Ephemeral Material
QUEERING THE ARCHIVE
ALANA KUMBIER

This book is number five in the series Gender and Sexuality in Information Studies, Emily Drabinski, series editor.

Also in the series:

Feminist and Queer Information Studies Reader, edited by Patrick Keilty and Rebecca Dean

Feminist Pedagogy for Library Instruction, by Maria T. Accardi

Make Your Own History: Documenting Feminist and Queer Activism in the 21st Century, edited by Lyz Bly and Kelly Wooten

Out Behind the Desk: Workplace Issues for LGBTQ Librarians, edited by Tracy Nectoux.

Forthcoming in the series:

Queers Online: LGBT Digital Practices in Libraries, Archives, and Museums, edited by Rachel Wexelbaum

EPHEMERAL MATERIAL

QUEERING THE ARCHIVE

Alana Kumbier

LITWIN BOOKS
SACRAMENTO, CA

Copyright 2014 Alana Kumbier

Published in 2014 by Litwin Books

Litwin Books
PO Box 188784
Sacramento, CA 95818
http://litwinbooks.com/

Cover art by Jenna Brager
This book is printed on acid-free, sustainably-sourced paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Kumbier, Alana.
Ephemeral material : queering the archive / Alana Kumbier.
pages cm. -- (Gender and sexuality in information studies ; number 5)
Summary: "Articulates a queer approach to archival studies and archival practice, and establishes the relevance of this approach beyond collections with LGBTQ content"-- Provided by publisher.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-936117-51-2 (acid-free paper)
1. Archives--Social aspects. 2. Sexual minorities--Archives. 3. Archives--Study and teaching. 4. Archives--Management. I. Title.
CD971.K86 2013
025--dc23

2013034730

Contents

Acknowledgements vii

Introduction 1

Section 1: Negotiating Archives

Section Introduction 41

Chapter 1 Inventing History: *The Watermelon Woman* and Archive Activism 51

Chapter 2 Haunting Archives: Memory, Disability, and Archival Spaces in *Liebe Perla* 75

Section 2: Archiving from the Ground Up

Section Introduction 113

Chapter 3 Archiving Drag King Communities from the Ground Up 121

Chapter 4 The Collaborative Archive: Aliza Shapiro's DATUM 155

Chapter 5 Queer Zines and Archival Pedagogies 189

Works Cited 233

Index 247

Chapter 4

The Collaborative Archive: Aliza Shapiro's DATUM

The opening night of DATUM, a three-day "installation and performance of archiving, displaying and distributing" by artist Aliza Shapiro, was festive. And hot. Earlier that afternoon, while Aliza was setting up the show at MEME, the sponsoring gallery, I'd inquired about what I could do to help her prepare the space. Her answer: please bring iced coffee, and pick up a couple of boxes of small binder clips. As I entered the gallery, I had an archivist's moment of worry about bringing plastic cups of coffee into the room, where they would sit on tables and cold-sweat as the ice melted, leaving wet rings in their wake. But then I thought otherwise: this was what my collaborator had asked for, specifically. And the archival collection on exhibit had resided in Aliza's house just hours ago, in her living room, susceptible to any number of everyday run-ins with drinks, the effects of cat curiosity, and the fluctuations in temperature and moisture levels that come with residing in an older home in Dorchester, Massachusetts.

Aliza's vision for the show was realized over the course of the weekend. In her proposal for the installation she expressed her interest in having the show be a space in which she and visitor-participants would "store, display, categorize and organize all of my photographic work (images, negatives, camera equipment, film/digital etc.) from the beginning until now" (1). She wanted the show "to [encapsulate] the process of archiving while allowing viewers to engage and look through the images of [her] life" (1). As participants pinned photos to a timeline-display

along one gallery wall, or selected photos for Aliza to scan and print, she suggested they would be empowered to "decide what they want to bring home for their walls, they get to decide what is 'art'. The customers/patrons help decide what is 'worthy'" (1).

She named the show DATUM because, as she noted in an interview, *datum* is "a word that is about the point of origin, or the line that something begins at" (Shapiro, "Truth Teller"). "I've been thinking about timelines, so that datum makes sense to me." Aliza had also been thinking about archiving because of recent events in her life. She noted that:

> I proposed DATUM as a project where the audience would be able to get to see the personal archive of a public person and a public artist now, while they're alive, which generally speaking, doesn't happen. I've been thinking about archiving, and [how] usually people think about archiving when they die. I had surgery in February so I did a lot of thinking about dying, and [did] your typical will and paperwork and all that. So I was thinking a lot about who's getting [the collection], and where it's going to be archived, and how will it be accessed by the public, and so I thought about 'How am I going to reveal these images to the public?' (Shapiro, "Truth Teller")

For Aliza, the benefits of the project were clear. As she put it, "I get the rare opportunity to spend time with all of the images of my life in one space, with room to display a fraction of them. The public gets the rare opportunity to look through the archives of someone (still living!) in their communities and to take something home to enrich their lives" (1).

By the time the show opened, our iced coffees were gone (consumed without incident) and some guidelines were in place, completing MEME's transformation into a temporary, ad hoc archive. As visitors entered the now-archival space, they became participants in the weekend-long installation-performance—in order to look at her photo collection, they would need to act as if they were handling archival records. Aliza and her assistants (including me) asked participants to don white cotton gloves before looking at the photos, to encase old photos (taken before 1980) in archival-quality polyester sleeves, and to not bring food or drinks anywhere near the photographs.

Opening night, May 25, 2010, felt like a summer night. The doors were (literally) open from 6:30-9:30pm, and the space was busy with friends from Aliza's many communities: drag and genderqueer performers, kink/bdsm folks, local artists, musicians, and activists, MEME curators and regular visitors, and neighborhood residents stopping in to check out the show. Aliza had arranged her photo-filled vintage suitcases in a row on the gallery's folding tables. At the end of the row, she'd amassed supplies necessary for organizing, labeling, displaying, and handling the collection: post-it notes, Micron markers, white cotton gloves, binder clips and tacks (for pinning photos to a timeline along the wall), tiny slips of index cards to insert between the binder clips and the photos, and polyester sleeves. Some participants dove right into the suitcase-collections to browse the contents, others scoped out the timeline, and friends chatted with Aliza and each other.

