Retrospecting the Collection
Recontextualising fragments of history and memory through the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive

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I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted it at any university for a degree.

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Signature Date

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ABSTRACT

In 2012, the Johannesburg-based artists' collective, Center for Historical Reenactments (CHR), presented *Fr(agile)*, a social sculpture and public intervention, following a three-day residency at the Alf Kumalo Museum in Diepkloof, Soweto. The *Fr(agile)* Residency intended to reimagine the archive by searching it for points of interest related to visual art-making. This research dissertation aims to revisit *Fr(agile)* in order to explore new ways of engaging the photographic archive, and artist-led processes and methodologies within this archive. The archive was never completely sorted although Kumalo had, had intentions of properly cataloguing his archive and had begun the process of digitising his photographs at his museum. With the archive closed for legal reasons, this research will draw on memory and account, and this dissertation will be presented orally. I feel it is necessary to remember what the archive was like during the residency, but to also propose ways to activate the archive through contemporary visual arts practice. The research further proposes ways in which archives can occupy a space within contemporary visual arts, how they can potentially function when looked at as contemporary objects, and begin to question the ephemeral relationship between the photographic medium, archive and memory.

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PROLOGUE

Retrospecting the Collection: Re-contextualising Fragments of History and Memory Through the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive is a reimagining of a conceptual archive, through the consideration of social memory, that is, of what is at stake in social memory, through exploring how it functions. The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive is an archive of materials accumulated throughout the photo journalist's lifetime. The archive has been put into storage, and the museum is currently closed. I consider here how one interacts with the content of the archive when the physical archive is absent. Its inaccessibility is possibly where the most interesting tension is found between the theory, representation and interpretation of an archive in its absence. The intangibility of the materials, while disabling to some degree, is the basis on which the nuances of this practice exist. This MAFA dissertation was adapted from *The Fr(agile)* residency, a project administrated by the Center for Historical Reenactments (CHR) at the Alf Kumalo Museum in Diepkloof, Soweto.

Despite active effort, the archive remained unavailable for the duration of this project. For this reason this paper has made use of secondary and tertiary materials, to consider the effect that memory may have on the interpretation of the original archive of Kumalo's work. These materials will include materials taken or copied from the archive, readings, texts, journals, articles, and projects by the members of CHR, and adaptations of content from the archive by external authors, relating to the process of fragmenting history through visual arts projects. The materials that had been gathered prior to the events of *Fr(agile)* will also be revisited during this process, and will serve as ancillary materials and documentations of the archive. This dissertation will consider the current state of the archive; intangible as it is, being locked in storage. It will also include my engagement with this as a research dilemma, and how this has resulted in this recording you are listening to now. You have also been given a list of image references that appear in the dissertation. This has been done only in order to comply with the protocols of the degree submission. As part of this exercise, please elect not to look at these images as you listen.

This text considers the archive as a manner of conceptual object, due to its intangibility, by organising space for varied interpretations and interactions with the materials. Forwarding the central argument relies on the ability to re-contextualise memory. The process of reading here proposes inverting the traditional archival processes by re-attributing archival functionality from its physical to its conceptual aspect. The photograph may be equivocated to the process of remembering, and the accumulation of memory - to the archive. The archive, which will be mentioned as conceptual throughout this dissertation, is such due to its in the accessibility. The conceptual consideration, however, creates a platform for imagining the archive in a multitude of ways. The "conceptual archive" is a characteristically unreal and limitless object, which can potentially function in any conceivable way, where, rather than being based on a specific theoretical framework, its contents and their significance can be considered according to a much broader frame of reference for the historical archive. The so-called 'conceptual archive' is boundless in its ability to move beyond traditional scopes of functionality, and rather proposes to find function in an array of disciplines, media and time frames. This intention is emphasised by the application of a range of academic frameworks from across a number of different disciplines, which may in turn create multiple areas of meaningful connectivity. Applying theoretical frameworks that are not only limited to a single aspect, or a given set of ideologies, an archive may continue to be activated through the application of its contents. The connections drawn to psychology, literature, history and more, notably the visual arts, deepens parallels of interpretation, which in turn may allow for the discovery of ancillary narratives. The observation of such parallels and creation of ancillary narratives is the premise according to which this recording has been realised. As the archive remains conceptual, its presence is given nuance by the intervention of contemporary digital media in the form of the adaptation of physical documentation and written text, which are the main components of the self-reinventing methodological archive.

Fr(agile) took place as an interaction with the archive over a period of three days. While the physical collection was present, the process undertaken by CHR galvanised, through its ability to create a further narrative that references the collection, without its physical

presence. This later discussion explores the sense of inaccessibility created by the absent collection. While this factor may have derailed this particular process, listening without being able to read creates the circumstances for considering a collection one is not able to view. In this way, this dissertation looks at the implication of memory and archival contents, bringing to the fore the critical question of the intangibility of the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive.

It is because of this that this auditory text is solely reliant on your ability to remember what you have heard. In this way it engages with the proposition that the spoken word may 'speak memory' into the archive. This dissertation does not propose to evaluate the archive or the construction of historical archives generally, although the theoretical framework does consider archival practice within the South African context. This paper focuses itself on the exploration of the way in which memory can impact or alter our relationship with history, utilising as its central mechanism.

This recording provides an experience of the archive, by conveying what is remembered about it, particularly through projects administrated through CHR. The focus on the means of making theory brings the reader, as listener, closer to the way in which the project has been developed.

INTRODUCTION

Context and Closure

This MAFA is an exploration of the plausibility of memory as archival material, through the use of the Alf Kumalo Museum, The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive and the *Fr(agile)* Residency, run by CHR in 2012. This thesis performs a post-analysis and recontextualisation of materials obtained by the CHR team during *Fr(agile)*, through the experience, unpacking and recording of interaction with the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive. I argue here for the consideration of the archive as a contemporary object, which transcends nostalgia or value in accumulation, and considers memory as a tool for collecting content (Foucault 1969: 3). While the archive was initially engaged with as a physical object, here is engaged as a conceptual object. I argue that the intangibility of a physical archive allows for greater insight into the relevance of archives in contemporary visual art, towards the integration of collections such as the one in question into visual art practices. I rest my argument here on the relationship between the artist-led processes, in this case by CHR in relation to the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive, considering, amongst other aspects, whether memory can re-contextualise our interpretation of archives.

The archive of the Alf Kumalo Museum has proved difficult to access since Kumalo's passing in 2012, as the museum closed soon after the death of the well-known photographer. His body of work spanned five decades, narrating struggle and oppression, as well as the story of his own family in the form of documentary photography. Many of his photographs have contributed greatly to history, and remain as relevant in their capacity as images, as the apartheid era that they document. Kumalo was always very directly involved in the exhibition and distribution of his work, creating his own methods of making art accessible to the public. The Alf Kumalo Museum was a space dedicated to the exhibition of Kumalo's work. as well as a space that could nurture the next generation of South African photographers. His philanthropic spirit and passion for the photographic medium created a visibly honest body of work reflecting South Africa before and after democracy.

The articulation of this project, based as it is on Alf Kumalo's work, is a device designed to re-activate the museum's collection as a conceptual archive, against its own disappearance. Historical photographic archives have experienced the pervasive injustice of becoming increasingly ignored as part of the landscape of cultural resources in the country.[1] These images remind contemporary South Africans of a time they would rather forget, where, since Kumalo's images are so unforgettable, they can be difficult to engage. This auditory text proposes that this very dynamic may govern the process of negotiating the ways in which post-apartheid South Africa engages with historical archives.

Since the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive was withdrawn from public access, there has been no word about whether it may become available again in future. It is important to consider how the removal of this collection from public view may be affecting the social construction of memory. Furthermore, it is important to also consider whether the absence of this, or of other similar collections, might have an impact on the ways in which history is told, portrayed and, most importantly, remembered forward. The focus of this project is the consideration of whether individual and shared memory can re-activate dormant historical archives, and at once to consider doing so through the content gathered, exhibited and used through the *Fr(agile)* residency organised by (CHR).

Having participated in the residency myself, I personally accumulated substantial material, including that obtained from my colleagues at CHR. Amongst my personal collection of archival material are a presentation at The Exuberance Symposium an exhibition and conference at the Michaelis School of Fine Art at the University of Cape Town; a performance as part of the *What if 2081?* symposium by the Goethe Institute; and participation in *Rise and Fall of Apartheid: Photography and the Bureaucracy of Everyday Life* exhibition, exhibited in South Africa at Museum Africa (2014-2015).

[1] This analysis of the medium of photography as Western construct and also colonial art form is elaborated by Salah Hassan in a reading entitled, (1999) "The Modernist Experience in Africa: Visual Expressions of the Self and Cross-Cultural Aesthetics". This text by Salah considers art making within a colonial African context and the relevance of photography as a documentary device, in contrast with how it is considered in contemporary art discourses. Photography remained practical, as a device by means of which to document history and moments in time. Malike Sidibe's body of work stands as an example of this, as the subject matter reflects a modern context, rather than an artistically motivated body of work.

Photography Against Apartheid

Rise and Fall of Apartheid curated by Okwui Enwezor and Rory Bester, both underscored and departed from conventional (and physical) documentary records and images. According to Enwezor

> Most images of South Africa during this era tend to privilege the public record of events associated with the resistance ethos of anti-apartheid struggle. While these images are historically important, and essential to the story the exhibition wants to tell, it is also the case that global familiarity with the documentary tradition shows us that there are other visual stories to tell next to it (Enwezor 2012: 2).

Rise and Fall of Apartheid is particularly pertinent food for thought, as this exhibition focused solely on the depiction of the ordinary and mundane, often highlighting the social nuances captured by photographers during apartheid. This amplification of nuance is essential to the deliberation of the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive. By using the same method, the introspection may be shifted when examining the photographs in the archive to reveal deeper narratives and moreover, the photographer's intention during the process of making his work. The photographs, such as those displayed in Rise and Fall, are objects that are physical, however, which inspire visceral response. This dissertation aims to convey something of the viscerality of photography by capturing what deeper implication in pictures may occur. By presenting the subjectivity of the author and the audience, and further more the narration that can be contributed by both, the 'idea of the photographs' may come to seem more nuanced than the photographs themselves. The nuance captured through the *Rise and Fall of Apartheid* as a curatorial project is precisely the ephemeral and intangible position on which this auditory text is realised. The ephemeral is not only in the abstraction of scenes captured in the image, but stretches the possibility for engagement to include the photographers' intention, allowing for a deeper understanding of the collection, and who created it.

This text considers the place and relevance of historical archives in contemporary visual arts by negotiating the relationship between history and memory. The Alf Kumalo

Museum Archive, much like *Rise and Fall of Apartheid* exhibition, stands to communicate more than only the narratives of the violent apartheid system. Kumalo's collection of work, rendered by an autonomous photographer, evokes a complex consideration of the relevance of historical archives in contemporary South Africa, including whether such collections will inevitably expire in terms of meaning, as they 'lose connection' to the present. The pivotal message in *Rise and Fall of Apartheid* centred on broadening discursive perspectives regarding apartheid and violence, by depicting instances of normalcy, and an idea of what everyday life under the regime may have looked like.[2] By exploring a broader means of narrative, *Rise and Fall of Apartheid* diversified the visible content of various historical archives by including the narratives of individuals alongside a representation of the apartheid mega-narrative and its social impact. The inclusion of the individual narrative challenged the perceived functionality of historical archives by understanding them not to be limited to the function of mere repository.

It is essential to consider the impact of apartheid, especially in relation to an archive that contains an exorbitant number of images that relate to its narrative. While the broader apartheid narrative is necessary to locating the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive in a particular time and history, it is important to be able to consider the position and experiences of the particular photographer with regards to how and, importantly, why images were taken. The intention of the author may layer our interaction with the archive. The mere possibility of this view point means the images can be engaged with from different perspectives.

By re-contexualising the Alf Kumalo collection as a conceptual rather than merely visual, object-centred archive, I aim to consider not only the political implication of such an interpretive shift, but also to surface often-overlooked social nuances that are present in

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[2] "Yet, without this documentary tradition, very little of what we know today about the apartheid system would be recorded. Nor would the public be able to gain a fuller understanding of what took place under its repressive and destructive political conditions if the images of deplorable scenes of brutality not reached wider public circulation. However, the issue this exhibition wishes to raise, is not that these scenes are not of importance, but whether the story of apartheid can be explored through other means as well. This is the challenge this exhibition endeavors to undertake, to set side by side extraordinary and ordinary situations, abnormality and normality. In this way, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid* by will through other mechanisms enable the viewing public to gain further understanding into how apartheid operated, how it not only became resilient, but fully integrated and therefore was made socially acceptable across all levels of South African society." *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid* exhibition text, 2014 – 2015, Museum Africa South Africa.

parts of the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive. With the consideration of social memory and subjective experience, I am interested in cataloguing these nuances through subjective memory, whilst tracking the effect that memory may have on interpretation. There are photographs that exist, which depicted normal realities and contexts, which, while they do not negate apartheid, nonetheless present aspects of the quotidian during this time.[3]

For photojournalists the environment was incredibly difficult, as they constantly ran the risk of being apprehended and jailed for their work. While they were conscious about the exercise of record making, the political climate of the apartheid police state proved to be highly sensitive to it, as their work served as evidence often of the aggressive treatment of black people. Photographers however, challenged the daily political injustices by documenting apartheid in South Africa, and their images became a means to show the world the extent of what was taking place. The political climate put black, male photographers especially at risk as they had fewer constitutional rights than did their counterparts of other ethnicities.

Alf Kumalo spoke openly about his persistent fear of death as a result of his photography, especially as a black man during apartheid. The political economy according to which such a significant number of black South African men worked as mine workers, meant the photojournalist was an unusual occupation to have. While contemporary photography is more accessible, and human rights more widely protected in South African society, during apartheid photojournalists worked against an series of constraints that in fact made the apparently simple action of taking a photograph incredibly demanding. Often their intentions did not follow a specific technical or intellectual process; specifically, while photographers photographed knowing that these documents were a kind of evidence, it is unclear whether someone like Kumalo intended to create an archive from these, which would be able to be referenced beyond his lifetime.

[3] See https://www.guernicamag.com/daily/roslyn-bernstein-okwui-enwezor-traces-the- struggle/ (Date of Access: 17 May 2014)

Collections and Archives

Collections like Kumalo's, which were created in a cumulative photographic process, are archetypal of how historical documents may have been initially made, that is, showing that historical documents are mostly sporadically created, until there is some narrative thread giving rise to the parameters of an archive. The records were made with the intention of recording a specific memory. The accumulation of subjective memorabilia is associated with our need to remember the things that have happened in our lives, however, historical photographic collections serve a broader role, by serving as a form of proof (Enwezor 2008: 11). The images that exist in photographic archives, validate the past and stand in for the 'truth' of many events. The limitation in traditional photographic rendering meant creating and altering copies was difficult, if not impossible, and thus there were seldom any disputes in the authenticity of any of the images that were taken.

A fundamental question of the archive, pertinent here, is as to where one locates the point at which a given collection may have accumulated enough documentation to become considered an 'archive'. That is, is there a necessary moment where a more conscious form of collecting and organising is required to take place in order for the collection to be significant beyond itself?

The actions of collecting information and placing it in a specific order so as to ensure that it may be read in an organised way, are what come to mind when characterising the nature of archival processes. Yet this process has become increasingly more complex as archivists need to consider the authors intentions and ensure that the representation of material is done truthfully. A level of critical understanding and an unbiased relationship by archivists towards those who interact with them, is essential to presenting the authors narrative, which must not be swayed by the archivists own subjectivity. Yet trying to secure even this is not only complex but in fact, virtually impossible. Historical archives are inherently affected by history and are thus subject to the proliferation of narratives that may exist around them. The memory of the archive is fundamentally based on what is remembered about its content. The relevance of the archives is validated through the view of those who have experienced its contents through individual and subjective modes of memory. Historical archives remain meaningful as a result of the history they reflect.

As such, it remains vitally important that archives continue to emphasise the importance of memory and history. The archive is a repository of documents which contain a multitude of narratives relating to what we remember, but more importantly, to the way in which we remember. The value of the archive is primarily to be found in its relationship with memory, and how it establishes the relevance of memory by reflecting the past. The archive is thus the bridge across which we are able to interact with history through the interaction and exploration with memory. The archive is primarily a place where memories have accumulated, presenting a particular narrative. The memory of the archive is subsequently explored through the active process of remembering. While there seems to exist a parallel between having the memory and remembering, the recall of memory actively connects narratives allowing them to exist in relation to each other. Remembering creates a labyrinth of interpretation and interactions, reconfiguring the function, relevance and most importantly the memory of the archive from *Fr(agile)*. By so remembering the memory, may present layered views of the past.

The tension perpetuated by apartheid is largely based on the negotiation of identity within an African setting amongst other social, economical and political tensions which complicated the construction of self. The subject matter of many photographic collections relies heavily on the representation of black Africans as "other". In his book, *On the Postcolony* (2001), Achille Mbembe examines how an African's contemporary construction of self largely rests on the position that was presupposed for the individual through the violence of its various oppressive systems (Mbembe; 2; 2001). The construction of African identity is seemingly reliant on existing visual and oral narrative of history and social politics. If historical archives are interpreted to include the plethora of undocumented or untraditional materials, the awareness of the complexity of the ideological position would be invariably most pertinent.

The function of historical archives in contemporary settings is the site of most heated contestation over discourses of the reliability of memory. One may ask, are there ways available to facilitate the process of resurrecting historical archives that might ensure they remain useful; or, will they, like most documents, disappear from memory when they are

no longer necessary? Is there an inherent connection between the narratives within the archive? And are the narratives embedded in society connected to archives, such that they may continue to make archives relevant for as long as they reflect important memories? Are the collective memories of any particular society effective enough to ensure that these collections do not become extinct?

Is it necessary to remember and continue to consult the past? If it is, what might the value in remembering be in changing or re-evaluating memory? Is there a possibility to extend the scope of interaction by avoiding the idea that narratives dictated by historical documents are the only reliable sources. Is there not inherent value in combining with documented history, the memory of those who experienced it so as to intervene in and replenish what becomes a fixed, institutionalised narrative, with deeper insight. Along with this intervention comes opportunities to relocate and reconsider history, so as to re-imagine it and to broaden its impact; to broaden the function of the archive. In this way, memory might in turn accumulate, creating its own archive: a secondary archive based on the root of the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive. The archive can be looked at as an accumulation of instances and events; an accumulation personal experiences. It is not inconceivable to consider that these happenings or experiences are, in fact, recorded memories, with proof and the archive is essentially a stock of memory. As without memory archives exist without narrative. This dissertation aims to explore the idea that memory can be collected, by considering the impact of memory, in conjunction with archival practice. This pertains to a broader discussion regarding archival processes, memory, the processes of intervention made by artists, the process of remembering, and lastly, whether social memory can reposition interactions with historical photographic archives.

