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Feminism in the Archives and the Archive in Feminism:
Propositions Gleaned from Alex Martinis Roe's *To Become Two*



Fig. 1. Alex Martinis Roe, *To Become Two*, installation view at The Showroom, London, 2017. Exhibition design in collaboration with Fotini Lazaridou-Hatzigoga. Poster series in collaboration with Chiara Figone. Photo Daniel Brooke

In Alex Martinis Roe's filmic installation, *To Become Two* (2014–17), adjustable steel racking shelves—bright purple in colour—unfold across the exhibition space at The Showroom in London like concertina. Ubiquitous within offices and archives, this modular shelving structure was repurposed to mount projection screens and posters, and provided a platform for another pile of posters which audiences could take home, as well as an array of miscellaneous objects. Produced in collaboration with artist-architect Fotini Lazaridou-Hatzigoga, the display system lent itself to multiple viewpoints and positions

within its installation at The Showroom, as well as new assemblies and iterations for the work's future and past iterations. Designed to be reconfigured anew in each venue, this "quasi-archival architecture," in the words of Hal Foster, was a solution for both display and deposition (Foster 2004, 5). In London, it created a mode of citation and juxtaposition between the videos and materials on display. Materials, text and images were entangled within the exhibition space, and so too the filmic space where references, language, metaphors, and flow. In adapting archival systems of display, *To Become Two* generated new affinities and power relations, tainting the "neutrality" of the archive with strategies of collective authorship via feminist genealogies.

To Become Two is concerned with the structures of care and systems of affinity enacted between feminist groups, which is arguably a kind of indirect carework.¹ The subject of these films is not unpaid domestic labour, but rather the labour—also unpaid—that goes into organising and resisting, not to mention generating the support structures that enable this kind of work. The subjects of what Martinis Roe calls the five "history films" are feminist activists groups from Europe and Australia who gathered, self-organised, and mobilised in the 1960s, 70s and 80s—many of whom continue today. It is not a stretch to imagine that many of these gatherings of women took place in the domestic sphere, configured around kitchen tables, nap schedules, school hours, and the demands of paid work. For Martinis Roe, the return to the archive is a feminist strategy of care. She works directly with the "minor cultures" of feminism, mining archives and other textual sources to recreate historical affinities and glean strategies of collectivity, collaboration, and mobilisation. For writer and curator Julie Louise Bacon, "to undertake a philosophical and poetic envisaging of the archive is to characterize the archive as a set of power-relations" (Bacon 2013, 84). Martinis Roe brings a feminist perspective to the patriarchal power-relations of the archive. In *To Become Two* she extricates materials from personal and institutional archives—photographs, Super 8 footage, flyers, unauthorised translations of continental philosophy—and binds them with oral histories and scripted narrative to create what she sees as "propositions for a feminist collective practice" (Martinis Roe 2017). Martinis Roe is interested in the relations between feminist activism, political theory, sexual difference philosophy as well as the social, material, and cultural conditions from which they occurred. In its attention to objects, subjectivities, and materialities, *To Become Two* begins to chip away at the binary that places embodied or material knowledge against the static, monumentalising nature of the archive.

This article analyses *To Become Two* in order to theorise the broader feminist politics of archiving care and caring for archives. The former, archiving care, is notoriously difficult. The separation of economic production and social reproduction through systems of capital has marginalised and devalued carework within official culture and discourses. The suppression of women via unpaid reproductive labour, and the construction and privatisation of "the home" and "the family" have naturalised carework to the extent that it is largely invisible (Mies 1986). By contrast, the labour involved in constructing, and caring for, archives has been well theorised in philosophy by Jacques Derrida, who emphasised that "archivization produces as much as it records the event" (Derrida 1996, 17). Yet this too overlooks the fact that many contemporary archives are looked after by

women rather than the patriarchal gatekeepers Derrida describes. For this author, this is the limit and tension of the archive and its return in contemporary art; the often gendered labour that supports both archives and systems of care are hidden to make constructions of power seem natural. Can the ordinary and embodied experiences of care be accounted for within archives? Can archival labour be exposed as a way of undoing archival-corporeal systems of knowledge production and preservation? This paper proceeds in three parts: firstly, it considers archival discourse to theorise the archive as a place of labour, as well as a site for recording labour. In the second part, it considers the structures in place that make carework invisible and thus difficult to archive, and the work of feminist activists and artists and bring visibility to this labour. In the third section, the paper returns to Alex Martinis Roe's film installation to consider the archival strategies used by the artist which attend to the materiality of archives, as well as the material conditions of their production and preservation. This paper frames the invisibility of feminine reproductive labour within the archive, and proposes a feminist recuperation of this labour as a strategy of care.