Ever the documentarian, Aliza also snapped shots of the goings-on. Some things are evident in photos from that night, taken by Aliza and her friend L.A. Teodosio: that it was hot (almost everyone's wearing t-shirts or some kind of short-sleeved garment) in the gallery, that the night-hours meant the indoor light seemed extra-bright, that the process of organizing involved a good deal of disorder, judging by the messy state of some of the tabletop surfaces. In other words, this was not a climate-controlled, highly-secure operation, aligned to the schedule of the business day. It's also pretty clear that queers were there, sporting outfts involving a tight, belly-revealing Superman tank top, a semi-transparent day-glo body-hugging t-shirt over a black bra, and vintage men's clothing, sporting elaborate makeup, multiple piercings, and tattoos. And the white cotton gloves, a new queer accessory. For some participants who knew Aliza through kink or queer communities, the act of putting on gloves before making contact with her photos recalled the familiar practice—and resonated with cultural expectations and norms—of donning gloves as part of sex and play, especially in public encounters with context-specific partners. The gloves made the performative aspect of the show evident. In putting them on, participants put on a part of the archivist's costume, and experienced their

interactions with the photographs—which some of them might have handled previously without gloves in the context of Aliza's home—as encounters with artifacts.

Over the course of the weekend, the DATUM archive became a social space—a space for hanging out with friends, for actually getting to catch Aliza at rest (instead of emceeing, working the crowd, or fliering), and for social worlds colliding in enjoyable ways (*performance art friends* meeting *drag friends* meeting *kinksters*). At DATUM, archiving was a pleasure: we got to go through someone else's stuff, discovered new-to-us moments in our friend's history—and heard her stories about those times. We found candid shots of our queer- and indie-rock celebrities (like Le Tigre and Mary Timony), and discovered unexpected relationships (like prom date John Hodgman). Longtime friends and loves found themselves represented in the collection, their photos nestled near those of other lovers, pets, and home-spaces.

DATUM transformed my thinking about archives. I'd thought about community participation in archives, but that was on more systematic terms, and the archive in those scenarios was always institutional or somehow permanent (for example, the finished basement that houses the Queer Zine Archive Project's collection, or the Lesbian Herstory Archives). The DATUM archive, in contrast, was temporary, set up in a space that was clearly defined as transformable, a gallery that fostered performance happenings and installations, subject to the modifications of the curators and artists occupying the space. All of our interactions with the space --the displays, materials, and what we made of them—would have to be removed at the end of the weekend.

In this chapter, I argue that the practices and processes that participants enacted at DATUM are as important as the products of the installation. They tell us something about the communities with which Aliza is involved: how events happen, who's involved, and what *about* them matters the most. To preserve contextual information about the collection and its creator, we need to document the context and the means through which the collection was arranged. DATUM's public accessibility, its participatory nature, and its dis-ordering of the

conventional archival timeline (allowing usually sequential and discrete processes to take place at the same time) made these processes possible, and established their importance. This chapter provides documentation specific to DATUM, and offers a rationale and example for others working with queer cultural producers. In the interest of showing how DATUM's archiving practices can illumine queer and archival theories, I bring these practices into conversation with recent theorizations of queer temporality, conventional conceptualizations of archival time, and emergent approaches to participatory archiving.

Queer time, queer collaborations

As we discussed the timeline, the chronological ordering of the photos in the suitcases, and the participatory aspects of the show, Aliza and I did not anticipate how the collection's queer content and audience would invite reconfigurations of archival practice, nor did we take any contemporary theorizations of queer temporality into account. We worked from Aliza's desire for the show to be interactive, performative, and focused on social engagement with her archive. The experiential archive that DATUM became, and the shape it took, informs my theorization (not the other way around). Its form and content make it relevant to recent arguments for participatory appraisal within archival theory, and to recent studies of temporality by queer theorists. I put DATUM in conversation with theorizations of queer (life) time and archival time, and with calls for participatory archival practice because I believe it has something to offer—beyond serving as an example affirming these theories' truthfulness.

In most archives, including queer ones, conventional understandings of temporality, and mechanisms for marking, observing, and conceptualizing time underpin theory and practice. Archives tend to operate in accord with normative time, characterized by linear progression, firm past/present distinctions, and generational logics of inheritance. In this chapter, I turn to the question of temporality—specifically archival temporality—to frame my discussion of how Aliza's documenting and

archiving projects rework conventional archival practices, and to consider how this work responds to the particular demands of archiving the life of a queer cultural producer.

In the past decade, queer theorists have turned their attention to time. They have theorized temporal dimensions of queer lives and cultures, and have explored how temporality—as a state of being and a framework/structure for understanding time—might be queered. Queer theorizations of temporality challenge the universality of normative time, denaturalize it, and propose alternatives. Some explicitly oppose the heteronormative institutions of marriage, reproduction, and inheritance. They draw attention to the way that our everyday experience of time is shaped by these institutions and logics. At the level of the individual lifespan, time (for women, especially) may be measured in relation to a biological clock, and making life-decisions based on one's reproductive capacity (*In a Queer Time* 5). And—perhaps most relevant to archives—there is the "time of inheritance" which refers to "an overview of generational time within which values, wealth, goods, and morals are passed through family ties from one generation to the next. It also connects the family to the historical past of the nation and glances ahead to connect the family to the future of both familial and national stability" (*In a Queer Time* 5).

Judith Halberstam suggests that queer critiques of dominant temporal schemes enable a "theory of queerness as a way of being in the world and a critique of the careful social scripts that usher even the most queer among us through major markers of individual development and into normativity" (*GLQ* 182). Queer temporality disrupts the Western model that "[charts] the emergence of the adult from the dangerous and unruly period of adolescence as a desired process of maturation" (*In a Queer Time* 152). In its place, queer time offers a "perverse turn away from the narrative coherence of adolescence-early adulthood-marriage-reproduction-child-rearing-retirement-death" (*GLQ* 182) and a turn toward other ways of living organized around different interests, priorities, and modes of sociality.

In her study of queer time, Elizabeth Freeman explores how the queer artists she studies "engage the temporal politics of deconstruction (thought as an antirepresentational privileging of delay, detour, and deferral)" in order to "arrive at a different modality for living historically, or putting the past into meaningful and transformational relation with the present" (xvi). These artists revisit failed revolutions, collecting and reanimating ephemeral material that emerged in conjunction with these earlier moments. Instead of simply looking ahead (the usual future-oriented temporal rubric of progressive politics and liberation struggles), they consider how the past can matter in the present in new, heretofore unexplored ways. Freeman analyzes how their preoccupations with the past enable an artistic and political praxis—reminding us that *things haven't always been this way*, encouraging us to consider *what could have been.*

Responding to Halberstam and Freeman's work, anthropologist Tom Boellstorff observes that their theorizations still assume/rely upon a linear timeline. He affirms the value of political and theoretical projects that "[denaturalize] straight time and its evolutive, apocalyptic, linear entailments" (241), but observes that most queer theorizations of time are invested in "slowing down, stopping, or reversing that linear trajectory, rather than calling it into question," returning to Halberstam's model of delay and prolonged adolescence and to the roles of regression, delay and "the pull of the past on the present" in Freeman's theorization of temporal drag (229-30). He proposes an alternative, that of coincidental time, that is independent of the linear axis (and notes that this is just one possible alternative temporality that might queer straight time). Boellstorff encountered the framework of coincidental time in the context of his fieldwork in Indonesia, where communities mark time in co-occurring weeks with lengths of five, six, and seven days (238). Coincidental time attends to moments, and is not based in logics of accumulation or duration. Instead, it "inheres in coincidence, intersection, admixture, in what we could call queer moments," and derives from a "surrealist aesthetic 'that values fragments, curious collections, unexpected juxtapositions'" (Clifford qtd. in Boellstorff 239). This is the temporal model which most closely aligns with the

kind of queer time we documented, experienced, and celebrated at DATUM. Though the archive on display was, indeed, an accumulation of records of past times, what mattered more were the meanings those records held for participants, as well as meanings participants expressed in their interactions with the collection.

