Unearthing Traces

Dismantling imperialist entanglements of archives, landscapes, and the built environment

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A Meeting that Begins in Silence

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Realizing the difficulty of alternative and intermediary artistic spaces to create narratives of their singular experiences, as well as the necessity of disseminating such information, I decided to use my own archival work as an artist and researcher to highlight the ways in which feminist and decolonial approaches are used in archives. I employ here my work with the collective *La Déviation,* conducted between 2019 and 2021 in the outskirts of Marseille as a point of departure. Through this text, I attempt to bring comprehension to *who* and *what* constitutes an archive—and how it can be used to provide the constitution of a "culture of forebears."[1] Furthermore, how can this be favorable to collective modes of life that have simultaneously emerged from both artistic practice and a contextual rooting that can be qualified as "emplaced."[2]

Minutes of the meetings at *La Déviation*: a singular archive for collaborative work

Since 2019, I have been conducting a portion of my doctoral research at *La Déviation*, formerly the working ateliers of the Lafarge cement factory, located on the heights of L'Estaque, Marseille.[3] Since 2015, *La Déviation*

was first rented and then collectively purchased by a group made up of artists, with a view to establishing a space for living and artistic research founded upon the principles of autonomy, self-governance, and communal living. In addition to the material provided over the course of my residency there, the collective gave me access to a considerable collection of documents in their possession that they make accessible to their members through a database platform.[4] Amongst the available body of materials related to the operation of the project, I decided to focus upon the notes taken during the regular meetings held by the group since they first occupied the space.[5]

The assiduous frequency and intensity of the collective's meetings, and the resultant proliferation of minutes was far from unusual given the practice of collectives, whether artistic or political, to view a horizontal approach to decision-making as utopian, crucial, and desirable. However, the ways in which the *La Déviation* collective made use of this discursive space, traditionally associated with militant morphologies, is of interest to me.[6] The group's meetings provided them with an opportunity to experiment with a collective practice they referred to as *parrhesia*. *Parrhesia* is a concept that dates back to Ancient Greece and refers to the concept of candid speech or truth telling. It was also employed by Michel Foucault, during a conference he held at the University of Grenoble in 1982, as a key concept regarding the genealogy of the modern notion of "care for the self."[7] The practice of *parrhesia* led to systematic, assiduous, and conscientious notetaking on the part of the group.

Initially, *parrhesia* is presented as a tool for resolving or preventing conflicts. During the meetings, each of the participants in turn is invited to freely express whatever individual or intimate thoughts are crossing their minds and propose an analysis of sorts. Broadly speaking, it is over the course of these meetings that the nature, form, and aims of the project are discussed, from the organization of activities and daily life to the philosophical and political questions that inform those activities. I have never directly taken part in these sessions, so it is impossible for me to describe them in detail. To that end, I had Mélanie Métier, a former inhabitant and active member of *La Déviation*, reread this article as I was writing it and she encouraged me to use terms she provided, in order to accurately describe and evoke this very

singular practice of the *La Déviation* collective. In her words, these group experiences elicit a sort of tension:

> Perhaps one should describe this exercise concretely: a group of approximately ten people (up to twenty for major events) gather in a circle in a vast space within the *La Déviation* complex. Silence is maintained, sometimes for several minutes, giving each person time to reflect before speaking. It's important to describe the ambiance that reigns, the looks exchanged and the tensions that are felt before even a word is spoken. It's a very beautiful space which I have always loved, and several of us stand firmly in it, but it can also be a very difficult space, one that is feared by some of our members, who have shared this on several occasions. Some are afraid of speaking up, others of going blank, etc.[8]

The practice of *parrhesia* is far more than the mere creation of a space for managing internal, collective, and interpersonal tensions within the group. It is also a tool for the collective and reflexive practice of "productive criticism."[9] Above all, it is intended to provide an open and productive space where even antagonistic and argumentative dialogue can take place regarding the manner in which the group collectively shapes and develops the project.[10] On the contrary, the pitfall to avoid would be for the collective to end up in a "quagmire without conflict" through attempting to appease and avoid tensions.[11]

On this score, the archival material produced by these meetings is a precious resource. All the more so because the format of the notes taken in these minutes does not merely consist of a transcript which, from an external, synthesizing viewpoint, would be assumed to follow the ins and outs of a given discussion to its resolution.[12] On the contrary, the process seeks to preserve individual input with precision, along with opposing views, agreements and disagreements, deadlocks and deviations, all of which come together to reveal the twists and turns that occur at the heart of a group at a given moment.

