shorter version of this chapter (all Art Libraries Journal, 2006: 31,4).

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[13] See also Ephemera: the stuff of history: report of the Working Party on Ephemera set up by CILIP (The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) (Cilip, Working Party on Ephemera, 2003).

Description and access issues

In libraries, art ephemera are usually stored in files termed Artists' Files or 'vertical files,'[14] and these, rather than the individual items within them, appear on the library's catalogue, with the main access point being the artist's name. Files may be maintained for galleries and other institutions as well as for individual artists. The files in each collection contain unique selections of material. There are widely followed standards and conventions for organising and cataloguing ephemera held in artist's files. These conventions affect how artist's files are described and how intellectual access to their contents is provided, through catalogues and other finding aids. Cataloguing policies vary: art ephemera may be held amongst and catalogued with archives. Small pamphlets may be considered to be ephemera, but may also be treated as a small exhibition catalogues, so some items will be catalogued as archives or books. Some libraries have used digitisation, or cataloguing to a deeper level, to highlight items of parts of collections.

Large, unfocussed collections of art ephemera are difficult to manage and to provide access to. Limited use compared to staff time spent maintaining them, and accessibility are concerns, mentioned by Lawes and Webb (2007, 3). In their article from 2003, Terrie L. Wilson and Erika Dowell investigated many important issues and made an extensive literature review of developments in the USA, at a time when digitised access was increasing. They proposed that 'Before determining a strategy for expanding access to an

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[14] See (Berger, 1995) and (Hughston, 1991) on artist files and for background, (Hodgson & Garoogian, 1981, rep. 1993).

artists files collection, it is important to have a clear view of what sort of documentation the files contain and the potential audience for that information". (47) Both they and Hadley (2001) emphasise that the librarian customarily has to use their own knowledge to facilitate access; Hadley explaining that items within archives, and visual information on items kept within collections are often only accessible through guides or indexes which may themselves not be readily available to researchers. Wilson and Dowell state that "Traditionally, one of the most effective "finding aids" for vertical files has been the librarian" (52). Wilson and Dowell cite a survey, and report by Evelyn Payson (1995) of Midwestern academic libraries on four-year, non-doctoral campuses, reporting that Payson found that institutions with no vertical file and institutions with large and actively maintained files are more satisfied with their situations that institutions with small or more haphazardly maintained files."(Wilson & Dowell, 46) Wilson and Dowell suggest analysis of the contents of collections, noting what makes them unique. They also suggest analysing use by "examining current and emerging research trends, monitoring local reference use of the collection, and talking to instructors and researchers who may have used such collections."(47) The analysis of these aspects, content and audience, can then be used to write a formal collection policy, which can then be used to inform development of the collection.

Complete description is not necessarily seen as desirable. Wilson and Dowell suggest that some parts of the collection, and some items, may be highlighted, by cataloguing at a more detailed level, by file or by item or by digitisation. Hadley points out that not only is comprehensive cataloguing impractical, an impossible goal, but users like to browse through files, as they like to discover items there and that this applies particularly to

researchers looking for visual material. In our management of the Women's Art

Library/Make collection at Goldsmiths, we have found that researchers at all levels like

to browse through the artists files, even though the items within them vary in extent

(usually private view cards, press releases and cuttings from national and local

newspapers). Access by artist's name is essential. This is partly because most researchers

come into the library to look for material on artists, but it is also because the artist's name

links ephemeral collections to other sources on the artist, which means that ephemera can

be read amongst other sources. Hadley too, although from an archival perspective,

emphasises the importance of understanding the qualities of each collection. She

considers use and organisation, to conclude that

> access and description strategies will be most effective if they 1) explicitly reflect
> the presence of materials held by the repository; (2) are reasonably consistent
> across the repository's holdings; (3) provide the type and level of information
> appropriate to the nature of the materials; and (4) anticipate the likely use of the
> materials.(49)

 Many of Wilson and Dowell's references are concerned with cataloguing art ephemera,

whilst Hadley's references to papers from the journal *Popular culture in libraries*

indicate a grounding in the study of ephemera as a historical source, but they have similar

conclusions, which I share, based on the principles of understanding the collection, the

importance of context and of using cataloguing process to build relationships between

ephemera and other sources. Nicole Jackson (2006) in a report on the reports on the art

ephemera collection held in the University of Auckland's Fine Art Library in Auckland,

New Zealand concludes by highlighting the impact of technology in improving its

management and promotion. Kent Boese (2006) considers the need for access from

outside institutions where ephemera is held, suggesting databases with a web-based interface are required.