My interest in this chapter isn't to explore how Aliza's documenting and archiving work exemplifies any one of these models. Instead, I bring these voices into the discussion because they perform one of the functions queer theory does so well: they help us take something that seems natural, obvious, universal, and inherent in our everyday lives and suggest how this dominant way of understanding that thing doesn't apply to everyone. They take something we assume is universal—in this case, time—and draw attention to its particularity, its social embeddedness. They help us critically engage the principles, practices, and perspectives that hinge on the dominant model, and propose alternatives.

Boellstorff, Halberstam, and Freeman show how their models are enacted by queers, in material terms and in everyday actions. They attend to queer ways of life. For Halberstam, this is particularly powerful because (following Foucault) a queer "way of life" is about more than queer sex or sexual identity—it encompasses modes of embodiment, unconventional familial arrangements and economic practices, commitments to friends and networks, and subcultural affiliations.

Documentation and archiving are significant components of Aliza's way of life. Through her documentation activities, Aliza performs her investment in making a record of queer creative expression—and of the social context in which it is performed, screened, or exhibited. While there are photographs of private scenes in Aliza's archive, there are also many (if not more) photographs of scenes from the queer subculture she fosters.

This subculture emerges from Aliza's work as a producer, promoter, performer, and artist. She started Truth Serum, her production company, in the 1990s while working at the record label Pop Narcotic Records. This wasn't the career path she'd initially envisioned

Aliza and performer Madge of Honor get ready to sort through some photos, with cotton gloves on. Photo courtesy of L.A. Teodosio

for herself. She'd gone to RISD to become an architect and, upon graduation in 1992, found herself in a bad economy. She got into carpentry, joined the carpenters' union in Cambridge, MA, and got injured. While she was healing, she went to a lot of shows, and met Bill Peregoy who ran the record label. Aliza worked in the Pop Narcotic office and booked tours until the label closed between 1994-1995. At that point, the bands Aliza had been working with still needed help booking tours and shows in Boston, so she started Truth Serum and went into business on her own. Booking shows gave her the power to change what she was seeing onstage, night after night, in the local indie rock scene. In an interview with me for the podcast *Champs Not Chumps*, Aliza described the dominant model for shows, and why it needed to change:

> I started getting sick of four bands in a row, standing up all night, and that's what we're all doing. So I started to incorporate performance art people or video or people who were doing not-indie-rock-band music, drag queens here or there, or film—making the shows more diverse. And that was partly because I was getting bored with the music thing,

> and I was looking for the space to be filled with other people. The indie rock of the '90s was still very male, and I was hanging out in the crowd and wanted more women onstage and women in the audience, so I started programming to make that happen.

By the late 1990s, Aliza started doing more queer programming, in the interest of cultivating queer community: "I started dating women when I was 26 and wanted more women around, and events

> that were going to nurture that community. I was hanging out in these straight shows and rock clubs all the time, and I was one of the only women and one of the only out queer women. There were women involved in the scene at the time, but none of them were really out as queer. They were kind of put off by the direct politicization and calling-out of their queerness, so I found it kind of lonely. I was like, 'Well, I want to see more women on stage, and more women in the audience,' not because I wanted more dates, but because I wanted it to be more interesting to me.

"Interesting" is a key criteria for Truth Serum productions (and is usually an understatement). Aliza bases her programming decisions on a small set of individual criteria that have consistently connected with and attracted members of her community. The rules of programming, she states, are that "it has to interest me, it has to be something I personally enjoy, the people have to be nice and easy to work with." The programs, themselves, have taken a variety of forms. Through Truth Serum, Aliza promotes events others bring to her (bands, spoken word artists, theatre companies, etc.), and helps local organizations with fundraising through "producing, conceptual work, and the [Truth Serum] mailing list" (Interview). Getting a mention or a promoted listing for one's event on the Truth Serum mailing list can provide a huge signal boost, as the list has over 4000 subscribers. Since 2004, Aliza has produced TraniWreck, a night of drag and queer burlesque performance which she describes as an "all-gender, all-genre cabaret variety mess." She usually emcees the show as Heywood Wakefield, her drag king persona. Acts that don't fit in at TraniWreck may find a stage—or

screen—with Cinemental, a series of queer film, video, and performance work that Aliza has produced with the Brattle Theatre. She also hosts Dr. Sketchy, a monthly drawing and burlesque event, at which "burlesque performers, drag performers, contortionists, and acrobats" model for three-hour life-drawing sessions and verbally entertain the audience. In addition to the work she does as a producer and promoter, Aliza does other artistic work under an alias, XRay Aims. XRay's artist's biography describes him as a "performance artist, temporary piercer and BDSM educator" who is compelled by the "fight between beauty and pain and the intrigue of breaching the delicate envelope that holds the body together" (bio). Aims creates work in public and private spaces, as multi-person narratives or installations, as performance and for photographic documentation (bio). Because the work is controversial (it engages kink/bdsm themes and practices), Aliza has been reticent to claim it under her legal name in the past. She notes this is a challenging situation because "it's really amazing work, and people are moved by it, and I'm moved by it and it's beautiful. It fulfills me in a number of ways and it's difficult to have to do under an alias and not talk about it as me, which has been exceptionally difficult, especially when you try to find funding or get gallery shows" (Interview). Even when she is in control of the show—as was the case with DATUM—the stakes of doing this performance (or sharing its documentation) in public are high. This part of Aliza's creative work was not included in the archive on display, and so was not integrated with the rest of her collection. By extension, then, this part of Aliza's life—and the community of practice and kink subcultures in which the performances are embedded—went un-recognized, un-incorporated, and remained a secret, and an absence. During our conversations about this chapter, Aliza emphasized that this was subject to change, and that she is working on new ways to integrate Aims' work with her own.