The first chapter of this dissertation considers established archival practices and challenges traditional methodology like catalogue creation and interaction with physical documentation, by proposing contemporary perspectives and alternative ways of considering archiving practice.

The second chapter considers artist-led practices and how these can be interventions in archival terms, that can re-contextualise the contents and function of archives.

The third chapter evaluates memory, the process of remembering and how construction of both individual and social memory can alter and enrich relationships with archives in contemporary practice.

The forth chapter combines the ideas presented in the chapters before by contemplating the impact of audio performance as a device to elaborate the importance of memory. Most significantly, this chapter will substantiate the argument that this recording constitutes a re-contextualisation of history through remembering the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive.

This dissertation considers whether memory can be understood as archival material, and whether this might make reactivate relevance for historical archives contemporary South Africa.

1. ARCHIVAL PRACTICE AND CONTEMPORARY VISUAL ART

1.1 Understanding Archives

An archive is defined simply here as a repository for records of historical value. They are similar to libraries and museums, as all three institutions organise and provide access to information. However, they differ in that: libraries focus on published information like books and periodicals, where museums focus on artifacts, or physical objects, and archives focus on unpublished original records.[4]

However, Michel Foucault writes,

the archive is not which, despite its immediate escape, safeguards the event of the statement, and preserves, for future memories, its status as an escape; it is that which, at the very root of the statement-event, and in that which embodies it, defines at the outset *the system of its enunciability*. Nor is the archive that which collects the dust of statements that have become inert once more, and which may make possible the miracle of their resurrection; it is that which defines the mode of occurrence of the statement-thing; it is *the system of functioning* (Foucault 1969: 3).

1.2 Archival Questions

Foucault's definition of archives above proposes a different functionality for archives in contemporary visual arts. Archives are no longer looked at to function is a traditional manner, as they are no longer engaged with as merely collections of historical material, but instead suggest alterative functions and interpretations. Historical archives linger in a liminal space, where the cataloguing of information does not only validate a particular historical narrative, but may bring into question whether they are relevant in a contemporary setting. Archives, whether consolidated or not, seemingly exist by changing how we engage with narratives about our history. Foucault argues that the archive is not a

[4] See http://library.lakeheadu.ca/?pg=498 (Date of access: 20 April 2013)

place where memories are collected and catalogued, but rather that the archive exists to locate us in a specific place and time. This relation is quintessential in creating relevant and social dialogue in our current context. as opposed to merely validating a desire for nostalgia. In the introduction of this book, Foucault explores our negotiation with histories, namely those derived from different disciplines, which seem to negate the periods and times, in and about which they were created. These histories exist without any connection to other histories created during the same time (Foucault 1969: 3).

The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive much like a number of others, operates autonomously, without any real connection to academic disciplines and discourses, outside of those pertaining to photojournalism and apartheid. The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive, containing decades worth of images, remains a product of particular historical moments, and remains bound within the confines of the political interpretation. An extract sourced Foucault's book entitled, *"The Historical a priori and the Archive",* argues a contemporary perspective on what the perceived or traditional function of the archive is. Where traditional definitions locate the archive as a source of valued historical records, Foucault repositions traditional perspectives by considering the impact of the materials they contain in relation to contemporary narratives. The role of the archive is subsequently reconsidered, and engaged with in a different way to that of traditional historical materials. Archives within a contemporary setting seem to function more to engage conversations and do not merely provide visual cues for the elaboration of past narratives. Archives move from a stagnant place and are essentially reimagined through a change in the perspective of looking.

The archive can only be said to be a device for narration, and no longer a place where we can find any manner of simple validation. Photographic collections, as argued by Jacques Derrida in his book *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (1995), are collections of a photographers' memories. By their means, we are given insight into the things that this person would have seen during their lifetime. Images, Derrida discusses, are, at the base of historical archives may include family portraits, everyday street scenes, and social scenes. The collections Derrida focuses on become archives, and are not initially shot with that intention. In theory, they are a storeroom for the photographer's often-personal moments

and records.

The archive in question in the current text is a collection of materials Kumalo would have accumulated during his lifetime, but which are not at present sorted or catalogued. I propose here that this is more than just a collection making up South African history, but rather a place of conversation, where the often-complex topic of history may be deliberated. The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive fundamentally evidences this, as the majority of his collection is filled with moments that constitute consequential political and historical narratives. Kumalo photographed the lives of the people around him as well his own subjects of interest, like boxing and soccer. Each image is laden with personal recollections and memories, as narratives he told during the residency, that create an interesting tension between private and public, as some of the remnants of the archive are now accessible as formalised public record.

Our contemporary negotiation of archiving subsequently involves the way in which we perceive the process of collecting materials, and furthermore, what is done after these materials have been collected. How does archiving function systematically, and how is this idea of collecting or categorising considered in the case of an archive that is not physically present, as with The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive. The practice of archiving has become most relevant through our need to conserve and document collections that relate specifically to our contexts. Archiving as a practice has continued to evolve, and functions beyond the sorting through of materials, by evaluating the applicability of such collections in our current context. This perspective extends further, to examine the content found within archives, while rethinking our methods of collecting. The *Fr(agile)* residency did not propose to create a catalogued 'collection' from Kumalo's work, but instead extracted specific materials, resulting in a form of 'social sculpture', which meant the audience overtook the residency by continuing to engage with the images. The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive proposes to be interacted with differently than traditional museum archives, as there is no actual access to the physical archive at present. As a result of this, I take leave to argue that the archive currently, is not in fact contained in or by a physical collection of objects of interest. My motivation is that this proposition necessarily opens up alternative methods of engagement and methods of thinking.

This project was initially constructed around the existence of archival material, but when these materials are absent, there are tensions that arise in archival practice and theory. What place do such collections occupy in contemporary spaces like galleries, museums, academic writing and curriculum, and as per Foucault's definition, how does the archive function as a contemporary physical object; how do such collections function, where do they exist, and what purpose do they serve when we consider them outside essentially of museum like spaces?

The archive is a conceptual object, but may introduce an alternative method of looking; memory as the archive. There are materials and contents taken from the archive during *Fr(agile),* which include photographs, texts and personal notes by Kumalo. This archive heightens the value of the role of memory, and introduces the deliberation of whether memory, or memories, can be considered as archival materials. This is particularly interesting since this archive consists of a large body of images or objects, which independently infer particular moments in history, and specific time periods. It is interesting to consider memory, because it can change, or even distort that which we may consider to be fact. If we remember images differently to what they look like, for instance, do we change the manner in which they function and what they stand to communicate? In many instances, this becomes the primary groundwork, as the ability to physically sort an archive is essentially based on what physical materials are available. When such materials are unavailable however, there must be development in adapting other ways to collect materials that still speaks to the narratives presented around the archive.

1.3 Authorship, photojournalism and the impact of technology on archives

The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive is a predominantly photographic archive, which includes a number of materials and content that contribute to certain contemporary narratives relating to history, memory and socio-political perspectives. The interpretation of this collection often references a particular period in time, and also evokes a specific set of emotions and reactions. Derrida speaks about the impact of historical collections in the

spaces in which they exist, and how they can potentially perpetuate a specific set of feelings (Derrida 1995: 9).

The archive is predominately photographic, as photographs once conceived were rendered in order to maintain the purpose of documentation. The imagery that exists in this archive was photographed in a particular genre of photography, as Kumalo worked prolifically as a documentary photographer.

Photojournalism and documentary photography are specific genres of photography, whose photographs were adopted and treated as records of occurrences in South Africa during apartheid. This meant that the images were essentially meant to be reproduced and viewed; they were not necessarily treated as precious artworks, but rather as proof, to support a larger narrative. There are images that remain unidentified, and photographers likewise, due to the hostile nature of apartheid, and because they were not even made towards establishing fame or recognition. Many of African photographic collections were destroyed, or never claimed. The action of photographing during apartheid was often undertaken in tumultuous circumstances, which meant photographers often had their cameras and negatives destroyed while they worked. The photographer's autonomy is inherently affected, as some images created during this time exist without ever being allocated to any particular photographer.

Rise and Fall of Apartheid discussed the erroneous nature of archiving and the ascription of authorship of the materials, which while included photographs also included the authors memorabilia, that gathered in these archives. These collections were not only hard to create, but they were also made when people didn't understand what they might one day become part of. Jilted lovers would destroy years' worth of photography, police would confiscate photographs so as to dispose of evidence, and in the case of certain archives, such as in the case of Alf Kumalo, water damage and storage limitations led to the destruction of parts of the archive. The idea of material autonomy in this context is exceptionally complex, as the recognition of the subject matter of the works is prioritised over the person who actually took them.

Roland Barthes' essay, *Death of the Author*, speaks to the idea of autonomy of photographers, and how it is not infinite (Barthes 1977: 387). While some photographers are aware of the origin of the photographs, the often-nostalgic nature of historical subject matter can render the photographer redundant. He is sometimes negated, as the photographs may serve as memories, and not objects.

While this can allow for greater perspectives in reading, it is problematic in the case of a historical archive, as so much of the content is easily recognisable because they visuals of things that actually happened. The historical photograph not only references specific historical events, but also serves as the 'visual content' of memory. The archive is then looked at by an external viewer merely as documentation, and the origin of the image or work is subsequently overlooked.

There are a number of larger archives that include works of apartheid era photographers. The Baileys African Historical Archive includes in it over 40 years worth of materials from publications including Drum Magazine, where Alf Kumalo worked as a professional photographer.[5] Jürgen Schadenberg noted in the 1950s that the works depicted a context different from what apartheid is understood to have been.[6] The Drum covers showed urban living, presenting a sophisticated urban black aesthetic to the world. And while Drum Magazine created a lifetime of visual narratives, The Baileys African Historical Archive were criticised in the controversy that emerged over ownership of the photographs it laid claim to.[7] Schadeberg claimed that documentary photographer Peter Magubane enquired as to how he would be able to retrieve the rights to his photographs from the archive. This was later denied by Magubane, yet the tension between their respective narratives alone highlights the dichotomies that exist around the negotiation of authorship and copyright in South African photographic collections. Drum Magazine commissioned the images that are present in the Baileys African Historical Archive from photographers, who were paid as Drum employees. In theory, the images would belong to Drum Magazine, and further The Baileys African Historical Archive, because they were not created in an independent capacity. While this may be true, it is more complicated a question to consider, when

[5] See http://www.baha.co.za/page/aboutus (Date of access: 15 March 2015)
[6] See http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/09/16/magazine/drum-magazine.html (Date of access: 16 March 2014)
[7] See http://mg.co.za/article/2005-07-21-drum-photographers-in-dispute-over-bailey-legacy (Date of access: 20 July 2014)

thinking through autonomy in photography as a medium per se. The Bailey's African Historical Archive is comprised of a multitude of images, taken by a number of photographers, who nonetheless own none of the copyright. The idea of autonomy and reproduction is quintessential in this discussion of photographic archives, because the images are so readily reproducible. Ownership can become quite ambiguous, as Gitte Stald has noted, it is apparent that many of these photographs exist without any ownership and without copyright laws being implemented (Stald, 2008: 145). The Baileys African Historical Archive at present is both a material collection, while also comprehensively occupying a digital presence. While technology can often have a negative impact on collections like these, the archive is far more accessible in this format. A public's process, and ability to receive information, is so instantaneous with technology that the information we share is able to reach a much larger audience than before. It is of interest to consider how technology may assist in creating platforms for collections like The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive, and The Baileys African Historical Archive, to exist in a contemporary setting without compromising the authorship of the work.

Photojournalism was not based on an understanding per se, the images were photographed as documents of history. Because of this, the images reflect an unconscious history that seem to narrate a distinct shared social memory of apartheid. *Rise and Fall of Apartheid* provides an appropriate base for the deliberation of the system of apartheid and thus created alternative realities for individuals living during this time (Enwezor, 2012: 2). Enwezor writes:

> It necessitated a continuous process of socialization [sic] and institutionalization [sic] until it acquired a sensibility of normalcy, as part of the reality of everyday life, shifting back from apartheid as a de jure system to again becoming a de facto aspect of normal social conduct (Enwezor, 2012: 2).

This quotation extracted from the exhibition text speaks to the political construction of normalcy, and how this adaptation could intermittently be seen in the images photographed during this time. The photographs by Alf Kumalo, alongside those of his

peers, show not only the political narrative, but also include images of people in South Africa living during apartheid. Although the conditions were harsh, there was some normalcy experienced by South African citizens during apartheid. Historical African archives have been used to validate political and historical narratives, while negating narratives of the actual lives people lived. The political structures began to collapse and so it became more apparent that what was being documented did not only reflect violence and racism. These images are often never at the forefront of these collections. The collections are most recognisable from an angled perspective of apartheid, that often relates to the historical agenda of the archive. Pierre Nora discusses this tension in what he names "sites of memory"; these 'sites' are where histories are held, for our nostalgic consumption (Nora, 1989: 2). These sites of memory serve only to validate narratives that have been secured by history, which means that the collections are often presented with bias, and geared only towards perpetuating a predetermined position or agenda. The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive has experienced the same dissolution, where certain images were omitted and destroyed so as to ensure that they were never seen. Archives, especially those created through photography, can be dubious, as the still frames are often more believable as factual than as memory or written texts. The photographic archive is particularly interesting because we are more prone to believing the photograph as a documentation of the truth. Okwui Enwezor furthers this discussion, but questions the material physicality of the photographs themselves. Enwezor explores the process of photographing, explaining that the photograph in turn acts as a type of time machine, gauging the ability to transport viewers to where ever they were shot. The photograph expands its functions from documentary, becoming the space in which a particular group, institution or society can be observed. The photograph as stated by Enwezor, serves an anthropological purpose, not only communicating information about a particular group, but also by freezing a moment in time, allowing us to revisit it in perpetuity, or as long as the image exists.

In a book entitled *Archive Fever: Photography Between History and the Monument* (2008), Enwezor exposes the connection made between the photographer and the photograph. The photograph, once taken, and placed into the archive, exists as a record. It is through its placement within the archive, among a flurry of ancillary records related to

it, that we receive it as a document. This metamorphosis questions the role of the archive, and moreover, the impact archiving has on the singular record. Archival collections in turn become treasure troves of historical documents, that are repeatedly used for reminiscence, and looked at in times of nostalgia. Archives of this nature – namely those that reflect a specific form of oppression toward a particular group of people – stand as evidence of the events of this oppression. The photographs are proof of what took place. Enwezor begins his discussion by forwarding that the 'pure mechanism' of photographic veracity already creates a sense of indisputability. The cameras precision in capturing images of the places in which they are taken, draws photography closer to truth than any form of documentation (Enwezor, 2008: 12). The cameras apparent ability to capture the time, place and event into a visual image renders the photograph is of the most reliable amongst archival documents. However, with ever-progressing technology, the documenters can in fact be anyone with access to photographic equipment. Access to the Internet means traditional documents are not only engaged with through museums or archives, but can essentially be found anywhere. Many archives or archival materials travel far beyond their origin. Kumalo's photographs for instance have been replicated so many times that in some cases they no longer even reference the collection they were initially taken from. Stald's (2008) aforementioned essay discusses the effect of technology on our lives, and the way in which society goes about exchanging and sharing information. Communication in a contemporary setting is far easier with instant text messaging and the ability to take as many photographs whenever it is desired (Stald, 2008: 142). It is most obvious that we are able to render images now in a much easier fashion, and such is our ability to share information. Stald provides evidence from an exploration of youth with mobile devices to demonstrate how the devices both aid and prohibit the construction of identity; how mobile technology can affect the way in which we establish a sense of self based on our beliefs of who we are (Stald 2008: 143). The availability of information and the construction of social platforms, bridges the gap between the document and the viewer by making the information more accessible. Where previously, documents and textual information would be located in museums and libraries, modern technology has progressively created not only accessibility, but also platforms on which multiple narratives can be presented. Technology can create an autonomous environment for viewing images, where viewers do not necessarily know or have any specific interest in

rendered the image. ‘Sites of memory’ are further developed by the ability to exchange new information, as alluded to by Pierre Nora (1989). Nora states that the problem with historical collections is not really that the images are catalogued as evidence, but rather, the problem lies with the question of who collects the evidence. The ‘sites of memory’ are subsequently compiled only to include narratives and documents that adhere to a particular agenda. Yet with the intervention of technology, access is infinite, and thus incredibly complex (Nora, 2008: 13). The interpretation of these documents is particularly fragile as it is based on the narrative that is given to support it, where if this narrative shifts even slightly, the interpretation of the document is compromised. The exclusion of certain documents can have a greater effect in changing the premise of a historical narrative, or on the way in which an entire group of people understand and identify themselves, especially those born into a lineage of oppressed individuals.

Stald has, in turn, created a compelling premise for the ability to distribute information, and more importantly, to reproduce materials without any acknowledgement of their origin. Technology has created a complex relationship with archives, even to some degree rendering them obsolete (Stald, 2008: 147). The archive, through technological advances, can change the way in which we interact with it. It has a new life within a technological realm, where narratives that are not included in the physical archive can gain visibility. The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive includes a number of extensions, where the archive continues to exist beyond the collection. All of these external documents and texts inherently supplement the content that was physically made by Kumalo. His photographic work is meanwhile represented on a number of websites, in media press releases, in his book entitled *Through the Lens* (2009), in catalogues, and most importantly through the significance of subjects like Nelson Mandela, Winnie Mandela and Mohammed Ali. The archive continues to live, and extend itself beyond the collection. All materials yet to be documented are inadvertently extensions of what has already been archived and collected. There exists a multitude of reproductions, some of which are direct replicas, but others of allude ideas from the archive but are not by any means reflections of the archive in its present state.

Walter Benjamin (1937) highlights the most crucial perspective where reproduction is concerned, namely that every replica is without the presence in time of when the initial image is taken, and therefore will always only remain a reproduction.

> Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be (Benjamin 1936: 217).

This poses a number of relevant questions regarding the way in which information is collected, as well as how it is catalogued, when the majority of it exists in experience or memory. The information which alludes the archive or exists in places like the internet and outside of the museum archive, in many ways relies on the need for the physical archive to remain applicable.