The problems of facilitating access to art ephemera and artists' files already held in libraries has featured regularly as a topic at IFLA, ARLIS/NA and ARLIS/UK & Ireland conference sessions and workshops throughout the past decade, indicating the ongoing interest in this subject. In 1991 there was an Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA) annual conference session on art ephemera, chaired by Mary Ashe[15], co-moderated by Darlene Tong[16] and Hikmet Dogu. Speakers included Jon Held who talked about mail art, mentioning the Jean Brown collection and its acquisition from her by the Getty Research Library. The report of this conference also includes a presentation on the *'Alternative' art forms* database/network project, reviewed below in the section "Integration of art and its documentation". The IFLANET. Section of Art Libraries Action Plan 1999-2001 under "Topics for next year's sessions " listed art ephemera. There was also a session on art ephemera at the 2005 conference. At the beginning of the next decade, in the U.K., ARLIS/UK & Ireland's 2002 conference included a workshop run by Liz Lawes and Vicky Webb on art ephemera.

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[15] Incidentally the title of this session 'Preservation of the avant-garde: contemporary art archives' draws our attention to the use of 'avant-garde' as the standard term used to describe 'alternative' practices.

[16] As noted in chapter 6, Darlene Tong was a member of and librarian for the San Francisco alternative art organisation La Mamelle, the archives of which are now at Stanford.

Digital ephemera

Digital ephemera, such as e-mail announcements and their attachments, present new problems for art librarians. At the ARLIS UK & Ireland conference in 2003 electronic ephemera was discussed at a workshop on cataloguing electronic resources and their was consensus that printing out e-mails was not the best way of including them in collections but it was the only practicable method. At that time there was no deposit of electronic materials required in the UK, and worry about copyright restrictions preventing copying of electronic resources by libraries for preservation, meant that ephemeral websites were not preserved and collected. The articles cited about (Houghton, 2006, Lawes and Webb, 2006) reflect upon this situation but do not describe an alternative, mentioning both technical limitations and uncertainty about copyright as factors which hold back developments. The UK deposit libraries did in 2004 begin to save electronic items, copying them onto CD-ROM, and the British Library began a national web archive in 2004 (UK Web Archiving Consortium, 2004), but such projects have not included art ephemera in any comprehensive way. For the Ephemeris collection, I printed out e-mail announcements and filed these printed versions for the section of material which I catalogued intensively, as was being done at Tate at that time. I included these printed versions in the FileMaker Pro catalogue by transcribing information from them and describing, as with other printed ephemera. However, I also saved e-mail announcements from 1999-2002 as digital files, using the e-mail program's option to save them as text files and from 2002-2005 I saved them in the e-mail progamme itself, as I became aware of the capability of systems developed for 'Knowledge Management' to manage e-mails, to archive (in the technical sense) both the content and administrative information about

them. As digital object management systems were increasingly used by libraries, both for archives and in connection with institutional repositories, it would be possible to catalogue electronic art ephemera, like other 'born-digital' objects, using them. Being created as digital files, the documents themselves could, using such systems, be added to the catalogue as text or PDF documents so being fully searchable. The Online Archive of California and Basis Wien are two examples of this kind of system in use. In research for this thesis, although I was aware that appropriate software existed, I did not have access to such software, so the task of digital object management remained outside the scope of the research project, as did the creation of an online resource. In my daily work, I had already archived digital ephemera in work on the UK DigiTool project.[17]. and in 2006 began using Eprints software to set up an institutional repository at Goldsmiths. I acquired CALM archives management system in 2005, as the research for this thesis ended which provided a means to produce a digital resource to include digital ephemera, as a new project.

Collaborative projects

Between 1995 and 2005, many projects had investigated the potential of web-based portals and joint catalogues to represent ephemera. Standardised cataloguing procedures for ephemera files have been developed and as more flexible electronic cataloguing methods have become available, there have, in addition to this, been initiatives that attempt to make artist's files and other types of ephemera collections on art more visible. There are a growing number of projects listing where public collections are to be found,

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[17] UK DigiTool project, which ran from June 2004 to July 2005, was led by University College London Library in collaboration with Ex Libris, as a trial of their new DigiTool digital object management software.

and what they contain, whether in libraries, museums or archives. Developments in information-sharing protocols mean that catalogue records can be collated: records produced in one database can be re-used by being imported into or presented in another online resource, as by *European-art.net* and *Arlis.net*, or catalogues can be cross-searched, as in the *VKK*. Developments in digital imaging and availability of digital object management systems mean that items can be represented visually in catalogues. Digitisation of vertical files is discussed by (Neuhaus, 1997 & 1998) and (Thomsen, 1997) and has been explored in some art documentation projects, such as European-art.net and CIAO, reviewed below, as a way of providing access to ephemeral material.