The minutes can be accessed and modified online, and for those who read them, they reveal a space that can be qualified as a "reconnection" (*reliance*) according to Marcel Balle de Bol. He describes "reconnection" as a space, or rather a mediating agent, which enables people to create or reforge, to establish or reestablish links between themselves and a social group to which they

belong. In short, to reactivate their sense of belonging to this group, even if they are momentarily absent from it.[13] Nevertheless, while the summaries can give those who were absent the feeling of participating in the life of the collective as it is unfolding in the space, the group members are acutely conscious of the operational limits of such a "reconnection." Consequently, the summaries are taken for what they are, that is to say, a retranscription, a reformulation, one which already constitutes a layer of translation of events that occurred in real time, a step removed from the event itself.[14]

I created an inventory of this large collection of documents in the form of an Excel spreadsheet. This spreadsheet systematically records the date and subjects covered in the notes of the meeting in question. The note-taking I did follows the threads of the text, using questions that were part of my own research as a guideline. This type of metadata, of archival representation, is subjective and situated, sprinkled with my commentaries, my notes for later on, and other comments addressed to myself. Here and there lie my *fingerprints.*[15] In fact, I did not seek to produce a neutral, detached, or exhaustive description of the materials made available to me. In the first place, it was a matter of creating a navigation tool that would provide a mnemonic aid so that I could better find my way amidst this voluminous collection. It was only once I had completed cataloguing the inventory that I fully realized its narrative power, and the way in which it tells a certain story about *La Déviation*.

On the importance of storytelling

In their work *Micropolitique des groupes: pour une écologie des pratiques collectives,* Thierry Müller, Olivier Crabbé, and David Vercauteren have set themselves the goal of offering a tool to both present and future collectives to enable them to find their bearings among the sometimes conflictual processes they use.[16] The work wends its way through a "mosaic of situations and problems." It does not propose solutions, but rather provides a blueprint, in the manner of Fernand Deligny, of problems and questions.[17]

As an introduction to their work and a means of putting the way in which collectives usually keep records of their activities in perspective, the authors begin by

examining two groups linked to the writing of collective memories.[18] On the one hand are historians: the quote about them also implies that their exterior and dominant position would diminish the collectives' ability to tell their own story in their own words.[19] On the other hand, there are forebears: here the term refers to those who came before, and who call forth memory. Using both the major and minor stories of the group, they are in a position to "[transmit] pragmatic ways in which to construct a common future."[20] Although the authors refer to this figure, it is far from certain that someone takes on that role among militant Western cultures. In their view, the absence of forebears is the problem here, rather than their exteriority. Accordingly, *Micropolitique des groupes* ("The Micropolitics of Groups") opens by presenting a deficiency. Both figures point out, each from their particular perspective, the recurring pitfall among collectives of not creating an active "culture of forebears" that can be shared, one that would nourish and propagate their own experiences. Other disadvantages include the compiling of narratives by people external to the collective who, deprived of first-hand experience, struggle to express elements worthy of retention. Yet another problem is the very absence of preservation of such elements, as well as the circulation of these elements for the purpose of "supporting cultures of a collective nature."[21]

All this at a time when the art of storytelling,[22] and even more so, the ability to disseminate such tales, is no longer uniquely a powerful initiative used in neoliberal practice, but an equally powerful means of transmission, and thus, of survival, of attempts to come together to work together in common cause in alternative ways.[23] It is essential for people who work daily to formulate and implement alternative ways of being in the world in order to have the ability to convert their experience into a narrative. These narratives have the performative power to convey, demonstrate, and transform those who hear them.[24]

Many collective experiments whose temporality is often of an ephemeral or frenetic nature are not inclined to work to create this culture of forebears, but the issue is singularly brought to the fore in the case of alternative or intermediary art spaces,[25] which are simultaneously the product of artistic practices and of a spatial foundation that can be qualified as "emplaced."[26] The way artists *font lieu* ("create space") has been identified and

defined as of the early 2000s as constituting the new frontiers of art by artistic and cultural institutions.[27] Today, the paths of these initiatives have become invisible and have fallen silent, drowned out by the dominant discourses rich in a mixed bag of expressions, such as "cultural wastelands," which tends to genericize them under an umbrella of a communal and presumably joyous experience of transitional urbanism and the rehabilitation of urban industrial areas.[28] Consequently, creating an accurate narrative and transmitting their experiences is currently a major challenge for these spaces and these groups, one they must meet so that their critical dimension can exist and operate beyond the limits of their own worlds.

Creating an archive: Towards the constitution of a culture of forebears?