1.4 Collecting the contemporary Archive

Artists have been engaging with archives in contemporary visual arts primarily as a method to broaden interaction with historical collections, in order to bring them into conversation. Interventions have however created dichotomies in the way in which archival materials receive interaction, resulting in a number of meaningful discursive outcomes.

The exhibition by A.R. Hopwood initially shown at the Freud Museum, London, entitled *The False Memory Archive* (2014), [8] was a website which invited artists and contributors to add memories that were untrue, or fabricated in order to create an archive. *The False Memory Archive* comprised of digital works, vocal reciting, artwork, and written texts, which were not necessarily factual materials, as the project candidly explored the idea false memory. The concept of false memory is a popular social construct in psychology, pertaining to how children create memories or forget moments of trauma they do not want to remember. The ability to create memory that is recordable and viable is limited, based on whatever may be an ideological perspective of the individual at a given time. Memories are often created on the basis of individual perspective and personal ideology. *The False*

[8] See http://www.arhopwood.com/#!fma/cee5 (Date of access: 17 May 2015)

Memory Archive exhibition explored this idea, inviting artists to create works that were conceptualised around the idea of the construction of memory, and the way in which these memories can impact on archives.

One of the most significant pieces was a Face Time video performance between two actors, reciting memories from the archive as if they were their own.[9] The exhibition displayed a number of works conceptualised from this perspective; this particular work was most poignant however, because the actors convincingly adopted other people's narratives through their conversation. This incites discussion of the reliability of archival material, and whether archival materials are limited to documentation, or whether memory may in fact play a role in the way in which we interpret archives; the reliance on the validity of history, and its ability to validate parts of ourselves that we feel we need to understand. This creates a tension, where documents are believed as historical artefacts, and not merely as documents placed within a particular archive for a particular agenda. Nora's elaborated theory questions the role archives play in constructing identity, and in prioritising specific agendas, without consolidating or considering narratives that exist outside of them. *The False Memory Archive* poses the question as to whether archival materials are exclusively documentary in nature, or whether accounts for history through memory are subsequently plausible as documentation. Archiving can possibly exist beyond material objects, to the process that is undertaken to achieve consolidation. Personal position is paramount, as the archive can often be so closely related to personal narratives. As archives often reflect solid narratives, they can exacerbate tensions due to the ideological differences of the audience who receives them. The method of archival processes is thus paramount in deliberating the affect of cataloguing on archives.

How is archiving done? Who decides on what should be archived?

In a conference held at SITE Santa Fe entitled *Contemporary Art in Context: Mining Memory: Rethinking the Archive* (2011)**,** Mary Anne Redding and Joanne Lefrak express tension regarding the responsibility the archivist has to tell the truth.[10] Are archivists and historians obligated to create truthful archives that reflect truth, and to what extent ought

[9] See https://www.freud.org.uk/exhibitions/75481/the-false-memory-archive-/ (Date of access: 17 May 2015)
[10] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvAK5mSzHEg (Date of access: 23 March 2016)

they to incorporate the extent of ideologies and narratives that relate to their particular context? Are they, instead, presenting their ideas and displaying a particular perspective of being? The question of the reliability of archives is rather complex, as it brings into question not only the materials that are collected and catalogued within a given archive, but likewise questions the people who are executing the catalogue. Much like The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive, the sensibility and perspective where collection is concerned would be based on whoever was to catalogue and present the collection. Thus, the presentation of the collection is dependent on what the archivist decides to present. The tensions over this choice can be complicated, as certain narratives may be omitted in order to present a particular narrative, or to draw focus to preferred parts of the archive.

In large part, the relationship with historical archives is predetermined by the way in which they are presented to their audience. The traditional method of production and exhibition involve a fluid exchange of works attained from the artist that would then be exhibited and viewed within the museum or exhibition space. Advancements in technology however mean that exhibition spaces do not need to be attended in person. Where in western methods of display the museum was the primary venue, archives and artworks can exist on so many platforms, be viewed and engaged without ever needing to be encountered in real space.[11] The rules and regulations, which govern the museum space, are empirically absent in the digital universe. Historical archives are, in turn, engaged often within through topics that relate to them, and not necessarily for the recognition of the archive. Yet, while the internet can operate ambiguously, its ability to distribute information is a quality that seems to have heighted the necessity of digitisation, allowing easier engagements to be formed with the materials.

Aram Bartholl, a Berlin-based artist developed a project called *Dead drops* (2010), where he placed anonymous USB drives into the facades of buildings, street curbs and walls.[12] The purpose was to create archives of material that were shared and contributed to by the inhabitants of the city. The Dead drops asked for those who were interested to plug in their laptops and either share or copy information from the USB drive. Bartholl describes the project as an offline peer-to-peer distribution system. The artistic intervention exists

[11] See http://www.e-flux.com/journal/art-workers-between-utopia-and-the-archive/ (Date of access: 13 July 2016)
[12] See https://deaddrops.com/dead-drops/ (Date of access: 13 July 2016)

outside of both the Museum space and the digital network, by foregoing dominant traditions of collecting and moreover, traditional methods of distributing and sharing content. While historical archives require formal museum spaces in order to be viewed, this project by Bartholl questions the necessity of space, as well as methods of collecting and distributing information. While The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive remains intangible, it does however exist in the digital context. This may call into question whether such historical archives require in-museum interaction, or whether artists propose that archives be interacted with differently; that the display of such collections may in fact create different possibilities of use within the contemporary setting.

Nontobeko Ntombela references Achille Mbembe's *The Power of the Archive and its Limits* to further discuss the relationship between spaces, collections and practitioners (Ntombela, 2013:16). The spaces in which collections exist have an inseparable effect on the way in which the collection is handled and viewed; and the relationship between the archive and where it is stored. The implication of the physical location of an archive is one over which possibly the most interesting tension is to be found. The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive is a unique case. The archive was initially located with the artist and thereafter moved into his museum space in Diepkloof, Soweto around 2002. The museum space in this example is different, where the creator of the archive owned and helped to manage the collection. Alf Kumalo not only retained the ownership of his collection through his authorship, and also extended his involvement through the archival process, curatorial practice and exhibition processes. He in turn ensured that he was able to restructure traditional museum spaces, by designing his own museum in his own way, ensuring that the interpretation of his archive be dictated by himself alone. However, while this arrangement appeared to be feasible, and even ideal while he was alive, the absence of Kumalo has left the collection without a formal or appropriate context for presentation. Kumalo's archive exists at present to whom it has been allocated to, who would most likely to be a member of his family. Ntombela's thesis negotiates the complexities of institutionalised spaces that currently do not hold much archival material for black artists, especially from the apartheid era, and periods prior. However the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive has not necessarily suffered this fate, instead this was his intervention over his own archive and legacy (Ntombela, 2013: 16)

2. **ALF KUMALO AND THE CENTER FOR HISTORICAL REENACTMENTS**

2.1 Alf Kumalo the Photographer

Alf Kumalo exists in a canon of documentary photographers who have captured many significant events in South Africa during apartheid. Kumalo's work has been exhibited in a number of exhibitions, including a solo exhibition at the 59th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York (2014). His work is held in several major collections such as that of the Johannesburg Art Gallery, and he is published in both local and international newspapers. His photographs have been featured in The Observer, The Sunday Independent in the United Kingdom, New York Times and New York Post in The United States of America.[13] The archive is a reflection of South African history, specifically during apartheid. Kumalo's collection is inundated with images of The Treason Trial, The Rivonia Trial, The Soweto Uprising and events he captured inter alia. Kumalo was an avid speaker, who narrated his experiences not only as a photojournalist, but also as a black man living in South Africa during apartheid. Apartheid was not only racially challenging for black citizens, but the turbulent political climate made documenting these events an often-fatal exercise. Kumalo spoke extensively about his experiences and the lengths he took to photograph. He often spoke of hiding his camera in a cabbage and balancing his camera on his head set on a self-timer, and then of being apprehended by police when unsuccessful in his disguise. He had become notorious and very well known by authorities, which often found him placed in detention, including solitary confinement. In one of the stories he recounted, he was arrested and beaten by authorities on his way to shoot a Mohammed Ali fight, who was undoubtedly one of his favourite athletes.[14] As a self-taught artist, Kumalo merely sought a means to communicate the happenings in South Africa; he did not photograph with the sense of building a larger rhetorical artistic project.

[13] See http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/alfred-khumalo (Date of access: 15 March 2014)
[14] Fr(agile) Residency 2012. Alf Kumalo spoke intensely during the residency regarding his experiences taking photographs. He did not only reference images depicting apartheid but also images that reflected his interests and passions.

Kumalo was adamant to communicate the injustices taking place during apartheid, and based his work on creating these dialogues through his images. Kumalo's work directly reflects his position and activism against violence and the oppressive nature of apartheid. His works were seen not only to expose the violence and unjust happenings in South Africa, but also to communicate the state of the South African context during this time. In 1951, Kumalo began working as a photojournalist shooting for magazines and newspapers in South Africa like Drum Magazine, featuring a spread taken in May 1976 entitled *The Affair at Park Station* which depicted a series of images of the mistreatment of black individuals by authorities during apartheid. Remarkably, this was one month prior to the most explicit display of racial violence, the June 16 March, where hundreds of students were killed by police in Soweto during the protest against Afrikaans.

Kumalo worked amongst a number of highly influential and recognised photographers, amongst whom were Mike Mzileni and Peter Magubane, whose works are predominantly featured in the Apartheid Museum, and Ernest Cole, whose story became widely known after he fled South Africa and gained international recognition through his depictions of the harsh conditions inflicted by apartheid. Cole was able to change his surname from Koole, the South African Tswana surname, to Cole, and was able to change his classification from Black to Coloured. This crucially allowed him to move around more freely, as Pass Laws restricted black citizens, who had to produce identification called a "dompas" if they came across authorities. Cole's reclassification allowed him to eventually move to America and travel around the world, where he settled in New York. He was then able to publish his work in the critically acclaimed book *House of Bondage in 1967,* which was immediately banned in South Africa. Cole's images became internationally synonymous with South Africa and apartheid and a majority of his images were ultimately used in the installations at the Apartheid Museum curated by Christopher Till.[15]

[15] Interview with Christopher Till, 2012.

2.2 Alf Kumalo Museum Archive

The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive is still heavily located within a particular space and time, apartheid affects our reading and interpretation of the materials it contains. The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive seems to exist as a validation of political narratives, by merely presenting visual images that give pictures to the extensive texts and memories that have been produced around it. Archives seem to exist in a liminal space, between serving as an informative and aiding in understanding the impact of history on the present. Archives have transcended their primary function, through certain activations, appropriations and usage by their inclusion in discussions in other disciplines. The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive, while contextualised, also shares the narratives of random individuals that Kumalo may have encountered during the course of his life. While photographic documentation of apartheid is dominant in archives, there is also other, overlooked photography, such as staged family portraits, as well as township scenes. These sorts of photographs appeared in abundance in Kumalo's collection; portraits of people he could not remember and images of family homes. The memory of the images by the photographer prove interesting as they include a much wider possibility of interpretation than what may be factual. The medium of photojournalism very rarely included one specific subject; scenes photographers captured that were of anecdotal interest to them, which were sometimes of the mundane or ordinary.

The genre was not based on an understanding or prioritisation of a medium, but rather, a means of communication however it cannot be assumed that photographers did not shoot images of things that personally interested them. The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive seemed to reflect the photographers curiosity in medium and subject matter, as it proposes an interaction with the subjects who are rendered in the archive, and not necessarily with photography per se. The images do not necessarily inform a particular medium; they reflected the context they were rendered in. The narratives that are told through the images are more fascinating than mere depictions of violent scenes, as they elaborate a documented history that may inform not only the Kumalo archive, but also some of the other images included in it. I argue that although it is not framed in this way in the

Kumalo archive, Kumalo's work has not only an aesthetic relevance to the visual arts, but is a body of work that even in its absence is singular.

The images were photographed as documents of history, a history that is shared by the society that experienced it, where the images reflect an unconscious history that seems to narrate shared experiences, even though they do not necessarily reference a particular artist or archive. Kumalo's authorship of his photographs is not always recognised; they are often contextualised as documents of apartheid and examples in South Africa of the genre of photojournalism. This collection includes notes he wrote to himself, personal photographs, memorabilia and negatives he had not yet developed. Most notably absent are narratives that would be told by the photographer that further our understanding of his experience and subjective perspective.

The Alf Kumalo Museum in Diepkloof Soweto was a space run independently by Kumalo, with the aid of Kwame Pooe and Jabu Perierra. He had intended to negate traditional museum structures by using his old home in Soweto as space to house his collection of work. Kumalo sold many of his works in the space, as he worked consistently to document and catalogue materials in the collection. Having owned the house in which it was kept, Kumalo was able to conceptualise a space where he could exhibit and sell his photographs. At one point, the museum also functioned as a school for young photographers, who did not have the means to make their own photographic work. This space operated as an artist-run space, a non-traditional space in most visual art contexts, yet brings to the surface a number of interesting dichotomies in how such spaces are negotiated, how they function, and most importantly is how the spaces are funded in order to retain sustainability. Independent spaces however, allow for freedoms in mandate and have become a popular alternative to commercial, private and government-run spaces.

CHR is also an independent space. It is one that works on a articulated conceptual premise, namely CHR is not in any sense a place, but rather a project, intervention, or in the iteration discussed here, a manner of residency (Makhubu, 2013; 417). The artist run space allows for a certain level of emancipation, as the capitalist ideology is somewhat creatively negated, but this may only extend to a certain point. The museum could only

stay open if Kumalo was selling work, where often, the commoditisation of the works would interfere with the cataloguing and editioning of Kumalo's prints, where the independent space or artist-run space has to have some level of economic liquidity in order to be sustainable. The Alf Kumalo Museum was fully funded by Alf Kumalo and rested on the sales made through his photography.

2.3 Center for Historical Reenactments

In March 2012, CHR who comprised of Gabi Ngcobo, Donna Kukama, Kemang Wa Lehulere and myself collaborating with Alf Kumalo staff members Kwame Pooe and Jabu Perierra, in a residency situated at the Alf Kumalo Museum in Diepkloof Soweto. CHR sets out to look at history, to investigate how, within a particular historical hegemony, certain values are created, promoted, and subsequently are able to become relevant to a broader international discourse. CHR explores how artistic production can help to re-contextualise and analyse particular readings of history, and how historical content may inform artistic practice, both of which become central questions.[16] CHR has continued to engage in material that questions the relevance of memory, history and language and/or translation. The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive became a place of grave discussion, and related quite naturally to CHR projects that came before and after *Fr(agile)*. *Xenoglossia* a project started by the founding members for CHR, Gabi Ngcobo, Donna Kukama and Kemang Wa Lehulere. *Xenoglossia* was a six-month research project that explored the often-mutable nature of language, and how this can inadvertently create misunderstandings and skewed interpretations of historical happenings. The project launched with *The Unknowing Grammar of Inhabiting a Text*, a performance by Donna Kukama and Kemang Wa Lehulere; displayed and referenced materials from artists, writers in a series of discussions/performances and screenings throughout a six-month period[17].

Xenoglossia, a research project which intricately considered the role of translation and language in how history is told and often mistold, was the first project I worked on as a

[16] Taken from the Center for Historical Reenactments mission statement. See http://historicalreenactments.org/index3.html (Date of access: 12 April 2015)

[17] http://centerforhistoricalreenactments.blogspot.co.za/ (Date of access: 24 February 2017)

CHR intern, which provided a theoretical platform for the exploration of the relationship between history, memory and in this MAFA project, photography. CHR has since worked in reference to the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive on the following projects: *What Happened 20*81?,* a performance piece commissioned by the Goethe Institut, as part of a project by Christopher Roth entitled *What Happened 20*81?, The Exuberance Project* held at Michaelis Art School in Cape Town, and *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid: Photography and the Bureaucracy of Everyday Life* (2014) exhibition at Museum Africa, as aforementioned. *Fr(agile)* has continued to inspire a number of subsequent CHR projects, and incorporated imagery from the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive into later projects. Certain images, namely those including historical figures, like Nelson Mandela, and historical events, namely the image entitled *Uitenhage on March 21, 1985*, was taken during a demonstration marking the 25th anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre, in the Eastern Cape. The banner in this particular image was recreated by CHR and converted into a hanging object. The banner is accurately explained in the text written to support it in exhibition.

> "*In March 2012 the Center for Historical Reenactments (CHR) took up a weekend residency at the Alf Kumalo Museum in Diepkloof, Soweto, one in a series of interventions on photographer Alf Kumalo's vast archive of images. Titled Fr(agile), the project was centred at the improbable task of comprehending the historical through Kumalo's lens. We were confronted by countless images, most of which captured iconic moments in South African history. One such image was taken in Uitenhage on March 21, 1985 during a demonstration marking the 25th anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre. The frame captures masses of people displaying two protest banners; the more visible of the two bares the statement "THEY WILL NEVER KILL US ALL." Seemingly unaware that the government had banned the demonstration the protestors were suddenly faced with police gunfire in which more than 25 people lost their lives. The banner on display has been reconstructed by CHR and makes direct reference to the banner in Kumalo's image. To single out this reference from a photograph is an attempt by CHR to reinstate the fact of history lived, or destiny foretold. Metaphorically, the banner made reference to the sort of determinism/determination that characterised*

> *the apartheid era; it is a symbolic declaration to the state that no amount of physical casualties would extinguish the people's desire to be free… We foreground this banner and this statement to dramatise continuity of polarisation ('they' versus 'us'), our intention in so doing being to revive a discursive space within which the post-apartheid/post-colonial space(s) of struggle might be critically examined through its many archives."* - exhibition label used in *The Exuberance Project*, and subsequently incorporated in *Rise and Fall of Apartheid* (2012-2015).