Caring for Archives

In aspects of contemporary artistic practice and academic discourse we are continuing to experience what Foster identified in 2004 as "an archival impulse" (Foster 2004). Artists, curators, and scholars from across performance and the visual arts draw from the archive, its tensions and contradictions, as both textual material and presentation strategy. Cultural studies scholar Kate Eichhorn has recognised the importance of this reassessment of the archive for feminist theory and praxis through an approach hailed as the "archival turn in feminism" (Eichhorn 2013). Central to the archive in feminism, and feminism in the archive, is the understanding of women as central agents of the archive rather than potential subjects, as well as the acknowledgment of the subjectivity, labour, and care performed by the archivist, and their role in shaping and influencing knowledge. The main work of feminism in the archive is to undo the binaries that govern archival logic. If one conceives of archives as static and historicising entities, that which exists outside this chronology is dichotomised as ahistorical and unstable. While in reality, archives are unstable, in flux, subjective, and laborious. This misconception of the archive as stable and neutral is preserved by the invisible labour of the archivist. In what follows I extend Derrida's *Archive Fever* to consider the appeal and potential of the archive for feminism, and also to highlight the missing and invisible labour of the archivist with Derrida's theory. Like other feminist readings of *Archive Fever*, my purpose in citing it here is to push against rhetoric of the archive to usher in a feminist and user's perspective.

Despite being conceived of as a fundamental text on archival relations *Archive Fever*, and Derrida's Freudian proposition that those who experience an insatiable desire for the archive are undergoing a nostalgic longing to repeat the past, has been critiqued by many archivists working in the field, including Carolyn Steedman (2001) and Tara Hart (2015). Historians and archivists agree that it has very little to do with archives, yet it is often cited as an etymological reminder that the archive has its origins in a physical space, "a house; a domicile, an address" (the Greek *arkheion*) which was guarded by the *archons*

(magistrates) (Hart 2015). Building upon this etymology enabled Derrida to link the housing of archival materials with practices of political governance (Derrida 1996, 9). Yet archival scholarship asserts that, “very little notice is still paid by non-archivists to how the record is chosen and shaped, privileged or marginalized, by archivists’ interventions” (Cook 2001, 29). The subjective selection and maintenance of the archive transmits power and knowledge on both an individualistic and collective level, yet in order to preserve the neutrality of archives as documents of “truth” this labour is hidden.

For Derrida, archive fever “is never to rest, interminably, from searching for the archive right where it slips away. It is to run after the archive. ... It is to have a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire for the archive” (Derrida 1996, 91). As I will demonstrate, Derrida’s figure of the feverish nostalgic might resonate with readers of the archive, but it does not account for the actual labour required in the maintenance of archival practice. In what follows I briefly consider two different perspectives from sufferers of “archive fever”: that of the reader—as summoned by those great readers Roland Barthes and Virginia Woolf—as well as the contemporary archivist. In his text on archival operations, *Lives of Ordinary Men*, Foucault demonstrates how the mechanics of registration enabled testimonial and biographical recordings of commonplace lives to enter the archive. “All those things that make up the ordinary, the unimportant detail, the obscurity, the details without glory, the common life, can and must be said – better written” (Foucault 1979, 86). For Roland Barthes in *The Pleasures of the Text* reading quotidian details provides a “hallucinatory relish”, capable of transporting one to another place and time (Barthes 1975, 53). So satisfying is this kind of reading, he asks, “are there, in short, ‘minor hysterics’ (these very readers) who receive bliss from a singular theatre: not one of grandeur but one of mediocrity (might there not be dreams, fantasies of mediocrity)?” (53). On a similar subject, Virginia Woolf muses in her essay “Hours in a Library” that we are less affected by the autobiographies of the famous; it is writings of ordinary people who “confide to us their opinions, their quarrels, their aspirations, and their diseases, generally end by becoming, for the time at least, actors in those private dramas with which we beguile our solitary walks and our sleepless hours” (Woolf 1957, 20). Further to these insomniacs and minor hysterics, Steedman proposes that we consider archive fever epidemiologically rather than metaphorically. The sheer volume of materials, and their very materiality, are occupational hazards for the archivist, who are subject to breathing “by-product of all the filthy trades that have, by circuitous routes, deposited their end products in the archives” (Steedman 2001, 1171).

