

## 11      Photographing Objects as             Queer Archival Practice

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IN HER 2008 EXHIBITION titled *An Archive of Feelings*, Tammy Rae Carland endows ordinary objects from domestic life with archival significance by photographing them.<sup>1</sup> Many of the images contain only a single object: a copy of Robin Morgan's *Sisterhood Is Powerful* so well thumbed that the binding has broken and the pages are held together by a rubber band (plate 10); a red-and-white checked mug bearing the word "ART"; a playhouse made of pink paper; a pair of heart-shaped chocolate boxes (titled *Imperfect Lovers*); a thrift-store coin bank with black leather trim and a suggestively queer "Hers and Hers" inscription; a box of love letters tied with a yellow yarn ribbon. The boldly colored objects pop out so vividly against the white background that they seem almost three-dimensional, an effect bolstered by the fact that they are depicted at their actual sizes. The relative invisibility of the frames (which are also white) further contributes to the sense of a magical apparition. The series includes not only photographs of individual objects, but larger images that combine items to create collections: cassette mix tapes with hand-drawn covers; dedication pages torn from books that acknowledge lesbian lovers; items that Carland took from her mother's house after she died. Although suggestive of collage, the photographed ob-

*Lucida's* exemplary case is the withheld photograph of Barthes's mother in the winter garden as a child, but one doesn't have to look far to find evidence of a queer sensibility at work in his choice of images, such as a self-portrait by Robert Mapplethorpe.<sup>6</sup> The photograph also figures prominently as a form of affective access to the past in Walter Benjamin's method of "brushing history against the grain," which has been an inspiration for work on queer temporalities.<sup>7</sup>

Benjamin's "aura," like Barthes's punctum, is closely affiliated with theories of the photograph as evidence of traumatic histories. But photography's value as a marker of subjective feelings is equally important in more ordinary and domestic contexts. Marianne Hirsch's attention to the family photograph as a document of intimacy and a way of preserving memories that might seem idiosyncratic to others is in the spirit of the archive of feelings.<sup>8</sup> Although the history of photography is deeply entwined with conventional modes of documentation and surveillance, as well as realist aesthetics, its links to affect also make it an important medium through which to critique conventional archives and documentary, specifically their relation to modes of power and domination.<sup>9</sup> As an archival object, the photograph's power derives as much from its affective magic as from its realist claims, and ultimately from the powerful combination of the two. The indexicality that Barthes identifies as making the image of an object or person seem real underwrites the photograph's affective power and the attachments it fosters. And despite Benjamin's fears about reproducibility, the forms of aura that attach to the image have only deepened since the advent of photography, placing the medium in a prominent position in any archive of feelings.

My ultimate goal is to consider the role of photographers, and artists more generally, in creating counterarchives that challenge not only conventional archives but critiques of the archive as impossible or politically suspect. Carland's and Leonard's connections to queer cultures are a crucial catalyst here, and both of them are engaged in what Alex Juhasz, in the context of video, has called "queer archive activism."<sup>10</sup> Carland's use of my concept of an archive of feelings and my use of Leonard's earlier work as inspiration for the concept also suggests the dialogue between archive theory and art practices and the potential for collaborations among artists, scholars, and archivists in constructing new archives and new forms of gallery and museum exhibition.

### TAMMY RAE CARLAND'S ARCHIVE OF FEELINGS

For both Carland and Leonard, an interest in archives emerges from the challenges of documenting queer and lesbian experience, but both of them wrestle with how to use photography in ways that don't fall into conventional identitarian politics or positive images.<sup>11</sup> Carland's depiction of objects in *An Archive of Feelings* is an extension of her portraiture of queers and lesbians, as well as being continuous with her interest in genres such as the still life and the landscape in which people can be indirectly but evocatively present through their environments. In her *Lesbian Beds* series, for example, lesbian life is documented through a series of empty beds with rumpled sheets and the occasional object that gestures to its queer occupants, and in *Outpost*, a series of photographs of women's lands, there are subtle traces of queer inhabitation such as a sign with rainbow markings or a rough tree fort.<sup>12</sup> In both series, Carland approaches queer documentation obliquely, sidestepping demands for visibility and positive representation in favor of exploring the environments that lesbians create and the spaces they inhabit, from the intimacy of the bedroom and domestic life to the utopian dreams of going back to the land to make new cultures. Carland engages with art historical genres such as abstract painting in *Lesbian Beds* and the landscape photograph in *Outpost*, appropriating rather than rejecting aesthetic genres and their histories in order to document queer experiences and refusing to separate political representation or documentary from the aesthetic.<sup>13</sup> She has been explicitly interested in archives and photography in the project *Photobacks*, in which she photographed the backs of found photographs, often with a queer influence, such as *Dike in Holland*. She has also done portraits of queers, such as the *Postpartum Portraits*, which include images of her daughter, but also still-life moments such as *Rusty Love*, a photograph of the kitchen sink full of dirty dishes and a heart-shaped rust stain in the drain. The interplay between portraits and still lives in Carland's ongoing oeuvre suggests the challenges faced by queers seeking to avoid conventional forms of documentation and visibility and also explains why they often become obsessed with archives.<sup>14</sup>

*An Archive of Feelings* builds on these previous projects, revealing anew Carland's ongoing interest in the feel of objects, and her attention to color, texture, and the haptic qualities of images, as evident in the multicolored sheets and pillows of *Lesbian Beds*, and the stray objects both in that series and in *Outpost*, where human contact with nature is embedded in the landscape. What's distinctive about this new project, though, is the white space,

which gives the objects the look of an archival display but also remains as unobtrusive as possible so that they retain their integrity. Despite being decontextualized or severed from the material environments that are so richly present in Carland's earlier projects, they are attached to those environments by the feelings that the photographs also archive, feelings that are not visible as such but embedded in the loving attention to surface detail and presentation.