Methodological approaches

Three mainstream methods are used to provide access to art ephemera: include ephemera files in library catalogues and larger bibliographic utilities (using MARC format collection-level entries at file level), and/or to produce web guides that provide collection-level descriptions or summary statements to identify and locate files across collections. The third method uses standards designed to work on the web, the archival EAD, or the generic metadata standard Dublin Core to produce a cross-repository catalogue. As my focus is library practices, I review MARC-based projects in most detail, but many of the projects I describe use portals and other metadata standards.

MARC cataloguing approaches: standard cataloguing programmes and bibliographic utilities

The RLG Art and Architecture Group 'Inaccessible Domain' Materials Working Group (RLG, 1997) considered ways to improve access to material such as ephemera, including

artists' files and other types of documentation defined as catalogues, clippings, visual resources, architectural records, documents, all of which were considered partially "hidden collections." The project produced a minimal record for collection level catalogue entries, which has since been adopted by BIBCO. (Library of Congress, [2006]) Records for files catalogued in this way can be searched alongside entries for books, in an integrated approach. Daniel Starr presented his paper *Cataloguing ephemera in the art library: towards integrated access*, at the IFLA 2000 conference in Jerusalem (Starr, 2000) in which the development of this methodology is described. The file level catalogue entry model has been employed by several major libraries: MoMA, the UK's National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Hyman Kreitman Research Centre for the Tate Library and Archive at Tate Britain.

In file level catalogue records, the genre of the material is defined and the contents of such files are described in a generic note, for example MoMA library Artists' files/Pamphlet files consist of a folder that 'may include announcements, clippings, press releases, brochures, reviews, invitations, small exhibition catalogs, and other ephemeral material'. The UK National Art Library Artists' Information files "typically contain a mix of private view cards for exhibitions, newspaper or periodical cuttings, offprints and press releases, slides or photographs, leaflets, promotional flyers, and hand-outs, often generated by the artists themselves". The main entry in each case is the name of the artist, or institution, and the title is generic, usually Artists' file, Pamphlet file, or Ephemera file. The main entry in each case is the name of the artist, or institution, and the title is generic, usually Artists' file, Pamphlet file, or Ephemera file.

The convention of calling these files 'artists' files' implies that the files belong, in some way, to the artists whereas they are usually compiled by the library staff. Artists are conventionally treated as 'subjects' in the application of subject headings, rather than 'authors' and this is problematic, because it is the 'author' who is defined as the person with 'primary intellectual responsibility' for the work, as mentioned above. Visual artists are divided in this way from authors of text. This convention is used also in the online indexes *Art Abstracts* and *Art Bibliographies Modern*. The definition can be used to narrow-down searches, by those who consult catalogues, if they are aware of it, but at the same time, this rule constitutes a definition of 'primary intellectual responsibility' as being demonstrated by the authorship of text, rather than images. Artist's files do sometimes contain statements and material "generated by the artist" as the National Art Library's (NAL) catalogue notes, but they are also likely not to. It is the mutual hope of the librarian and the researcher, possibly, rather than a usual fact. The direct trace of the artist is mentioned in the NAL's generic description, quoted above and was seen as important by Jack Robertson, in 1989, who was particularly interested in providing access, through a library catalogue, to the 'primary source' material of artists' statements, valuable as commentary on or explanation of art or artists' working practices, to be found in exhibition documentation, particularly group show catalogues and ephemera:

> [T]he pamphlets and exhibition flyers that, most typically, commercial galleries or artists' cooperative galleries provide to accompany exhibitions."… "Even more frustrating than the lack of access to primary source materials in full-scale exhibition publications is the fact that this art "ephemera" is virtually irretrievable, even when art libraries do maintain systematic vertical files. (Robertson, 1989).

Although a standard subject heading for Artists' statements has been made in the *Art and Architecture Thesaurus (AAT)* it is not standard practice to use it, due to the formulaic treatment given to files in catalogues. Form and genre terms, derived from the *AAT* are used in the MARC21 655 field. An alternative source for these is the *Thesaurus for Graphic Masterials*, reproduced by the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress. Lowther (2006, 13) says that at the Wellcome Library, they had to compile their own list from various standard listings, to describe the wide variety of materials in their collection.

Collection description portals

Collections, which are locally catalogued in various ways, can be described in portals at the level of a description of the collection. Portals are used to link collections thematically, for example the Women's Art Library/Make collection is described in the *Genesis* portal of resources for women's studies, or can be used to present research projects, or to reach specific audiences.

Dublin Core and EAD

Dublin Core is a metadata standard developed to catalogue electronic resources on the web describing a core of generic fields which can be used to map other metadata structure to each other and is often used for web-based directories[18] It is a relatively simple metadata set, with a flat structure. If exchange of data is planned, for example if DC is used to make a catalogue which uses records compiled using other, different

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[18] Jacqueline Cooke and Anna Harding (2006)

metadata standards, a standard crosswalk such as that written by the Library of Congress or the Getty is used.