Caring for archives means considering the users of the archive as well as the creative and subjective labour performed by the archivist. “Returning to the past” via the archive can be an act of historical solidarity, knowledge production, historical revision, or simply an archivist doing their job. To return connotes that something is unfinished, incomplete, or ongoing; a feminist return to the archive is a project of expansion, a process of making room to account for those experiences that cannot exist wholly in the documents, that is to say the embodied experiences of daily lives that resist or deny documentation. Performance scholar Rebecca Schneider asks, “in what ways does the housing of memory in strictly material, quantifiable, domicilable remains lead both backward and forward to

the principle of the archon, the patriarch?" (2011, 99). Schneider argues for different systems of archiving could hold potential for different forms of knowledge production. Following Schneider, the archive has the potential for a radical rethinking, which proposes archives as containers of bodily-knowledge and embodied action. This proposition is taken up by archivist Tara Hart in her essay "How Do You Archive the Sky?" (2015). Hart reflects on the changing role of the archivist, their creative and subjective labour, to propose the archive as a "radically mutable site" (Hart 2015). She writes:

Rather, by assuming that archives are incomplete, archivists would make greater efforts to account for gaps and inconsistencies in the record, responding with more description, and increasing their efforts to connect different bodies of archival material, to piece together competing facts. This way, they will build more complex histories that could account for the co-existence of contradictory and multiple narratives. (Hart 2015)

Undoing the archival logic values the document over the event, holds potentials for durational, enduring or embodied experiences to enter the archive. One such "embodied" experience to be figured within the feminist archive is the domestic labour and care work performed largely by women. Perhaps the closest evidence of this kind of mediocre maintenance work can be found in the household schedules, lists, and logs—for instance the schedules of an infant's feeding times, the meal plans and the shopping lists—tasks of recording that require maintenance in and of themselves, and which when read in accumulation take on some of the texture of daily lives, yet there remains so much missing from the picture. How can this labour be fully recorded in order to enter the archive when, in the words of artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles, "it takes all the fucking time" (Ukeles 2016, 210)? For many archivists, speaking to the absences can be a form of documentation. For instance, Steedman writes "historians read for what is not there: the silences and the absences of the documents always speak to us" (2001, 1177) while Hart, quoting Lisa Darms, notes that "speaking about the gaps can also be a form of documentation" (Hart 2015). The following sections will consider some of the strategies that have been employed to address archival gaps and the invisibility of reproductive labour.

Archiving Care

While archives need a great deal of care, care itself is notoriously difficult to capture and record. The occupation of caring for dependants, whether paid or unpaid, falls under the definition of carework, as does domestic labour such as cooking and cleaning. "By deploying the term 'carework'," writes Joya Misra, "scholars and advocates emphasize the importance of recognising that care is not simply a natural and uncomplicated response to those in need, but actually hard physical, mental, and emotional work, which is often unequally distributed through society (Meyer 2000)" (Misra 2007). Marxist feminist scholars such as Silvia Federici (1975), Kathi Weeks (2017), Maria Mies (1986), and Marina Vishmidt (2011) have argued how unwaged carework has been

systematically made invisible to form the hidden measure of exchange value that underwrites the basis of capital accumulation. The radical feminist campaign, *Wages Against Housework*, emphasised the wage as both political tool and economic compensation to draw attention to the unaccounted and unremunerated hours of domestic labour performed largely by women upon which capitalism depends. It is not an accident or coincidence that care resists the logic of the archive; the system that decides and privileges what enters the archive is in opposition to the durational, embodied, affective experiences of carework. Here I consider two different strategies that intended to make visible, indeed to radicalise, the ordinariness of carework in the 1970s.