As a document of a real life occurrence, it is difficult to separate the image from the historical background that precedes it. The banner was placed in two exhibitions as a separate work, and removed from the visual reference to the photograph in which it is depicted. The banner was exhibited at the Exuberance Project at the Mandela Rhodes Gallery, suspended from the ceiling. As part of *The Rise and Fall*, exhibition the banner was shown nailed against a wall. The replication of part of this image is the image is viewed differently through the banner. It is replicated as an object and is no longer a part of an image. The extraction of this iconography from the image re-contextualised its reading, by not only removing elements of the photograph but also displaying a familiar image differently to how it would have previously been seen, thereby instigating a conversation around the way which archival material is read, used, displayed, engaged with . This image was of interest to CHR as it demonstrated the context in which the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive is located. By creating discourse with historical images and texts within the visual arts industry, CHR has aimed to create discursive exchanges, in this case by extrapolating the text from the banner and recreating it in different contexts as the same text has also been used in other protests around the world. After the exhibition of the banner at the Exuberance Symposium (2012) it then travelled and was included as vinyl text in part of an exhibition Gabi Ngcobo curated in New York's New Museum called *After-After Tears* (2013), and parts of the archive were used in this exhibition to. Most recently, the banner made another appearance in a project called *The CHR Museum*, exhibited at the *Nothing Gets Organised* (NGO) space[18], aimed at exhibiting past projects

[18] NGO – NOTHING GETS ORGANISED exists as a forlorn and contemplative_____, a ____ and _____ twirl in a moment of bewilderment. The platform functions as a space to reflect on shifting and uneasy entanglements. NGO is interested in un/conventional processes of self-organising – those that do not imply structure, tangibility, context or

by *CHR* in an unconventional space, however, proposing that any space could be considered a museum if it adhered to certain regulations.

> "CHR museum' presents a haphazard story of the Center of Historical Reenactments – CHR (founded 2010. Died 2012. Haunted 2014. Exorcised 2017. Museumified). CHR museum suggests that placing things/ memories within the framework of museum is akin to abandoning the scene(s) of history. It is a journey to nothingness." [19]

The quotation above contextualising the exhibition presents the life cycle of CHR, as repository of its own memories to some degree. The banner is rehung in this iteration, but changes again in its function, as it is no longer an artwork, but somehow becomes the record of its own participation in other exhibitions. [20]

After *Fr(agile),* a number of projects were undertaken that made use of certain elements of the Kumalo archive. *What happened 2081?* hypothesized a context where men became extinct in the year 2081, and women had the sole mandate on how the world would be run. The participants in this particular project were invited to propose what this world would look like according to their own sensibilities, and also in relation to their own practices as some as artists, writers, musicians amongst others. As CHR, we decided that we would continue on the narrative from The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive and focus on Nelson Mandela as a fictional character by presenting that Mandela would have regressed in age at this point; in 2081 he would have returned to the age of twenty-five. We proposed that this gentleman, called Nelson Mandela, walked into the CHR premises, at that point situated in August House, Doornfontein, to claim that he was the great South African freedom fighter Nelson Mandela, who had come back to reclaim his stake, as no one knew what had happened to him since his disappearance in 2012. Gabi Ngcobo and I partook in

form. It is a space for (NON)SENSE where (NON)SENSE can profoundly gesticulate towards, dislodge, embrace, disavow, or exist as nothingness! Research is ongoing, malleable and open ended. NGO pursues that, which becomes publicly visible, as always already processes in motion – to which we confer context, name and identity. What happens when production remains unmediated? What do unmediated spaces (as political and resistant to organisation) hold out for the quest for what might be considered as ___or _____? How does art _____ from spaces so mediated, the possibility of speaking for itself? The founding members of NGO are Dineo Seshee Bopape, Gabi Ngcobo and Sinethemba Twalo. http://www.contemporaryand.com/exhibition/ngo-nothing-gets-organised/ (Date of access: 7 March 2017)

[19] See https://www.facebook.com/events/1106309466164413/ (Date of access: 7 February 2017)
[20] See https://www.facebook.com/events/1106309466164413/ (Date of access: 7 February 2017)

a silent performance piece, which looked to have audio, as we were wearing microphone headsets, however which was performed with the help of a printed text that was displayed on a projector screen. On the text we wrote the exchange between Gabi and myself in a conversation about Nelson Mandela, his legacy and his appearance in the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive. We looked up Nelson Mandela to find many of his images in the archive, started to piece together where he would have existed, and also the context in which he would have existed. The archive was used as the visual aid to represent Nelson Mandela's life, as Kumalo had photographed Mandela prolifically during his lifetime. The performance piece, which did include a man, was a response to the brief, as, while according to it no men could exist in 2081, we proposed the fictional presence of Mandela under these conditions.

CHR interacted with the archive more frequently making interesting connections with the collection in relation to the discourses of contemporary arts.
Craig writes that in her view, "all archives originate in the conscious act of memorializing [sic] some thing by the giving, receiving, and keeping of documentary records" (1990; 279). The construction of a shared or public memory is one that is heavily rested on the content of archives. Where an archive substantiates major historical or political events, especially if they are celebrations of abolished oppressive or violent systems, the archive content stands to validate the feelings and memories of the public who experienced these events. These commemorations can be done in a multitude of ways, as in this particular image, as a part of the social sphere in demonstrations, performances, commemorations and so forth. The ways that artists have used archives broadly is incredibly interesting, as the focus is not the materials themselves, but instead on being discursive in unconventional ways. Artists have also engaged with archival processes, often reimaging the way we collect materials, and archival materials are chosen for display.

2.4 Fr(agile) Residency

CHR is also an artist-run collective, which proposes a difference in the interaction with historical content, in the contemporary arts. The process was not governed by any specific rules or expected outcomes but rather encouraged free interaction with the archive.

Projects by CHR challenging perspective, as we considered Kumalo's presence to be an activation and extension of the archive. Through engagement with the photographer, as well as the vast amount of work that had not yet been sorted through, the photographer's personal methodology and process adds to the engagement with the archive. The archive is in part still 'active' or embedded in the world, as it exists in a number of places outside of the collection in which it is implicated. Detailed information is distributed so far beyond the original image, that the information can be found in projects, texts, galleries and museums. The reproducibility of photography creates a tension in the relationship between the original record or image and its copy, or in the case of Kumalo, the multiple copies that we are aware exist, as well as those which may have been reproduced by Kumalo without any record. The copy in this discussion may extend the reach of the photograph, as the copy of the negative, and further beyond the image's origin. The ability to create copies of the original works and narratives means that the archive can exist without ever referencing the documents that exist in it. The relationship between the original image and its copy is most interesting, as there is no real way to track what has been copied, or to determine which is a true copy, and which isn't. In the case of Kumalo, multiple copies exist, through his own sales from the museum, and with recent technological advances, images are reproduced and distributed with much greater ease than before.

The quotation by Hitto Steyerl below further emphasises the impact of reproduction and the proposed functionality of archives, which are seldom met.

> Usually, an archive, like a film museum, is supposed to create "faithful" reproductions of its material: that is, reproductions that are as identical as possible. Keeping the control over reproduction is the basis of the power condensed within archives.[21]

Fr(agile) explored the effect of reproduction on archiving, attempting to track in part the origin of some of the images, often supplementing the photographer's pictures with narratives. During the three-day long period, the residency was moderated by Rael Salley.

[21] See http://eipcp.net/transversal/0608/steyerl/en (Date of access: 23 July 2014)

The project also extended beyond the space of the museum, with a series of spin offs and insertions into projects and exhibitions outside of the museum space. As the intention was never to organise, sort or arrange the contents of the archive or collection, these projects rather made use of materials that prompted specific questions and responses.

CHR observed the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive by simply looking and subsequently sorting materials into categories that often pertain to our personal interest. The archive was a vast collection of Kumalo's entire lifetime of work, and included personal artefacts, alongside his photographic collection. Kumalo includes pictures of himself, his family, as well as personal narratives that accompanied each photograph. The residency involved the photographer beyond his role as the author, and was made richer by his ability to speak memory into the archive, as he was physically present throughout the time CHR was there. Alf Kumalo was able to give insight to the team, but also interact with the archive reflectively, narrating stories that may otherwise remain untold. He often spoke fondly of his interactions with certain subjects especially those he admired like Mohammed Ali and Nelson Mandela. Our ability to enquire about the images, question who the people were in the photographs, and receive a response from the person who experienced it, gave a different experience, as the residency was run through the photographer who is now no longer there.

The residency involved the sorting of images, materials, equipment and other content that were kept at the museum, into cardboard boxes that were thematically labelled and displayed in a manner that allowed visitors to also continue with the process of "sorting" during the open event. The residency did not, however, aim to create a catalogued archive, but instead, proposed what we could consider to be a social sculpture, from elements derived from the archive. The physical archive is thus transcended, from a place of material stagnation, where it is only present to be viewed, as the role as spectator is transformed. The social sculpture introduced interpretations, conversations and memories of the audience members as a part of the residency. An event was held on the last day, where an external audience was invited to speak to their findings in the archive, in a similar fashion to what had been done by the CHR Members prior. The audience was given free reign to engage with the archive, thus activating it, by layering its interpretation

with a variety of responses, and creating an experience which did not dictate a specific interaction, instead allowed the audience to construct their exchange with the archive as an art intervention. Existing narratives and questions largely prompted by the political narrative set a precedent of interpretation of the archive by both CHR and the invited audience.

CHR collaborated with Alf Kumalo, and his staff member, Kwame Pooe, in creating and enacting a residency that would also act as a model for relating to the archive within contemporary artistic practices. The process of looking was not governed by any specific instructions but merely allowed for sporadic intervention, while sorting materials, grouping photographs and looking in the archive for other materials like notes and labels for his negatives. The residency most importantly relied on subjective experience and perspectives of the CHR members, which revealed interests and questions derived from personal memory. The subjectively of the experience meant that we were all drawn to different element of the collection. As the youngest participant of the residency there were portraits of people, which came into discussion who I did not know. Similarly, as a young scholar of documentary photography, I had been taught about Alf Kumalo long before I had met him or visited his museum.

2.5 How artists use archives

Nontobeko Ntombela's MAFA dissertation, entitled *A Fragile Archive: Refiguring | Rethinking Reimagining | Re-presenting Gladys Mgudlandlu* (2013), provides analysis of the archive of artist Gladys Mgudlandlu. Ntombela considers the impact of external ideologies and systems on particularly historical archives belonging to black artists. Like the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive, Ntombela begins her analysis by locating the reader in a particular societal context, in order to highlight the disparity and disregard for black artists by racialised cultural institutions. Mgudlandlu was hailed as the 'first' black female artist in the 1960s in South Africa (Ntombela, 2013: 7). While contested, the absence of acknowledgement of the authors of such collections, is pivotal in the discussion of contemporary relevance and visibility, moreover, the establishment of supporting documentation of historical archives and collections, especially those rendered by black

individuals. Ntombela looks at the construction of visibility through visual arts patronage, specifically, how certain artists were given support through white patrons who in turn created visibility for them leading into the future (Ntombela, 2013: 8).

Kemang Wa Lehulere's extended body of work poignantly references the same ideas pertaining to history, autonomy and the afterlife of authors of historical archives. Wa Lehulere's often melancholic and nuanced use of materials, photographs, drawings and videos seem to revive remnants of the past by contemporary intervention through his engagement with them. *To whom it may concern,* a solo exhibition by Wa Lehulere at Stevenson Gallery in Cape Town in 2015, engages with the memory of apartheid era journalist Ndazana Nathaniel (Nat) Nakasa, after his relocation to the US, followed by his suicide, after not finding refuge in black America.[22] Nakasa was exceptional in his writing of both English and vernacular languages. He was even awarded a fellowship at Harvard University, but was not able to attend, due to visa restrictions.[23] This came as a shock to him, as he did not consider any of his material threatening or opposing to the apartheid system in any particular way. This left him only one option, namely to except a so-called 'exit permit', which meant that he would never be allowed back into South Africa. Wa Lehulere alluded to this process of final voyage in his exhibition, including a number of symbolic physical objects and mementos that were said to have been carried by Nakasa. Alongside these mementos, Wa Lehulere places private memorabilia and objects, which Nancy Dantas describes in her review of the exhibition as "tokens of sophistication".

In a subsequent exhibition, entitled *History will break your heart,* Wa Lehulere continues his 'protest against forgetting' by conceptualising staged conversations with other forgotten historical figures.[24] Here, Wa Lehulere uses the concept of interpretation and representation to create collaborative interactions that deepen the tension between contemporary history and the narratives that exist around this history. Wa Lehulere's work considers how individual memory is constructed when it is looked at through established social history. The extract below from an exhibition review by Alice Inggs, elaborates the

[22] See http://www.art-agenda.com/reviews/kemang-wa-lehuleres-to-whom-it-may-concern/ (Date of access: 16 August 2016)
[23] See http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/ndazana-nathaniel-nakasa (Date of access: 16 August 2016)
[24] See http://www.asymptotejournal.com/visual/kemang-wa-lehulere-history-will-break-your-heart/ (Date of access: 15 August 2016)

significant intervention of Wa Lehulere's work, in gently questioning and shifting social history:

> The significance of threading the life stories and works of deceased artists such as Mgudlandlu, Mancoba, Dhlomo, and Nakasa through his exhibitions is twofold: to ask how sanctioned history has affected the individual, especially those who have been marginalised; and to demonstrate a continuum between past and present[25].

Wa Lehulere explores the idea that the past and present may exist fluidly and even continuously into each other. This idea of continuum will further be discussed in a later chapter of this dissertation. The ability for history to transcend not only the spaces in which it exists, but also that the relevance of time, concomitantly merges the past with the present. In her review of the exhibition Inggs suggests that Wa Lehulere combines micro-histories and presents narratives, which he believes to enrich and layer the histories that were established through institutionalised systems. In this exhibition Wa Lehulere also invites his aunt to recreate drawings on a chalkboard of Mgudlandlu's paintings, from her memory. She had visited the artist's house in her childhood, and Wa Lehulere places her drawings in conversation with the actual artworks by Mgudlandlu, and in doing so, creating ancillary connections and narratives around memory and history.

According to Achille Mbembe:

> The term 'archives' first refers to a building, a symbol of a public institution, which is one of the organs of a constituted state. However, 'archives' is also understood as a collection of documents – normally written documents – kept in this building. There cannot therefore be a definition of 'archives' that does not encompass both the building itself and the documents stored there (Mbembe 2002: 19).

Historical archives, especially those containing work by black artists, were treated differently to those by authors of other ethnicities. This meant collections such as these were badly handled, often passed along until there was no knowledge of their physical

[25] See http://www.asymptotejournal.com/visual/kemang-wa-lehulere-history-will-break-your-heart/ (Date of access: 15 August 2016)

status, which inevitably affected how these collections remained active once their authors have passed on. Ntombela's MAFA dissertation considers the ill-treatment of black artists, their collections and the disparity in the visibility of certain collections impacts what has been written about them, as well as where they are inevitably housed (Ntombela, 2013; 7). The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive raises similar questions of lack of visibility. However, his archive and career trajectory were given greater visibility, despite his colour, and socio-political position. Yet, much of his collection exists outside of the archive, an archive that, at this point, is left to us to imagine. Gladys Mgudlandlu's collection was eventually housed at the Johannesburg Art Gallery through the intervention of art historian Elza Miles. Unlike Mgudlandlu's collection, the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive existed in a space conceptualised and constructed by the artist, which operated differently under the direction of Kumalo; as he was able to determine the way in which the archive functioned and how it was viewed. His singular authorship and curatorship provided a personalised perspective of his work as dictated by Alf Kumalo himself. His selection and presentation of his work was personally rendered. While fragments of his collection appear in publication, artists interventions and museum collections, the actual archive can only be spoken for as imagined, because there is no physical access to it. The archive remains intangible, but is made present, to some degree, by how it is remembered.

Memory may also be seen as a method of reproduction, in the sense that the way in which individual memory and experience can create elaborate established narratives. It is the effect of individual memory which allows for multiple experiences of one event. Laura Millar (2004) provides a layered perspective regarding the way in which humans relate to the individual as well as collective memory. Millar argues for memory to be considered to have the same importance as archival materials (Millar, 2004: 113). Memory can be a useful device to fully engage with a specific period in history and time. Our process of remembering is, to a certain degree, arranged and sorted in a similar fashion to the way in which we organise and catalogue physical documentation. The personal memory of historical experiences is often separated from documents located in the same time and space as the content we use to validate it. Millar explains, "the process of remembering, then, relies on the discrete acts of creation, storage, and retrieval" (Millar, 2004: 113).

The discussion of memory and archiving presents a number of complex thinking points

regarding how in fact we relate to historical archives. While artist-led interventions may be argued as a logical and plausible method, it is imperative to lead the discussion of memory from the starting point of location. It is also important to determine the ideological residue of these conceptual objects in the context in which they were created, and in which they currently exist. While the archive is imagined, the interpretation of the collection may be predetermined, given the context in which it was created. The interpretation of art, objects and ephemera from an archive is reliant primarily on its ability to translate imagery or text in order to make sense. The method used in translation, especially the space between two languages, can present discursive problems between the ways in which documents are rendered, and how they evolve. Hlonipha Mokoena, in her critically acclaimed book *Magema Fuze* (2011), describes the tension in a research paper entitled *The Afterlife of Words: Magema Fuze, Bilingual Print Journalism and the Making of a Self-Archive* (2015).

Mokoena speaks to the disconnect experienced by Fuze, a Zulu writer in the 1980s, who worked initially for Christian publications in both Zulu and English (Mokoena, 2015; 2). Fuze was taught how to read and write through the tutelage of Christian missionaries in KwaZulu-Natal during colonisation. Mission communities were setup by missionaries to establish Christianity amongst black converts, training them in literacy. Here reference has been made to the predominantly Western and modern interpretations of the archive, the focus on African relationships with history, memory and location also create a personalised interpretation of the role of historical archives in contemporary South Africa.

Mokoena's analysis of *Magema Fuze* considers not just the effect of translation on documents written in vernacular languages, but also considers their afterlife. What happens to these texts or documents once they have been translated or transcribed, moreover, how close are these new documents to the original? In the same way that memory can dilute an event, does the transcribing or translation of historical documents, after Benjamin, not in turn affect the faithfulness of what is essentially a copy?