In photographing objects that are meaningful to her, Carland insists on the archival value of the personal. An exemplary case is *My Inheritance*, the photograph that displays the objects that she took from her mother's house when she died (plate 11). A floral-print pinafore apron; a souvenir map of San Francisco; a book of crossword puzzles; playing cards; a bingo card; a needlepoint that says "Born to Bingo"; a box of recipes and a recipe card with a picture of cake on it; a pair of glasses and an umbrella; and various signs of handicraft such as a box of fabric scraps and a crocheted flower and doily—if these objects have value, it's mostly of the sentimental kind. But sentiment is taken seriously here—many of the objects suggest domestic culture and the combination of leisure and labor, or creativity and necessity, available to a working-class woman who planned the meals she would cook, entertained herself with puzzles and games, and decorated her house with souvenirs and handmade crafts.<sup>15</sup> Carland has preserved her mother's life, as well as her own sense of loss, by photographing these humble objects and framing them for public display. Although her inheritance may not consist of conventional forms of cultural and economic value, Carland draws on the models of queer kinship invoked by the other photographs in the exhibition to suggest that the transmission of property (and creativity) can take unpredictable forms.

Available as a souvenir from the show was a broadside sheet that reproduced *My Inheritance* in newsprint along with an epigraph from Roland Barthes: "Who will record the history of tears?"<sup>16</sup> This resonant question has been taken up by cultural theorists and historians of all kinds, and it is particularly appropriate to the project of queer archiving. A history of tears is a history that attends to the everyday and the ordinary, to feelings and emotions, and to the experiences of minoritarian cultures for whom loss (including the loss of history) and sadness are all too familiar. But even if we agree that tears are an important part of history, how are we to record them—via what kinds of documents and via what creative or scholarly projects? As the product of ephemeral practices and embodied knowledges, tears might be more appropriate to what Diana Taylor has called the reper-

toire rather than the archive.<sup>17</sup> Perhaps the history of tears, and by extension, loss and emotion, requires the help of artists and other creative archivists to transform the work of the scholars and the museums and libraries. Carland uses the practice of photography to claim historical value for personal possessions and the relationships they represent. The objects linking her to her mother, as well as to the friends and lovers with whom she shares music, books, letters, and other gifts, constitute an inheritance or a legacy of queer intimacies and affections that she has made into a public archive and exhibition.

Especially notable in Carland's archive are forms of print and musical culture that are not only personally meaningful but signs of the punk and riot grrrl subcultures that use private feelings as a resource for collective production, often through DIY methods that emphasize the power of individual agency.<sup>18</sup> But unlike a more conventional library or archive where the focus might be on the content of the books or records displayed, Carland's photographs draw attention to their status as material objects. For example, the tattered paperback copy of *Sisterhood Is Powerful* shows the signs of use that have made the material book itself, and not just its contents, a beloved talisman; the letters from an ex that are displayed in a transparent box and carefully tied with a yellow wool ribbon indicate the care with which such personal archives are preserved and constitute another case in which text becomes an object; a collection of dedication pages from Carland's personal library of queer and feminist books (called *Vaguely Dedicated*) is a reminder of how love gets expressed in public (and published) form. (The dedications link familial intimacy—"For my father"—with the political and collective—"To the oppressed and to those who suffer with them and fight at their side.") Even the nearly flat book pages in this image seem three-dimensional or ready to lift off of the white background, leading the viewer to pause to see if they are actually present and not just photographed. In each case, the materiality of the object makes more immaterial relationships and cultures tangible or visible (what I have called sensationalism in *Mixed Feelings*), including feminist and queer ones that are often socially marginalized. But these objects and their meanings bump up against official notions of the archival artifact, veering off in the direction of the ephemeral or the minor. The objects in the archive of feelings make personal experience and feelings meaningful by making them material, capturing the ephemeral through ephemera, the archival category for occasional publications and miscellaneous artifacts.

Especially important in this regard is the large photograph of a set of cas-

sette mix tapes and their handwritten and handcrafted covers that friends (including Kurt Cobain) gave Carland (plate 12); they serve not only as testimony to the exchange of music as a form of emotional expression and social bonding but as a document of the musical subcultures and scenes that have shaped her art practice.<sup>19</sup> Even in the moment of its making, the cassette mix tape serves as an archive of everyday feelings, a form through which people share their musical tastes and affiliations, enhancing the meanings of individual songs and artists by combining them with others and using them as ways to facilitate relationships (as the title, *One Love Leads to Another*, aptly suggests). They add to the impact of the sonic meanings by decorating the tape covers and the tapes themselves, endowing them with additional layers of emotional meaning and ultimately too with archival significance as material artifacts. Carland herself has facilitated such queer networks of affiliation and cultural production as cofounder of Mr. Lady Records, an important alternative producer and distributor of lesbian and queer music and culture, which drew inspiration not only from independent labels associated with punk, such as Kill Rock Stars and K Records (based in Olympia, where she lived for a time), but also from women's music labels such as Olivia Records. With the passage of time, this collection of tapes takes on additional archival meanings, especially because the format of the cassette tape itself becomes archaic, thus serving as a historical marker of a particular scene or era. Carland serves as both archivist and curator by assembling the tapes together in one photograph that documents her collection. *One Love Leads to Another* suggests how a collection of objects can serve as a way to document communities and the ephemeral relationships and feelings that produce them.