For Derrida the archive is tied to daily lives through their physical domiciliation that places them under “house arrest” (Derrida 1996, 2). Derrida visualises Freud’s last house as an archive in process, existing between house and museum: “[a]t the intersection of the topological and the nomological, of the place and the law, of the substrate and the authority, a scene of domiciliation becomes at once visible and invisible” (3). For radical feminists within the women’s liberation movement, the home was in a similar state of becoming. Yet a very different kind of “house arrest” is evoked through the *Wages* campaign which positioned women as slaves within the home, where they have “cooked, smiled, fucked throughout the years” (Cox and Federici 1975, 5). Located within the passage from the private to the public, from “one institution to another” the home was a site of political warfare (Derrida 1996, 3). The bedroom and the kitchen were opened up as spaces to fight political battles (Mies 1986). The *Wages* treatise rallied women under the cry, “behind every factory, behind every school, behind every office or mine is the hidden work of millions of women who have consumed their life, their labour power, in producing the labour power that works in that factory, school, office or mine” (Cox and Federici 1975, 5). Women’s tasks of household and personal maintenance were exposed as capitalist tools designed to reproduce the family and the home for the benefit of labour power, rather than a natural or gendered inclination towards care giving. Through what Maria Mies has called “the process of housewifization”, home and family were privatised and positioned in opposition to the “‘public’ sphere of economic and political activity” (Mies 1986, 104).² “Women were shut “into their cosy ‘homes’ from where they could not interfere in the war-mongering, moneymaking and the politicking of the men” (Mies 1986, 104). The fight for a wage is a demand that we reconsider what counts as labour in a society dependent not only on reproductive labour but also on its obfuscation.

In 1974 at New York City’s A.I.R. Gallery, the first non-profit gallery in the US founded and led by women, Mierle Laderman Ukeles performed *WASHING*. For three hours, she attempted to clean the sidewalk with buckets of water, scrubbing brushes and rags. Inherent within this three-hour task is the implication that the Brooklyn sidewalk would never be successfully ‘cleaned’. *Is it possible to clean oneself completely?* she asked in a 1978 performance, *Mikva Dreams* (see Phillips 2016, 214). The unfinished or the ongoing has continued to be a key idea in Ukeles’ celebrated oeuvre, which she self-titled “Maintenance Art”. In *The Manifesto for Maintenance Art!* published in 1969, Ukeles claimed acts of personal and household maintenance as art, and refused any distinction between the daily labour and creative practice. Ukeles’ work is often

experienced as documentation, as exemplified in her series *Private Performances of Maintenance as Art* (1970). Black and white photographs chronicle actions of care work such as *Rinsing a B.M. Diaper* and *Dusting a Baffle*, as well as the performance with her children titled *Dressing to Go Out / Dressing to Go In*. Ukeles' embodied performances exist as documents of text and photography that comply with the logic of the archive by virtue of being reduced to fragments of time. Operating on their own timescale, motherhood and housework cannot exist in the archive as anything other than fragments; they are outside of the temporalities of archival logic, as Ukeles pronounces: "[a] mother must calibrate herself to a completely different time and space... isn't that sculpture? Moving into an expanded-defined space beyond ourselves" (in Phillips 2016, 214). Ritual, duration and temporality are intertwined in the work of the artist who undertakes decades-long residencies and projects such as *Inner City Outer Space: Landfills and Transformation* (1977–ongoing). Ukeles is not interested in the experience of time as vertical, ascending and process-driven—time as experienced by her male contemporaries—she wants to “move not only ‘up’ and ‘away’; but also ‘sideways’, ‘backwards’, ‘through’ and ‘around and around’; to weave and loop as loosen up the existing structures to see them” (in Phillips 2016, 212). In other words, she treats time as fluid. Both carework and the archive exist outside of time, and yet are bound to it. Ukeles' long-term maintenance performances confound the logic of the archive and its inability to capture ongoing processes; it is only in their fragmented documentation that they can be archived.