Encoded Archival Description (EAD), is based on the *International Standards of Archival Description (ISAD(G))* and has, therefore, far more fields and a far greater capacity to represent specific kinds of metadata and layers of information. I discuss use of *Dublin Core* in the Vektor project, and *EAD* in CIAO below, with comments, in the section "Cross-border walks".

Thematic approaches:

Biographical indexes

Artists' files are compiled as resources about individual artists, and often provide unique evidence of their life and career, therefore it is reasonable and useful to use artists' names to identify holdings and to include biographical information in an index to such files. A number of projects take this biographical approach, and aim to locate files held on artists in libraries and archives.

The National Gallery of Canada Library's online index *Artists in Canada* (National Gallery of Canada Library) is a well-established list that identifies the locations of files on Canadian artists, with biographical and bibliographic references, which superseded the earlier printed directory, the *ARLIS/MOQ=Directory* of 1989. The resource continues to be updated, see Trepannier (1995). ARLIS/NA had begun to map regional biographical resources by 1989 (ARLIS/NA, 1989). *Art Documentation*, spring 1995 focussed on artists' files. The lead article by Paula Baxter from New York Public Library was titled

North American Vertical File Database: dream or possibility. The ARLIS/NA Artist

Files Working Group's 2005-7 project to produce an online directory of artist files seems

likely to make a North American directory a possibility. Notes from the meeting at the

ARLIS/NA conference in 2005[19] report the group's decision that 'Ultimately, it was

agreed upon to produce a double-pronged approach: encourage the future addition and

migration of minimal level artists' file records to bibliographic utilities, while

simultaneously creating a web-based directory of institutions and their holdings that

would ideally be mounted on the Arlis/NA web site'. In addition, a 'best practices' page

for artists' files was proposed. The notes from the 2006 meeting of this group show

development of this idea to cover recommendations for cataloguing and access, and for

creating artists' files.

The background to this project can be traced in the long-standing interests of the RLG

and ARLIS/NA members. Following the Research Libraries Group project *Inaccessible

Domain,* his group has continued to work on artists' files, the emphasis being on

participation by member libraries in the RLG Union Catalog. The Steering Committee

made a survey of ephemera collections and artists' files at AAG repositories for its

annual meeting 2004, at the ARLIS/NA 2004 Conference, New York, NY (2004).. In

2004 the ARLIS/NA Artists' Files Working Group was set up and this has since met

annually. Notes of the meeting held that year say that 'a diverse group of interests were

expressed: ranging from institutions with limited or no electronic access to files, those

pursuing independent databases, those who have already added files to their local

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[19] Unpublished, from the author's collection.

catalogs and larger bibliographic utilities (RLG, OCLC), those who wish to undertake

digitization projects, individuals who were more interested in the potential for an increase

in name authority records.' Amongst these diverse interests, the web-based directory plan

was prioritised.[20].

In the UK, the ARLIS/UK & Ireland's 2002 conference included a workshop run by

Elizabeth Lawes and Vicky Webb on art ephemera; following this, a mailing list[21] was

established, some members of which have continued to discuss the possibility of a

'union' catalogue for UK art ephemera collections began liaison with the ARLIS/NA

Artist Files Working Group in 2006. It is hoped that UK collections can be added to the

online directory.

Internationally, The *IFLANET. Section of Art Libraries Medium term programme 1998-
2001 2.3* (1999, rev 5 May 2000) included the objective to investigate the possibility of

creating an online database containing biographical information on artists born after

1950. While a biographical index on such a large scale remains a future possibility, other

online projects have been established which index artists in a particular country, such as

the UK *Artists' papers register* or have a particular focus, like *WAAND (Women Artists'
Archives National Directory)* in the USA.

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[20] This section is written with reference to documents *Artist Files project: statement of purpose* and *Artist
Files Working Group: site structure* presented at the meeting of the Artist Files Working Group, at the
ARLIS/NA conference 2006, Banff, and notes of ARLIS/NA Artist Files Working Group meeting at
ARLIS/NA conference 2004, New York, all unpublished.

[21] http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/art-ephemera

The aim of the *Artists' papers register* was to compile a computerised register of papers and primary sources relating to artists, designers and craftspeople located in publicly accessible collections in the UK and this is now a useful finding aid. *WAAND* is being developed by Rutgers University Libraries: it is an online integrated directory that "directs users to primary source materials of and about women artists and women artists' organizations active in the U.S. since 1945" *(WAAND)*. The project website started operating during 2005 and has founding institutional partners that include the Archives of American Art, MoMA Museum Archives and the Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division. Repositories are asked to contribute by filling in an online form, and artists are invited to provide information about their archives and papers. It is also part of the remit of the project to encourage artists to "organize their papers for donation to an appropriate research collection". Both projects have contacted repositories to ask them to contribute to the project.