When objects are animated by feelings, they may demand alternative or experimental archival practices. Artists have thus been important curators of queer archives because they have a knack not only for valuing objects that others don't but also for exhibiting them in ways that can capture both their felt value and their historical value (and make claims for felt value as historical value). Carland's use of photography to constitute objects as an archive of feelings exemplifies the transfers across media that are a hallmark of the archival practices of artists—objects become photographs, photographs become sources for drawings or animated films or fiction, visual artifacts become part of installations or performances.<sup>20</sup> No one medium is privileged over others in the queer archive of feelings, which is often characterized by the creative use of multiple formats. The archiving of queer experience can thus take the form of the labor of transferring artifacts from one medium to

another in order not only to preserve and circulate them but also to suggest their affective significance.

The increased traffic between the visual and the sensual also emerges from the search for new forms of documentary media motivated by the demands placed on the archive by subaltern histories and traumatic histories of social violence, such as slavery and diaspora. The legacy of these histories has often been either the absence of an archive, or the need to pick through or read against the grain of the documents of civilization as documents of barbarism and domination.<sup>21</sup> Such histories require imaginative archives, and artists are adept at creative ways of producing new kinds of documents or working with existing documents. Pressure on the archive or archive trouble often manifests itself as a suspicion of print documents, which are so frequently dominant, and as a desire to escape the spectacle of the gaze. Artists and critics have also looked for alternatives to the sensational or the sentimental (which can be present in realist and documentary genres no less than in melodramatic ones). They have thus turned to more ephemeral genres, seeking documents that can access the feel of ordinary experience, sometimes by virtue of being more tactile, and hence sensational in a different way.<sup>22</sup> The archive of feelings is not just about archiving feelings; it is also about trying to make an archive that is felt and sensuous.

Carland's practice reflects the photograph's dual status as both material object and document of the ephemeral. Photographs often function like iconic or sacred objects when they hold memories and feelings—the materiality of the paper is as important as the indexicality of the image in providing a tangible connection to a lost place, person, or object. In an extension of this process, Carland takes the material object and turns it into a photograph, transferring it to another medium in order to convey its significance and to make it less ephemeral. Although a solid object might seem more robustly material than a photographic image, in traditional archives, objects are often classified as "ephemera" and assigned a more minor status, whereas paper documents, especially books and manuscripts, but also photographs, are treated as primary (although print documents of a more occasional or temporary nature are also categorized as "ephemera"). The photographing of the material archive represents the impulse toward preservation of the ephemeral, which has been crucial to documenting queer and other minoritarian or popular histories. What might otherwise be what Kay Turner has called "ephemeral memorials," temporary accumulations of material objects that are the vehicle for ritual and performative practices, such as burning candles, are given a more archival permanence by the

photograph.<sup>23</sup> Carland's efforts to render the objects in her images three-dimensional and life size conjures their materiality or thingness and is also a reminder of an elsewhere beyond the photograph and the public archive that is the domain of ephemeral feeling.

### ZOE LEONARD'S ANALOGUE

Although Zoe Leonard's archive of New York storefronts and the global circulation of commodities might seem rather different from Carland's more personal collections, Leonard's career has also been shaped by an interest in loss and in the role of photography in the documentation of both intimate and collective histories. Moreover, while *Analogue* may not seem overtly queer, it develops out of Leonard's previous engagement with the preservation of queer intimacies and histories through the love of the archival object. For *The Fae Richards Photo Archive*, for example, Leonard collaborated with Cheryl Dunye on her film *The Watermelon Woman* (1996), in which Dunye, playing a version of herself, searches for the archival traces of Fae Richards, a black actress who played minor and stereotypical roles in Hollywood films; to make this fictional character seem historically real and queer, Leonard created a pseudo-archive of vintage photographs documenting a lesbian life for Richards.<sup>24</sup> Leonard has also engaged directly with archives and museums in photographs of young girls in the Natural History Museum, the preserved head of a bearded woman under glass (in the Musée Orfila), and anatomical models from a museum in Vienna, and in her *Documenta IX* installation, where she placed photographs of women's genitalia alongside old-school portrait paintings.<sup>25</sup> Other series display Leonard's interest in objects that others might not care about: traces of bubblegum on the pavement, the trees that grow up around fences in New York City, remnants of dried-up fruit sewn together (which served as a memorial to friends who had died of AIDS-related illnesses). Seeing and caring are linked in the photographs, which provide a record not just of the objects themselves but of Leonard's experience of walking the streets and noticing what others don't see. Not to be underestimated either is the impact of her history as an AIDS activist on her continuing engagement with death and mourning as catalysts for archival practice.<sup>26</sup>

Building on Leonard's long history of documenting the overlooked or invisible, *Analogue* makes an ambitious bid to create a public and global history from personal investments. Embedded in Leonard's experience of living and working in the Lower East Side, where artists and queers have long been part of the landscape of immigrant New York, and then in Brook-

lyn, where they are increasingly present, *Analogue* is rooted in her process of recording a very personal diary of her neighborhood. In her own words, "I know the world will never look quite this way again, and I want to look closely, to hold it near."<sup>27</sup> She is documenting not just the social and economic landscape of the city but its emotional landscape, using the intimacy and immediacy of her own connections to the neighborhood as a way to address global conditions. Risking what might seem like nostalgia, her willingness to be unapologetically personal reflects a queer sensibility.

In *Analogue*, the queer sensibility about loss and marginality manifest in Leonard's earlier work intersects with a Benjaminian tradition of documenting urban neighborhoods as an archive of global economics; the project belongs to a tradition that includes, among others, Eugène Atget's photographs of Paris (about which Benjamin wrote) and Berenice Abbott's photographs of New York (Abbott being another photographer of the city whose work was marked by the queer even if not overtly queer).<sup>28</sup> Signaling her engagement with these early twentieth-century modernist projects, Leonard uses the disappearing technology of the analogue film camera to record the small businesses on the verge of disappearing due to the globalization of industry and the gentrification of the neighborhoods of the Lower East Side that were once home to immigrants and the textile trade. In the style of Atget and Abbott, Leonard focuses on buildings rather than people, and on potentially unexceptional or forgotten locations, seeking to capture them on film before they are gone. (In response to comments that there are no people, Leonard says, "But I was there," insisting on the personal vision that inspires her process and marks her images.)<sup>29</sup> As part of *Analogue*, Leonard also includes photographs from her travels to Uganda, Cuba, eastern Europe, the West Bank, and Mexico, where the forms of commerce visible in New York appear in simultaneously familiar and foreign ways and where, for example, bales of clothing photographed in New York show up as part of a common network of global exchange.