This question of the creation of a narrative and the transmission of experiences was at the heart of a conference in which the *La Déviation* collective took part, *Archives Communes pour des Lieux Hors du Commun* ("Common Archives for Uncommon Spaces"), held in November 2019 at the former squat Le Rivoli 59 in Paris.[29] Two curators, Lucie Camous[30] and Vincent Prieur,[31] assembled representatives of twenty intermediary art spaces, inviting them to present a selection of their archives in the form of a documentary exhibition, and participate in a series of round table discussions. The first of these discussions, "What Archives are Possible in Alternative Spaces?," was more specifically dedicated to the various ways in which the assembled collectives produced their own archives.

Although it was not explicitly stated, the proposition formulated by the curators to consider the collective and autonomous methods of archive generation resulted in a major reversal in the ways in which we generally regard archival work and designate *what* constitutes an archive. This reversal to some extent includes a feminist and decolonial approach to archives, such as the one advocated by archivist Michelle Caswell in her work "Dusting for Fingerprints."[32] Caswell invites us to rethink the role of those who are tasked with identifying elements that have value as archives by circumventing the supposedly unassuming, objective, and neutral position conferred on them by institutions. A position that, in the field of historiographical knowledge, contributes to

preserving the currently dominant operational processes, which tend in the name of this alleged objectivity to silence or exclude the voices of all those whom one could consider *sans parts* (disenfranchised) according to Jacques Rancière.[33] According to Caswell, an archivist, working rather from a situated, critical standpoint, can become the means of transmission that would provide communities with the capacity to produce their own archives and, as a result, appropriate their own historiography.

It would then seem, if we follow Caswell's lead, that collectives should rethink their groups to ensure that they make a place for an archivist, situated somewhere between the historians and the forebears. The role of the archivist is not so much to write their history as it is to identify the heterogeneous materials that might be of use in the writing of that history, according to Shannon Faulkhead.[34] In her view, the archive is not merely evidence of something to someone, but, rather, in a wider sense, a "springboard for memory."[35] Thus, their raison d'être is linked to the preservation and *maintenance* of these selected materials, to use the terms of American artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles.[36] These functions place the archivist in their rightful position of interiority/exteriority in relation to the community. They must preserve artifacts that perpetuate the effective and active aspects of the group's actions from a position of a forebear, on the "periphery" of the group, and yet within its bounds.[37]

To return to the conference held on November 2, 2019, and the question it posed, namely if and how intermediary spaces could produce their own archives, the participants put forth a certain number of arguments pertaining to the very nature of the action and archival nature of such conservation work. The fear was that the very nature of such preservation implies a sense of fixing or freezing elements that should, on the contrary, in order to retain their active and alternative "freshness," remain fluid and experiential. The fear is that this would infer forms of institutionalization that would be difficult to negotiate for such intermediary spaces. While the inherent risks of this institutionalization requires a nuanced treatment that would necessitate more than the space allotted for this article, it is inevitable that some forms of archival work entail the capture and commodification of collective memory by external actors, whether they be institutional, artistic,

or commercial.[38] This is in any case the conclusion one might reach when observing the frenetic archiving in the heat of the moment of the 2011 Occupy Wall Street movement by museums and other US groups involved with the art scene under the pretext that "Occupy is sexy."[39] As stated in an article published by the *New York Daily News*, an "archive group" had been set up by activists with the aim of literally providing shelter for hundreds of signs, posters, flyers, magazines, fanzines, and other documents in order to prevent the co-opting of the history of the movement by the views and the voices of institutions and companies.

Sharing the experience of intermediary artistic spaces: An impossibility?

It would appear that intermediary artistic spaces face several obstacles. Apart from the powerful process of capturing critical margins, which is an integral part of neoliberal capitalism, there are other, more endogenous obstacles to the work of creating narratives and a political history of their experiences.[40] The very artistic field in which these collectives work practice—from which they "make politics, even when what they create is anything but"[41]—seems to make the possibility of creating a true commonality of experience particularly delicate. As a matter of fact, the morphology and syntax of public debate make it difficult to precisely record "a political reality that is constituted independently of the mode upon which it is usually and classically expected, one that does not declare itself as expressly political, but which nevertheless well and truly acts in those terms."[42]

Over the course of the project he led in 2007 with members of the ARTfactories/autre(s)pARTs network,[43] sociologist Pascal Nicolas-Le Strat shared the conviction of artists that there would be two major risks to their practice and to intermediary artistic spaces when distilling their experiences into narratives. The first would be an "excessive and abusive generalization" which would deprive their experiences of the singularity conferred by their artistic intent. The second would be a confiscation, from and by the reified and reifying figure of the artist, of words and memories that also belong to others.[44]

On both sides, whatever their nature, form, or reach, the collective real-life experiences from the field of artistic practices, caught between the constantly reformulated question of the autonomy of art and a hackneyed representation of the *artist-person* as a regime of exception, would seem to be condemned to remain out of the common realm.[45] A knotty situation if there ever was one, and one which Nicolas-Le Strat invites us to examine with a view to implementing a policy of narrative that eludes and limits the effects of hierarchization that possibly come into play once artistic practices are conceived and deployed in a socially committed manner.[46]

Archives and/or documentation: Recording a narrative as a process of neutralization

If, for a moment, we take a look upstream from the writing of collective histories in the field of archives, we can see that although these different hypotheses make up the germ of an answer to the difficulty intermediary artistic venues have in recording their own experiences, they perhaps fail to underline the way in which the archival gesture is equivalent to, or in any case is similar to that which, in the field of art, is part of the action of *documentation*.