The relevance and/or necessity of archival material is predetermined by our perceived value placed in a document or object. The value proposition we make is based on how

important we perceive a particular history to be, enough to conserve, document and it even translate it. All these actions inherently create an accessibility, be the object visual, aural or textual, in order to gain insight from it. Mokoena's reflection on her book, deals quite poignantly with the topic of translation, and how the mere action of trying to make documents accessible can in turn corrupt them, and push insight into them beyond reach (Mokoena, 2015; 4). The complexities of interpretation are the tipping point on which many historical archives exist; the resting place between where the documents are informative, and where they may stand only to validate a particular narrative. It is the precipice on which translation exists, as many materials lose their authenticity through the need to translate and transcribe them into documents that can be more widely understood. The context is also fundamental to consider, who had access to materials or education and how they came to acquire these skills. Fuze is a character from a time when black South Africans were not being taught how to read and write, unless through some sort of intervention, in his case, by Christian missionaries. Fuze was the first member of his family to be enrolled into school in a Christian school system, baptised, and converted to Christianity (Mokoena 2015: 3). He was taught to read and write and appointed as a printer for the Bishop of Natal, which gave him access to skills and resources rare amongst black South Africans at that time. He was taught how to read and write English as well as Zulu, where the combination was incredibly rare, but placed him in an opportune position to understand the political scope of his context. At the height of colonisation, Fuze was not only enabled by this to fully understand his role as a black man but also inevitably contribute dialogue in both his vernacular language and English, for later usage and consideration. The individuals who lived in Christian missions like Fuze, and his family, were commonly known as "Amakholwa", otherwise translated as "believers" as they had been converted to Christianity (Mokoena, 2015: 4). Bilingual black individuals in missions were appointed as translators between the English and vernacular speakers, working in the liminal space between the coloniser and the colonised. This was an incredibly fragile space between the two, where the historical archive often found its place:

> ...operating in the no man's land between the powerful and the dispossessed; between the respectable and the disreputable. They lived – and died – at the broken boundaries between nominally distinct worlds

> and came into their own as mediators between chiefly and other forms of authority, brokers between written and oral forms of knowledge, interpreters of modernism in a world of traditionalism, translators of the religious in secular terms and redeemers of the past for the present (Mokoena, 2015: 4).

Beyond the example of Fuze, a number of other writers had also found themselves in this unique position; writing texts for vernacular and English publications. This made the colonisers feel some sense of achievement, as they have not only introduced the native to the religion and language, but they had begun adapting text into an expression of their own sensibilities and folktales. The writings of these texts inadvertently contributed to some conservation of history, and furthermore, to memory. While the texts were interpreted as expressions of blackness and vernacular language, the writers during this time had come to realise that they were contributing to the wider collection of history and of the past through written literature. Mokoena highlights, more interestingly, that memory transcends its role as merely a device by means of which to recount the past in this particular example. Memory was fundamentally a signifier of the development of intellect amongst African people. The action of conservation became significantly more conscious amongst not only the black authors of these kinds of publications, but also their readers (Mokoena, 2015; 5). An archival process seems to take place here without any particular theoretical intention. Mokoena forwards that memory and literature are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Literature becomes a medium in which memory was conserved and is a reflection of memory, where the two are in fact intertwined. While this example is specific to Magema Fuze and the literature arising from colonial circumstances in KwaZulu-Natal, the theoretical framework around the collecting of archival materials and the construction of memory in relation to archives, only amplifies the relationship between material and memory (Mokoena, 2015: 6). The relationship between the media used to document memory, the construction and preservation of memory, subsequently intersect. Memory is what was being memorialised, and literature or photography are the devices by means of which the memory is captured. The document is merely a reflection of the memory, and the memory is a reflection of the document, which in this case is in the newspaper which Fuze had written in. Written documentation was used within

struggle periods as communication between and about marginalised groups regarding their struggle with the ruling class. La Hausse noted writer John Dube, who was a contemporary of Fuze's, constant reconfiguring of himself through his writing stating this process as a means, "to express his own sense of history as the discourse of identity" (Mokoena 2015; 6). The quotation quite accurately engages the tension of content that exists in archives and historical collections. While many archives exist during the same period at the same time they seem to seldom intersect because they were created in separate contexts from each other. Especially during oppressive movements like colonisation and apartheid as exchanging materials would have proved difficult if not impossible. It is most imperative to acknowledge the importance of identity construction to the ways in which archives are created, and furthermore, the decision of what is chosen by a given author to memorialise, and what is omitted. Moreover, the way in which the selection process is executed, and how this predetermines our contemporary interaction with archival documentation. History acts as an important vessel for the construction of identity which is heavily rooted on memory and with how individual memories affect the construction of self. Nora highlights the absence of time and space as a problematic component to how historical archives are interacted with. Whilst collections reflect a particular moment in history, it is also fundamentally important to isolate social events for consideration. The perspectives and experiences of the authors and subjects who created or appear in historical collections provide ancillary standpoints relating to the context included and to narratives that appear in these collections. Mbembe elaborates the evaluation of African intellectuals, stating that African individuals may not have been expected to conceptualise or create collections, narratives, literature or archives that were this complex. The assumption that African individuals were not capable of creating archives, highlights the simplification in their ability to render African forms and archives. While contemporary collections like the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive have been misrecognised, many of his African contemporaries suffered the same autonomy and presupposition through the simplification of African sensibilities (Mbembe 2002: 3).

3. **Speaking Memories**

3.1 Individual and Social Memory

As the Kumalo archive is taken as conceptual throughout this text, much of the theory here centres on the introduction of alternative methods of engagement with archives, 'the archive as memory'. I have considered materials and contents taken from the archive during *Fr(agile)*, in the hopes that I would inevitably gain access to the archive itself. During the process, I have re-evaluated my direction when analysing the archive. I have found value in the role of memory, and in the deliberation of whether memory or memories can be used as archival materials. The extract below by Alan Babbeley speaks to my interest in memory as archival material:

> the secret of a good memory, as of a good library, is that of organization [sic]; good learning typically goes with the systematic encoding of incoming material, integrating and relating it to what is already known (Baddeley 1989, 55).

In the last line of this extract Baddeley highlights the significance of memory, as its ability to add content to established narratives. The concept proposed by this dissertation of 'Archive as memory' explores the impact of memory on archives. The aim was to explore the idea of remembering through intangible materials and through a conceptual archive. This research has aimed to propose that memory is sufficient as archival documentation, by creating supporting theoretical content to support the hypothesis. The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive is has an ample amount of physical documents but remains absent in the memories of the photographer, who substantiates the narrative of every image. The archive was mostly conceived during apartheid, yet remains relevant in contemporary South African narratives, through social re-collective memory. The absence of the physical archive has created a purposeful engagement with the idea of absence, by evolving the definition of archival material. This dissertation is, in fact, speaking to the inaccessibility of the archive, but engages the importance of the space between the archive and what is remembered about it. This auditory text is experienced in the same vain of that of the process of this project as it is primarily grounded on the absence of the

Kumalo's memories and the consideration of whether this absence is paramount in the reading of this archive. While this may be true, what is more intriguing about memory, is that it is fundamentally subjective. Memory is based on our individual perspectives, and often, on our feelings towards a given situation; where a memory can alter the way in which something took place, or indeed what took place, if we allow memory to serve as proof.

Memory, while subjective, may dictate a specific reading of a given material, based on one's subjective position towards it. This means primarily that the archive is considered from the perspective of individual memory, as the mega-narrative has predetermined our emotional, physical and intellectual experience. The images depicting street scenes from Soweto and townships in South Africa, Caspers driving in the streets over bodies, images of women being apprehended by police in the streets, some jumping over walls through garden trying to out run authorities, marches with tear gas explosions and funerals related significant historical episodes, are interpreted from the perspective of history, and not from the perspective of the photographer. This predetermines how the archive is interpreted, when it is looked at as a body of work, and not as an extension of a mega narrative. Memory is an interesting channel for deliberation, as it engages subjectivity but allows for multiple accounts of a given moment. The insertion of memory into the practice of archiving has become most relevant through our need to conserve and document collections that relate specifically to our contexts, like The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive.

Nala Xaba (2015) addresses the impact of adopted memory on those who have not directly experienced it. Her writing concerns the impact of memory on 'born frees', viz. children born after 1994, in post-apartheid South Africa. Post-memory is used as the chosen terminology that describes the phenomenon of a transferred trauma; their children adopt the experience that is fundamentally based on the memory of those who experienced it. This borrowed experience, while adopted to some degree, remains puissant in the reconciliation of oppression, especially when it is experienced by a large and specific group of people.

> South Africa's born-free generation is inevitably and profoundly implicated in the structure of postmemory, which describes our relationship to the

> collective trauma of our parents and how it is transmitted to us through the familial and national archive (Xaba, 2015: 7).

The generations of individuals whose parents or elders experienced apartheid are inevitably positioned to adopt the feelings attached the trauma of the oppressive system, even without witnessing the actual events taking place, the memories, stories, photographs, documents imminently imprint fear or guilt and even hatred that often do not correlate with their subjective and post-apartheid narratives (Xaba 2015: 11). The ability to decipher subjective narratives from the mega-narratives is made increasingly difficult because the information is so closely related to the construction of identity and position in society. The construction of memory and the action of remembering remains fragile, but also pertinent to how the wider narrative is constructed, especially document based evidence is viewed as truth. Because memory is fundamentally idiosyncratic the individual memories and experiences have essentially travelled through the interpretations of countless people, whereby the narrative may have shifted, mutated and completely changed from its original state. Memory, especially that located in a post-apartheid setting, is subject to a multitude of interpretations, and thus vulnerable to criticism, because there is no longer original insight. Yet, even an original insight stands to be criticised by a system that recognises only documentative material as evidential, due to the fact that reflects only the interpretation of a mere individual. The ability to recall happenings is however based on individual position in society. We however experience a multitude of events daily that are considered and experienced from our perspective. The individual perspective however is ideologically subjective, based on personal perspectives. And while the reliability of memory is an important and complicated concern, the absence of memory leaves history in the position to be validated through a selection of documents; which may only account for certain events, or account for the events from a only particular perspective (Xaba 2015: 11).

A study conducted by Heaps and Nash (2001) discusses the construction of false memory and the way in which collective memory can become believable through rehearsal and storytelling, in a journal entitled *Comparing Recollective Experience in True and False Autobiographical Memories* (Heaps and Nash, 2001: 920). As reiterated by Xaba previously, the construction of post-memory has very little to do with our ability to

remember, and more to do with the rehearsal of the narratives that are passed down generationally. In this experiment a set of parents were placed in a separate room to that of their child and asked to choose an early memory that involved all three of them. The memory was shared with the psychologists in detail by the parents, and presented to the child, who was asked to recount their memory of the same incident. The memories of the child often conflicted with that of their parents. It was found that truer memories were constructed when they were autobiographical, and not re-collective. The experience concluded that true memories contained more information, whereas false memories and re-collective memories reflected the consequences of the events. The influence of storytelling and rehearsing of memories, especially in re-collective circumstances, can impact plausibility in our construction of true memories (Heaps and Nash 2001: 920).

Short-term memory is merely a vessel by means of which to absorb surrogate memories, and to become ourselves an archive for where this evidence is stored whether it is true or false. Nash and Heaps' experiment found that collective repetition could create false memories, especially where memory is used to elaborate re-collective experiences, making them appear to be true. Does plausibility of memory render memory invalid or inadmissible? Is the possibility of some aspect of falsehood enough to disqualify memory in the consideration of archival material? The concept of re-collective experience however proposes that the validity of memory is slightly more complex than our ability to recount events exactly as they have happened. Memory, and moreover, the action of remembering, is not in the regurgitation of rehearsed information, but rather, that our adoption of memory is based on the simulation of the experience, or of retrieving certain happenings in our history. Where collective memory is concerned, the *remembered experiences,* a coinage of Gardiner and Java (1993), the appropriation of memory can be linked to the connection to or awareness of historical happenings. The connection to certain episodic events may generate the construction of narratives that are either unclear, or indeed non-existent. Yet the images and documents which exist as evidence, prompt often emotional responses, linked to what we recall in history, even if our experience of any given moment is experienced through the memory of a wider collective, or another person. The construction of autobiographical memory, that is, very closely related to the construction of identity, may appear more vivid, and create truer memories (Heaps and Nash, 2001;

920). Memories are constructed based on a willingness to remember, and more importantly, through rehearsal or storytelling. We remember the parts of our lives that most represent who we are, and what we value. We essentially create individualised archives of our own life experience through memory. These memories are subjectively the truest because they reflect our own personal experiences and perspectives. When these memories are shared, however, they may contribute to a larger narrative.

When a collection of memories like these, that depict oppression and violence, are proposed as documents, their validity is often scrutinised. Laura Millar (2004) proposes a shift, specifically in archival practice in how we relate to, prioritise and organise memory. A section of the abstract poignantly frames the real need amongst archivists to re-contextualise memory in relation to archives. Millar layers the opinions of a group of Western archivists relating the importance and function of memory and while this particular group of archivists is located in a Western context, it is interesting to consider the evaluation of the function of memory in relation to the context in which the archive is situated. This dissertation does not centre its focus on the different methods of archiving or does it assume that only Western theorists have evaluated memory in archive. Instead it focuses the argument on how memory can provide some richer interactions with historical archives through the considersation of memory. [26]

[26] "Despite their appeal, however, neither the metaphor of archives as memory nor the relationship between the nature of memory and the nature of archives has been probed in depth. As archivists such as Craig, Brien Brothman, Terry Cook, Margaret Hedstrom, and Eric Ketelaar have noted, we tend to make assumptions about the meaning of the word "memory," using the term strategically but perhaps not critically in the quest for increased understanding of, and support for, the archival endeavour. Proposing that archivists develop a "memory-based approach to record-keeping," Brothman has called for a "rigorous clarification of a concept of memory" and a better understanding of its relationship to history and archives. Hedstrom has suggested that archivists need to achieve "not only a more refined sense of what memory means in different contexts, but also a sensitivity to the differences between individual and social memory." In a quest for that better understanding, this essay considers the concepts of individual and collective memory and their relationship with archives. Can the way we create, store, and retrieve memories be compared with the way we capture, preserve, and make available records and archives? Are archives, in fact, our memory?" (Millar 2004: 106)

Millar proposes that we treat memory is in a similar fashion to the way in which we treat archival materials, by drawing similarities in the ways in which we retrieve memories and the way in which we conserve archival documents. The testament of Kumalo's memories would have possibly created a depth in understanding the documents which appear in his archive. Aside from the more popular photographs are writings amongst other objects which remain without elaboration because Alf Kumalo is no longer alive. The memory of the author and his process of remembering, even in the small narrations by Kumalo which took place during *Fr(agile),* are already significant in deepening the interaction with the archive. The process of remembering and storing memories draws similarities in how archives are consolidated and essentially displayed. In absence of documentation, memories stand to validate the past just as archival materials would. The process is essentially similar to that of extracting archival records to validate particular happenings. Memory can be a useful device to fully engage with a specific period in history and time. The conservation of the records along with, record provenance are vitally important, as historical archives will inevitably exist outside of when they were created. Archives are specifically catalogued and monitored in order to retain order and validity (Millar 2004: 107). While memory remains subjective, individual memories, whether they are true or false, can still create rich narratives and interpretations of history. How we remember, though, is sometimes also confined to a particular order and concession. We remember with a similar tenacity to which we organise archives, by creating cognitive records of the things that happen around us.

In contemporary settings, our methods of remembering have altered far beyond our awareness; technological advances create records so readily it is often impossible to track their origin, and even to know what we are aware of and what we aren't. Technology has altered our methods of recording, as there are multiple platforms that may simultaneously record a single moment, but these platforms may then also be recording information without our knowledge. Millar furthers this idea by saying that memory can in turn be "created" anew in theory, as it is duplicated and re-pasted at the leisure of whomever is using the memory. We thus lose track of the origin of these memories, but fundamentally, we lose track of the time in which they took place, as this becomes lost through sporadic reproduction. Archives are thus not located in any one specific place, and essentially no

longer located in a particular time. The elements of archival practice that have constituted the validity of archives through the process of collection, conservation and storage, are no longer applicable, as this process is now undertaken through an unmanageable system. The distinction between past and present is, similarly, more of an metaphysical concept, as past documents and memory may be re-added into contemporary narratives through the ease of the retrieval process. There is in this sense no real time or place, and archives have become inherently affected by this because the information can be copied and reproduced, time and time again, creating multiple copies of the same thing. The view that the archive is the only place where the narrative can exist is further debunked, as the technological environment can render the physical archive completely redundant.

3.2 Memories into the Archive

In the same way that technology has created a sudden wealth of reproductive mechanisms and reproduction, memory may in turn serve in itself as a method of reproduction. Individual memory and experience can create alternative narratives, which can enrich the relationship between collectable materials and implication of memory on archives.

Barbara Craig (2002) develops our understanding of the impact of our memory on archives, stating that essentially archives are collections of our memories, noting that when we collect materials for archiving, we are essentially collecting the documents that we have created in order to remember a particular moment or a particular occurrence. Our ability to remember is invariably the basis on which archives are constructed. Where collective memory is considered, the memory of those who commemorate historical events is quintessential to creating resonance around the documentation that has been used to validate the veracity of the event. While memory has been questioned due to its subjectivity, it is however a quintessential part of our process of reminiscing about the past. As much as physical documentation, recordings, photographic records and other physical documents have validated history, recollections of memory have provided richer engagements with these narratives, and are concomitantly viable as archival materials. Archives are conceived through our need to conserve memory, and while the act of conservation may infer validity, Craig argues that memory is the very thing that is being

fundamentally reproduced, while documents are merely a permanent copy of what we do not want to forget (Craig, 2002; 279). Craig motivates, "all archives originate in the conscious act of memorializing [sic] something by the giving, receiving, and keeping of documentary records" (Craig 2002: 279). And yet even the archiving of materials creates resonance and the process invariably generates its own kind of memory. *Fr(agile)*, which worked with materials is not without memory based narrative as the residency created its own memory, memory on which this dissertation is based.

Memory is thus more transparent in commemorations of collections that include large groups of people who have been affected by a particular historical event. The memory of that particular group of individuals is subsequently the basis on which a particular collection of documents is recognised and interpreted. In historical occurrences like apartheid, the memory of a given event functions re-collectively as a shared experience. While archives and documentation of apartheid validate that it took place, it is because it was collectively experienced that the memory can be considered as truthful. The construction of a shared or public memory is one that is heavily rested on the content of archives. Shared memory exists in such a fragile state like that experienced in Kumalo's archive. One of Kumalo's most recognised images entitled *"Shoot to Kill"* (1976) also known as *"Casper and bodies"* depicts a military casper moving in the street toward two bodies on the ground. In this instance we assume that the casper is moving toward the bodies and aims to ride over them. The harshness of the visual is abstractly experienced by everyone who interacts with Kumalo's depictions of apartheid. His archive contained direct remnants of his own memory, most notably a note amongst many, written to himself behind a photograph which read "Passion, emotion, love after freedom!! Freedom from fear, freedom from thinking that I am better than my brother or sister. Freedom from being free. Freedom unconditionally!! Freedom to be the best I can be. To love whoever I want. Freedom to be an African without imposition".

Craig furthers her conversation by considering the way in which the content can in effect extend beyond the archive itself, as a part of the social sphere in demonstrations, performances, commemorations and so forth (Craig 2002: 279). As mentioned prior, this means the archive can exist beyond its ability to validate historical subjects, but exists

with contemporary narratives, and moreover in an actively shared memory. Yet Brien Brothman argues the latter, tracking the 'life cycle' of archives, in this particular example the business archive, to the end where the collection becomes obsolete.

