

English

Display Depot **Collected**
Collections
Exhibition **Future Archives /**
Archive Futures

Kunstverein Tiergarten zu Gast in der rk—Galerie für zeitgenössische Kunst
Möllendorffstraße 6, 10367 Berlin

**Featuring: !Mediengruppe Bitnik, Nora Al-Badri, Klara Källström & Thobias Fältdt
with Thomas Sauvin and Bernard Dionysius Geoghegan, Nihad Kreševljaković and
Clarissa Thieme, The Mail Art Archive of Ruth Wolf-Rehfeldt and Robert Rehfeldt,
Sarah Oh-Mock und Bongjun Oh, PPKK (Schönfeld & Scoufaras), Sim Chi Yin,
Wie-yi T. Lauw**

On View: 8.10.–18.12.2026

Archives collect, organize, and preserve records of the past in the form of documents, images, voices, objects, and data. Every decision about what they preserve is also a decision about what will be passed on to the future. Archives, therefore, do not merely manage the past. They also shape the conditions under which history can be remembered, recounted, and interpreted in the future.

Future Archives/Archive Futures takes this temporal intertwining as its starting point and considers archives as infrastructures of possible futures. The group exhibition explores how the conditions of archiving are changing and what other forms of memorization, oral tradition, and knowledge production may emerge from this.

The historian, philosopher, and political scientist Achille Mbembe describes the archive as the result of selection and authorization: “The archive [...] is not a piece of data, but a status.” (Achille Mbembe, *The Power of the Archive and its Limits*, 2002). What is included in an archive, how it is classified, and how it is made accessible are always expressions of social and institutional power. The question of the archive is therefore inevitably and strongly linked to the question of who organizes history, whom it belongs to, and who is allowed to participate in its transmission.

In the digital age, archival practices and perspectives are undergoing a fundamental shift. Databases and algorithmic systems are expanding the possibilities for storing, organizing, and circulating knowledge, while artificial intelligence no longer merely processes existing material but actually generates images, texts, and voices on its own. In the process, the boundaries between document and construction, historical evidence and synthetic memory, are becoming increasingly blurred.

The destabilization of archival authorities also offers the opportunity to think about archives differently: in a more decentralized, polyphonic, and collaborative way. This allows established orders to be critically and constructively questioned, and enables those whose stories are archived to become producers and interpreters of memory themselves. The archive thus appears less as a place where history is codified and more as a social space where different forms of knowledge converge, are negotiated, and are passed on. The key question then concerns both what is preserved, but also by whom, for whom, and under which conditions.

The exhibition title *Future Archives/Archive Futures* traces this dual movement: It explores what the archives of the future might look like—but also which futures are already being created by archives today.

Mail Art Archiv of Ruth Wolf-Rehfeldt and Robert Rehfeldt
Mail Art, various artists, ca. 1975–1986
Courtesy of ChertLüdde

Through mail art, Ruth Wolf-Rehfeldt and Robert Rehfeldt opened a window to the world from East Berlin, turning their studio and home into a quiet hub for a global community of artists, poets and activists.

Between the early 1970s and the early 1990s, the artist couple exchanged thousands of postcards, prints, postmarks, and letters with more than 1,800 contacts in some 70 countries—including Eastern Bloc nations, as well as countries in Western Europe, North and Latin America, the Middle East as well as Australia. Their mail art archive is as well a community archive that documents how exhibitions, publications, and actions were organized through informal networks. It demonstrates how Mail Art deliberately circumvented the official channels and structures of the art market and how, often out of necessity, it had to operate in secret in order to disseminate artistic works across ideological and infrastructural boundaries.

Ruth Wolf-Rehfeldt (1932, Wurzen – 2024, Berlin) moved to Berlin in 1950, worked in the exhibition department of the Academy of Fine Arts, and, beginning around 1970, developed her characteristic typewriter graphics (“Typewritings”), which she distributed as originals, carbon copies, and small prints suitable for mailing. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, she ceased her artistic practice.

Robert Rehfeldt (1931, Stargard – 1993, Berlin) graduated from the University of the Arts in the western sector of Berlin in 1953. From 1963 onward, he was among the experimental artists in East-Berlin and became a member of the Association of Visual Artists of the GDR. In the early 1970s, he came into contact with the Mail Art movement and quickly built up an international network. Robert Rehfeldt died in 1993.