The status of *Analogue* as a documentary archive is also evident in its exhibition format, where, in the tradition of projects such as Gerhard Richter's *Atlas* and Bernd and Hilla Becher's photographs of industrial architecture, the photographs are displayed in a series of grids, or what Leonard calls "chapters," that group objects by categories. The installation begins with a chapter of shuttered storefronts, then moves to a collection of store windows featuring images of hairstyles, and then back to a large collection of open storefronts (including some of the same ones in the opening chapter).<sup>30</sup> The chapters that follow focus on particular themes, such as objects,

window displays (especially clothes), flags, signs that have been erased, and multiples of commodities, which become a record of Leonard's process of gradually accumulating subsets of images that then emerged as categories for exhibition. A chapter of photographs of clothing bales serves as the transition between the United States and other locations, especially Africa, and the exhibition moves sequentially to other forms of commodity display, including the makeshift booths of street markets and a final chapter in which secondhand objects are displayed on blankets on the ground (plate 13). Leonard's chapters are reminiscent of Benjamin's collections of writings about fashion, toys, and interiors, in which social life is categorized according to what might seem like minor themes.<sup>31</sup> Laid out on a two-dimensional grid, they also resemble Carland's images of multiple objects. Both photographers work like collectors, who accumulate things over time, sometimes obsessively so, and like archivists, who preserve and catalog collections. The act of photographing serves as a method of both collecting and archiving, as does the mode of display. (Moreover, Leonard repeatedly prints her works over time, making an archival practice of the activity of going from negative to print.)

In *Analogue's* individual photographs, Leonard creates a version of the still life, in a mode reminiscent of Carland's interest in the seemingly arbitrary object, by collecting scraps and fragments that might seem worthless or beneath notice. There are no people in these photographs—objects tell the story, piled up both inside and outside the storefronts and shop windows that are the centerpiece of many images in the series. Capitalism's vast accumulation of objects—mattresses, TVs, food, pillows, signs, trash cans, graffiti, clothing bales—are on display here in ordinary and nonspectacular ways that are nonetheless given visibility through Leonard's act of photographing them (including the work of framing marked by the photograph's borders). These are not the glamorous store windows of Fifth Avenue or the upscale department store; these are bargain basement discards at the bottom end of the chain of commerce, where distinctions between what's on display for sale and what's in the disarray of the trash disappear, and where the sheer volume becomes a nightmarish sign of production gone awry. At the same time, in Leonard's photographs a collection of shoes or jackets in a street market can seem full of feeling, as though inanimate things remain alive and valuable even when what was once a thriving commodity reaches its dead end.

Leonard's photographs are documents that capture the materiality of the objects in the photograph—the use of color and framing yields unexpected

forms of the punctum that Barthes describes as the emotional center of a photograph. Many of the photographs in the opening chapters show a single storefront that includes a display window and the surrounding signage; as is the case with other projects by Leonard, they are printed with the border of the negative included, so as to indicate that the image has not been cropped, which also suggests its status as an archival document and the photographer's mediating presence. Yet even with this framing, the photographs have the effect of making every detail potentially important, rather than the focal point being the window display, especially since the objects in the windows are often piled up randomly. The gaze is variously drawn to the harsh neon lights of an interior, the reflections of the street in the window, the graffiti on the walls, or the peeling paints on exterior walls that add to the color palette; through the documentation of ordinary materiality, an archive of feelings emerges.

In a photograph of Stanton Street, New York City, 2002, for example, piles of fabric bolts in the window create a random assortment of color (plate 14). They are complemented by the dirty white canvas pushcarts outside, which suggest the movement of materials along city streets and beyond. There is graffiti on the storage box, multiple shades of brown on the fire escape and the exterior, the trace of a sign that once said FABRIC. As in many of the other photos in the series, the signage is deteriorating or barely legible, and often in scripts and designs that are evocative of other eras. Although its peak has faded, the Lower East Side's previous generations of history as a garment and tenement district have survived to remain visible into the twenty-first century, but the photographs suggest that persistence is now coming to an end. In order to capture its remains, Leonard has to remain alert to a history that is embedded in the nonspectacular and in ostensibly dead objects and businesses that are, for her at least, still alive and telling a story.

The store's display window is a focal point but not in the usual way. The multiple colors of the fabric bolts—piled so high they are tipping over—pop out against the more neutral backdrop of browns and beige, and especially visible are solid reds and oranges punctuated by a strip of light blue and what appears to be a red-and-white floral pattern. These fabrics are stacked on top of another assortment of folded bolts whose ends face the window and whose multiple colors form a random pattern, drawing the gaze toward individual colors. The experience of looking is like that of shopping in a thrift store; the spectator, like the consumer, has to sort through an overload of objects that are not arranged for aesthetics or convenience. The windows are no longer being used for an intentional display—the bolts are

bisected in the middle by the window frame, for example—but Leonard's eye and the resulting image insist that there is a lot there. Like the bargain hunter who discovers a useful item amid discarded commodities, or the flâneur who sees something of interest while wandering the streets, or the queer archivist who is drawn to the marginal, Leonard finds value amid waste and detritus.