Brothman (2001) adds a useful basis to the focus point of this text, underscoring the way in which we consider memory and archives separately to one another. Archives are only consulted with when we no longer remember what took place, where, if the need to remember does not arise, or the memory is sufficient, the archive is never revisited. The conceptual past is systematically more complex than the traditional archive. The archive, quite naturally, flows through two versions of the past, the practical past, in which it is active is used frequently for validation, and the historical past, where the archive becomes inactive and is essentially no longer of use (Brothman, 2001; 50). This cyclic narrative occurs as the records reach redundancy; within a business model where there is no emotional or societal background the archive will inevitably disappear or be discarded when the documents are no longer needed. Yet while historical archives have run the risk of this demise, archivists intervened to ensure that historical archives would not become inactive. The imperative difference in the role of the record markers and the archivist became a crucial distinction in the lifespan of certain archives (Brothman, 2001; 51). While the record maker or keeper is given the responsibility of ensuring relevant copies are kept under certain conditions, they are also responsible for disposing of documents that were no longer of use and completing the life cycle of the archive. Yet it is in the completion of the archive where the root of the argument is to be found, that is, in how an archival activity is determined, and in whether collections of information can or should ever be redundant. Can archives restart their cycles through contemporary intervention and through technological distribution, or do they ultimately remain a collection of obsolete, accumulated objects?

Brothman asks a series of fundamental questions pertaining to whether historical archives can in fact find relevance in a contemporary setting once they have been rendered inactive or underused, asking:

> How can one claim that something possessing contemporary value is also

> non-current? What does "continuing" mean – continual or continuous? Do records periodically become young, active, and useful again, though perhaps not for their original business purpose? (Brothman, 2001; 54).

It is possible in understanding that the life cycle of an archive is not necessarily limited to a particular linearity, that the understanding of the archivist is firmly based on the possibility that archives do not have to only find significance in the period in which they are conceived. The life cycle of an archive is subsequently not limited to the sequence of events that it infers, but rather that the narratives that occur in these collections can in fact substantiate or contribute discursively to contemporary narrative purposes. The term *'record continuum'* used by Brothman to explain this process, elaborates the archive's ability to occur in multiple moments in time, through the past, present and imminently the future (Brothman, 2001; 52). This in turn may imply that the necessity to interpret archival collections in relation to specific timescales or historical periods is ideologically outdated. Historical collections are successively relative to the narratives that exist around them. Applying the notion of the *record continuum* to historical archives fundamentally means that their relevance can in turn be applied in multiple contexts especially those which are affected by time and chronology. It is in turn irrelevant when the records were created but rather the discussion is based on what the impact of the historical archive is when it is outlasts the time period of its conception.

3.3 Considering the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive as Memory

A majority of the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive's content is a reflection of a particular part of history and time. This collection, which was constructed solely by a single individual, was never rendered with the intention of making an archive. Kumalo's collection was, rather, a representation of what he had seen during apartheid, much like many documentary photographers, Kumalo accumulated a lifetime of images through his practice as a photojournalist. The archive, as it is now intangible, has not been categorised or put entirely into any particular chronology. At the time of his passing, Kumalo had dedicated his life to cataloguing his archive, as well as creating a working exhibition space in his museum. The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive exists in a fragile state, as while it has

not become inactive yet it is lingering within a liminal state of dormancy. It has not reached a space of redundancy but is inaccessible and can not be physically engaged with. The contents of this archive however are still relevant and portray the narrative of a collective memory. Yet it seems in the absence of access to or visibility of the materials themselves, this specific archive is in danger of existing to serve the grand narrative of apartheid, which has been documented in an array of media. The narrative is somehow more important than the origin of the materials that validate it.

The archive, as stated by Terry Cook, is intrinsically a place where collective memory is both saved and stored. The importance of the role of the archivist is based on the archive's ability to remind us about history, and most importantly our past (Cook 1997: 43). The importance of many historical archives is linked to the necessary of the ramifications of injustices and oppressive systems more broadly. The conservation of archives is made important through a societal need to maintain the constitutional rulings that have been put in place to abolish superincumbent political systems.

Ketelaar (2005) states that the distinction between individual and social memory is paramount in understanding the relevance of historical archives (Ketelaar, 2005: 2). By creating a distinction between these respective types of memory, it is feasible that social memories may be considered to be a culmination of societal narratives. Ketelaar amplifies the construction of social memory by stating that societal memory is cultivated by means of cultural tools. The cultural tools can be made of a number of different things that remind us of a context in the past. Ketelaar calls these devices 'cultural texts', which appear in many different forms, ranging from written or oral narratives, to monuments or physical objects, which evoke particular historical narratives. The relevance, as well as commemoration, protest and political acknowledgement, may aid in our construction of shared memory. The performative aspects of commemoration also adds value in the construction of valuable social memories. While archival material and documentation act as evidence of happenings, the activation of these documents is rendered through the acts of remembering. Historical archives are intrinsically connected to the past, and are duly re-activated through the commemorative performances that occur. The act of remembering is not enough to consolidate the past, and so memory, commemoration and historical

archives act in unison in order to preserve history. The fundamental necessity is for all of the 'cultural texts' to contribute and function alongside one another in order to preserve historical narratives. It is impossible for any of these components to act independently, as they are all reliant on each other for validity.

Ketelaar presents the *memory continuum,* which bridges off Brothman's term *record continuum,* relating to the continuous nature of records, stating that our memories cannot exist in isolation (Ketelaar, 2005: 4), and that while we experience memory individually, our memories will always serve a wider narrative. Our memories are, in theory, connected, allowing us to collectively experience the past. Maurice Halbwachs, a theorist on the subject of memory, wrote about what he called 'memory in group', which considered the effect of individual memories on that of memories experienced by the group narrative (Halbwachs, 1980: 2). Halbwachs concluded that memories could never be individual without considering the memories that exist around them. Individual memories are intrinsically collective, as they create a webbed arrangement of narratives that together construct the social or group memory. Individual memory is thus intrinsically constructed through collective memories. Individual memories can disappear, if supporting social narratives do not enhance them. It is the role of the collective or social memory to remind us of our own autobiographical memory, in order to ensure the construction of culture and identity is retained. The 'memory text' contributes to the process of validating or substantiating our own individual memories. The labyrinth of the 'memory texts' aids in elaborating our negotiation with family economy, culture and history. This collaboration makes it possible for us to explore our own ideologies, but also to create rich connections between our own sensibilities and the world around us. 'Memory texts' continuously enrich the process of remembering by layering richer content with our autobiographical narrative. Subsequently our autobiographical narratives are a part of collective documentation and historical archives. Collections of memories collected during apartheid have become public records of collective memories. The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive is a great example of this as while his archive like many others, remnants recorded and displayed outside of the archive, on line and in publication for instance, are experienced in relation to a number of individual memories. And even then our individual process of remembering is often based on our own individual ideological position. Individual

memories of apartheid will differ quite dramatically depending on an individual's social experience of the event. This process is mediated through different elements like ritual, commemorative ceremonies, monuments and archives, in order to present and preserve a cohesive social memory. The archives are thus constantly re-activated through memory, and through the action of remembering. The social memory, however, is subject to constant change, as it is intrinsically affected by society. Social memory remains in constant flux, and is dependent largely on which narratives we choose to re-activate and continue remembering, and which will inevitably become obsolete. By reiterating Nora, Redding and Lefrak's separate arguments, the process of choosing and prioritisation of certain narratives remains incredibly vulnerable as external variables inherently affect this process. The archivist, political structures and society can in turn even dictate the degree to which the narratives are considered, as well as affect or shift our emotional connection to certain narratives. Cook mentions that,

> Former National Archivist of Canada and ICA President Jean-Pierre Wallot has set the inspiring goal for archivists of "building a living memory for the history of our present" (Cook 1997: 43).

This quotation evokes a perspective of the archival collection as more than merely a collection of redundant objects. Nor is the archive a place of nostalgia as prompted by Pierre Nora. The archive is fundamentally a guide into the future; while it synchronically reminds us of our past, it creates a multitude of dialogue and discourse, through our relationship to it within the contemporary setting. The construction of identity and political position are often predetermined by the documents, which exist in historical archives. They are, as stated by Barbara Craig, collections of our memories, and are not collections of physical memorabilia. The physical documents are in themselves merely elaborations of memory-based narratives by those who have created them. These documents are themselves subjective, as they only serve to validate memories that are primarily subjective. The photograph is as fundamentally subjective as the camera is loaded, positioned, and composed by the individual in charge of it. The photographer is given the power to create a permanent record of what they remember a moment to be. The plausibility of the historical archives is based on a collection of documents that are

theoretically created in a subjective way. While subjectivity is paradigmatic in its consideration of validity, the impact of memory envelops a seemingly poignant and necessary role in relation to the historical archives.

In the quotation previously mentioned by Former National Archivist of Canada and ICA President Jean-Pierre Wallot (1991), the importance of preserving collective memory is paramount to the societal construction of culture and nationality. The importance of archives lies in their ability to keep the memories relevant and alive to maintain individual feeling of place and belonging. The continuous experience of these archives and of the history they prompt allow for the narratives to transcend time and continuity. And while the discourse of archives is often pre-judged in relation to plausibility, the job of the contemporary archivist is simpler, but now simultaneously laborious, as the question is different. If both documents and memories are plausible as archival material, then the questions are to be found in what we choose to remember, what we choose to forget, and which vital narratives have been discarded (Cook 1997: 43).

4. SPEAKING MEMORY INTO THE ARCHIVE

4.1 Memory as archival material

The contents taken from the archive during *Fr(agile)* as well as the interventions of artists who use archives more generally, have created an interesting value in the role of memory as well as the deliberation of whether memory can be considered as archival material.

The archive as experienced during *Fr(agile)* currently exists in the memory of those who partook in it the residency. The memories of CHR members in some part begin to speak to the archive through what is remembered and what we remember Alf Kumalo's archive to have been. This is particularly interesting as this archive consists of a large body of images and objects, which independently infer particular moments in history and specific time periods. However, these memories are of themselves fundamentally subjective. The process of recollecting these memories can change or even distort factual subjects and happenings. If images are remembered differently to what they look like for instance, does it change the manner in which they function, and what they stand to communicate? In many instances, this becomes the primary groundwork, as the ability to sort or archive is essentially based on what physical materials are available. When the materials are unavailable however, as with the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive, the process of collecting is invariably altered, and the display of the material would be adapted to still speak to the narratives presented around the archive.

The process of remembering may in fact find it's rooting most significantly in how we choose to remember, alongside the information that is chosen for preservation. The choice and decision-making, where preservation is concerned, may often be subjectively chosen, where for example in the instance of this text, it may solely be dictated by any specific intention as that of artists who use archives. Specific topics, periods or authors have been isolated by the writers, artists and curators discussed here, with a specific consideration to the reasons behind this manner of subjectivity. The authors that may have been used by the referenced writers not only resemble the same racial and social political description, practitioners have worked with collections that are in danger of becoming obsolete, but all

the subjects that have been referenced in this MAFA question whether art can re-activate archives through memory. This spoken text simultaneously processes the dilemma of historical archives by speaking uncatalogued memory into the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive. This process points solely and directly to an archive which at present remains unattainable. The inaccessibility of the archive, however, may constitute this practice; this experience of listening to spoken memory, moreover, of speaking memory into the archive. The dissertation is also deliberately produced through spoken word, as the intention of this project is to add ancillary narratives to the content that already exists. Although conventionally, the MAFA by dissertation requires the submission of a 25 000 word dissertation which accompanies a conceptually constructed practical body of work, this recording aims to qualify both components simultaneously. In this project, I propose that this recording is both the dissertation and practical body of work. What you are listening to is a rehearsed and performed reading of the research. Being delivered in spoken word qualifies the discussion around memory and archival material, and inevitably, of how artists can re-activate memory and historical archives through contemporary visual arts.

4.2 How CHR has used memory in arts practices

Nomusa Makhubu, in an article titled *Open Debate* (2016), references the manifesto of the Non-non-collective comprised of Donna Kukama and Kemang wa Lehulere, who are also as previously mentioned, CHR members, while discussing the white institutionalised power with in the visual arts industry. Please see manifesto below:

> We are non-lines and non-textual descriptions. We are non-everything. Art included! We make translations, gestures, proposals and rehearsals. We make music, dictionaries, write texts, produce maps, give directions, and situations that are 'non-art' (Makhubu, 2013; 416).

This manifesto is particularly interesting as it stems from Kukama's and Wa Lehulere's, lack of commitment to any description, be it of the process or outcome, however ensuring incredibly powerful discussions through their work. The Non-non-collective, much like

CHR, perpetuates narratives around historical subjects, collections and archives without creating anthropological or sociological analyses of the subject matter content. The insertions or gestures around the content of archives to which the collective refers and of which it makes use, especially those made by artists, are seldom informative as they specifically function to invoke ancillary narratives; yet are sometimes disruptive to existing material by further complicating history and as a result memory. CHR's mission statement proposes an unconventional space in which artist-led practices may reconfigure or represent history differently to the way in which it was established.

> …historical constructions play essential, almost central roles in the formation of the apparatus and what has been taken for granted… Therefore within the scope of emancipatory artistic productions, historical reenactments as an artistic framework can, and do play a significant role… artistic production helps us to deconstruct particular readings of history and how historical context informs artistic creation, both which become central questions…[27]

Makhubu exemplifies artists and practitioners to occasionally divorce themselves from the use of conventional modes of production and representation in order to develop interventions that are unsanctioned and unconventional (Makhubu, 2013; 417).[28]

At the end of 2012, CHR proposed its own death in an event, which was eloquently, titled '*We are absolutely ending this'*. The collective had run for two years at this point, and began to question whether their initial goals were still relevant, or whether in fact the unconventional mode had become expected, as predetermined by its viewers.[29] While CHR had placed primary focus on creating interventions at the intersection where history meets art, the underlying intention, that is, to contest established constructs, seemed to

[27] http://historicalreenactments.org/index3.html (Date of access: 12 April 2016)

[28] "The refused appropriation, better yet, the refusal of the assimilation of established institutionalised modes by collectives like CHR, The Non-non-collective and Gugulective, whose word rest on the premise of undocumented or unorthodox interventions which deliberately disrupt established narratives while suggesting alternative perspectives and interpretations." (Nomusa Makhubu, 2013)

[29] See http://historicalreenactments.org/endingthis.html (Date of access: 12 April 2016)

have been normalised, and had become less radical. The institutional suicide seemed more to formalise the fact that, unlike many visual arts institutions, CHR was understood by its members to be neither a place nor a project, but rather a set of questions and intentions[30].

After-after Tears (2013), a project which chronicles the collectives' death, seemed to respond to its own institutionalisation by staging the death of the collective. After years of sporadic intervention and readings that had begun as informal, that, which contested the ideology of the white cube, seemed to have become ordinary and anticipated. The specific use of the phrase *After-after Tears* references the commemorative event that occurs after a funeral to celebrate the bereaved. This particular event known in township parlance as *Wie sien ons?* (who is seeing us) poignantly explores the processes that are involved in commemoration especially those constructed within cultural or ritual methodologies. It also extends the definition of commemoration, and considers the impact of cultural constructs on the death of an institution or era, if is it considered within those ideologies. By staging its deliberate death, CHR inadvertently created an afterlife for the collective and its members. Although CHR is still an active collective post-suicide, it performs in a manner of a haunting after-affect. CHR subsequently establishes accessory narratives, which, directly referencing particular historical narratives and authors. The collective itself transcends both space and time, as new interventions occur in the present. The implied death identifies the collective as an unconscious fragment of the past. The collective performs in response to historical collections, archives, moments within history, while occupying both the past, present and presumably the future, through the activation of artist-led practices. These interventions, while often abstract, have propelled historical narratives into the contemporary through artist and academic interventions. Every publication, performance, text review inter alia, in which artists have used memory to re-enact or question history simultaneously draws focuses on the subjects which have been discussed. Gabi Ngcobo argues that artistic and curatorial gestures can be used to transform political spaces which veer into dormancy or which have not been engaged with in a fashion which exposes trauma. This process is essentially limitless but considered as active practice aims to conjure questions and further tensions in narratives that already exist. Ngcobo quotes Ashraf Jamal in this particular article, in a question which seems to

[30] See http://historicalreenactments.org/endingthis.html (Date of access: 17 July 2016)

underpin the focus of this dissertation, "How do we commemorate, where does one begin?"

The archive of Gladys Mgudlandlu, writer Magema Fuze and of course the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive, escape dormancy through interventions, which make use of their contents or subject. Gabi Ngcobo further reiterates the intervention of death as an established desire to exist differently, but also to simultaneously plague redundant and obsolete systems with the memory of disruption and objection of oppressive contemporary ideologies.[31] She also makes abundantly clear the sincerity and necessity of artist-led practices in the intervention of how history is told[32].

CHR continued, however, with a project in titled *Digging our own Grave 101 (DOOG 101)*, with an article by Eungie Joo in 2014. *DOOG 101* was a project, where the collective was received in a shifted perspective, the project saw CHR alternatively enact a ghost like 're-turn', as stated on the collective's website. The concept of re-turn is compared to the feeling of walking over an unmarked grave, accompanied by a sense of a general instability and an eerie response. This project, and the collection of those that preceded it, deliberately perpetuated the feeling of displacement and melancholy, in its activation of history and memory. What is quite interesting in this particular text, is the correlation it makes between commemoration and legitimacy; how deliberate does a commemorative act need to be in order for it to be acknowledged?[33] *DOOG 101* subsequently prioritised the unintentional by proposing it more important because it poses the ability to open visibility to unknown subjects and to narratives. The project was propelled by Achille Mbembe's use of the phrase 'Nongqawuse Syndrome' in a catalogue essay for the exhibition *A Decade of Democracy*, Mbembe where he describes this expression as:

[31] See http://historicalreenactments.org/endingthis.html (Date of access: 17 July 2016)
[32] See http://www.newmuseum.org/blog/view/museum-as-hub-endnotes-was-it-a-question-of-power (Date of access: accessed 8 March 2017)
[33] "Writing in a catalogue essay for the exhibition *A Decade of Democracy* held at the South African National Gallery in 2004, Art Historian and writer, Ashraf Jamal posed the question: "How, then, to commemorate? Where does one begin?", suggesting that "perhaps, at best, by accident. Or perhaps enacting the act of commemoration as an accident." Equally, *DOOG 101* activates the hypothetical – it proposes that the accidental may even count more than the intended – it is a space for acknowledging the unknown, the what if?" (Gule, 2015; 102 – 109)

> "the name of a kind of political disorder and cultural dislocation South Africa seems to be experiencing [...] a millenarian form of politics which advocates, uses and legitimizes [sic] self-destruction, or national suicide, as a means of salvation" 34

'Nongqawuse Syndrome' is translated as 'the prophetess of doom'.[35] This project was a deliberate intervention to re-contextualise the grammar of history, which aimed to create discussion and reveal truth, without finalising any narratives, which may intervene or predetermine readings of the future. Both CHR's manifesto and the project by the collective, expose an intentional priority in questioning and re-contextualising memory and history, allowing for newer discussions and even speculations to come to light. Makhubu describes the process of this work as 'ephemeral', as it does not exist to be commoditised, but rather functions to shift the established methods of looking, in the case relevant for this dissertation, at history and how processes of remembering are essentially constructed (Makhubu, 2013: 417). The intentional and specific selections of certain narratives as well as the productions of unconventional interventions, artistic processes are not only the most significant aspect of CHR's work, but rather the focus of the work diverts the importance of medium and/or place, by dwelling in the spaces between the subject of the work.