Cross-border walks: international, cross-collection and cross-domain catalogues

The libraries and archives in art galleries collect ephemera amongst other documentary, archival and bibliographic material. Such libraries and archives may, but are equally likely not to, participate in the kind of shared cataloguing schemes developed between libraries that use MARC format catalogues. Other kinds of catalogues have been produced and interfaces designed which will function well in the wider terrain of web search engines such as Google. Digital images of physical documents or works or original digital files can be linked to the catalogue entries. In addition search techniques for digital documents including image retrieval software and full-text search facilities, rather than just catalogue record searches, are widely available. Particular, local, content

is being catalogued in such a way that information can be retrieved about it widely, as a mass of fragmentary information is joined together. Metadata standards are used so that records from different databases are compatible ie searching for an 'author' will find authors in each different catalogue. Dublin Core (DC) has emerged as a widely recommended descriptive metadata standard, but standards-crosswalks (Library of Congress, 2001) and Getty [2007] are being developed, so that the information compiled by institutions using other metadata standards (EAD, MDA Spectrum, VRA Core Categories, for example) can be exchanged and reproduced.
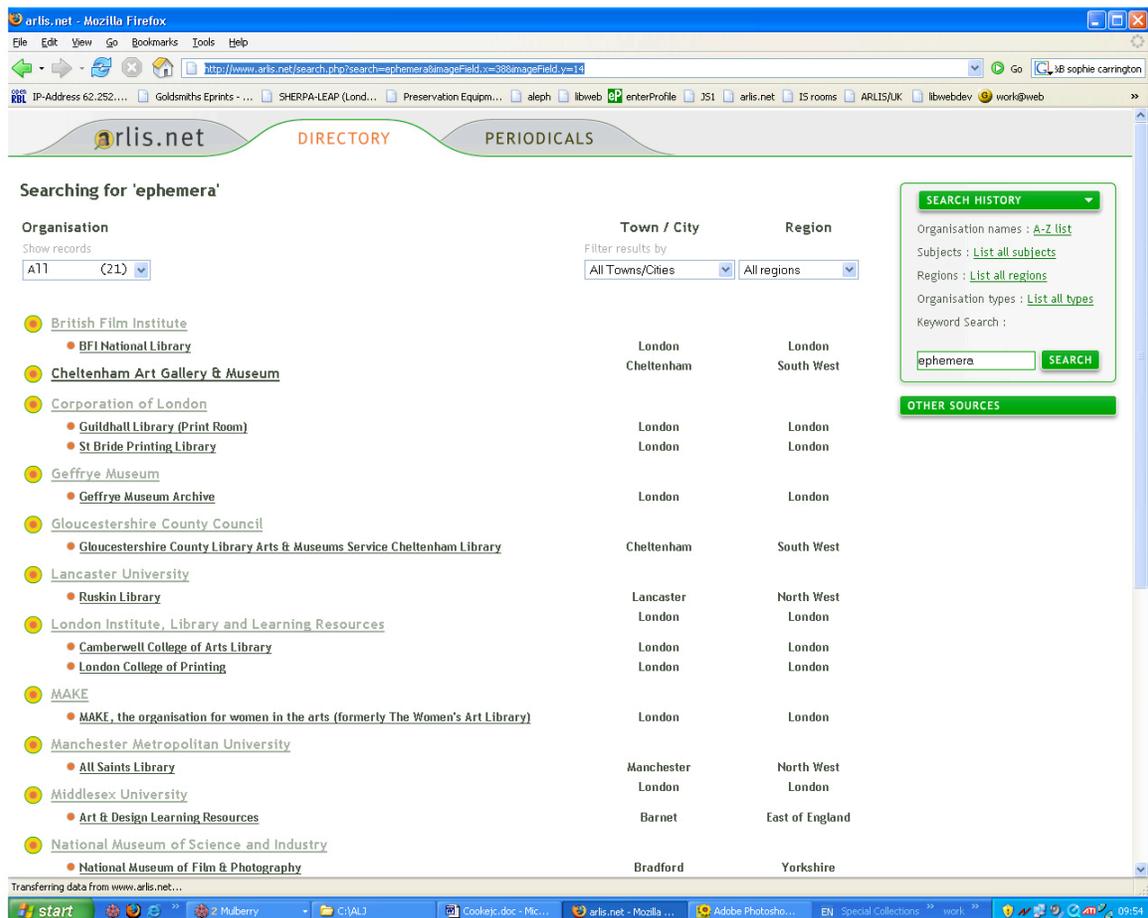
Figure 4: Arlis.net. Search results for "ephemera", October 2006

Whilst most of the UK libraries listed in chapter 6, with substantial contemporary art ephemera collections, do catalogue their ephemera on their web catalogues to some extent, there is no collective finding aid or scoping covering the UK and many other institutions have little or no electronic access to their ephemera files. Arlis.net[22] describes UK art library collections, and is being developed to do so at a deeper level, but does not currently identify ephemera collections.