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Radical activism is etymologically entangled with the ordinary. The expression “the ordinary people” was once synonymous with grassroots; as Raymond Williams notes in *Key Words*, the term ordinary “was often adopted, in a favourable sense, to indicate ‘the real workers’ for a party or organisation” (Williams 1976, 226). In the 1970s feminist practices of collectivity and consciousness-raising became important strategies to bring awareness to shared experiences of daily life. This kind of grassroots activism has ordinariness at its core. For women, common ground and shared disillusion with their everyday experiences provided the impetus to mobilise and the *Wages* campaign and work of artists such as Ukeles succeeded in bringing visibility to unwaged domestic labour. Yet these embodied experiences of unending duration still resist the archival logic. The sense of these activities being in and of time, is absent from normative archives. Following the argument of Hart and Schneider, outlined in the previous section, a radical rethinking of the archive would allow for expanded concepts of not only enters an archive, but what constitutes an archive. “We could say that the kitchen table provides the kind of surface on which women tend to work. To use the table that supports domestic work to do political work (including the work that makes explicit the politics of domestic work) is a reorientation device,” writes Sara Ahmed (2006, 62). For Ahmed, the ordinary experience of gathering around a kitchen table can be reoriented towards political work, and with this reorientation the table carries (archives) the marks of the familial and the radical. Ukeles similarly used domestic surfaces on which to carry out

her political art/work, reorienting the daily maintenance of caring for young children as act of artistic production, as well as reproduction.



Fig. 2 Alex Martinis Roe, *To Become Two*, installation view at The Showroom, London, 2017. Exhibition design in collaboration with Fotini Lazaridou-Hatzigoga. Poster series in collaboration with Chiara Figone. Photo Daniel Brooke

The Work of Alex Martinis Roe and *To Become Two*

A generation later and a continent away, what does it mean for Australian artist Alex Martinis Roe to try and archive care and to care for these lost feminist archives? Since her 2010 project, *Free Associations*, Martinis Roe has been exploring the relationship between feminist theory and praxis as well as the tensions between lived experience and their textual or archival record. Her most recent project, *To Become Two*, was co-produced by If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution (Amsterdam); ar/ge Kunst (Bolzano); Casco – Office for Art, Design and Theory (Utrecht); and The Showroom (London), and consisted of five films, an installation, posters, and a series of workshops. Relations between the films, the participants, and the documents, and the communities around the exhibition spaces, unfolded anew with each iteration.³

To Become Two traced the crossovers and the borrowing of ideas, philosophies, and the relations of trust and support between five feminist groups, including the Milan Women's Bookstore Collective, Psychanalyse et Politique based out of Paris, Women's Studies at Utrecht University, a network of people who were part of the Sydney Women's Film

Group and General Philosophy at Sydney University in the late 70s and early 80s, and a milieu in Barcelona including Duoda and Ca La Dona (Martinis Roe 2017a). To create each film, Martinis Roe travelled to the physical interior-architectural spaces in Utrecht, Barcelona, Sydney, Milan, and Paris where the groups and/or their archives reside. The camera work of each of these films is scripted: consisting of close-ups of hands turning pages of books, location shots, bodies in architectural and interiors spaces. The content of the films combines archival and textual materials with oral history interviews and staged reconstructions of meetings or lectures. Through her work Martinis Roe generates new archives in a double act of documenting and imagining. In an interview with Mousse magazine about her project, Martinis Roe explains:

I worked directly with these groups and a younger generation around them using various methods, including participant observation, oral history interviewing, archival research, and collaborative social practices, with the aim of performatively bringing about new collective practices through the act of storytelling. In each film I also explored the interior architectural spaces that were used and created by these groups as a meditation on the agency of the material setup of their political practices. (Martinis Roe 2017b).

By attending to the material systems Martinis Roe exposes the mechanisms and apparatuses used by each group, citing Foucault's concept of *le dispositif* (Martinis Roe 2017a). *Le dispositif* is commonly translated to mean apparatuses, for Foucault it is about the said "as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements" (Foucault 1980, 194).