Even as the viewer is drawn to the fabric bolts because of their bright colors and the window's framing, Leonard recasts the figure/ground hierarchy that is often created by both the frame of the picture window and the frame of the camera and encourages the viewer to see all the details in the picture as potentially important. This strategy is particularly evident in the series of photos of shuttered storefronts that constitutes *Analogue's* opening chapter. In a photo of East 12th Street, New York City, 1999, for example, the storefront for Mandel Tobacco reveals nothing beyond the faded sign (plate 15). The image is dominated by a set of grays that ties together the doors of the building, the shutters, the concrete cinder blocks, and the trash cans, as though the monochrome were some intentional design decision. The faded sign for Mandel Tobacco adds another hue, and the green garbage bags that sag over the rims of the cans add some texture. In other chapters, the storefronts are completely shuttered, revealing how the sliding grates that cover windows are themselves part of the city's landscape and have an aesthetic and visual power in their own right. The signs then emerge as the most visible objects, sending forth random messages (such as *Wholesale 152 Joy Boutique Retail*) that become urban poems.

Although their modes of display differ, Leonard, like Carland, uses the photographic medium to bring archival status to seemingly insignificant objects. Carland isolates her objects on a flat white background so that the figure doesn't have to compete with the background in order to assume visual prominence. Leonard, by contrast, lets insignificant objects become visible by refusing to create a strong figure/ground distinction. The resulting punctum effects are unpredictable; they might even be dubbed instances of "low punctum," that is, focal points and emotional effects that are ordinary rather than traumatic or sensational. In an image of Pitt St., New York City, 1999, for example, two aluminum takeout containers that have fallen behind the shelf create an inadvertent window display, their silver color matching that of the siding below and framed by the muted yellow of the storefront (plate 16). To claim that one of the stray aluminum containers (or the Styrofoam cup off to one side) is the punctum might seem arbitrary, but Leonard's interest in the everyday and the random legitimates the idiosyncratic perspective that

Barthes gestures toward (but also resists in his magisterial explanations of his choices). Leonard encourages the viewer to sustain attention even as it is dispersed across the surface of the image so that any object could potentially be important; the aluminum containers, for example, distract the viewer from the window sticker advertising an energy drink that should be a focal point. These are objects on the verge of being forgotten, part of the vast circulation of a system that manufactures too much for too little. Although Leonard's rich environment differs from Carland's decontextualizing white space, Leonard's objects often look oddly out of context too, as though they landed unexpectedly in their locations or belong somewhere else, and the two photographers share a similar sensibility with respect to both the archival and the affective value of ordinary objects.

At the same time that Leonard remains committed to the local and intimate in documenting the neighborhood in which she lives, another crucial feature of *Analogue* is her turn to other locations outside the United States, especially Uganda, which are displayed in the later portion of the exhibition. She says, "The deeper I look, the more I realize that in looking into these shop windows, I am also looking out at the rest of the world."<sup>32</sup> Leonard seeks to make direct connections between her home on the Lower East Side and locations elsewhere, manifest most literally and materially in the presence of the clothing bales that make their way from the United States to other places, including through their persistent appearance in signs. She also shows the ubiquitous presence of corporate logos, such as Coke and Kodak, that are at once familiar and yet different insofar as they are painted by hand rather than photographed or copied, thus acquiring a local character that retains the mark of earlier technologies and craft. Although there are some storefronts in the photographs from Africa, Cuba, and the West Bank (including those featuring familiar logos and resembling shops on the Lower East Side with their humble mass-marketed objects such as brooms and bags), these later chapters also present other modes of commerce such as outdoor markets, where Leonard shows clothes hanging as though personified. The final chapter in the exhibition of *Analogue* is a series of collections of used objects displayed for sale on blankets (plate 13); this profusion of items that have been rescued from the trash to recirculate as commodities can be overwhelming but also lends itself to the search for the idiosyncratic or personal punctum in the random shoe or old typewriter. These abandoned objects have the capacity to be loved again through Leonard's attentive photographic practice.

This is risky work for documentary if it seeks to avoid familiar liberal

clichés about Third World poverty, sensationalizing exoticism, or neocolonialist ethnographic voyeurism; by turning from people to objects, Leonard brings to new places the same sensibility with which she looks for the stray object or the forgotten detail in her neighborhood, believing in the possibility of being able to see outside the conventional journalistic or documentary gaze. She does so by looking at those objects with a gaze that is simultaneously intimate and curious, open to the aesthetics of the minor detail and slow to declare its meanings. Although the effort to bring faraway places close may not be able to negotiate incommensurabilities of nation and race, Leonard's version of an archive of feelings offers a felt relation to these objects, a way of slowing down to see their surfaces so that they are not reduced to the economic systems that create them. Viewing Carland and Leonard together, particularly in their haptic relation to objects, suggests that the sensibility that leads them to collect and photograph objects close to home, ones that in some instances would be coded as white, or female, or working class, can lend itself to different ways of approaching cultural difference as well, such as recognizing it as familiar or as something to be valued and touched.

Leonard also archives objects in order to archive material spaces; her photographs manifest the desire to use archival artifacts to transport the street into the art gallery or museum. This has been an ongoing project for museums, particularly in the wake of historical critiques such as Benjamin's, which have led to new forms of installation that replace disembodied vision with more sensuous modes of perception. Efforts to address cultural geographies often grapple with the tension between the museum space and actual locations, acknowledging the limits of the museum at the same time as they seek to make displays more material or to point to the problem of representing material locations.<sup>33</sup> *Analogue* faces the archival challenge of using the photographic document to represent spaces that not only exist elsewhere but are more tactile and sensational in their original locations, and Leonard's attention to its installation reflects her ongoing interest in transforming archives and museums.