Vektor was a Culture2000 EU- funded project to research the potential and problems of sharing information on contemporary artists in European archive collections in a web-based catalogue. The project was not intended to produce a functioning catalogue, but investigated whether it would be feasible to use the Dublin Core to make a joint catalogue for both digitised material and physical items and considered the cultural implications of using such a generic standard in a cross-domain (archives, libraries and galleries) and multi-national European context. The partners included basis wien (the Austrian national contemporary art documentation centre), the Documenta Archive at Kassel, Galleria Moderna in Ljubljana, the Archives de la Critique d'Art in Rennes and the Hansard Gallery in Southampton. Nine countries were represented. Some had existing electronic catalogues but these used different standards and many were offline. During the project, a small part of this information was presented in the forum's database to form a joint catalogue. The working language of the project was English. Critical issues that were explored by the project were differences between archival and library cataloguing practices, both at the basic level of organisation, and in rules of data entry

[22] ARLIS/UK & Ireland Database, available from Arlis.net, http://www.arlis.net/.

and vocabulary. Material qualities, item types, relations between objects, roles of people and private and local interests were identified as problem areas. Names, for example, appear differently in different languages due to differences in translation and transliteration, diacritics can cause problems for searches, and names can change over time, particularly in formerly communist Eastern European countries, so it was agreed that the form of the name in use where the person concerned was a citizen at the time of the creation of the material should be employed, while reference was made to authority files such as *PND* and *ULAN*. Vektor also compiled a subject thesaurus of terms which were specific to contemporary art. This list was compiled in English and translated into the European languages used by project members. When compared to the *AAT,* this indicated aspects of art practices important to local communities; these included definitions of curatorial strategies and practices, and socially motivated art practices. Liobe Reddeker, of Basis Wien, reflected on the aims of the project, in the Vektor handbook (Reddeker, 2006). She says that they found it necessary to "adopt a position of self-denial towards.plans of comprehensive image and text searches, precise, jointly developed metadata and portals and advanced graphic retrievals" (92) because of differences in collections and approaches " sensitivity to archival qualities of individual collections (and beyond that the practices themselves)" (92). Participants in the project, were for the most part housing collections documenting current arts production on small and limited budgets, and "are confronted with an infinitely large variety of material and a simultaneous struggle for their own legitimacy." (93). For the archivists involved, the project brought differences between archives and other institutions that collect art

ephemera into focus, and a simplified, single level catalogue was thought to be too
limiting.
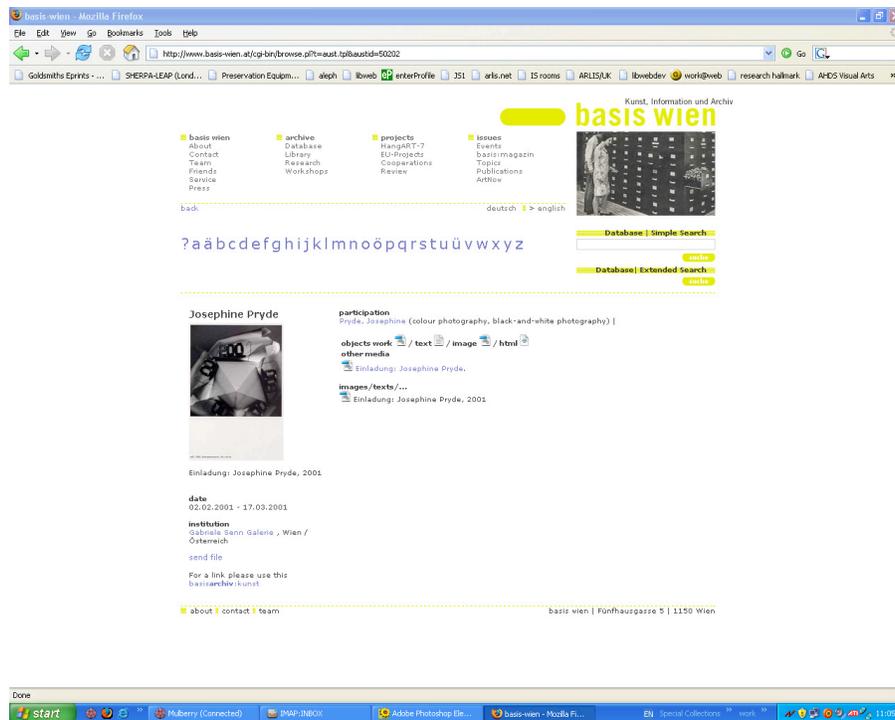
Figure 5: European-art.net, entry for an artist (Josephine Pryde), 2006