Let's consider documentation, which in the field of art consists of the following: 1) producing traces of the works with a view to making them visible and lending them an existence beyond their allocated time of exhibition; 2) sometimes producing the work itself in the field of "art in common" when the documentation in the exhibition space comes to translate and sometimes substitute itself for that which has been played elsewhere and at another time;[47] or 3) having the document serve as an object or space that enables one to perform an experiment of an esthetic or poetic nature that would challenge the traditional partition of knowledge between the arts and sciences.[48] Consequently, this act of documentation seems to be virtually omnipresent in the contemporary context, both at the heart of creative works as well as on their margins.[49] Therefore, the fact that intermediary artistic spaces collectively appropriate the question of the writing of their history, in a context that widely substantiates the archival or documentary tendencies of art, is far from insignificant.[50]

Indeed, this turning point seems to have given rise to extreme forms of a sort of "taxidermization" of collective practices linked to communal living. One example is *Infinite Spaces (Lieux Infinis)*, the curatorial proposal of the architecture collective Encore Heureux for the French pavilion at the 22nd Venice Architecture Bienniale in 2018. The Pavilion was inaugurated with a large and imposing installation[51] made up of objects from all ten spaces represented in the exhibition, which were chosen according to processes of selection, sampling, and extraction, all of which are intrinsic to archival work.[52]

Set above the viewers, these individuated objects, organized according to criteria that seem to be both spatial and formal, were removed from the contexts of their use and the network of gestures, of the handling that renders them both familiar and part of the quotidian that they normally inhabit.[53] As a result, these objects were reduced to their mere materiality, and thus commodified, one might even say desubstantialized.[54] Thus conceived and curated under the auspices of an installation that—to appropriate Till Roeskens' term *dé-terrestrer*—"de-grounded"[55] the artifacts presented, it would seem that the scripting as narrative, as Yves Citton refers to it, or more generally speaking the representation here, does not so much risk an institutionalization of collective experience but rather the neutralization of the objects' emancipatory potential through their very curation.

From what I have described so far in the text, one might fear that the emancipatory potential of daily lives, artifacts, practices, actions, and customs are only to be truly lived by the happy few who directly participate in them, since some types of narrative adaptations would almost definitely relegate them to the margins of a wider commonality. Paradoxically, it may seem that the narrative itself plays a key role in the constitution of a form of communalization one could describe as "affinity." This communalization transcends the contours of the collective or the space in question, touching and moving people who have not directly had the same experiences.[56] As a palpable vehicle of shared references, feeling, or even ties of familiarity, in effect the narrative transforms the experiences into a series of symbolic common spaces, within which links of attachment are forged even as the possibilities of a wide range of uses is maintained.[57] The telling and transmission of stories relating to a group or place thus contributes to

making these singular experiences a basis for communalization, centering notions of proximity and affinity within the heart of political and social ties.[58]

Therefore, the archival space should be occupied not merely as a place of documentation or for rendering experiences visible, but as a strategic space for the formulation of counter-histories that challenge the neoliberal precept that "There's no Alternative," as well as in the field of art with its "devitalizing" installations[59] of forms of communal life. This is also crucial because it enables intermediary artistic spaces to review the singular experiences they have had, the better to communicate and disseminate them in a manner that remains active and relevant. The capacity of groups to perform this reflective review of their own history is actually a condition for the possibility of generating grassroots politics—and subsequently history—from the bottom up, based directly upon a "meshing of experiences and experimentations" and not a putative objective overview, distanced and neutral.[60]

This is precisely the direction taken by the research work undertaken by sociologists such as Thomas Arnera, who are bridging the fields of humanities and the arts to "reformulate the archival experience" based on the places themselves, their spatiality, and the practices performed therein.[61] This is also what I have attempted to do at *La Déviation*, through my inventory of meeting minutes of in-depth sessions held by the group since 2015.