Like the queer subcultural producers Halberstam writes about in *In a Queer Time and Place,* Aliza is both a cultural producer and a documentarian. In the proposal she submitted to MEME for DATUM, she described her practice:

> I've had a camera in my hands since kindergarten. I have a photo of my teacher from that year, her head is cut off, but I captured what was important to me: her hands and chalk covered pants. I have self-portraits from age six on. I've always been a documenter. Always slightly separate and capturing, but still in the mix and connecting with what is happening. I have all of my cameras and all of my photos and negatives. I have most of my maternal family's photos. At different times I've felt more or less connected to the art and craft of capturing images. Through high school and college and a bit beyond I took it all very seriously. As I moved into digital photography I began to trust my eye more and focus less on fussy technical aspects and more on capturing the moment and the "beauty" I was witnessing. This has left me with many images. Much product. Much history captured. (1)

At shows and other events she produces, Aliza often (literally) simultaneously performs the roles of performer and archivist, emceeing from the stage, then slipping into the audience to take photographs during acts. And she enrolls other cultural producers in her documentation work, as well. Professional photographers became part of the TraniWreck audience when the show moved to Oberon, a club in Cambridge, MA, and joined Aliza in photographing the performers and the crowd (Interview). After shows, they share digital files with her, which she adds to a massive online photo archive documenting all events she produces under the umbrella of Truth Serum productions. The Truth Serum photo page (www.truthserum.org/photos.html) functions as an open, public repository for queer cultural events in and around Boston, spanning 10 years (starting in 2003), covering almost all of the events Aliza produced, performed, or participated in (even if only as an audience member). This public repository complements the personal archive on display at DATUM. Though the two might seem interchangeable—except for their different forms (digital and material)—they serve different memory functions. The Truth Serum archive is community-oriented, in its openness, the publicity of events it documents, and its intended audience, while DATUM intermingled the kinds of material available in the Truth Serum archive with more personal, private records of Aliza's life.

In her documenting and archiving practices, Aliza is publicizing a way of life that isn't conventional: on the stage, she and her performer-collaborators offer spectacular, glamorous, comic, and messy performances of queer embodiment, gender, and sociality. Offstage, she has dedicated her life to cultural production instead of pursuing a professional (architectural) career and accumulating wealth. She has an enormous extended network of chosen family, friends, collaborators, fans and admirers. In the last two years, the shape of her life has changed dramatically, as a result of a stroke she experienced from a brain hemorrhage on July 25, 2011. She experienced another bad stoke in May 2012, and is still in the process of recovering. She's been amazingly resilient, and as we'd expect given her work ethic, dedication, and ferocity, has worked hard in physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy to deal with the aphasia she experiences as a result of the strokes. She's returned to the stage for a couple of TraniWreck shows, and has emceed, roller-skated, and amused the crowd with her aphasia- and stroke-related stage banter. If you visit the Truth Serum photo page, you'll see Aliza has been documenting her recovery, along with her activities onstage and around town. In documenting her on- and off-stage experiences, Aliza is making her queer way of life visible. By letting us in, she's giving us an example of how we might choose to live otherwise, and what that life might look like.

Archival time

In addition to extending recent theorizations of queer time, DATUM challenges us to think critically about archival time. By archival time, I refer to the chronology we associate with records before, during, and after their transfer to a repository. This timeline generally breaks down into a series of linear stages: the period during which an individual creates, collects, uses, and organizes her papers as part of everyday life; a later period during which the creator may prepare the collection for donation (after the papers have served their everyday-life functions); the period during which arrangements are made for the donation of the collection; the transfer of custody to the repository (this may be done directly by the creator, or by a surviving relative, partner or other proxy);

the period during which the collection is processed by archivists; and the period after processing, when the collection is available to researchers for consultation—and, depending on the nature of the collection—may be exhibited, materially or virtually, as artifact or digital facsimile. Along this archival timeline, records move from the private possession (in the home, studio, or office space) of their creator to the semi-public space of the archives, where they are securely stored, but accessible via the archivist. Their organization happens in a linear, sequential fashion, as well: records are organized by the creator, then that organization is preserved by the archivist and codified in a finding aid, following the principle of original order. If the creator has not established a legible organizing scheme, the archivist may impose one. But the contents of the collection are not, then, re-organized once they enter the archives.

DATUM complicated the archival timeline, by allowing usually distinct, sequential activities to happen at the same time: participants accessed the archive while also organizing its contents, and they established chronological and semantic contexts for items in two distinct spaces: the full collection in suitcases and selected images on the wall along the linear scheme of the timeline. Aliza asked participants to help organize the photos in the suitcases and plastic tubs into chronological order by year, and down to the month or week when possible. For a collection and a show organized around the life-long collecting and documenting practice of a single individual, there could be alternate schemes—kinds of photographs, subjects depicted in photos, and life stages. The chronological scheme works well however, as an organizing framework that enables and invites participation by a group of people who know Aliza to different degrees and in different contexts. The chronology doesn't rely on extensive shared history or insider knowledge. And given that most of the photographs were processed in labs that added date stamps to the backs of images, to negative strips, or to lab envelopes, it was easy to identify where photos should be stored, relative to other envelopes. Participants could come in, get the very direct instruction to put on a pair of white gloves, pick a place to start (a place in the suitcases where photos hadn't yet been organized), and

start organizing by date. As they organized the photos in the suitcases, participants also re-enveloped them in acid-free, archival-quality white envelopes. Through these practices, Aliza encouraged participants to think about the future while accessing the archive in the present, by requiring that we wear cotton gloves to preserve and protect the photos, replace camera-store envelopes with acid-free, conservation-friendly ones, use archival-quality pens to label the new envelopes with dates, and store some of the more aged and valuable prints in their own polyester sleeves.

By handling, viewing, and organizing Aliza's collection, participants were also able to understand themselves as archival subjects. As I helped with organizing, the photos created a portal to a world I didn't expect to find in Aliza's personal archive. Browsing through photos from 2001, I discovered multiple envelopes filled with photos from the International Drag King Extravaganza in Columbus, Ohio. These photos were almost all *by* Aliza, with very few *of* her—she'd documented troupes and performers at the Extravaganza, and made a collective history accessible in a personal context. Suddenly, a home-place, and a set of feelings, memories and desires were sharing space with the here-and-now. I took some phone-photos-of-photos and sent messages to my Columbus drag friends to let them know they were *there with us*. Even though I wasn't depicted in any of the photographs, they elicited a powerful sense of my *belonging to* this archive, and to this particular queer history. They reminded me of my own photos of this time, and affirmed my sense that all of this was important, worth documenting, preserving and worth sharing. Aliza's approach leads me to wonder what effects similar practices could have in a conventional archive, what experiences of ownership, belonging, and fun they would enable. After all, even though it was happening in a gallery context, we were basically going through someone's private stuff. And that someone leads an exciting, rich life, making it all the more thrilling.