In the opening of her book *Queer Phenomenology*, Ahmed considers the material conditions that make work possible, such as the table, the paper, and the chair that are essential to writing or a "room of one's own" (2006, 3, 34 61; she is, of course, referencing Audre Lorde and Virginia Woolf). For Ahmed, attending to the materiality of objects is a feminist act, as she argues that the erasure of the materiality of objects generates the fantasy of a paperless Philosophy. This fantasy can be "understood as crucial not only to the gendered nature of the occupation of philosophy but also to the disappearance of political economy, of the 'materials' of philosophy as well as its dependence on forms of labor, both domestic and otherwise" (34). Martinis Roe's sixth film within the *To Become Two* project, *Our Future Network*, takes a different structure than the five other films. It is constructed around the "enactment of 20 'propositions for feminist collective practice'," each proposition was developed between the artist and contributor from one of the feminist networks explored in the other films. In bringing together this network Martinis Roe aimed to develop new collective practices to ask: "what can we learn from the political, theoretical and aesthetic practices developed within and among the historical feminist collectives in the *To Become Two* project, and how can we adapt these practices to our own needs, desires and contexts?" (Martinis Roe 2017a). One proposition was "a room of female references" drawing from Milan

Women's Bookstore collective referencing Woolf. One participant in the video reads the following quote:

Virginia Woolf maintained that in order to do intellectual work one needs a room of one's own, however it might be difficult to keep still and apply one's self if paralysed by emotions which have no corresponding terms in language. The room of one's own must be understood differently then, as a space-time furnished with female-gendered references where one goes for meaningful preparation before work and confirmation after.

The participants each selected object from which to build their room, and these are displayed on a shelf in the installation as archival fragments.



Fig. 3 Alex Martinis Roe, *To Become Two*, installation view at The Showroom, London, 2017. Exhibition design in collaboration with Fotini Lazaridou-Hatzigoga. Poster series in collaboration with Chiara Figone. Photo Daniel Brooke

The Milan Women's collective is just one of many spectral voices of in Martinis Roe's practice. The presence and influence of feminist materialist philosopher Luce Irigaray also runs throughout several works. Correspondence between the artist and the philosopher was established via an earlier work, titled *Genealogies; Frameworks for Exchange*, where Martinis Roe proposed a conversation between Irigaray and new materialist Elizabeth Grosz as an "embodied theoretical exchange" via an online video conference (Martinis Roe 2017a). Irigaray declined but a postcard addressed to the artist was displayed as part

of the exhibition. Irigaray's politics of sexual difference, as well as her practice of *mimesis*, is a central device for Martinis Roe as Andrea Bell has noted (Bell 2012, 88). Bell demonstrates how Irigaray employed strategies of repetition to bring awareness to the mechanisms "through which language and thought perform its normative operation" in order to make visible what would otherwise remain invisible. In a similar way, Martinis Roe brings attention to the mechanisms of reading and speaking, making visible the systems through which feminist collective knowledge and affinities are formed. For Irigaray and other sexual difference feminists, the erasure of difference can lead to the "disappearance of the subject under the sign of the universal" (Ahmed 2006, 34). Language and culture operate under the "universal" male, charading as neutral. This difference has no place in Derrida's archive, who argues that the archive must "articulate the unity of an ideal configuration" (Derrida 1996, 3). Martinis Roe accounts for this difference by drawing speculative thought, subjective acts of storytelling, oral histories, and intergenerational relations into the processes of archiving.

