

Archivo Courses: Photography, Archive & Visual Culture (Online, 6 May-24 Jun 26)

Online

www.archivoplatform.com/courses

Ana C. Pinho

ARCHIVO Spring / Summer Courses.

MAY 2026

ACTIVATING ARCHIVES: Photography, Ecology, and Historical Change in the Anthropocene
Course led by Dr. Bergit Arends

Archives provide compelling insights not only into environmental changes but also into ideologies and cultures of nature, into vulnerabilities, responsibilities for and the effects of change. They not only document but shape the proposition of the Anthropocene, which seeks to describe histories and consequences of human interventions into the natural world. This course explores the connections between photography, archives, ecology and historical change in the presence of the narratives of the Anthropocene. It introduces these thematic areas and explicates their interactions. We will examine, in depth, selected transhistorical engagements with archives as lived and performative sites by contemporary artists, and the different roles of photography within the processes of formation and transformation in their projects. We will discuss photographs as images and objects, as scientific practice, as social practice and as artistic practice for documentary as well as art photography.

The lectures centre on dialogues between different kinds of voices: engagements with mute historical records and with the photo-object to activate them creatively, exchanges between collaborators and conversations with users of archives and exhibitions. The projects we discuss narrate environments as a field of study as well as a critique of human intervention and the separation between humans and nonhumans in European understandings. The artistic projects to be studied however generate dialogues across moments in history, making these works productive to imagining and presenting environmental change. They discard single modes of seeing environmental transformations in favour of a multiple and de-centred environmental imagination.

We will study photography a participatory and collaborative method for intervening in environmental knowledge. The course foregrounds artistic documentary practices, critical fabulation, and 'reperformance', an engagement with historical visual and written materials and the processes that generated these. We will take an interdisciplinary approach, drawing from curatorial studies, historical geography, art theory and environmental studies.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course takes place over one month and includes four in-depth sessions of three hours each,

held weekly. As part of the programme, participants will enjoy complimentary access to ARCHIVO's public events throughout the course duration, including the Webinar Series and the Open Sessions, offering further opportunities for discussion, and exchange.

LECTURE 1: 6 May / 5 PM - 8 PM (UK time)

LECTURE 2: 13 May / 5 PM - 8 PM (UK time)

LECTURE 3: 20 May / 5 PM - 8 PM (UK time)

LECTURE 4: 27 May / 5 PM - 8 PM (UK time)

Dr. Bergit Arends is a curator of contemporary art, museum professional, and academic with research interests in the intersections of research-based artistic and curatorial practices, material culture, and environmental history within European and global contexts. Her monograph *Photography, Ecology and Historical Change in the Anthropocene: Activating Archives* (2024) is part of the Routledge series *Photography, Place, Environment*. Her doctoral research resulted among other in the award-winning publication *Chrystel Lebas. Field Studies* (2018). Bergit has curated many contemporary art projects for the natural history museums in London and Berlin. She was British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow at University of Bristol and the Courtauld Institute of Art, London, where she is a Teaching Fellow. She is Curatorial Research Fellow in the UK Research and Innovation Network Plus 'Shifting Global Polarities: Russia, China and Eurasia in transition'; and Research Associate in the international CoastARTS project, working on coasts as zones ecocultural crisis. She has contributed to many award selection panels, including After Nature. Ulrike Crespo Photography Prize at C/O Berlin.

TICKETS

Early Bird: €120.00 / Sale ends 31 Mar, 23:50 WEST

Standard Registration: €150.00 / Goes on sale 01 Apr, 00:00 WEST

<https://www.archivoplatform.com/event-details/course-activatingarchives>

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JUNE 2026

ENCOUNTERING THE ARCHIVE THROUGH EXHIBITION

Course led by Dr. Peter Lester

From a manuscript written on gold leaf to photographs of trains in Kenya; from medieval illuminated gospels to contemporary digital records, archives provide diverse, exciting, engaging and reflective subjects for exhibitions. Little explored in archival scholarship, exhibitions are nonetheless a key aspect of archive practice, ranging from displays of treasured manuscripts to family letters and diaries, accounts of colonial expansion and dispossession to personal experiences and memories. This course explores the diverse practice of archive exhibitions, the aims and intentions of archivists and designers in creating them, and the way narrative and design work to shape our experience and understanding of the archive.

Located within archival scholarship, the course explores the historical and contextual influences on exhibition-making and the impact of different and diverse audiences on the archive. Examining new spatial reconfigurations of archival buildings, it considers how exhibition provides a forum for engaging with archives in various ways. It explores how design and narrative work to create experi-

ences with authentic, material archives and how they open up political, reflective and activist understandings of history and the role of archives in this. It considers the implications of contemporary exhibition-making on how we understand and experience the archive and the different ways that we encounter new stories, perspectives and people both in the past and the present.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course takes place over one month and includes four in-depth sessions of three hours each, held weekly. As part of the programme, participants will enjoy complimentary access to ARCHIVO's public events throughout the course duration, including the Webinar Series and the Open Sessions, offering further opportunities for discussion, and exchange.

LECTURE 1: 3 June / 5 PM - 8 PM (UK time)

LECTURE 2: 10 June / 5 PM - 8 PM (UK time)

LECTURE 3: 17 June / 5 PM - 8 PM (UK time)

LECTURE 4: 24 June / 5 PM - 8 PM (UK time)

Dr. Peter Lester is an archivist and researcher. He holds a PhD from the University of Leicester. His research interests focus on the exhibition and display of archives, encounters with archival material and the design and experience of archival spaces. He is also a professionally qualified archivist with over ten years' experience in the UK archives sector. His book *Exhibiting the Archive: Space, Encounter and Experience* was published by Routledge in 2022.

TICKETS

Early Bird: €120.00 / Sale ends 30 Apr, 23:50 WEST

Standard Registration: €150.00 / Goes on sale 01 May, 00:00 WEST

<https://www.archivoplatform.com/event-details/encounteringthearchive>

Reference:

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