Rael Salley, who moderated *Fr(agile)* in an evaluation of the useful interaction between artists and historical subject matter, specifically examines artists and artworks that aim to change the established view on history and the past, simultaneously altering our definitions and descriptions of identity both individually and nationally (Salley, 2013: 355). Salley selects a specific group of artists he believes speak to what he calls 'temporal awareness'; the beginning stage of the construction of histories, how the absence of awareness has in turn created, in reliable recounts of history and the way in which it is

[34] See http://historicalreenactments.org/a%20talk%20by%20Eungie%20Joo.html (Date of access: 17 September 2016)
[35] "Nongqawuse, also known as the 'prophetess of doom' predicted that, on 18 February 1857, the sun would rise and set again in the east, and the whirlwind would sweep all white men into the sea, after which the ancestors will rise, there will be abundance for all and a life from anguish, on a deadly condition that the Xhosa people kill all their cattle and burn all their crops. Nongqawuse's is a classic story exemplifying one of the most unforgivable and unforgettable historical acts of 'digging of ones grave,' one whose deadly results remain critical aspects of how the present unfolds." (Mbembe: Page 3)

remembered. Salley's article is not only a necessary evaluation of whether artist-led interventions can affect the current position of any established narrative, but rather that the 'temporal awareness' may saturate narratives by incorporating too great a sense of temporality and subjectivity.

> …to reveal how the visual arts could perform transformative effects in political spaces that may not yet be recognised as sites of struggle and thus enter a refreshed political sensibility. (Salley, 2013; 365).

The article makes use of CHR as an example of how artists have consciously challenged our temporality by challenging our awareness. He states that our present position in large part is predetermined by how we have constructed our past and present. We are, therefore, only somewhat connected to our awareness of our present. The tension lies in the process of creating disruptions in the way and in the sequence in which history is remembered and catalogued. If there are no particular sets of methodologies or chronologies, as noted by Salley, a radical chronology based on what we have become aware of can be assembled (Salley, 2013; 365). The intervention of artist-led practices by no means re-configures the past, but merely exists to present varied perspectives of looking at one thing, through the transformation of what we have believed it to be.

> The chronologies dealt with by these artists are not distinguishable pasts, presents or futures, but constellations of technology, ideology and art that chart realms of possibility (Salley, 2013; 366).

Khwezi Gule (2015) amplifies the ideas presented by Salley above, in looking at CHR's project in titled *'PASS-AGES'*. Gule begins his deliberation by discussing the idea of 'memory work', which by his description, is active and conscious, taken in order to conserve, present and perpetuate a collective history. This, in a similar fashion to the ideas presented by Pierre Nora, is done through memorial, museums, public records and such; somewhat deliberately choreographed, as stated by Gule, in order to accommodate a particular perpetuation of collective memory. This memory work can function quite problematically, as it still perpetuates particular narratives and perspectives, specifically the Western white male perspective, which is further elaborated through looking at white male artists' many public art interventions in South Africa.

Gule uses '*PASS-AGES'* as a case study of how artists have initiated the act of remembering history, that is in itself buried in the city space. CHR at this point was comprised of Gabi Ngcobo, Kemang Wa Lehulere and Donna Kukama, who invited visitors into the former pass office, which has since been converted into a woman's shelter. This exhibition did not aim to re-imagine the space or convolute history by creating or imitating western ideals of exhibition display (Gule, 2015; 92). Instead they presented a site-specific exhibition, which disrupted traditional modes of representation by retaining the original look of the space. This room connoted a particular history relating to the oppressive nature of both apartheid and colonialisation. The passbook was given specifically to black individuals, and regulated their every whereabouts. Gule speaks to the impact of the exhibition's location which extended the discomfort of knowing how it had previously functioned, as the exhibition became more than a display, instead involving a conscious deliberation of position, and furthermore, of identity. CHR again, reiterated by Gule, seems to 'decelerate' the past in order to find and potentially create ancillary narratives in relation to history (Gule, 2015; 99). CHR interweaves similar narratives by responding to particular moments in history, presenting and challenging the aforementioned reclassification of apartheid photographer Ernest Cole's race from black to coloured, Kemang Wa Lehulere performed a piece in titled *uGuqul'ubhatyi*, in which he dug a hole in the backyard of the house in Gugulethu (Gule, 2015; 91). The performance initially references methods of classification, such as that of the pencil test. The pencil test was a method of classification based on how easy it was for the pencil to pass through an individual's hair.

Gule furthers the discussion around CHR's disruptions of history by looking at *Fr(agile)* and the banner created for *The Exuberance roject* and *Rise and Fall of Apartheid*. Initiating the crashing of the past with the present is possibly the most relevant action of artist-led practices, which aim to question the past through contemporary interventions, deliberately creating cracks in which ancillary pertinent narratives may come to surface. Gule writes:

> Contradictory impulses are implicit in the attendance of CHR to rescue commanders archive: on the one hand, preserving the life's work of one of South Africa's most important photojournalists; on the other hand,

> recognising that an institution can outlive the reason for its founding (Gule, 2015; 96).

Gule here has quite accurately summarised not only the ability for institutions, archives and authors to enter an afterlife, but further re-iterates the ability memory has to be able to speak life into dormant archives. This not only re-contextualises fragments of history and that of archival material, but rather actively revives the narratives that were present in the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive. Speaking memory into the archive is a process which not only mimics the process of dealing with a conceptual archive, by not being able to touch or see any of the content you are hearing, it also suggests and probably challenges traditional notions of archival practice. And rather, the archive is physically intangible, remaining active through the interventions that continue to breathe life into it.

4.3 Speaking memory into the archive

Lacey, grapples the sensation of and relevance of listening, how adaptation from written text has impacted the way in which we relate to words. Where society had a natural inclination towards written texts and the individual experience had while reading. Lacey argues that recounting aloud and listening changes the experience of information absorption by the introduction of audio text and communication (Lacey, 2013: 13). Lacey describes the adaptation of listening from analogue form, as a promise for accessibility of information, but also promised to diversify and include a number of different narratives, in so doing, creating rich narratives. Auditory information also allowed for a multivant experience; listeners were able to receive information while doing other things, like driving or housework. This information could be received during the course of everyday life. The experience of listening happens without great deliberation and concentration. And yet, the digitisation of radio has continued to adapt over the years further changing in light of an audience's interaction with technology. As most access points are located on the internet, public broadcasters are bridging the gap between commercial entities and themselves, for the purposes of greater visibility (Lacey, 2013; 10). Yet the conception of radio and audio information still veers toward the prioritisation of the quality of transmission, moreover being able to assure audiences that the authenticity of listening would not compromise the integrity of the experience. The importance of the sound

inadvertently aids in establishing an authentic connection with the audience. From the ease of distribution, radio created a personalised relationship between the listener and speaker, as though the conversation was taking place interpersonally (Lacey, 2013; 11). The adaptation from analogue to digital audio information more significantly allowed for the storage of this information and subsequently the development of audio collections, which could be shared globally. The audio collections would then be supplemented through the inclusive of text and imagery. Digitisation, though, creates easier access to information. Auditory archives can be called on and searched for with much easier methods (Lacey, 2013: 11). This may be the most significant aspect when it comes to the digitisation of radio, allowing for more instantaneous access to such collections. Access to information is the most defining factor between analogue creation and digital. The storage and cataloguing of digital files like that of the Bailey's Historical African Archive reveals the relevance of digitisation in historical archives. Yet, speaking memory back into the archive is to be found poignantly in listening; that is, in the value of the authentic connection between the speaker and the listener. The fundamentals of listening still reference those predicated during the first establishment of radio.

Because the phenomena of auditory perception is not necessarily revolutionary or in any way new, contemporary listening is further layered by combining audio experience that is public, with private subject matters and experience. Audience participation revolving around personal subjectivity transcended the value of listening, from the informative to the relatable. The listener is thus automatically given a space to create connections to what they are hearing. While analogue auditory perception originated through the distribution of information, its evolution is subject to the changing needs of the audience (Lacey, 2013; 12). Their needs appear as simple as being able to contribute to narratives and respond to what they are listening to. The listening has thus adapted to include the people doing the listening, as their roles have adapted to include their participation. Lacey explains this, stating that the 'public', which was the target market during the primary production of radio, grew to include an audience capable of interacting with what they were listening to. Lacey cites McLuhan's (2006) conceptual recognition of the shift from visual to audio, stating that the parallels created between the individual, object rationality which reading presented to, established collectivity, and subsequent globalisation, through

the act of listening. Where reading remains an individualised singular experience, listening extends outward, creating a plethora of connections. Yet this also does not mean the listening may not be personalised. The digitisation of listening allows audiences to tailor their listening on a number of different platforms. Moving past the intervention of radio, listening has developed through the audience's needs and requirements, dictating what they want to listen to. The introduction of social platforms listening transmuted significantly to include more personalised interactions and peer-to-peer exchanges. The sharing of music, audio texts or books, and podcasts may allow for greater depth and choice of the way in which auditory perception is experienced. This reading follows the same format as an informal auditory text and shared experience.

The contemporary development of listening and of auditory texts is the experience of listening, and more significantly, the reception of information by the masses (Lacey, 2013: 16). The digital age essentially promised what analogue text could not achieve, that is, to allow speakers to talk directly to audiences who share their interests. The concept of "listening in" and "listening out", as outlined by Lacey, communicates the tipping point between broadcasting to the listening public, and the listening that is constructed for a specific interaction with a specific audience. These distinctions are constructed by the intended listening, predicated by the listener. Is the listener *listening in,* dependent on an attraction to a specific topic, or *listening out* to whatever is being presented, to possibly draw connections. Ukhozi FM, a South African Zulu-based radio station, has long been known for the listenership of their drama stories, in many black South African communities, in rural areas which may have only attained television fairly recently. The stories were a form of popular entertainment, in large part because they connected to their audience with familiar narratives. The lack of educational advancements in these communities is highly relevant, as many indivduals were illiterate. Listening provided an alternative to the traditional engagement with text, which was unattainable for some. The idea of a distributed storytelling is not uncommon where this language development and distribution relies largely on personalised audio interaction. *Listening in* and *listening out* are concepts which happen concomitantly with further digitisation of audio perception. The value of enriching audio materials is fundamentally unlike any other medium, as it

allows for both personal and public interactions to simultaneously collide (Lacey, 2013; 20-21)

This practical body of work abstractly explores the idea of memory through intangible materials, by not using any physical documents or photographs from the archive as talking points. The dissertation relies on the memory of my colleagues who took part in *Fr(agile)* as source material for my own re-contextualisation, by including conversations about the political impact, established historical content, and most interestingly, the relevance of personal memory on archives. The ability to reimagine that archive through spoken word may richly layer the narrative, to consider the potential effect of both the individual as well as memory on the interpretation of history.

Performing the Archive: The Transformation of the Archive in Contemporary Art from Repository of Documents to Art Medium by Simone Osthoff argues for the consideration of transformative archival practice (Osthoff, 2009: 1), noting that even artistic interventions and artworks made about archives re-contextualise their present consideration, but inevitably how they function (Osthoff, 2009: 1). Osthoff, in the abstract of a book, proposes that archival material could be treated as artwork, and that in turn, may create varied interactions with the materials they contain, if the archive is considered to function differently to that of historical repositories. The archives' contents may be re-imagined, and even subsequently perform a different role, if the methods of classification are altered.

> I argue that histories of media, art, science, and technology, rather than becoming a proliferation of case studies that seek to fix their place within a more established international art history canon, need to first and foremost critically engage with historiography and methodology as such, as media capable of topological performances of their own (Osthoff, 2009: 53).

Osthoff, in this quotation, extracted by writer Jonathan Zilberg, states what she believes the function of archives to be (Zilberg, 2012: 72), by engaging a multidisciplinary interaction with history that challenges traditional definitions of historical practice. While her discussion is specifically located in Brazil, looking at the artist works of Eduardo Kac,

Paulo Bruscky, Villem Flusser (1940-1972), Lygia Clark (1920-1988) and Helio Oiticica (1937-1980), her theoretical framework may be useful in the consideration of a wider contemporary archival practice (Zilberg, 2012: 1). These artists, much like collectives like CHR, create an artwork as the threads of awakening and documenting history. The absence of commodification as that of Alf Kumalo's initial process, possesses a space broader than that of contemporary art making, as South Africa was documented by Kumalo without any conception that his work could generate greater wealth. Osthoff describes these artists as one might, as activists, that is, actively cataloguing and documenting their history through visual art mediums and production. She proposes, through the study of topology, to describe the processes by means of which an artwork is made, to when it enters into the archival state (Zilberg, 2012: 1). Art making follows a rather systemic process in order for the work to exist beyond the author's lifetime and beyond the time of its conception. The process, as mentioned by Ntombela, the writings about the work, the research and theory developed around any particular work, is systematically engineered to become an archive. Zilberg loosely cites Osthoff (2012: 72) to say something important for this discussion, namely that, while contemporary art practice persists in a somewhat separate and insular capacity from the rest of society, archives are collections of work that need external interaction for elaboration. This deliberation, while seemingly bleak, is possibly art's most important potential, that is, where intention is derived from the necessity of elaboration. "Archives are still alive", she says, as the capacity for interaction is still highly possible. The Brazilian artists mentioned in Osthoff's book are used to exemplify the active participation created by artists with their viewers. By adapting media and creating interventions with a diverse material basis, the ability to interact and also to circulate information became increasingly tangible. She regards this as the place where archives may exist in contemporary visual art making. The ability for archives to function in an interdisciplinary way evokes a multitude of possibilities, as while they gain elaboration through other mediums, the archives themselves contribute to the elaboration of other narratives and subsequently other archives (Zilberg, 2012: 72).

Özdil (2013) elaborates these ideas, stating that archives or museums are no longer structures that are separate from their surroundings, they are no longer repositories for the display of stagnant histories. Rather, that they should communicate outwardly regarding

topics relating to cultural and societal identity (Özdil, 2013: 49). The adaptation of historical archives and spaces has rapidly changed through contemporary intervention, perpetuating and encouraging what Özdil calls "use value" for the contexts they exist in (Özdil, 2013: 50).

In her essay, Özdil provides a clear definition of what the author considers a cultural object.[36] Her adjustment to the expected definition is that to Özdil's, 'cultural object' no longer infers museum collections or objects, archives, or, historical documentation, but rather, the cultural object is constituted by the relationship of an object with its cultural context, as well as with those who find an ideological connection to it (Özdil, 2013: 50). The archives are thus capable of transcending functionality through heritage-based interactions to change the relationship and interaction with them. If archives become limitless in their function, they can essentially become limitless in their presentation, and moreover in their reception. The constant re-activation and presentation of cultural and historical material inevitably revives and perpetuates histories and memories. The archives, while in themselves fundamentally valuable, in turn create more actors, who perpetuate the relevance of history and memory (Özdil, 2013: 51). The performance of exchange, in fact, as stated by Özdil, by producers of cultural creations, continue to perpetuate, for as long as the exchange is carried out. This analogy by Özdil means that any practice which furthers the active exchange of cultural creations is valid, more importantly, in ensuring culture and history does not become redundant, by engaging new actors in mediums that they understand. She calls the cycle the "History Continuum", namely, the constant exchange between museums, archives and collections (Özdil, 2013: 53). This exchange or relationship is essentially driven by its actors, in the same way the dissertation actively participates in the elaboration of the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive. The following quotation shows Özdil's intended hypothesis relating to the relevance of historical archives:

[36] "The use of the term "cultural object" does not only mean museum objects, archival materials, or records. In a broader definition, moving towards it's materiality and authenticity, the term "cultural object" is also used to mean an object with relational aspects that a) owns and offers a meaning-making process; b) is polyvocal, holding also symbolic meanings in relation to context; c) is under a cultural influence; d) enables communication and diffusion of its inherited meanings; and finally, e) interacts with the surrounding physical space to offer an interpretative space for audiences. In this case, a designed object or a display for an exhibition can also refer to a cultural object" (Özdil, 2013; 51).

> the search is for archives that are able to evolve continuously, can be transformed or adapted to be diffused or activated, innovated, and integrated, connected adapting to the changes in technology and updated to the contemporary needs of visitors (Özdil, 2013: 49).

As memory has been proposed as archival material here, the deconstruction of cultural subjects and traditional modes of interaction broadens the access to history, and further more, to the presentation of it. If history can legitimately be represented through archival engagement with personalised memories, interdisciplinary representations and artist-led practices, archives then harbour the ability to transcend nostalgia and actively contribute to our current context. Özdil makes a compelling argument about the necessity of constant cultural creation, in not only preserving the narratives that exist within these collections but more importantly in perpetuating a cycle of active actors who will continue to engage the archival narratives, by ensuring, optimistically, that historical archives will always be relevant as they adapt to those who are receiving their content. Özdil further emphasises the functional ability that contemporary mediums and techniques may have on historical archives. Her arguments a compelling one, necessitating the of culture of constant creation, in not only preserving the narratives that exist within these collections but more importantly in encouraging and growing a going public who will naturally visit cultural spaces (Özdil, 2013: 53).