To construct the timeline along the gallery wall, we wrote the numbers representing each year of Aliza's life on slips of paper, and tacked a slip of paper for each year onto the wall, in order. Aliza then asked

participants to locate and select photos from the collection to accompany each year in the timeline. Once participants had filled the central axis of the timeline with photos, Aliza invited us to build out from the line by adding any images we desired from the suitcases. Aliza anticipated some themes that became assemblages — memes — along the timeline in our interview before the show. She said that, for example:

> In 1976, there's a self-portrait of me in the backseat of a Volvo, and I've still been taking self-portraits in the same way, now with a digital camera. So I was hoping that we'd go through and pull out the self-portraits, the photos of me holding the camera with someone else on my left. There's going to be the pictures of the cats, or the pictures of the cats on my shoulder, different things that will pop out and create a timeline in the space. (Shapiro, "Truth Teller")

As participants added photos to the timeline, we helped articulate Aliza's life-history by selecting images that represented particular individuals, moments, relationships, or queer cultural producers. Our selection activities were partial and biased. When participants added photos of themselves (alone or with Aliza) to the timeline, they made their relationships legible as meaningful aspects of her life history.

The timeline offered a public venue for making shared histories visible, for constellating and claiming queer kinship and community. Its function was more than chronological, and made certain queer temporalities apparent: photos depicting Aliza's enduring, intimate relations were juxtaposed with images documenting one-night, event-centered connections. The impermanence of her (and others') gender presentation was evident because of her ongoing documentation and collecting activities: while she's stayed with her current hairstyle for the past several years, earlier photos show us an Aliza with long, curly hair, or hair pulled back in a ponytail or held back with a headband. We could see that her past partners and dates constitute a diverse group of people, not just folks who seem to manifest a particular kind of gendered embodiment or sexual orientation.

The show most clearly embraced temporal unruliness with the timeline. There was leeway with its form, as participants pinned photos to the wall in unevenly-defined columns, which took shape as photos were added. This uneven distribution, and lack of discrete boundaries between years, was part of the timeline's design — Aliza could have chosen to create a structure into which the photos could be inserted (e.g., by creating columns or a grid outline on the wall before participants arrived). Because the photos weren't all imprinted with dates, we couldn't be sure that we were associating the right photos with the right years on the timeline (unless we asked Aliza, and even then, there was some guesswork involved). And participants weren't discouraged from deviating from the chronology as we saw fit. For example, one participant decided that it was more important to retain the integrity of a scene — members of the band Le Tigre riding in the back of a car together, captured in a three-photo panorama — than to respect the boundaries between the 'years' the panorama occupied on the wall. In making this choice, the participant decided to maintain the integrity of the records' form and intent (respecting the photos as a set) instead of adhering to the structure of the chronology. Here, the circumstance and intent of Aliza's documenting activity, and the ability of the photographs to show an important moment in her career as a queer producer, matter more than sticking to the one-column = one-year form.

If we are open to taking advantage of DATUM's temporal dis-order, we can recognize the possibilities this alternate mode of archiving presents for preserving information about queer subjects and their communities. By inviting participants to exhibit her photos, Aliza facilitated a representation of her life that she couldn't have created on her own. It was a fitting depiction of her dedication to creating spaces for queer cultural production and community articulation. Through communal engagement with Aliza's documents, participants accessed material evidence of a past they shared with — or because of — her. More than one meaning, and more than one temporal scheme, came to matter during the exhibit.

The collaborative and participatory aspects of DATUM resonate with models for participatory archiving that have recently emerged from within the profession, in major archival publications like *Archivaria* and *Archival Science*. Proponents of participatory archiving argue for an approach that engages users in all aspects of archiving—a significant departure from conventional archival practice.

Traditionally, when archivists collect, arrange, and describe personal papers, they determine users' access to them. As they gain physical and intellectual control over a collection, they stabilize the order of files, document the collections' origins, and—through description—interpret the meaning of records for users. Archivists are empowered to choose which papers to preserve, how to represent records to users, and how to provide access to collections. Historically, archives have collected the papers of the powerful, and have not developed collections that represent the experiences of multiple, diverse constituencies—at least not on terms that represent all subjects as persons and not objects of property, surveillance, policing, or study. In an attempt to better represent more than just the most powerful few, some archivists are developing collections that document the experiences of specific racial or ethnic groups, subcultures, or minority constituencies. One goal of these collections is to preserve "empowered narratives:" "records and histories spoken directly by traditionally marginalized communities, embedded within the local experience, practice, and knowledge of that community" (90). Learning from scholars in other fields, who take positionality, power relations, and multiple epistemologies into account, these archivists seek to involve community members in records selection, description, and organization. Ideally, their collaborations result in more representative collections, yield reliable descriptions and nuanced interpretations, and preserve the "the articulation of community identity" in the collection (Shilton and Srinivasan 90).

Within the archival profession, participatory approaches to collection-building and description are still experimental and far from the norm (Huvila 2008, Shilton and Srinivasan 2008). Of course, collaborative archiving existed well before the professionals got involved. The archival

literature has not adequately engaged histories of grassroots LGBTQ and feminist archives, and has not taken-up these examples as models for practice. The profession has not accounted for what Kate Eichhorn describes as "the rich histories of community-based organizing that witnessed women, often with no formal archival training and few resources, accumulating and preserving the documentary traces of their private lives and public activism" (622-23). My writing about DATUM is designed, in part, to account for one example of queer independent, do-it-yourself community-based archiving, to recognize the project as an example of participatory archiving, and to document how this participation took shape.

Archival collaborations

DATUM was a collaboration initiated by Aliza, its principal archivist. As Aliza developed her proposal for the show, we discussed what forms it might take, what modes of participation she could invite, and how the gallery space could function as a temporary archive. I visited her house, and we looked at the physical collection together, discussed how she was storing her photos (in suitcases), and talked logistics: how could we arrange the suitcases in the gallery space, how could we use the wall-space, and what kinds of supplies we'd need. She invited me because she knew I had some basic knowledge about archival practices, materials, and standards—even though we both knew I wasn't a professional archivist. In the course of our conversation, Aliza articulated an initial vision for a photo timeline on one of the gallery walls. She wanted participants to create memes—meaningful arrangements or groupings of photographs. Aliza proposed having a scanning station that would enable her to reproduce images (for a fee) for visitors, and wanted to bring a projector to the space to project digitized images.