One of *Analogue*'s other forms of exhibition is its translation into a book, the format of which is borrowed from another increasingly archaic genre, the library book with its protective buckram binding and familiar white print titles.<sup>34</sup> (It is available with red, green, dark blue, brown, and black bindings.) Bringing the photos together to constitute a material artifact, *Analogue* as a book makes the move to another medium in order to extend

the project's archival life. The image has become an object again, serving as something that the viewer can hold and circulate, in a form that is reminiscent of archives from the past (especially if the book form is increasingly replaced by digital archives). Leonard moves between object and image, and between image and text (as object), in order to reconstruct and preserve older archival practices as a resource for contemporary archival practices. In her use of the disappearing format of the bound library book, as well as the analogue camera, she shares Carland's interest in moving across media to create new archives.

*Analogue* includes an essay by Leonard titled "A Continuous Signal: An Essay of Excerpts and Quotations" that, in the style of Benjamin, consists of an archive of quotations about documentation, cities, and photography that reference Atget, Abbott, Gisèle Freund, and other important theorists of photography, including Benjamin himself. In yet another way, though, Benjamin gets a queer twist from Leonard, who also includes quotations from her AIDS activist colleague, Gregg Bordowitz, as well as from James Baldwin, Samuel Delany, Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf, and Adrienne Rich (whose *Diving into the Wreck* is a crucial text of lesbian and feminist archive theory). Testifying to Leonard's multiple influences, this textual collection also confirms the mutually informing value of photography theory and queer theory for innovative approaches to the archive.

#### ART AS COUNTERARCHIVE: MATERIAL EPHEMERALITY

In making art as archival practice, Carland and Leonard address critiques of the archive as impossible or historically suspect that have emerged in cultural studies. Their work takes as point of departure theories of the archive that emphasize its limits and that look for new forms of collecting and display that can account for the ephemeral or the invisible. The traffic between photography and objects in their projects forges a distinctive conjunction between the ephemeral and the material in the archive of feelings. Sometimes, their work makes the ephemeral more material by giving it a concrete visual representation in the photograph. At the same time, they reveal that the material is ephemeral, particularly when it stands for feelings that are attached to objects in arbitrary ways. Lost worlds often linger beyond reach of the material practice or image in the gallery.

This convergence of the material and the ephemeral combines *ephemerality* as used in performance studies to describe that which escapes the archive with *ephemera* as used in archival studies to describe occasional



print artifacts and material objects that have a minor status. Carland and Leonard develop practices of photographing ephemera in order to archive the ephemeral. The ephemerality of the archive that has been a central concern for performance studies is also relevant to photography, which has been such a crucial technology of memory. Formulating the distinction between the archive and the repertoire, Diana Taylor has suggested that performance and other new media often seek to escape the traditional archive and to resist the deadening effects of preservation in favor of the forms of history that are embedded in ephemeral practices.<sup>35</sup> In her discussion of the “ephemeral memorials” that appeared in the streets of New York in response to September 11, 2001, Kay Turner describes the memorial practices that endow collections of material objects like those collected by Leonard and Carland with affective meanings. Leonard treats the storefronts from the neighborhoods not far away from the World Trade Center as though they, too, were a kind of ephemeral memorial composed of altars of ordinary objects that offer testimony to lost histories.

Although embodied performance has been the exemplary case in theories of the ephemeral, the material objects and locations photographed by Carland and Leonard are also in their own way ephemeral, even if they are ultimately documented in photographs that are versions of conventional artifacts designed to resist ephemerality. The act of photographing is performative, whether on the street, where Leonard turns unlikely spaces into memorials of the sort Turner describes, or in the studio, where Carland’s photography is a way of seeing and holding objects. Moving between the visual and material, they emphasize the status of their photographs as objects and they challenge the privileging of textual documents in the archives. (Even where Carland’s objects are print documents, her photographs draw attention to the materiality of paper and hence to a text’s status as an object.) They also embrace material culture because of their commitment to archiving the locations and sites of felt experience that can be hard to preserve and display in traditional archives. (In this respect, their work reflects the sensibility of museums of design and material culture, such as London’s Victoria and Albert Museum, which document everyday life and history through fashion and commodity culture.)

Material objects are also ephemeral insofar as they are often not included in archives, especially if they seem insignificant as so many of Carland’s and Leonard’s objects tend to be. Turner’s work is suggestive for thinking about how art practices are inspired by and adapt popular forms of memorial to

the more fixed space of the art gallery (although sometimes at the risk of erasing the populism and ephemerality of the street memorial).<sup>36</sup> The relation between photography and ephemerality is pronounced in Carland’s and Leonard’s projects because they photograph objects rather than bring them into the gallery (or bring them into the gallery via photographs). Although their photographic styles suggest the materiality of objects in different ways—Carland, through giving them a three-dimensional quality and suspending them against a white background, and Leonard, through attention to detail and location—both nonetheless render their objects in an archival format that preserves feelings, both sensuous and emotional.

In preserving forms of ephemerality, the objects that Leonard and Carland photograph can also be understood as “testimonial objects,” the term used by Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer to describe how objects can serve as mechanisms for the transfer of history, often because they have narratives and ephemeral histories and feelings attached to them.<sup>37</sup> However, the example they use to develop the concept—a miniature notebook with drawings, carefully hidden and then passed on from a concentration camp—is of quite obvious historical value, unlike the more obscure objects photographed by Carland and Leonard. Moreover, if they photograph testimonial objects, or make objects testimonial by photographing them, it is not necessarily by virtue of recourse to a narrative testimony attached to the object. Carland and Leonard are less concerned about histories being immediately manifest in their testimonial objects, perhaps because they want to insist that it is enough that they care about them. In the spirit of Benjamin’s mystical archives of quotations, they want to make the object testimonial without benefit of explanatory narrative; instead, the object and its archival presentation become its meaning, without it having to be decoded to be made meaningful. In their haptic qualities, the photographs focus attention on the surface of the object as itself significant.