Irigaray concludes her book *This Sex Which is Not One* with a manifesto of sorts, titled "When Our Lips Speak Together" (1985). In emphasising the feminine sex and self as multiple and manifold, this final chapter celebrates and reclaims sexual difference. Of men, she wrote: "Let's leave *one* to them: their oneness, with its prerogatives, its domination, its solipsism: like the sun's" (Irigaray 1985, 207). Using the metaphor of speech, Irigaray implores women to "hurry and invent our own phrases", to rupture the language of sameness by redefining ourselves outside of the patriarchal structure (215). "The familiar scenes, worn-out phrases" that have dominated life under patriarchy must be replaced with the new language of women's bodies (206). Images of lips, labia, and kissing are used to illustrate points of female connection and collectivity. She continues: "Don't cry. One day we will manage to say ourselves. And what we say will be even lovelier than our tears. Wholly fluent" (216). Irigaray names a desire to be universally understood, to exist in an alternate future where the absence of translation between women creates harmony between listening and speaking, language and the body. Etymologically derived from the Latin word for flow, her use of the word fluent implies a natural and formless movement towards knowing oneself, becoming whole, and is a means to disrupt "the ebb and flow of our lives spent in the exhausting labour of copying, miming" (207). The title Martinis Roe's *To Become Two* is a textual echo of Irigaray's proposition for feminine unity alongside the acknowledgment and maintenance of disparity and difference. Irigaray claims that women need a whole new language in order to be heard. What potentials does a new language hold for the embodied archive? And why has Martinis Roe chosen to return to this language now?

Textual citation and language feature heavily in Martinis Roe's work, with textual documents presented as revered artefacts. She situates her work in "the genealogy of my own feminist formation – the ideas, books, and people who have shaped my knowledge and methods" (AQNB, 2017). In earlier works such as *The Practice of Doing* (2012–13), which Martinis Roe identifies as a precursor to *To Become Two*, reading was built into the formal staging of her work (Martinis Roe, pers. comm). Animating text scrolled across screen while a recorded voice read out loud the English translation. She displayed the

Milan Women's Bookstore Collective collectively authored book, *Don't Think You Have Any Rights* alongside the English translation: *The Practice of Sexual Difference and Feminist Thought in Italy: An Introductory Essay* as generous 'footnote' to the viewer. Other strategies for dealing with text and citation include displaying stacks of borrowed library books as "vertical relations", filming hands turning pages in books, panning a camera lens over activist printed material. Martinis Roe offers text in the same way a friend or influential teacher offers a reading list, bringing the viewer onto the same page. In these ways Martinis Roe attends to the materiality of the archive, and the treatment of so much text instills a mode of reading in the viewer. Martinis Roe explores what is, and can be, generated through interrelations between people, time, and texts. Her work explores the effects of the interpersonal and inter-relational; how documents, records, and people can rub up against one another and generate new relations. Also of concern is how knowledge is transmitted inside and outside of the archive, whilst also recognising that histories can only ever be partial, never complete.

Conclusion

There is an inherent paradox within the archive. Its logic determines a reliance on materials—those dossiers of daily life and governmental authority—yet as Hart argues, those very materials defy the hierarchical classification systems, and furthermore the material conditions that produce and determine what enters the archive are only recently beginning to be reflected in archival practices. Ahmed's queer phenomenology reminds us to consider the conditions of production; to resist the 'fantasy of a paperless philosophy', and instead invest in the domicile and its material occupants—the table, the paper—as sites of power. For Martinis Roe the archive is used as both the means of production and display to create an interface between the present and the un(der)recorded past. Her various presentation strategies are a way to reorient the ordinary objects and spaces of organising. Her gestures of reorientation enable her to consider material conditions and *dispositives* central to systems of care and support. The repetition of the archive is used to access and reprise a previous time, but with a sense of nostalgia that is angled towards the future. Driving her work is the question of what might be unearthed for future generations through new experiences of collective knowledge? Martinis Roe's project demonstrates the importance of material histories and material remains—both physical and digital. The (re)turn to the archive is made richer through access to the subjectivity of the author and archivist, the processes, feelings and care of the archive's assembly and preservation.

Notes

1. It is not the focus of this paper to consider the complex idiom of self-care, but I would like to acknowledge its current prevalence in popular culture. For a critique of self-care's dilution from a radical act of "political warfare" (Audre Lorde) to a touchstone of neoliberal feminisms' drive for upwards mobility, see Sara Ahmed (2014).

2. Mies has convincingly argued how the process of housewifization was a strategy of the European bourgeoisies, who domesticated and ideologically manipulated women into wifhood and motherhood (1986).

3. From this body of work, only the three-channel video *It was about opening up the notion that there was a particular perspective* (2015-17) was shown in Sydney, as part of the major exhibition *The National: New Australian Art*.

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