The inventory as a space for ongoing critical work

After my perusal (*dépouillement*)[62] of the archive as described above, I presented the resulting inventory to the group over the course of an informal residence outing on February 18, 2021. On this occasion, I presented the members with a modifiable digital copy of the spreadsheet so that they could make use of it. Viewed from the standpoint of my position—as an artist who had been invited to a residency in the space, and as a researcher who had been granted access to the memorial materials of the group—which placed me within the space of the collective, the creation of this archival meta-material extends the dynamic of reconnection instigated by the systematic and conscientious minutes that the members of *La Déviation* produced.

In returning it back to the group, it is also an attempt to circumvent forms of (re)presentations of memorial materials that, in the realm of art, provide matter for a devitalized installation on the forms of communal life.

Apart from its usefulness for my own research, I produced this inventory solely for the group and feel that its use should remain entirely at their discretion. While this inventory contributes to rendering the volume of documents it describes less opaque, it is not in my purview to decide whether it should be made public and accessible to others. The materials hold traces of statements, conflicts, and breaks which may occasionally not be resolved by the people who experienced them. In this respect it is fragile and delicate, and should not be released to others without the unanimous consent of the parties concerned.

Apart from this essential precaution, the fact of first presenting the fruits of this archival work to the group or the community from which the archives emanated attests to the intent to render it a tool for critical reflection specifically for the group or community in question. The inventory, like any other form of archival metadata, is already a re-reading, an interpretation, the creation of a narrative of the archive itself, as indicated by Samia Henni at the *Unearthing Traces* conference.[63] This enables one to "resocialize the archive" to resituate the traces of its own history at the heart of the networks of socialization endemic to a community, making them actors in real time. As a result, by facilitating the group's access to its own history, my intention here is to have the inventory be more than an instrument of research that describes and communicates the content of the archive. I hope that the way in which it constitutes a narrative will engender its own open space of critical discussion, one that contributes to the constitution of a "culture of forebears" particular to this place and group. I also hope that this inventory might, on a wider level, address itself to artistic and occupying alternatives. Once there has been an internal review of the results regarding the situations that have existed or do exist among the members of *La Déviation*, other people and other groups can make use of them and actualize them in the here-and-now of their communal practices and in terms of the questions particular to them. This is the patient sedimentation of knowledge and savoir-faire at work.

At the time I am writing these lines, I still do not know whether the *La Déviation* collective has appropriated this tool and, if they have, what use they have made of it. However, there is no doubt that the long and inexorable process of sedimentation is currently underway.

Mathilde Chénin is a visual artist whose work emphasizes versions over finished forms, with collaboration being a key component of her research. She explores the collective space within which one exists and comes together to work through a concept of expanded writing practices that navigates between bodies, techniques, and language. Her oeuvre is an elaboration that incorporates different kinds of systems, from immaterial and utopian architectures to genealogies, scores and other large collective objects. Chénin has been developing her work over the course of research residencies (La Box, 2013; ESACM Research Cooperative, 2014—2015) and transdisciplinary collectives (One Metaphorical Institute 2015—2018; MACSUP, MAC Lyon, 2020—2021). Her work has been presented at the Nouveau Festival (Centre Pompidou, 2015), the BF15 (Lyon, 2016), Galerie CAC (Noisy-le-Sec, 2015), the Salon de Montrouge (2017), and the FRAC PACA (2018). In 2016, in collaboration with artists Maxime Bondu and Guillaume Robert, curator Bénédicte Le Pimpec, and computer programmer Julien Griffit, Chénin cofounded Project bermuda, a site that features shared studios for artistic production and research (Sergy, FR). In 2022, she obtained a PhD in sociology focusing on the grammars of "the commonality in the plural" such as they are composed at the crossroads between a "living together" and a "working as an artist", at HES-SO HEAD—Genève and the Laboratoire de Sociologie Urbaine, EPFL Lausanne.

1 David Vercauteren, *Micropolitique des groupes. Pour une écologie des pratiques collectives* (HB Politiques, 2007), 1.

2 See Laura Centemeri, "Entre expertises et émotions: les conflits relatifs à l'extension de l'aéroport de Milan Malpensa," *Émotions et Expertises* (Rennes: PUR, 2015), 127—46. core.ac.uk/download/pdf/52435968.pdf.

3 Doctoral research (advisor Luca Pattaroni and Olivier Desvoignes, HEAD-Genève) spanning artistic practice and urban sociology. The aim was to reveal the dynamics between two regimes of engagement that are "inhabiting" and "creating": these are distinct modes and yet so necessary to each other. The areas of participant observation in the research are three communal living and art spaces that provide artistic residencies: La Déviation, Marseille (www.ladeviation.org/); Moly-Sabata, Sablons (www.moly-sabata.com/); bermuda, Sergy (http://bermuda.pm/).