We talked about how she could guide participants through the practices of organizing, displaying, and interacting with the photos. In addition to guidance she would offer on-site, she would leave out copies of instructions for participants, and rely on participants to

communicate guidelines and expectations to newcomers in the space. We discussed—at her suggestion—policies for protecting the photographs from damage, and for respecting privacy by keeping some photos (e.g., those featuring other people in the nude, or engaged in activities not intended for public display) at her home, not with the exhibit-collection. When I left, I had a set of tasks, mostly related to helping Aliza procure supplies for long-term photo storage (archival quality material), negative storage, and envelope-marking. Also high on the list: find a relatively inexpensive source for cotton gloves to ensure safe photo-handling by participants.

This was the level of my involvement. It's important to be specific about the nature and extent of my work with Aliza because I want to emphasize that our approach was collaborative, with Aliza taking the lead. I helped in ways Aliza asked me to help, when she asked me to help. Our collaboration wasn't unusual for a queer subcultural archiving project. Writing about the relationships between cultural producers and the scholars who document and study them, Judith Halberstam

Aliza documents the event (and herself). Photo courtesy of L.A. Teodosio.

notes that the distance between the two is often collapsed—or at least diminished—in queer subcultures. She writes that, like "Minority subcultures in general," queer subcultures "tend to be documented by former or current members of the subculture rather than by 'adult' experts" (162). Queer cultural producers and queer archivists and scholars often "coexist in the same friendship networks, and they may function as coconspirators" (162). This is true in the case of my relationship and collaborations with Aliza.

I knew of her in the context of our mutual participation in several years' worth of International Drag King Community Extravaganzas, annual weekend-long conference-performance-and-social events focused on drag and genderqueer performance. Though we didn't meet each other directly during our IDKE years, we share many IDKE-friends in common. I'd seen Aliza perform as Heywood during showcases, and had seen her at conference workshops. When we met in Boston (while Aliza was handing out fliers for a Truth Serum event), I referenced our shared IDKE history and involvement, and she invited me to perform in TraniWreck on the spot. I got to know her through performance and Truth Serum event-attendance first, and became her archival-collaborator years later. Our relationship offered more than access—her to someone with archival knowledge, me to someone with a project that excited me. While another archivist could help Aliza negotiate logistics, make short- and long-term decisions about her collection, and offer volunteer labor, that person wouldn't necessarily share the contextual information about the collection that I had developed by being involved in her local performance community for six years, and in U.S. drag king culture for over a decade. My community participation means that I not only recognize who and what are documented in records, but I'm also familiar with the contexts in which documentation happens (i.e., the circumstances in which records were produced) as well as the nature of the communities being documented *and* those participating in the archiving.

Though my involvement in Aliza's community and her archiving projects is typical for U.S. queer (archival) cultures, it differs from the kinds of involvement articulated in recent models of participatory

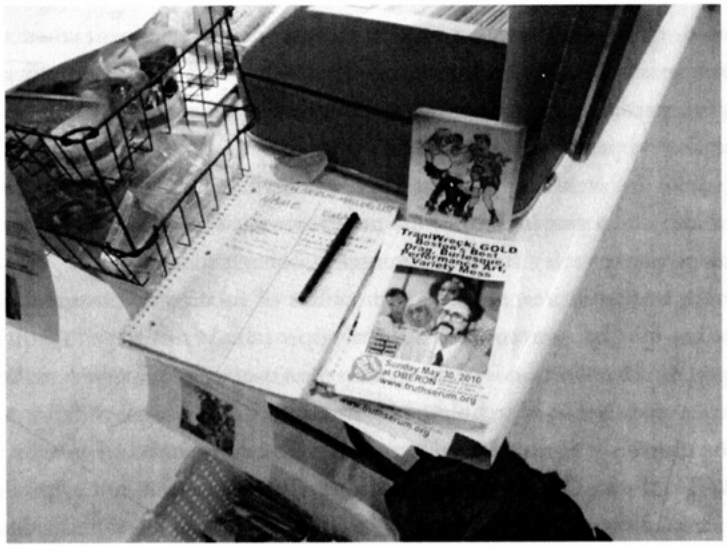
archiving by Shilton and Srinivasan (2008) and Huvila (2008). In these models, archivists consult, collaborate, and build digital archives with communities of users. These models recognize archivists' knowledge as always-already situated and partial, unable to account for the particular epistemological systems, recollections, narratives, and knowledges that contextualize archival records and collections. Participation in the authors' projects is hybrid. Shilton and Srinivasan invite community members to contribute to and lead focus groups, upload and share content they deem worthy of digital archiving, and to engage in online interactions for description (e.g., creating folksonomies or social tagging). For Shilton and Srinivasan, participation is a strategy for preserving a community's empowered narratives, and for developing more representative collections. The examples they highlight are ones in which archivists consult and collaborate with community members in making decisions about appraisal, arrangement, description, determination of provenance and ordering. In their model, the archivist is responsible for guiding the process.

Huvila becomes involved in the archiving projects he writes about at the invitation of the records-holders, and proceeds through a series of interviews and consultations with subject experts and meetings with "potential and actual users" (20). Huvila contrasts his approach with that of Shilton and Srinivasan, who "retain the a priori authority for archivists to focus on participatory information seeking rather than participatory management of the archive" (26). Huvila, whose research centers on digital archives, foregrounds the user in his model. The users share curatorial decision-making responsibilities with the archivist, as the archivist "[harnesses] knowledgeable users of archival collections to contribute in the form of new and improved descriptions, translations, summaries, and relationships to other records" (32)—this is also true of Shilton and Srinivasan's approach. And the archive functions on a principle of "radical user orientation," in which usability and findability of resources matter more than "preservation and the archival process"; the archive's form, contents, and ontologies emerge through participation, hinging on users' interests, needs and involvement (25-26). In other

words, "the radical user orientation assumes that the moment when an archive is built is the starting point for participation" (30). The archivist is one participant among many, and the archive thrives on the inclusion of diverse perspectives and stakeholders (25).

Like the archiving projects Huvila describes, DATUM existed as an idea and a project before the involvement of an archivist (i.e., me, taking on that role). Its form emerged in conversation, and was guided more by the desires, needs, and priorities of its records-creator than by any kind of conventional archival approach. At this stage in its history, Aliza's collection is more creator- than user-oriented, which makes sense given her need to hold on to the collection and work with it until she donates it to an archival repository. The community of users for DATUM was, like the communities Huvila writes about, not a "predetermined consensual community," but rather, "a sum of all individual structures, descriptions, orders, and viewpoints contributed by individual participating archive users whether they are users or contributors, archivists, researchers, administrators, labourers, or belong to marginalised communities or the majority" (26). Of course, in the case of DATUM, we'd need to add—or substitute other—participant roles, including curators, friends, strangers walking in off the street, Gallery MEME regulars, photographed subjects, photographers, and more.