Wie-yi T. Lauw
Fleeting Universe, 2021
Tapestry, wool, cotton, hand-dyed, hand-woven

In Wie-yi T. Lauw’s hand-woven tapestry *Fleeting Universe*, classical motifs from art history, manga characters, East Asian symbols and digital interfaces merge into a visual collage of collective memory, personal recollection and global pop culture. A robotic hand frozen in motion, a green dragon that seems to threaten a female warrior: inspired by the concept of “windowing” in Byung-Chul Han’s book *Hyperculture*, the visual motifs overlap, obscure and intersect, behaving almost like remnants of a browser history or a camera roll that have accumulated without any narrative order holding them together. This creates a dual gesture: the work translates the window-like, fragmented structure of the digital present into a material that suggests permanence, while at the same time raising the question of what remains of this simultaneity of worlds once it is released from its fleeting nature and fixed in place.

Wie-yi T. Lauw’s artistic practice explores the intersection of personal and collective narratives. In her installations, she engages with themes such as displacement, memory and the fluid construction of identity. Drawing on experiences shaped by the Asian diaspora in Europe, she examines how stories are fragmented, passed on and reimagined through migration, cultural exchange and acts of remembrance. Her works reflect on belonging, otherness as well as the enduring fascination with the “foreign”, challenging inherited notions of how difference is perceived. By linking personal experiences to overarching historical forces, T. Lauw reveals how cultural imaginaries continue to resonate in the perception of identity, place and memory.

Sim Chi Yin

The Suitcase Is A Little Bit Rotten, *Antecedent*, 2022

The Suitcase Is A Little Bit Rotten, *Canopy*, 2022

The Suitcase Is A Little Bit Rotten, *Climb*, 2022

UV print on glass, light box, replica vintage stand.

Courtesy of Sim Chi Yin and Zilberman, Istanbul | Berlin

In the series *The Suitcase Is a Little Bit Rotten* Sim Chi Yin re-appropriates antique Magic Lantern slides, once used for scientific, colonial and missionary lectures and projections. The found imagery of the former British colony of Malaya and other parts of Southeast Asia, as well as the cosmos, date to the late 1800s and early 1900s. She remakes the glass slides into plates which are then placed on replicas of antique retouching stands, where glass negatives were hand-colored and retouched in the early 20th century. Sim continues this gesture of intervention, inserting the figure of her grandfather alongside that of her son, who inherited part of his great-grandfather's Chinese name. Sim's grandfather was deported by the British from colonial Malaya to China in mid 1949 for anti-colonial activism and executed shortly after by Nationalist (Kuomintang) soldiers. He went unspoken of within the family for decades. By returning him to the frame, Sim stages situations that history made impossible, and opens the work onto broader questions of transgenerational memory, remembrance and forgetting in the aftermath of violent histories.

Sim Chi Yin is an artist from Singapore whose research-based practice uses artistic and archival interventions to contest and complicate historiographies and colonial narratives. Working across photography, moving image, archival intervention, performance, and book-making, she constructs multi-layered works that weave research, personal history, and geo-political critique. Sim lives and works in Berlin.

Nora Al-Badri
The Post-Truth Museum, 2021-2023
AI-video, sound, 13 min.

In The Post-Truth Museum, Nora Al-Badri uses deepfake technology to have the directors of the British Museum, the Louvre, and the Prussian Heritage Foundation speak with unusual clarity about their institutional responsibilities. The museum director's synthetic voices are based on their real voices and address the colonial histories of the museums, their collections, questions of restitution, and the possibility of a different institutional future. What sounds like an official statement, however, does not originate from the institutions themselves. Instead, Al-Badri shifts the authority of speaking, and draws, among other sources, on excerpts from critical and decolonial thinkers, which are now voiced by institutional representatives. Alongside these speaking figures, stylized museum objects and masks also have their say. They are given a voice that is usually taken from them within the museum: they are collected, classified, and exhibited, while the violence of their appropriation remains invisible. The work thus creates a space between reality and fiction, truth and deception, past and future, in which it remains possible to negotiate which stories are passed on and who is involved in passing them on.

Nora Al-Badri is a multidisciplinary and conceptual media artist with a German-Iraqi background. Her research-based, paradisciplinary and postcolonial works explore the politics and emancipatory potential of new technologies such as machine intelligence and data sculpting. Al-Badri's artistic approach combines speculative archaeology with performative interventions in museums and other public spaces. She lives and works in Berlin.