Photographing the testimonial object in ways that also preserve its ephemerality, Carland and Leonard create forms of archival practice that reside between the traditional archive and the ephemeral practice. They seek to redefine the archive in order to make it more alive and more open to, for example, queer experience and to preserve the ephemeral in order to let it perform its critical work of making alternative histories. They address the tension between official and unofficial archives, between institutional archives that serve the dominant culture and counterarchives that produce alternative histories. Carland’s and Leonard’s projects remain attached to

the concept and practice of the archive, seeking to intervene in its construction in order to make new kinds of public histories. In their use of art forms, in this case photography, as an archival practice, they insist on an archival process marked by personal sensibilities, where the act of photographing and the act of display both establish a felt (in the sense of both tactile and emotional) relationship with objects. They use photographic practices that bring a material and sensuous world of objects and locations into the gallery and thus respond to the challenge of the ephemeral, while still using conventional art genres and modes of exhibition in order to preserve and legitimate potentially insignificant archives.

Even as Carland and Leonard remain attached to the archive, they also significantly transform it. They understand the limits of the traditional archive and aim to revise it to incorporate ephemeral and performative knowledges. They use creative practices to make public space for materials, whether cumbersome objects or ephemeral feelings, that have not always been considered archivable. In creating an archive of feelings, these artists are not just making art about archives or from archives; they are making art as an archive. In their concern with the aesthetics of exhibition and display and their attention to how history is embedded in fragments and material objects, they suggest a mutual engagement between art practice and the archive. By expanding what constitutes an archive, these artists also make a richer affective archive, documenting not just what history means but why it matters.

## NOTES

An earlier version of this essay appeared in Mathias Danbolt, Jane Rowley, and Louise Wolthers, eds., *Lost and Found: Queering the Archive* (Copenhagen: Nikolaj, Copenhagen Contemporary Art Center, 2009). Thanks to Mathias Danbolt for commissioning the essay and for editorial suggestions. Thanks also to Elspeth Brown and Thy Phu for the opportunity to present at the "Feeling Photography" conference and for their insightful feedback. This project has further benefited from the input of audiences at Duke University, Trent University, and Columbia University, as well as from the expert advice of Ann Reynolds and Kay Turner. For help with images and editorial assistance, my thanks to Jocelyn Davis and Pilou Miller. I'm deeply grateful to Tammy Rae Carland and Zoe Leonard for the continuing inspiration of their work and our ongoing discussions.

1. Tammy Rae Carland, *An Archive of Feelings*, Silverman Gallery, San Francisco, June 2008.
2. Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).
3. Leonard is present in *An Archive of Feelings* in multiple ways. She is one of the women

I interviewed for my oral history project with lesbian AIDS activists, and she was the photographer for *The Fae Richards Photo Archive*, which features prominently in my discussion of the film *The Watermelon Woman*. My book closes with one of her photographs of trees growing around and through fences in the streets of New York because it so powerfully evoked the book's argument about persistence and survival in the face of damage and injury. I have also written about Leonard's art practice and her visual activism with the Fierce Pussy collective in Ann Cvetkovich, "Fierce Pussies and Lesbian Avengers: Dyke Activism Meets Celebrity Culture," in *Feminist Consequences: Theory for the New Century*, ed. Elisabeth Bronfen and Misha Kavka (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 213–253. She is thus an important fellow traveler for my thinking on a range of issues.

4. See the chapter on Marx in Ann Cvetkovich, *Mixed Feelings: Feminism, Mass Culture, and Victorian Sensationalism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992). My thinking is also fundamentally informed by Kay Turner's discussion of the collection of objects for altars in *Beautiful Necessity: The Art and Meaning of Women's Altars* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1999).
5. Although photography is not explicitly taken up in *An Archive of Feelings*, it is significant in some of the works discussed, including Margaret Randall's memoir-essay *This Is about Incest* (Ann Arbor, MI: LPC-Firebrand, 1987); Dorothy Allison's memoir *Two or Three Things I Know for Sure* (New York: Plume, 1996); Jean Carlomusto's videos *Shatzi Is Dying* (New York, 2000) and *To Catch a Glimpse* (New York, 1997); and Zoe Leonard's photographs for *The Fae Richards Photo Archive* that were used in Cheryl Dunye's film *The Watermelon Woman* (Dancing Girl, 1997). Of note is the mixing of media when photography crosses over into literary texts and film and video, and the frequency with which family photographs are used for affective purposes.
6. See Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981).
7. See, among others, Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 1969), 253–264; "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, 217–252, which discusses photography; "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century" (1939), in *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 14–26, which mentions Atget; and, especially on the question of the archive, *The Arcades Project* more generally. For queer temporalities, in which relations to the past are structured by affective investments rather than causal logics, see Elizabeth Freeman, ed., "Queer Temporalities," special issue, *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 13.2–3 (2007).
8. See Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).
9. Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October* 39 (winter 1986): 3–64; Okwui Enwezor, *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art* (New York: International Center of Photography, 2008); Charles Merewether, ed., *The Archive: Docu-*