It bears noting that the modes of participation for DATUM were different than those described by Shilton and Srinivasan and Huvila. Because the archive on display at DATUM was primarily material, community participation hinged on accessing that material in a specific time and place. Participants had to show up at the gallery during set hours, and were only able to participate by being there, then. Their interaction was generally synchronous, as it happened during a short set of hours (compared to the asynchrony of acts like social tagging), and required direct, face-to-face social and spatial engagement with others in the gallery. Though this mode of participation didn't allow for guided group discussion, interviews, or collective consensual determinations of provenance or description, it was valuable precisely because it took



Participants were invited to pick up archival supplies and Truth Serum promotional materials as they entered the gallery. Photo courtesy of L.A. Teodosio.

Organizing photos in Aliza's collection. Photo courtesy of L.A. Teodosio.

its own form — one aligned with community engagement with Aliza's other queer cultural productions.

Process becomes context

By creating a space in which the collection was accessible, and encouraging members of her communities to participate in the show, Aliza mobilized her personal networks to do the work of organizing her collection, and enrolled them in creating a collectively-articulated, community-based life history. She cast the archive as a social, participatory space, and created conditions in which her community — and the work its members do — were legible.

This process is as important as DATUM's products (the organized collection, the timeline) because it provides us with a better understanding of how queer cultural events happen, and who's involved — at least in and around Boston, facilitated by one of the region's key producers. The collective organizing work that went into Aliza's collection is important because it is representative of the collective involvement that undergirds her other endeavors. While Aliza's creativity, ingenuity, and tireless work ethic are essential to the success of her projects, she also enrolls and mobilizes a network of performers and volunteers who are instrumental in each production. Before a TraniWreck show, for example, performers assist Aliza by promoting the event on social networking sites, fliering in their neighborhoods and at other events, and getting the word out on their personal email distribution lists. At shows, volunteers circulate spiral notebooks and pens, encouraging new audience members to sign up for the Truth Serum mailing list; take tickets at the door; manage the VIP seating areas; run spotlights; stage-manage and stagehand; record the show on video; and flier at the door for other upcoming Truth Serum events. The expectation that performers will contribute to a show's promotion, and that volunteers will want to lend support, is not uncommon in the queer drag subcultures I've been involved in. Usually, show promoters aim to pay their performers and some backstage and technical support staff — but the

ability to pay is contingent on audience revenue. It's crucial that participants do pre-show publicity because most shows are one-night affairs (without a multi-night or weekend-long run), may not be scheduled at regular, predictable intervals, and may change venues from month to month or year to year. So, when participants — many of them involved with Aliza's projects in one capacity or another — arrived at DATUM, the idea of pitching in and helping with another project wasn't remarkable. DATUM created a space in which Aliza's friends, collaborators, supporters, and fellow artists brought a familiar approach to collective queer culture-making into a new context — that of a grassroots archive. DATUM's participants re-iterated practices of collaborative volunteer engagement to organize and interpret a collection.

So why does this group activity, this process, matter? The answer has to do with context. In conventional archival practice, the archivist strives to preserve the context of a record's creation. Traditionally, a key mechanism for retaining the contextual value of a creator's records is provenance. The principle of provenance specifies two organizing directives: records of the same provenance (those created by a particular individual or institution) should be separated from those of other provenance, and when they are brought into the archive, the archivist should maintain the original order in which the records were kept (Gilliland-Swetland 2000 12). Keeping records in their original order allows archives to preserve contextual information — i.e., that which can be gleaned from the way a creator organized their files, classified information, and understood the functional relationships between different kinds of records, formats, and uses. As Emily Monks-Leeson points out, records' evidential value hinges on provenance, as "the concept of provenance itself draws a direct link between the creator of the records as the source of meaning and the records' reliability" (43). When combined, provenance and original order "ensure that the intellectual integrity of aggregations of records is maintained and that individual records are always contextualized" (Gilliland-Swetland 13). The contextualization that happens through provenance and original order is part of what distinguishes archival knowledge organization

practices from those of libraries. Instead of interpreting the content of records by assigning subject headings to individual items, and then organizing those items in groups by subject, the archivist documents and preserves "the context, organic development, and content of the collection" (14). In such situations, the archivist is understood as a neutral, objective figure whose role is to "'reveal [the record's] meaning and significance — not to participate in the construction of meanings'" (Duff and Harris qtd. in Monks-Leeson 43).

Postmodern interventions in traditional archival theory have challenged this view of the archivist as a neutral functionary, however, recognizing that archivists make choices about the acquisition, description, preservation or destruction, and terms of access to records. Theorists, activists, and practitioners have also drawn attention to the fact that records, themselves, are partial — they reflect the perspective and interests of their creators, who are working in particular social contexts and communities (Monks-Leeson 43, Brothman 86, 90). These conditions constitute what Terry Cook refers to as the "deeper contextual

A section of the timeline. Photo courtesy of L.A. Teodosio.

realities" of contemporary archival materials and practices. Each collection of records is an assemblage produced by the "'social and technical processes of the records' inscription, transmission, contextualization, and interpretation which account for its existence, characteristics, and continuing history'" (Cook qtd. in Monks-Leeson 44). The context that matters to archives in this formation is much broader than the relationship of the creator to the record, or the record in its file folder and the folder in its cabinet. This formation understands the archive as an actor that not only protects the original/prior context of the record (by respecting provenance and keeping it in original order), but also considers the archive—and the processes of archiving—as part of the record's context and meaning. Something happens to a record when it is deemed worthy of archival preservation: archiving affirms the record's status as evidence, as something of value worth protecting, as an object (or part of a collection) that belongs to a particular archive (exclusively). And, given the attention to social context, this approach understands that the record's creation, use, circulation, and organization all happen within broader social relations and contexts, shaped by distinct power relations, geographic locations, historical contingencies, local and transnational communities and subcultures, under economic advantages or constraints.

If we think about "deeper contextual realities" in this way, we can align our archival practice with Shilton and Srinivasan's call to preserve empowered narratives. They posit that "Using archival arrangement and resulting descriptive practices to preserve contextual value as the community understands it allows historically marginalized communities to speak not be spoken for" (95). When archivists involve community members in arrangement and description activities, they are able to work from the community's understanding of authorship, and to preserve "the habits, practices, preferences, or even beliefs of the record creators through arrangement and resulting descriptive categories that preserve the links that each record has to other narratives within the community, to create an organizational structure that resonates with the knowledge architecture of specific communities" (95). When participants at

DATUM pinned photographs to the timeline, we were arranging records into collectively-determined, contingently-articulated "memes"—groups of photos assembled based on community interests, values, and preoccupations: gendered embodiment and transformation; relationships; living spaces; cats; performers and performances, to name a few. In a very informal, temporary way, the timeline functioned as a site for the expression of multiple, intersecting narratives about Aliza's life and queer culture in Boston. It enabled the kind of "meaningful representation of traditionally marginalized groups" Shilton and Srinivasan prize, which "relies not just on so many records or collections existent in an archive, but also the arrangement, structuring, and labeling of the archive in ways commensurate with community knowledge" (96).