Sarah Oh-Mock and Bongjun Oh
All you can see, 2025-2026
Multi-part multimedia installation (excerpts)

All you can see is a collaborative, ongoing installation by artists Sarah Oh-Mock and Bongjun Oh. Using seashells, epoxy resin, paint, and discarded electronic devices the artists create semi-organic beings that envision a possible future of the Anthropocene: pregnant smartphones that give birth to their next generation, or hybrid clams and sea snails that produce their own meat for human consumption, thereby rendering the exploitation of their natural counterparts unnecessary. These semi-organic beings are also part of Oh-Mock's long-standing research project PHASO (Post-Human Archaeological Studies Organisation), in which she explores the material and cultural legacies of a possible post-human future.

In the installation, the objects appear as commodities from a futuristic „all-in-one self-service station“—somewhere between a convenience store, cell phone shop, snack bar, and gaming café. The 360° videos in the VR headset lead back to real places on the South Korean island of Jeju where the artists have spent time: a market visit, a temple, the Hello Kitty Museum or a trip to the sea appear in short sequences. All you can see can be read as an archaeology of the future: What remains of our present-day objects, technologies, and economic structures when they lose their original function and transform into something new?

Sarah Oh-Mock is a media artist who explores the relationship between culture, nature, and the unconscious in surrealist video works, installations, and drawings.

Bongjun Oh studied painting and sculpture and creates expansive installations combining painting, collage, and used materials that focus on the theme of impermanence.

Sarah Oh-Mock and Bongjun Oh are a Berlin-based artist couple who have been collaborating repeatedly for around ten years. Drawing on their different cultural backgrounds and native languages, they develop a fictional, transcultural aesthetic that transcends nationality while combining organic, inorganic, and digital materials.

Nihad Kreševljaković und Clarissa Thieme
Do you remember Sarajevo — Multitude, 2021
3-channel video installation, video monitors, Raspberry Pis,
random generator, archival video footage

Do You Remember Sarajevo – Multitude is an installation by Nihad Kreševljaković and Clarissa Thieme. It is part of the open-archive initiative Između Nas/Between Us, which they founded in 2016 and which invites scholars, artists, and the public to engage with the Library Hamdija Kreševljaković Video Arhiv Sarajevo.

The archive brings together amateur footage, local television images, and artistic films shot by a circle of friends around the Kreševljaković brothers and Nedim Alikadić in besieged Sarajevo between 1992 and 1995. Three monitors simultaneously display material from these three bodies of work. New videos are continuously selected at random, and visitors can restart the selection at any time by pressing a reset button.

At the Video Arhiv Sarajevo, collective viewing and discussion of the recordings have been part of the archiving process from the very beginning. Today, as war crimes are increasingly relativized, the archive has once again proved to be a contested site of interpretive authority. The installation extends the Video Arhiv Sarajevo's practice to new audiences, inviting them into an ongoing, inherently political process of interpretation and exchange.

Nihad Kreševljaković is a Bosnian historian, producer, and screenwriter, and the director of the MESS International Theatre Festival in Sarajevo. With his brother Sead, he founded the NGO Video Arhiv Sarajevo, which holds over 1,000 hours of footage recorded during the Siege of Sarajevo. The archive builds on the historic Library Hamdija Kreševljaković, the private collection of books and oral-history transcripts on the region assembled by his grandfather Hamdija Kreševljaković (1888–1959), a pioneering historian of Sarajevo.

Clarissa Thieme is a filmmaker, artist, and researcher working in the fissures between individual memory and its violent translation into historical objectification, exploring the living archive as a commons and vulnerability as essential to resistance and solidarity. Central to her practice is a collaborative mode developed over many years, most significantly since 2004 with the film collective Save the Amazon Production at the Library Hamdija Kreševljaković Video Archive Sarajevo. Together, they co-founded the open-archive initiative Između Nas/Between Us. She is also a co-founder of the AR archiving platform The ARchipelago (www.archipelagoarchive.com).

**PPKK (Schönfeld & Scoufaras),
PPKK 02.03, 2017**

**sculpture, assemblage, archival material as a gold mirror, sound exciter,
mp3-player, amplifier**

The Schwules Museum archive contains over 1 kilometer of materials documenting the histories and cultures of LGBTQI communities. The work, consisting of two parts, emerged from a series of wild dérives over six months through the archive, with media and materials selected at random. For Part A, the findings are digitized and stored on 20 hard drives. The drives are then chemically mined to extract their gold. The original archival documents, translated into digital data and inscribed onto metal, are now transformed into a powder, which is then vaporized onto a glass plate to create a mirrored surface.

The mirror is the data. The data is the mirror.

Part B works with a selection of VHS pornography. The audio tracks of the pornos are isolated and mined for the exact instance of orgasm. These sonic records are pieced together to compose a choir of orgasms. The mirror and the soundscape are connected by an electrodynamic exciter that transmits the sound data as vibrations through the mirror.