4 I completed three tours of research at La Déviation between October 2019 and February 2021, each for the duration of a week according to the methods of an observer-participant. On each occasion, I requested a residence, outlining the object of my research, the time required for my stay, as well as the workspaces I wished to occupy. The requests were made according to the operating methods in use at the time and were subject to change over the entire course of the period. During my stays, like all the other artists in residence, I was lodged in a caravan placed at my disposal; I took part in collective meals twice a day and participated in the tasks related to the self-management of the collective (collective housekeeping chores; cooking at least one communal meal; participation in a technical meeting). I made a financial contribution for the occupation of the spaces, operational costs, and meals. In terms of workspaces, I used the communal kitchen and office. Each of my stays provided the occasion for a presentation of the ongoing research to members who were interested upon the end of my residencies.

5 A total of 282 summaries of meetings, both technical and in-depth.

6 See Luca Pattaroni, *Politique de la responsabilité: promesses et limites d'un monde fondé sur l'autonomie*. Geneva: University of Geneva, E.H.E.S.S, 2005 and Desvoignes, Olivier, *Blackboards Were Turned into Tables: Questioning "Horizontality" in Collaborative Pedagogical Art Projects*, PhD thesis, London, London University of the Arts, 2015, ualresearchonline.arts.ac.uk/8730/.

7 Regarding the notion of parrhesia, as interpreted by Michel Foucault as part of the genealogy of the disciplinary processes linked to the truths we tell ourselves, see Michel Foucault, "La Parrêsia." Anabases [online] 16 (2012): 157—88, journals.openedition.org/anabases/3959; and DOI: doi.org/10.4000/anabases.3959.

8 Commentary on present article, sent on 25/09/2021.

9 On the notion of "productive criticism," see Judith Butler, "Qu'est-ce que la critique? Essai sur la vertu selon Foucault," in *Penser avec Michel Foucault*, ed. Marie-Christine Granjon (Paris: Karthala, Recherches Internationales, 2005), 73—104, www.cairn.info/penser-avec-michel-foucault---page-73.htm.

10 See Chantal Mouffe, "Artistic Activism and Agonistic Spaces," *Art&Research* 1, no. 2 (2007), www.artandresearch.org.uk/v1n2/mouffe.html.

11 Minutes of the meeting of November 8, 2015, La Déviation. For more on the active dimension of conflict, see Sarah Schulman, *Le conflit n'est pas une agression: rhétorique de la souffrance, responsabilité collective et devoir de réparation* (Paris: Payot Culture, 2021).

12 The taking of notes is done by several people over the course of a same meeting. Consequently, their qualities fluctuate and vary depending on each notetaker: some decide upon a faithful word-for-word transcription, others prefer to reformulate.

13 Marcel Bolle de Bal, "Reliance, déliance, liance: emergence de trois notions sociologiques," *Sociétés* 2, no. 80 (2003): 99—131, www.cairn.info/revue-societes-2003-2-page-99.htm

14 The curfew that was then in force in France had long passed when M. and I began discussing the events that caused such disturbance over the course of the summer of 2020, and which resulted, a few months later, in major changes at the heart of the group. For my part, I became acquainted with the course of these events and the reactions they provoked through the minutes of the meeting of July 5, 2020, that of the Extraordinary General Assembly on July 27, 2020, and the meeting of September 13, 2020. While I provide my feelings about the various exchanges whose transcriptions I could read, M. reminded me that, despite my meticulous reading of the summaries, they were a million miles away from what actually took place and that I could not pretend to formulate an informed opinion about these events. She specified that, for her part, she accepted the fact that, "when she is not there, she is not there," and that her absence did not enable her to know what was, or was not, going on in the group.

15 The expression is borrowed from Michelle Caswell, "Dusting for Fingerprints: Introducing Feminist Standpoint Appraisal," in eds. Elvia Arroyo-Ramirez, Jasmine Jones, Shannon O'Neill, and Holly Smith, *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies*, vol. 3. Radical Empathy in Archival Practice no. 1 (2019), journals.litwinbooks.com/index.php/jclis/article/view/113/67.

16 Vercauteren, *Micropolitique des groupes*, 4—7. The three authors mentioned here form the emerging face of a wider collective initiative whose roots lie in the middle of the 1990s with VeGA (les Verts pour une Gauche Alternative, or Green Party), the struggles for autonomy linked to the occupation of empty buildings until the Collectif Sans Tickets (CST) which began in Brussels in 1999. Before it disbanded in 2003, the CST decided to compile a narrative of their experiences as a collective, which took the form of a fifty-page document entitled *Bruxelles, Novembre 2013*. Subsequently they spent a year sharing the text with their circle of friends and activists who criticized, extended, and added additional experiences of situations in other collectives. Then came a year of group writing and editing that would result in the publication of the work *Micropolitique des groupes*.

