

Haunted Archives of Livingness (online, 24–26 Sep 25)

Online, Sep 24–26, 2025

Deadline: Jul 13, 2025

Ana C. Pinho

Haunted Archives of Livingness: Visual Culture and the Politics of Care in the Age of Ecological Entanglement.

6th International Conference "Reframing the Archive".

The archive, in its variables of collecting private or public documents, relating to a person, family, municipality or state, is configured as a circumscribed place, with limited access or reserved for specific users. Its historical connection – especially the archive as institution – with power and various forms of long-standing hegemony, while it has contributed to arousing its fascination and a certain aura of mystery in recent decades, has been paralleled with a profound questioning and recognition of its problematic “neutral technology” (Azoulay, 2019).

To consider that a collection of written texts, visual works, volumes, and photographs, and moving images composes a corpus can lead us back to the etymology of the Latin term, which takes on this meaning much later. Before, it referred to a body, individual, person, or living being, as well as a corpse, inanimate body, matter, organism, and structure. If we then maintain the polysemy of the corpus to diversify the archives in which they live, we will suddenly find ourselves faced with a variety of typologies that expand the very notion of the archive, push it out of protective walls, dirty it, contaminate it and regenerate it, making it living matter and in constant metamorphosis (Coccia, 2020).

We can read this corpus as an archive that self-generates, feeds itself, feeds back, tells itself, passes on, and lets itself be consulted. A system of knowledge that owns itself as an archive, which “should be seen as a contact zone between past and present but also between temporally diverse and interconnected processes of documenting and consuming information” (Tortorici, 2018), available to be activated and put into relation in a constant becoming in transformation. What can this approach teach us about the wonder, the abject, the beauty, the waste in the planet when they become “haunted archives of livingness” (Subramaniam, 2024)? In this context, photography emerges as a central medium through which haunted archives are constituted, activated, and contested. Photographs not only preserve the visual remnants of ecological and political violence, but also act as spectral witnesses – carriers of both memory and omission. What role does the photograph play in embodying “livingness” or decay? How can photographic archives resist the logics of extractivism, classification?

Confronted with climate change, overdevelopment, ecological devastation, environmental crises,

energy dependence, poverty, reproductive injustice, unsustainable agriculture, and food insecurity, to name just a few, “seeking to understand the world as embrangled in its histories is the urgent project before us.” (Subramaniam, 2024) How can we look at the geological traces, at the rivers’ flow, at the accumulation of waste, at the dialects of folk proverbs and storytelling, at “invasive” plant species, at the physical space occupied to store our digital data and see them, observe them, sense them and create through them? Would we be able to look at them with the attention devoted to documents preserved and protected in archives without falling into the trap of “classification, tagging, and naming of different groups to form a human index” (Azoulay, 2019), or – by contrast – would we be able not to forget or ignore them but rather to embrace a project of care?

Envisioning art—and cultural practices more broadly—as an empowering means at our hands to cultivate a utopia for a better liveable future, the 6th edition of the International Conference Reframing the Archive invites scholars at any stage of their careers, as well as visual artists and other professionals in the field of visual arts, to share their work and reflect on how contemporary artistic practices have been and are dealing with these haunted archives of livingness. We welcome proposals for 15-minute theory and practice-led presentations (followed by 15-minute panel discussion) from various disciplines, including: photography, cinema and new media, art history and theory, anthropology, museology, philosophy, cultural studies, visual and media studies, and fine and graphic arts. These presentations should offer an in-depth investigation into the conference topic. Please note that the conference will be conducted in English.

Potential topics include, but are not limited to:

- Photographic archives and haunted image materialities
- Spectrality, indexicality, and decay in photographic media
- Oral histories and storytelling
- More-than-human archives (geologic, spontaneous, accidental, inaccessible, toxic)
- Digital archives data and their material storage’s environmental implications, where and at which cost
- Non-human animal knowledges and aesthetics
- Visual witnessing, non-human photography, and environmental surveillance
- Aural, terrestrial, underwater waste
- Machine vision, drones, and the archive of planetary sensing

:: SUBMITTING YOUR PAPER

Paper proposals for RTA 2025 are limited to one submission per candidate and must be written in English.

Proposals must be submitted online and should follow one of the two formats outlined below:

INDIVIDUAL PAPER SUBMISSION

Guidelines:

Individual presentations have a duration of 15 minutes.

Candidates are required to submit a proposal that includes:

- Author information (name, email, affiliation, ORCID)
- Paper title, abstract (2000 characters), and keywords (maximum 5),

- Bibliographical references (maximum 5),
- Author short biographical note (written in third person, 1000 characters).

PRE-CONSTITUTED PANEL SUBMISSION

Guidelines:

Submission of proposals for pre-constituted panels should consist of three papers.

The panel corresponding author is requested to submit a proposal that includes:

- Panel title and abstract (2000 characters)
- Information regarding the three candidates and their individual papers, as described in the guidelines for individual papers described above.

:: SELECTION PROCESS AND FEES

Submitted proposals will undergo a peer-review process. Authors will be notified of the results by July, 2025. The names of the Scientific Committee will be announced after the peer-review process is complete.

Selected speakers must confirm their participation and complete the registration payment within one week of receiving the selection notification. The registration fee for is 50 EUR.

Archivo Friends with an active subscription plan are entitled to a 30% discount on the registration fee, should they be selected to present a paper. For those who wish to attend the event without presenting, general admission is free for Archivo Friends.

:: PUBLICATION

Following the conference, extended versions of the presented papers will be considered for publication in a forthcoming issue (2026) of *Archivo Papers - Journal of Photography and Visual Culture* (ISBN 2184-9218). Conference speakers are warmly invited to submit their articles, which will undergo a double-blind peer-review process.

Please note that this submission is separate from the conference application and applies exclusively to the journal publication. Those interested in contributing are encouraged to consult the journal's Editorial Guidelines and prepare their article proposals accordingly. The deadline for journal submissions is October 12, 2025.

:: IMPORTANT DATES

Deadline for submission: July 13, 2025

Notification of results: July, 2025

Deadline for speakers registration: one week after confirmation of acceptance

Online conference: September 24-26, 2025

Deadline for publication submission: October 12, 2025

Organising Committee

Ana Catarina Pinho (IHA, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal)

Vanessa Badagliacca (Independent Researcher)

If you have any questions about the conference, please contact us at info@reframingthearchive.com

For inquiries related to the Archivopapers Journal submission process, please reach out to info@archivopapersjournal.com

Reference:

CFP: Haunted Archives of Livingness (online, 24-26 Sep 25). In: Arthist.net, May 14, 2025 (accessed Jul 4, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/49242>>.