PPKK is a casual nomadic lab founded in Berlin 2016 by Sarah Ancelle Schönfeld and Louis-Philippe Scoufaras. PPKK is digesting different phenomena appearing within the globalized 'western metabolism'. They span from colonialism to the greenhouse effect to fascism and nuclear waste management.

PPKK explores ideologies behind the development of waste technologies through radical shifts of scale and angle, always on the verge of the nonsensical. PPKK develops systems stemming from heterogeneous fields and includes audience participation, addressing the human body and sensorial perception, resulting in installations and happenings. PPKK has an affinity to vibrations, humors and rituals.

**Klara Källström & Thobias Fäldt with Thomas Sauvin
and Bernard Dionysius Geoghegan**
Annotation Fever!, 2025
**Collaborative LLM (Large Language Model) project, book,
reproductions from a photo archive, annotations on plastic sheets**

New media create new ways of seeing, which become embedded in tools, practices, and institutions while reorganizing how we perceive the world, individually and collectively.

In today's AI, the photographic is everywhere and nowhere at once. Historical photos and archives form the datasets that train image-generating models. At the heart of this process is annotation: the labeling, dating, and marking of images. In the Beijing Silvermine archive, date stamps on negatives act as a kind of pre-AI annotation—small marks that signal events, ruptures, and limits to circulation.

Contemporary AI models depend on vast networks of human annotators. Every machine-readable image carries traces of this collective labor. To annotate is to learn to see as the machine sees, aligning intuition with statistical logic. These annotated images increasingly shape our shared visual culture; even everyday phone photos are subtly guided by algorithmic ideals.

Annotation Fever! makes these hidden processes visible. Through exhibition and workshops, it asks: What should be labeled, erased, or withheld? Who owns an annotated image, and should it feed future AI? In the gallery, a red dot marks images consented for further computational use. To annotate is not only to prepare images for machines—it is to shape the future of vision itself.

Annotation Fever! forms part of Iconologies of AI, developed and presented by artists Klara Källström, Thobias Fäldt, and Thomas Sauvin, together with media theorist Bernard Dionysius Geoghegan. It is supported by the Gothenburg Research Infrastructure for Digital Humanities, the Department of Applied IT, and HDK-Valand at the University of Gothenburg.

!Mediengruppe Bitnik

Random Darknet Shopper—The Bot's Collection, 2014–2016

**3-Channel video installation, full HD, sound, 9:40 min, Loop,
dimensions variable, 5 urethane rubber casts of items #1, #2, #6, #7, #8**

Random Darknet Shopper is an automated online shopping bot which operated from within three exhibition spaces in three different countries between 2014 and 2016. With a budget of \$100 in bitcoins per week, the bot went shopping on the deep web, where it randomly chose and purchased one item per week and had it delivered directly to the exhibition space.

At the time, hidden online markets exemplified how the Internet in general and the Darknets most notably helped to increasingly blur the lines of national legal dictates. Being global, these markets connect diverse jurisdictions, thus questioning the notions of legality and producing a grey zone of goods available everywhere through online shops.

'Can a robot, or a piece of software, be jailed if it commits a crime? Where does legal culpability lie if code is criminal by design or default?', asked Mike Power in an article about the Random Darknet Shopper published in the Guardian.

These fundamental questions were negotiated locally after the public prosecutor's office seized the Random Darknet Shopper on the morning of 12 January 2015 after the three month exhibition at Kunst Halle St. Gallen closed. This caused a sensation around the world because for the first time a robot had been arrested for an illegal act. At the same time, however, it remained unclear who was responsible for the actions of the bot. The bot itself, the artists, or the exhibition space and its staff?

!Mediengruppe Bitnik (read – the not mediengruppe bitnik) live and work in Berlin. They are contemporary artists who work on and with the Internet. Their practice expands from the digital to affect physical spaces, often intentionally employing loss of control to challenge established structures and mechanisms. The works of !Mediengruppe Bitnik formulate fundamental questions concerning contemporary issues. !Mediengruppe Bitnik are the artists Carmen Weisskopf and Domagoj Smoljo.

The Kunstverein Tiergarten's 2026 exhibition and education program is realized in cooperation with the Lichtenberg District Office of Berlin, Department of Continuing Education and Culture, Division of Art and Culture. It is supported by the Fund for Presentations of Contemporary Visual Art of the Senate Administration for Culture and Social Cohesion, Berlin, as well as by the Lichtenberg Cultural Promotion Fund.