17 Fernand Deligny is a French educator who has worked to create open living spaces for autistic and/or delinquent children. Over the course of the 1960s and 1970s, accompanied by other adults who were not so much educators as close associates, he developed a technique for the cataloguing and transcription of the movements of children amongst these living spaces, which he referred to as *lignes d'erre* (lines of errance). These maps were not to understand or interpret the movements of the children, but rather to "see" what was not visible to the naked eye, the relationship of the children to their environment. For more on the subject, see *Cartes et lignes d'erre: traces du réseau de Fernand Deligny, 1969—1979* (Paris: Editions Arachnéen, 2013). It is this definition of the map that the authors of *Micropolitique des groupes* adapted, not so much as an instrument of observation, but rather one of evaluation, defining in that regard a culture of forebears as "a manner in which to evaluate the qualitative and intensive difference of our modes of existence by relating them to the problematic situations that preceded them." (Vercauteren, Micropolitique des groupes, 7).

18 Ibid., 1.

19 Ibid.: "As long as the history of the practices of collectives is not recounted by those who live and construct them, it will be the historians who will take charge of it."

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid., 7.

22 On the notion of storytelling, see Christian Salmon, *Storytelling: la machine à fabriquer des histoires et à formater les esprits* (Paris: La Découverte, Poche, 2008).

23 Regarding the importance of the reappropriation of the forms of narrative by left-wing activist movements, see Francesca Polletta, "'It Was Like a Fever…': Narrative and Identity in Social Protest," *Social Problems* 45, no. 2 (1998): 137—49.

24 Yves Citton, *Mythocratie. Storytelling et imaginaire de gauche* (Amsterdam, Paris: 2010).

25 Independent intermediary artistic spaces are defined as collaborative and experimental art and cultural spaces whose intention is to preserve the autonomy of art, its practices, and its actors with regard to public powers and commercial policies. These spaces are united under the banner of the CNLII (Coordination Nationale des Lieux Intermédiaires et Indépendants) whose charter they have all signed (cnlii.org/qui-sommes-nous/charte/charte/). The places represented during the meetings entitled Archives Communes Pour des Lieux Hors du Commun are: le 6B, Saint Denis; Lieu Commun, Toulouse; Le Générateur, Gentilly; La Friche Lamartine, Lyon; Les Ateliers du Vent, Rennes; Mains d'Œuvres, Saint-Ouen; Le Bon Accueil, Rennes; Pol'N, Nantes; AAIA, Roquefort; le Shakirail, Paris; La Gare XP, Paris; Doc!, Paris; 5UN7, Bordeaux; l'Assaut de la Menuiserie, Saint-Etienne; Les Halles du Faubourg, Lyon; Metaxu, Toulon; Un Œuf, Martinique; Cheminement, La Réunion; La Déviation, Marseille; La Semencerie, Strasbourg, and Le Syndicat Potentiel, Strasbourg.

26 Regarding the specificities of the regime of familiarity that is characteristic of inhabiting a place, see Marc Breviglieri, "L'usage et l'habiter: contribution à une sociologie de la proximité," PhD thesis Paris, EHESS, 1999. See also the difference Joan Stavo-Debauge established between residents and *passants* (passersby) in Joan Stavo-Debauge, "L'indifférence du passant qui se meut, les ancrages du résidant qui s'émeut," in *Les Sens Publics*, eds. Daniel Cefaï and Dominique Pasquier (Paris: PUF, 2003), 347—69.

27 See Marie Trossat, *Faire Lieu*, presented at the Séminaire Pratique de la Recherche en Anthropologie (Université Catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve, 2017).

28 See Fabrice Lextrait and Gwenaille Groussard, *Friches, laboratoires, fabriques, squats, projets pluridisciplinaires…: une nouvelle epoque de l'action culturelle*, report to M. Michel Duffour, Secrétaire d'Etat au Patrimoine et à la Décentralisation Culturelle (2001).

29 For more about the former squat Rivoli 59, see www.59rivoli.org/qui-nous-sommes/.

30 Lucie Camous is an independent curator and the Administrative and Artistic Director of Rivoli 59: luciecamous.com/a-propos/

31 Vincent Prieur is an artist and president of the association Curry Vavart, which organized the occupation of disused spaces with a view to transforming them into shared creative spaces for artists between 2006 and 2011. Since 2011, the association benefited from several conventions on temporary occupation for spaces such as the Shakirail or the Villa Belleville. Site of the Curry Vavart association: curry-vavart.com/home.htm. See also Vincent Prieur's contribution to the contemporary history of squats housing Parisian artists: Vincent Prieur, "Revendications des squats d'artistes et institutions," *Marges* 2, no. 21 (2015): 74, journals.openedition.org/marges/1035.