After the end of the Vektor project, several former Vektor partners developed European-
art.net, an engine for searching art archives. European-art.net aims for 'presentation of
the results of database searches in various databases through one web address, and the
special focus on the problems of Eastern European contents and structures (diacritics in
names and many offline databases). Data from offline databases is imported and these are
accompanied by a link that refers to the original database. The resource is also designed
to function well in the wider terrain of web search engines such as Google.

Reflecting on the Vektor project, Liobe Reddeker commented that rather than see the web
as a site for a cross-collection digital archive, "It is more appropriate to see the web as a

temporary storage space and means of transport of information", roles which *EAN* effectively performs. She comments that "preservation, scientific recording and thematically meaningful networking, remain a task of specialist institutions and the databases they operate". (16)

The *Virtuelle Katalog Kunstgeschichte (VKK)* is a sustained European project, which has produced a functioning cross-catalogue interface. This project also faced, and found solutions to, the issues of different languages and cataloguing structures (see Hoyer, 2003), in its specialised, multilingual, art bibliographic search engine. This uses CGI script to search the contents of members' databases. Because the subject indexing is not consistent between the European library catalogues it searches, the VKK solution was to have no separate subject search, but a combined title, keyword and subject search field. Links are provided to the separate catalogues so that more detailed searches can be carried out in those, this catalogue highlights some of the problems that complicate international, multi-lingual catalogues.

A number of digital object management products have recently become available, in which digital representations of physical documents or objects, or original digital files, can be displayed and linked to the catalogue entries. One project using such a product was the UK DigiTool Project, which used the Ex Libris DigiTool software and Dublin Core metadata to store and access text, image and sound files from digital repositories. This software incorporated image retrieval software and full-text searching of the digital document itself, rather than just its catalogue record, as well as hierarchical management, in which lower-level objects (such as a video-clip) can inherit data elements from higher-

level objects (such as databases). All of these would be useful features for cataloguing both digitised ephemera and electronic art ephemera. Archival cataloguing systems have been developed which have similar functions, such as the CALM system[23].

Ephemera collections share some of the characteristics of archives, and therefore approaches which use archival cataloguing structures, which are hierarchical, reflecting collections in which individual items are put into meaningful groups (an event, an entity, an expression) may be more suitable than traditional, item by item, library cataloguing structures. The *About Art Spaces Archives Project (AS-AP),* set up in 2005, maps the archival heritage of living and defunct for-and not-for-profit spaces of the "alternative' or 'avant-garde" movement of the 1950s to the present throughout the United States. The initial project to provide an index of places and spaces began in 2004. The prospectus for this project argues for the role of ephemera as a historical source, and aims to encourage the organisation of archives as well as to provide an access tool.

Integration of art and its documentation

Some of the key forms of contemporary art are works or practices which can be variable, such as performance and installation, or which are not discrete entities, such as context-specific works or digital works playing on the internet. If digital recordings are made which are representations of these, they can be catalogued as digital objects. These recordings can be incorporated into database catalogues, as can art created digitally, in library terms born-digital'. However, there are ethical and technical problems associated with both these activities.

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[23] DS CALM, see http://www.ds.com

When the technical programs or languages used become obsolete, preserving them in archives becomes difficult and the knowledge they create may disappear. These was one of the problems addressed in the University of Iowa's Alternative traditions in the contemporary arts (ATCA) unit's two projects *CADNET* and the *Alternative' art forms* database/network project (the ATCA collection later became part of the CIAO project), documented in the ARLIS/NA 1991 conference report of presentations from Fred Truck of the Electric bank of performance art material in Des Moines, Iowa and Estera Milman. Estera Milman, Head of the unit. Milman describes her understanding of the kind of material collected by that unit (Fluxus items) as an "often difficult body of work (resisting as it does the concept of hierarchical value and even more the processes of organisation)". (ARLIS/NA conference 1991) and points out that

> [T]he historical intermedial and conceptual arts have undeniably captured the imagination of our own present. They are central to ongoing reinvestigations of our cultural assumptions about the nature of the art experience itself and our concurrent attempts to re-examine the viability and expand the scope of both the museum and the academy as cultural institutions (Milman [1999] unpag.)