Though DATUM only allowed for a temporary display of Aliza's records, the community's organizing work will endure. It would be interesting to invite participants (old and new) to return to the collection again, after some time had passed, to revisit the timeline, or to assemble photos into sub-collections using another model or scheme. The primary organization of the photographs (chronological) could endure, and would not be significantly disrupted by such activity, and we could discern a different set of community narratives.

It's important to remember, the DATUM collection doesn't constitute the entirety of what we'd consider Aliza's *fonds*, which would also include her large digital archive (at truthserum.org), videos of shows and performances, costumes, ephemera from Truth Serum productions and other endeavors, and whatever personal papers she might collect. There's also overlap between the years when Aliza was shooting with film and getting prints made of her photos, when she was shooting with a digital camera and getting prints, and when she was primarily shooting digital shots and transferring them directly to the online repository—printing no hard copies in the process. And this overlap doesn't account for materials she may have collected from other artists and photographers making work at or about her productions. Aliza's documentary record demands an approach to preservation and organization that will take these diverse materials and formats into account. Whether Aliza will

be the organizer of these materials, or whether that work will happen with collaborators, or at a later stage, remains to be seen.

Following Shilton and Srinivasan's work, it's easy to imagine how we could extend the work that happened at DATUM. For example, in addition to participating in the arrangement and display of Aliza's physical collection, community members could participate in the description of her photos (print and digital). Traditionally, description has helped users understand a collection's organization and access material by identifying data, such as "creator, title, dates, extent, and contents" (Pearce-Moses "Description"). The description process usually involves the creation of a finding aid—an inventory of the collection—or other access tools that allow users to survey what's in the collection, and allow the archives to protect the collection by having a complete inventory and minimizing the users' need to browse through the original materials (Pearce-Moses "Description").

Aliza's friends, collaborators, and fellow performers could be hugely helpful in the description of her photographs of events—especially those in her digital Truth Serum archives. Because Aliza takes photos during shows, and posts them online chronologically, in sets associated with particular shows, it would not be hard for community members to provide metadata about creator and date, and to offer both descriptive summaries of the shows documented (where was the show, what was the theme, etc.) and identification of specific performers. Because Aliza's documentation style has traditionally been to take many photos during each act, it's often easy to see a narrative arc developing in a series of shots. This visual story would be enhanced if performers contributed information about the music or other elements that accompanied their acts, or added brief narrative synopses of the acts to the online archive. This metadata could also facilitate searching for performers' images across shows, and would help create timelines for different performers' involvement with the productions. The kinds of participatory descriptive practices I'm imagining would require an entirely different architecture than the one Aliza is currently using to post photos, but, following Huvila, tech-savvy members of Aliza's community could

take a participatory approach and design that architecture based on the collection, itself. That way, the structure would allow for descriptive practices that are suited to the collection and its subjects.

The collection and its organization bear the imprint of their creator, Aliza, the community of participants at DATUM, and any volunteers who help her with organization in the future. This information is exactly the kind of contextual information archives can incorporate in the kind of descriptions Shilton and Srinivasan describe. While a detailed story of DATUM may be too much to incorporate in the scope and content notes of a finding aid, its inclusion in the collection's documentation would enable researchers and other users to understand the organizing process, would affirm the value of that process as part of queer collection-formation and queer archiving, and would keep the community's embedded knowledges with the collection—along with the recollections, documentation, and records from its creator.

This chapter, itself, does descriptive and documentary work. In my writing about DATUM and Aliza's documentary and archiving practices, I demonstrate how a collection-level narrative or ethnography might look. Still, there is much more to document about Aliza's collection. For example, it would be helpful to document how she creates the online archive—to understand the process by which she uploads, organizes, and makes her photographs available, as well as the process by which she records shows, and what she does with the recordings. It's easy to imagine ways volunteer archivists, librarians, and friends from her communities could join in these efforts: adding metadata to photos in the archive, perhaps transferring some images to a more searchable and navigable online interface, helping organize other papers and ephemera, and helping to identify an archival repository for the collection, when Aliza chooses to donate it. These collaborations would align easily with Aliza's other endeavors, with the community involvement DATUM enabled, and with queer commitments to open, participatory, grassroots approaches to archiving.

By the end of the DATUM installation, we had experienced a queer temporality that encouraged—and enacted—the co-existence of multiple frameworks for experiencing and understanding time. The chronological/

historic ordering of the photos in the suitcases happened alongside the coincidental/juxtapositional posting of photos on the timeline. The practices that defined the performance of archiving in the space (volunteers sorting, ordering, protecting, displaying) resonated with—and came close to re-enacting—the collective, participatory activities that support Truth Serum productions. With DATUM, Aliza gave us an opportunity to experiment and play with her/our history and the timeline it represented, to line our lives up with hers, and to experience the demands of sticking to a chronological organization scheme. We put on our cotton gloves and enjoyed the here & now of the MEME gallery on a May night with our friends and the there & then of a history we were encouraged to share, to which we could belong.

Ephemeral Material: Queering the Archive articulates a queer approach to archival studies and archival practice, and establishes the relevance of this approach beyond collections with LGBTQ content. The book argues that queering the archive (thinking through queer interests, experiences, explanatory frameworks, and cultural practices) allows us to critically engage established archival principles and practices. It also describes and interprets the work of archivists, community documentarians, activists, and scholars who preserve materials documenting queer lives, and imagines how we might respond to the particular demands of archiving queer cultures. *Ephemeral Material* brings work by scholars in history, media studies, disability studies, queer studies, and other areas of the humanities into conversation with the practical and theoretical concerns of archivists and librarians. The book supports its conceptual work with concrete examples of collecting and documentation projects and with analyses of media that represent (and critique) archival spaces and practices.

Alana Kumbier is the Critical Social Inquiry and Digital Pedagogy Librarian at Hampshire College. Her professional and practical interests include critical pedagogy and library/research instruction, pedagogies of creating and making, accessibility, and zine librarianship. She is a co-editor of *Critical Library Instruction: Theories and Methods* (Library Juice Press) and a zine-maker.

Cover illustration by Jenna Brager. Cover design by Alana Kumbier.