- ments of *Contemporary Art* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006). A major influence for recent work has been Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
10. Alex Juhasz, "Video Remains: Nostalgia, Technology, and Queer Archive Activism," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 12.2 (2006): 319–328.
  11. For more on the challenges of visual representation as a means of lesbian cultural and political visibility, see Cvetkovich, "Fierce Pussies and Lesbian Avengers."
  12. On *Lesbian Beds*, see Cathy Davidson's catalog essay *Reinserting Myself into a History* (Durham, NC: Duke Museum of Art, 2002); on *Outpost*, see the catalog for *The Way That We Rhyme* (San Francisco: Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, 2008). For more of Carland's work, see the website for the Jessica Silverman Gallery, <http://jessicasilvermangallery.com/tammy-rae-carland/> (accessed July 4, 2013). For more on the connections between our projects, see the transcript of our public conversation, Tammy Rae Carland and Ann Cvetkovich, "Sharing an Archive of Feelings," in "Queer Affect and Queer Archives," ed. Tirza True Latimer, special section, *Art Journal* (summer 2013): 70–77.
  13. Carland's representational strategies parallel those of Catherine Opie, who has also alternated between landscape and portrait projects. See the catalog from her major retrospective exhibition, Catherine Opie and Russell Ferguson, *Catherine Opie: American Photographer* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2008). See also Dana Seitler's essay in this collection (chapter 2) for a discussion of Opie and Carland together and for a more extended analysis of *Lesbian Beds*.
  14. Carland's interest in archives is further evident in the collage project, *Ransom Letters to Random Girls*, in which she writes messages of acknowledgment and encouragement to women who are part of famous couples, such as Alice B. Toklas, Yoko Ono, and Lee Krasner, and who have often been marginalized or maligned in the historical records, including having their own work as artists overlooked. Carland's art practice intervenes in and transforms the archives of intimacy.
  15. Carland has publicly articulated her sense of a working-class identity in her zine, *I (Heart) Amy Carter*.
  16. Roland Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978). Heather Love uses this question as an epigraph for *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).
  17. Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).
  18. On queer subcultures, see Judith Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Space: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005).
  19. Carland's own archive is now available as part of the Riot Grrrl Collection at the Fales Library at New York University. The files include zines she made, such as *I (Heart) Amy Carter*, and documents from Mr. Lady Records. Selections from the collection, including Carland's papers, have been published in Lisa Darms, ed., *The Riotgrrrl Collection* (New York: Feminist Press, 2013).

20. See, for example, my discussion of Alison Bechdel's drawings of archival documents, including photographs, in her autobiographical graphic narrative *Fun Home*, in Ann Cvetkovich, "Drawing the Archive in Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 36.1-2 (spring/summer 2008): 111-128. My essay in progress, "Tasting History in Monique Truong's *The Book of Salt*," explores Monique Truong's historical novel, *The Book of Salt*, which takes its inspiration from photographs of Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas, as well as *The Alice B. Toklas Cookbook*.
21. On the problem of archives of slavery and diaspora, see Saidiya V. Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008).
22. For more on documenting ordinary feelings and the tensions between realist and sentimental or melodramatic modes, see Janet Staiger, Ann Cvetkovich, and Ann Reynolds, eds., *Political Emotions* (New York: Routledge, 2010); as well as Kathleen Stewart, *Ordinary Affects* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).
23. See Kay Turner, "September 11: The Burden of the Ephemeral," *Western Folklore* 68.2-3 (spring/summer 2009): 155-208.
24. For more on the Fae Richards archive, see Zoe Leonard and Cheryl Dunye, *The Fae Richards Photo Archive* (San Francisco: ArtSpace, 1996); and Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings*, chapter 6.
25. For more on Leonard's work, see the retrospective catalog, Urs Stahel, ed., *Zoe Leonard: Photographs* (Gottingen: Steidl Verlag / Fotomuseum Winterthur, 2007), which includes a version of *Analogue*; and Zoe Leonard, *You See I Am Here after All* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), which documents Leonard's 2010 installation at Dia:Beacon of her collection of vintage postcards of Niagara Falls and includes critical essays by Ann Reynolds, Angela Miller, Lytle Shaw, and Lynne Cooke that provide important perspectives on Leonard's interest in archives.
26. See the discussion of my interviews with Zoe Leonard in Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings*.
27. From the website for *Eminent Domain: Contemporary Photography and the City*, New York Public Library Online Exhibition, <http://exhibitions.nypl.org/exhibits/eminent/leonard>, which included forty photographs from *Analogue*, that drew from a special edition of dye-transfer prints, another format in danger of becoming obsolete.
28. See Molly Nesbit, *Atget's Seven Albums* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994); and Berenice Abbott, *Changing New York* (New York: New Press, 1999). Leonard draws from Nesbit in her essay for the book version of *Analogue*, which also references Abbott.
29. *Eminent Domain: Contemporary Photography and the City*, New York Public Library Online Exhibition, <http://exhibitions.nypl.org/exhibits/eminent/leonard>.
30. The chapters and individual images within them have varied with each of *Analogue's* installations. My descriptions here are based on the project as represented in Stahel, *Zoe Leonard*.
31. See Walter Benjamin, *Walter Benjamin's Archive: Images, Texts, Signs* (New York: Verso, 2007); as well as Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*.

32. *Eminent Domain*.
33. See, for example, Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993); as well as Ann Reynolds, "Curving into a Straight Line," in Leonard, *You See I Am Here after All*, 154–174. Reynolds discusses the relation between representation and place and the role of the mass-produced image in mediating that relationship; like *You See I Am Here after All*, *Analogue* grapples with how to use images to archive material places.
34. Zoe Leonard, *Analogue* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007). The book served as the catalog for the exhibition at the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio. Rather than being displayed in chapters, the images are laid out one to a page, but the sequence is similar to that of chapters in the larger installations.
35. Taylor, *Archive and the Repertoire*.
36. Turner, "September 11."
37. Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, "Testimonial Objects: Memory, Gender, and Transmission," *Poetics Today* 27.2 (summer 2006): 353–385. For more on the intersection of objects and feelings and the historical significance of objects, see Peter Schwenger, *The Tears of Things: Melancholy and Physical Objects* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); and Bill Brown, *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).