In this PhD research, Özdil references Andre Malraux's *Le Musee Imaginaire,* which translates "museum without walls".[37] This was described as a collection of artworks in our individual minds that would vary between individuals. The philosophy of a 'museum without walls' is that content can exist anywhere and everywhere, that everybody by some conception has a museum of artworks they have sorted in their minds. Malraux's hypothesis proposed that museums can abstractly exist anywhere and everywhere, and that the exhibition of artwork is not localised to a particular place or structure. He used a museum catalogue as an example of this manner of transmission, stating that transmission

[37]See https://culturalvirtualspaces.wordpress.com/2014/06/17/malraux-and-the-musee-imaginaire-the-museum-without-walls/ (Date of access: 26 August 2016)

is in fact a museum in itself, allowing for even more works to appear in one place for viewing.[38] The evolution in photography, for instance, meant that viewers did not necessarily need to visit museum spaces in order to gain access to work, but rather that developments like catalogues and books, with pictorial references, allowed for the ephemeral experience of the museum space. The museum experience is often limited by access to location and by scale, yet photography and digitalisation allow for collections to be experienced instantaneously, and at much larger volumes.

4.4 Oral history, oral tradition and memory

Building on this, the museum could, in theory, exist anywhere. Our own understanding of a museum space or historical archive could function as a manner of imagined museum. If this concept is pushed even further than this, memories could be plausible as artworks, and thus a collection of archival content. With this thinking in mind, the plausibility that archival material may be anything and the museum can also exist anywhere is easier to comprehend. When media politics removed as a concern, this means that memories might be validated in any fashion, and might still be considered as plausible archival material. Spoken word is possibly the oldest from of archival preservation, especially in the African context. Oral literature is a well-known way in which traditionally, individuals transferred cultural knowledge and histories through generations (Finnegan, 2012: 12). While this technique was at first one of the only means to preserve information, it was also linked quite closely to tradition and culture. Only certain individuals within the community would receive cultural lore, and were given the task of informing the next generations about the customs and traditions of their particular community. In *Oral Literature in Africa* Finnegan (2012) speaks to the formal construction of oral histories and the legitimacy in the process of creating these histories, and Turin's foreword in this book raises a pressing concern regarding the endangerment of oral literatures. Turin states that these literatures are at risk of disappearing, as members, especially elders are at risk of not passing on this history in time. The stories that have been passed down through generations within communities are thereby placed in jeopardy, and are at risk of succumbing to advancements in globalisation and shifting prioritisations of media. This

[38] Ibid 35

book was written in two editions by Finnegan, the first edition which was published in 1969, and the second edition, developed much later with significant adaptations. Finnegan states in the preface of the second edition that the developments in technology and the appearance of African scholars meant that in its development, the book provided a much richer acknowledgement of work by African researchers on the topic, but also that information was a lot easier to collect and distribute (Finnegan, 2012: 14). Finnegan argues that because Western literature constitutes a form of hegemony in printed literature, furthered only through digitisation, the importance of collecting or understanding African oral literature was found lacking in her view in her first manuscript. The importance which she highlights was the need for establishing a different understanding of the role and function of oral literatures, where, while they are perceived as a primitive mode of record when compared to the written modes of Western literature, their function and impact exists in their performative ability to relay histories (Finnegan, 2012: 5). Oral literatures can only be experienced in a personal capacity and the majority were only ever performed by one person, who had been designated with that duty. Written literatures while enjoying an exponentially greater scope for reproduction, detached the author and viewer from one another, where oral literature is a cultural artefact contingent on personal proximity. When the space of transmission becomes at once the space of the content or knowledge itself, this allows for an intimate experience of the content itself (Finnegan, 2012: 14). In oral literature, there is expansive potential for nuance in delivery.

Finnegan's research elaborated the role of listening in relation to archive and the role of memory in relation to history. Listening as cultural transfer of knowledge has long been used to give life to important texts in rural communities in the past and at present. This is still widely considered the most discrete method of preservation of cultures and traditions. Communication and technology might be seen to overpower this mode of exchange, however, much like the personal engagement involved in oral histories, digital audio text provides us with choice; choice of platform, audio medium, distribution channels and subjective matter. The process of 'listening in' is constructed according to what we are interested in listening to, and what we feel reflects our own ideologies. The relevance again is linked to audio texts' dual ability to be widely disseminated, and to be able to be engaged whilst busy with other daily tasks. Listening provides a form according to which

many media may amalgamate, but listening provides a community of interaction, where individual perspective can meet that of others much easier than it can with printed text (Lacey, 2013: 18).

However, acknowledging that there is a fundamental difference between oral traditions and oral history is where the most definitive distinction is to be made between the process of listening and how listening is documented.

Moss and Mazikana (1986) evaluate this fundamental difference. Oral history is understood as an intellectual intervention in the process and construction of memory. The process of inquiry, as stated by Moss and Mazikana perpetually creates physical documents in the recording of the history. Oral history aims to make records that capture data and provide further scrutiny of a given subject. It functions to supplement written record although it has been perceived as unreliable, due to its subjective quality (Moss and Mazikana, 1986: 1). Oral histories have supplemented recorded accounts by including testimonies of those who experienced the history. Oral history in this context is perceived as the intellectual interpretation of oral tradition as oral text. It aims to validate orally transmitted text through documentation and record making.

However, the premise of oral tradition rests on largely organic processes of sharing information. Oral traditions are fundamentally based on the rehearsal of memory and the verbal performance of remembering (Moss and Mazikana, 1986: 2). This remembering is used as a traditional custom, where the receiver is obligated to listen, such that they are able to remember what has been passed on to them. This is done in this way so as to ensure that a specific individual is given the duty of keeping this information, and then passing it on to the person who will take their place. This traditional process was one that, even with the intervention of written text remained prevalent in communities who kept up the transfer of oral traditions as a method to ensure inherited knowledge. The act of listening is essentially most powerful as the only record making device in communities which practice oral history. There is importance not only in the exchange but also in the performance and the reception of the exchange, that necessitates this being listened to and not read.

The place where oral history and oral tradition collide can often change the activeness of the information, by subjecting it to exist only in its recorded state. The process of what is included and excluded loosely resembles the cultural context. This limitation of the oral tradition is relevant in highlighting the differences between western communities and traditional communities in their respective methods of preserving information, as both seem to serve a disservice to each other. This is not to say that western communities do not have oral tradition but rather that written documentation occurred but sooner in the West and at a much faster rate (Moss and Mazikana, 1986: 3). The construction of archives is fundamentally based on this process of collection, recording and preserving. The process of record making fundamentally alters oral content but eliminates some of the most significant components: speaking and listening.

The archive here is delivered as an auditory text not only to negotiate the sensory significance of listening, but also to draw the tensions derived due to the absence of the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive. This MAFA speaks memory into the archive by equating remembering to a photograph, and remembering into an accumulation of memories, which is at once, the archive. *Retrospecting the Collection: Recontextualising fragments of history and memory through the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive* is a performance of listening, where recollection is presented, in absence of a material archive.

CONCLUSION

> In the new century ahead, I think that archivists will continue to shift their emphasis from the analysis of the properties and characteristics of individual documents to an analysis of the functions, processes, and transactions which cause documents to be created (Cook, 1898: 47).

This perspective of the archive serves more to change the functionality of the archive by changing the way in which it can be engaged. Foucault (1969) argues that the archive is not a place that exists for us to collect and catalogue memories, but rather that the archive exists to locate a person in a specific place and time. The root of this discussion relies quite on the abstract notion of memory, and how we perceive it. While memory is subjective, archival materials and documents are, in themselves, affected by subjectivity. And while the records, much like memory, struggle to find plausibility, the re-collective engagement with archives is fundamentally the device that may continue to re-activate memories passed their point of conception. The importance of upholding collective historical archives is paramount in any society's construction of culture. Social memory is thus fundamentally that according to which historical archives retain relevance and avoid becoming obsolete.

However, this is not an automatic or easy exchange between archives and viewers; the archives are not necessarily where individuals visit when they experience nostalgia. Museum spaces and academic institutions have traditionally been the spaces in which archives could be found for access, yet growing advances in technology have meant that the information is much easier to access by private means. Growing technological advances have reduced the physical need to visit museum spaces which have since lost visitors, while technology also helps to distribute a much greater array of information than any one building could physically house. This begs the question as to the fragility of archives, as even the institutions that are housing them may no longer be relevant themselves. Yet maybe this consideration is not about trying to alter how important archives are to society but rather altering the archive to adapt to its social context. The contemporary manner of distributed information, apart from being ephemeral, also allows

for similar narratives to connect and communicate over a given topic. The cross pollination of sources relating to historical topics, which have subsequently manifested themselves in contemporary narratives, has re-activated our need for historical archives to supplement narratives which accorded in the past. Subsequently the role of the archivist has become different, and seemingly more complex than merely being the custodian of a particular collection of objects of interest. The archivist is challenged to re-imagine their role according to a contemporary perspective, which would rejuvenate the narratives that exist in the collection and fundamentally bring to life forgotten archives of history.

The extract provided here by Terry Cook explores this idea of the responsibility of the archivist to create meaningful discussions around historical collections in order to establish sustainability of cultural creations and connection to society (Cook, 1898; 18). And while narratives are much more easily accessible in contemporary settings, the relevance of archives now relies on the ability to exchange information and elaborate historical narratives. The past is not forgotten, as commemorations, public holidays, celebrations are constantly established around remembering historical events. The social narrative is still relevant and still alive. This point begs the question as to why historical archives and institutions are becoming obsolete. Within a context like South Africa, where apartheid continues to shape societal structures, political systems, and general interactions of the society; history still plays a fundamental role in the shaping of individual identity. This however exposes a significant disconnect with the contemporary society, and their relationship towards cultural material. With institutions like Museum Africa being at risk of closing down, should the conversation around historical archives not be over whether society still feels that these ‘memory texts’ are fundamentally the basis on which they create their identity? Culture performs an important social function that connects and identifies groups of individuals to each other and internally to themselves. However, contemporary narratives may not necessarily be derived from history anymore. Popular culture and mass consumption may be at the root of this dilemma, moreover there is a lack of resources to implement an understanding of respect for heritage based subjects at an early age. The role of the archivist and cultural institution is furthermore to amplify society’s prioritisation of culture and art appreciation, possibly by creating value chains, which may exist outside of them. By creating ancillary contact points, museums may be

experienced without physical participation. The distinct disengagement with cultural institutions and cultural subject matter is evident in the abandonment of historical archives and institutions that house them. If individuals within a society are willing to spend time and capital in other leisure-based activities, they should be willing to view exhibits that reflect their histories. And while this may be idealistic, the reality is that cultural institutions are visited less readily, over the course of several years. This has continued to impact archival collections, as the interest in the subject matter contained in them is not readily sought after. The current state of the Alf Kumalo Museum Archive is possibly where it will remain forever, which means the access that has been experienced of it to date may be the only connection it will ever make to the contemporary context. There exist narratives, images, content that was yet to be discovered and catagorised for the display of Kumalo's collection. In many instances like that of Kumalo, authors of historical archives are inevitably overlooked making them subsequently become redundant. If the authors of the archives are not recognised, it is unfairly circumstantial that the archive collections suffer the same fate. While history is remembered, it still is not a direct reflection of the lives that we live in contemporary South Africa. And while many of the discourses presented throughout the archives relating to apartheid still reflect injustices and inequality, the relevance of the archives that reflect this time has subsequently decreased. The era of Drum magazine photographers and photojournalists like Alf Kumalo and Ernest Cole gained visibility through the readiness of the photographic medium, as well as the relevance of their personal narratives along side those that were photographers. The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive, while fundamentally exceptional and socially relevant, remains in danger of falling into disuse, as it has been, much like the photographer himself, locked away and similarly discarded. However the continuation of artist-led interactions, interrogations of historical subject matters and presumably any references made to the archive may aid in establishing a social reference for the memories that it contains.

What is most imperative is what is selected for display, what is selected for preservation and what is selected to represent archival records. Terry Cook expands this idea by stating that we have forgone the process of merely selecting records for preservation, and are now meticulously preserving specific records in these collections (Cook, 1898: 19). The life

cycle of the archive, as previously mentioned, is now predetermined not by whether an archive can remain active, but rather by selecting certain records to contribute to a larger archive. Theodore Schellenberg separated the operational value of the historical archive (see Cook, 1898: 22) into two aspects, where the archive serves a primary and secondary function; the first being the function towards the author in creating a cohesive collection of work, and the second being towards the researcher, who will select documents to contribute towards their own narrative project. The collection created by Alf Kumalo primarily consisted of images of interest to him, as well as sketches and texts which are of interest to his perspective, and included narratives which pertained particularly to his life during apartheid. The archive firstly provides an functional role as it represents the process the author may have taken in creating the materials, yet when they become historical records they take on an evidential role in order to elaborate a particular historical narrative. Schellenberg attributes the importance of the evidential value in the form of the intention of the creator of the archive, to ensure the integrity of the creator and the primary value of the archive. This is again linked to the difference in the role of the archivist and the record keeper, respectively. The record keeper will, by virtue of their training, collect materials that are informative, but lack the ability to be critical about the records which are being selected for preservation. The role of the archivist is yet again made more complex by the responsibility that is put on to them, of selecting materials that are not only informative, but also that contribute discursively to historical narratives. Schellenberg believed that archives were not the accumulation of the records, but that they were selected by the archivist and were not in fact different from information collected by a record keeper. He draws a distinction between the record keeper and the archivist, between the institution per se and the *archival* institution. While both function with archival content, the direction of engagement is fundamentally different. This extract by Jenkinson further elaborates the suggested role of the archivist:

> The Archivist's career is one of service. He exists in order to make other people's work possible... His Creed, the Sanctity of Evidence; his Task, the Conservation of every scrap of Evidence attaching to the Documents committed to his charge; his aim to provide, without prejudice or afterthought, for all who wish to know the Means of Knowledge... The

> good Archivist is perhaps the most selfless devotee of Truth the modern world produces (Cook, 1898: 22).

Even this is a trying exercise for the archivist. How can historical archives be considered records of the creator's doing if they are subject to the interference of the archivist? Do archives lose authenticity and rarity value by the intervention and selecting of certain records for preservation? This may create a seemingly inappropriate process of engagement by the archivist, as their own subjectivity will inevitably affect the process of selection, and ultimately, which records are preserved. The selection process is fundamentally the most fragile component in the preservation of historical documents (Cook, 1898: 23). In most cases the ideal circumstance would be that the archivist's process of preservation, involved the archive's creator, and asked for their selection. This is impossible in the case of Alf Kumalo, because he is no longer here to intervene or dictate any decisions that are to be made about his collection.

Kumalo's extensive body of work remains a vast collection of records that were created by him, but remain without narration as they exist inside a collection and without 'his' prioritisation. And while thematic categories can be created in order to organise the work, who, one might ask, would be the appropriate custodian of such an undertaking? This discourse was coined as the 'Jenkinsonian dilemma' of archival appraisal. And while the process which Jenkinson called "archive-making" was not a fool proof method of creating authentic archives, it did help to at least begin to shape of the process archivists would need to avoid creating bias through their process (Cook, 1898: 24). Yet concomitantly this approach may also allow for the arrangement of particular records to create particular narratives; narratives that may only favour a minority, and prevent the larger narrative from being preserved.

Joanne Lefrak expresses the often dubious relationship between the archivist and history by considering these questions:

> Who writes history, how are historical narratives established and how does an archive or museum present history? Do we have an obligation to

> tell the truth in so far as we are able or are we as curators or activists allowed to manipulate that truth? The conversation around value judgments and how they are encoded in museums, i.e. how does the museum choose to collect what it collects and how do they choose to present materials, whether in an exhibition or online or however it is used in a publication.[39]

The selection of records that reflected the apartheid system, seemed to wholly rely on the narrative of oppression and violence. And while the injustices of apartheid were the highly visible, the selection made here has subsequently excluded an array of supporting narratives that did not necessarily work to change the narrative of the archive, but rather to personalise it. By aiming to broaden the process of selection and to connect similar narratives to each other, historical archives may create a contemporary life span. The historical archives are collections of an individual's experiences, their families, their lifetime and more importantly, a collection of the author's memories. The Alf Kumalo Museum Archive is not only a collection of Kumalo's most influential memories, but is also a collection of memories that may not seem as important. His legacy and his conscious intention to portray life in South Africa during apartheid depict the holistic life of a black man in South Africa before and after democracy.

The most compelling function of archival and historical collections has little to do with the physical documentation, and more to do with their function, that is, the necessity and importance of storytelling and the experience that this may provide. Storytelling as previously mentioned by Ece Özdil, describes the relevance of the aesthetic experience created through storytelling (Özdil, 2013: 54). It is fundamentally where museums and archives function, as they provide a window into history, allowing visitors to vicariously experience the past through an aesthetically curated experience.[40]

And, much like Özdil's research does not aim to dismantle archival processes or their

[39] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvAK5mSzHEg (Date of access: 23 June 2016)

[40] Ece Özdil elaborates, "Storytelling in museums offers a kind of aesthetic experience, where the space offers a solution, sheltering different constructions in relation to the whole story, as in a movie, that the listeners follow, almost having a "ludic" experience; spontaneous and unexpected events might occur in time." (Özdil, E., forthcoming 2014).

functionality, this research aims to broaden processes by including other methods of curatorship and representation. The relevance of historical archives in the contemporary context relies largely on their ability to function as more than repositories of history, but rather, to offer active experiences. The active experiences are necessary to anchor societies construction of identity and ideological value. Our active engagement with the past especially pasts that have been met with some contemporary interventions allow us to find a place in society. We may find ourselves more deeply rooted in the conscious upliftment of past narratives by adapting new methodologies and processes to enhance and encourage remembering. Historical storytelling, as focus is placed on it here, is paramount to whether memory can validly serve as archival material. The tradition of spoken word as historical document, as elaborated by Finnegan (2012), was used within African countries as the protocol for handing down important histories verbally. As aforementioned by Moss and Mazikana, in many contexts this was the preferred method, helping to retain the authenticity of the material. They further their argument to include the process of recollection and the liability of recollections as evidence (Moss and Mazikana, 1986; 6). While they conclude that recollections are somewhat unreliable they do provide the archivist and archive with an abstracted and untouched perspective, either of the collected materials or if there are none, of the relative narrative. Storytelling and recollection are ultimately the most authentic re-enactments of history, performed through listening to memory, as that of the recollections of Alf Kumalo and his history during *Fr(agile)*. There is an intrinsic value derived in the authenticity of listening to personal experiences, but equally, a value in contributing these narratives to other narratives, and other narratives, and other narratives. The action of speaking history, however, is present in many of the archival accounts that we have for history, if only in an abstract way. The corporeal activity of delivering history through spoken word, and memory, is fundamentally where archival processes began, that is with listening.

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