The series of projects *Archiving the Avant-garde* have been concerned particularly with alternative and avant-garde forms of art. BAMPFA at Berkeley had a leading role in these large-scale consortial projects, The original project *Archiving the Avant-garde* was followed by the projects *Art in Variable Media* and *Conceptual and Intermedia Arts Online (CIAO)* which fed into the *Online Archive of California*. The *Art in Variable Media* project and CIAO dealt with access to art collections. Some of the key forms of contemporary art are works or practices which can be variable, such as performance and installation, or which are not discrete entities, such as context-specific works or digital

works playing on the internet. If digital recordings are made which are representations of these, they can be catalogued as digital objects.

When mediation or reception is part of the form of the work, or when the technical programs or languages used become obsolete, preserving them in archives becomes difficult and the knowledge they create may disappear. These were some of the problems addressed in *Art in Variable Media* and *CIAO*. The Rhizome ArtBase, a partner in *CIAO*, is an example of an organization created as a platform for new media art, currently consolidating as an archive, as was Franklin Furnace, another partner. Artists and collectors nominate works for inclusion, the artist is asked to provide the technical information that goes into the catalogue. In his White Paper *Preserving the Rhizome ArtBase* Richard Rinehart (2002) recommended a strategy of preservation to include emulation; writing software that will instruct a future computer to operate as if it is an earlier one. This aim, which has an art historical impetus, requires expertise and resources that would most easily be obtained by a large funded project. It would be so useful as an archival tool, he says, that he advocated it should be created as open source software. Possible preservation measures for variable media art include documentation, migration, emulation and reinterpretation, which all preserve a version or trace of the work.

The technical problems of long-term digital curation apply to digital ephemera produced as work, or of documentation of work, which will provide evidence of the work. When cataloguing digital objects, the catalogue must include one set of the kind of information that the works have in common with other art works, such as a creator, title, format, etc., and another technical set, recording what has been done to the work. The *METS* standard

has been developed to manage the different sets of metadata required in such catalogue, and Rinehardt discusses how these sets of metadata are managed (Rinehardt, 2001).

In conceptual art works it can be difficult or unnecessary to tell where the documentation ends and the artwork begins. In the *Conceptual and Intermedia Arts Online* (CIAO) project, material was catalogued in which the documentation or re-presentation of work for the archive and the work might be indistinguishable, both conceptually and in format. The catalogue was used to create relationships between parts or groups of material in different media using a hierarchical structure based on *Encoded Archival Description*, and this principle can be applied when we catalogue digital ephemera, or ephemera related to recordings of art practice. Artworks, documentation of art and administration may be interrelated and the catalogue can be used to make those relationships evident, using *FRBR* (OCLC, 2007) structures to catalogue items in context.

The archivist Jean-Mark Poinsot has analysed the function of the kind of contemporary art 'archives' collected in galleries, or libraries. He says that although these are not archives in the strict sense, contemporary art archives do collect unpublished material that comes direct from artists. Such collections function as archives, not only for this reason but

> …because of the dematerialisation of art and the fact that many artistic activities in the field of the contemporary visual arts are ephemeral or non-permanent, and because the documentation of the works and their preparation or realisation embodies the memory of the work until such time as it is re-actualised, rather as with a musical performance. (Poinsot, 2006, 66).

Archivists have historically aimed to preserve original records without mediation, but when mediation or reception is part of the form of the work, or because the technical programs or languages used become obsolete, preservation in archives is difficult and the knowledge they create may disappear. This condition is similar to the ethical problematic of creating archives of the 'alternative', to which artists have different attitudes, and which I have considered in the previous chapter.

Conclusions

Many contemporary artists and art researchers are mobile, and the issues they deal with matter across geographical borders, as art works and practices cross media and disciplines. As libraries we similarly need to communicate across such borders, of curating, archiving, librarianship, so that our users can find the information they are looking for. The boundaries between different formal systems and conventions are explored in the various projects that are evolving, whilst technological innovations make it possible for our catalogues to be more flexible. Both standard catalogues and online databases are desirable for different reasons; catalogues and standards are reliable and authoritative and existing networks are widely used internationally, whereas web portals are relatively quickly produced and can hold information about files in collections that do not produce traditional library catalogues, and can also be used to highlight subjects or to publicise materials to particular audiences. These are both ways in which particular, local, content present in ephemera can be catalogued in such a way that information about it can be re-used and widely retrieved, as a mass of fragmentary information is joined together to represent ephemera visually and textually. A hybrid approach to cataloguing, encompassing archival methods, and curatorial aims, will help us to

represent art ephemera better, by representing its context. Such projects can be

understood as making, as well as documenting, histories that would otherwise disappear.