32 Caswell, "Dusting for Fingerprints."

33 I specifically chose to use this term, central to the philosophy of Jacques Rancière, rather than the term of "dominated" or "minority groups." While the former do indeed see their existence relegated to the status conferred upon them by the dominant processes at work, the *sans parts* (disenfranchised) refer to a figure "in movement" of sorts, a figure that exists and emerges because it rejects the idea that a status be attributed to their revolt and, by the same token, removes themselves from established spaces and orders, contributing to their contestation from spaces that refuse to "admit to and go on about the division of the world between dominators and the dominated," according to sociologist Guillaume Gourgues. For more on this, see Jacques Rancière, *La Mésentente: politique et philosophie* (Paris: Galilée, 1995) and Guillaume Gourges, "Sans Part," in *Dictionnaire Critique et Interdisciplinaire de la Participation*, eds. Ilaria Casillo, Rémi Barbier, Loic Blondiaux, Francis Chateauraynaud, Jean-Michel Fourniau, Catherine Neveu, and Denis Salles (Paris: GIS Démocratie et Participation, 2013), www.dicopart.fr/fr/dico/sans-part.

34 Australian scholar Shannon Faulkhead, for example, offers a pluralist view of records as "any account, regardless of form, that preserves memory or knowledge of facts and events. A record can be a document, an individual's memory, an image, or a recording. It can also be an actual person, a community, or the land itself." Shannon Faulkhead, "Connecting Through Records: Narratives of Koorie Victoria," *Archives and Manuscripts* 37, no. 2 (2010): 60—88.

35 Faulkhead, ibid.

36 Mierle Ukeles Laderman, *Manifesto for Maintenance Art* (1969): who went through a series of maintenance actions (cleaning, sweeping, feeding, taking out the trash, shaking hands, etc.), actualized within a familial, domestic, or social context, gestures of an artistic dimension.

37 Vercauteren, *Micropolitique des groupes*, 1.

38 See Eric Hazan and Julien Coupat. "Pour un processus destituant: invitation au voyage," *Libération*, January 24, 2016, www.liberation.fr/debats/2016/01/24/pour-un-processus-destituant-invitation-au-voyage_1428639; Frédéric Lordon, *Vivre sans? Institutions, police, travail, argent… Conversation avec Félix Boggio Éwanjé-Épée* (Paris: La Fabrique, 2019); Vincent Jarry, "Vivre sans? Trempette dans un verre d'eau," *Lundi.am*, no. 243 (May 2020), lundi.am/vivre-sans-trempette-dans-un-verre-d-eau.

39 In 2011, when the Occupy Wall Street movement was still active, the Smithsonian initiated a large-scale collection effort of artifacts and publications produced by the activists in order to create an archive of this embryonic movement, arguing for the urgency of preventing some of these ephemeral documents from disappearing, preserving them for the distant perspective required in order to write history. As for the articles pertaining to this archival work, they indicate that the materials were not collected for their historical potential, but rather because Occupy was considered "sexy" so consequently, the materials were sought for their cachet in the art world, and also possible commercial value. See www.nydailynews.com/new-york/museums-collecting-occupy-wall-street-artifacts-article-1.996617 and www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/nov/30/national-museum-of-american-history-collects-occup/.

40 See Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1999).

41 Nicolas-Le Strat, Pascal, "Faire politique latéralement: la fonction intermédiatrice du récit," *Multitudes* 2, no. 45 (2011): 192—97.

42 Ibid.

43 For more information about the ARTfactories/autre(s)pARTs network, see autresparts.org/.

44 Nicolas-Le-Strat, "Faire politique latéralement."

45 Nathalie Heinich, *L'élite artiste: excellence et singularité en régime démocratique* (Paris: NRF Gallimard, Bibliothèque des Sciences Humaines, 2005).

46 Nicolas-Le-Strat, "Faire politique latéralement." Regarding the latter, see the study led by artist Yves Mettler at a community garden in Paris in 2011: "Un cheminement engagé dans l'art," Memo for the Sociologie Pragmatique de la Politique et de la Morale seminar (Paris: EHESS, 2011), www.theselection.net/thelabel/EHESS/cheminement-56-2011.pdf, as well as the commentary made by Laurent Thévenot, "Community-Engaged Art in Practice," in *Artistic Practices*, ed. Tasos Zembilas (London: Routledge, 2014), 132—50, www.researchgate.net/publication/344663852_Engaging_in_the_politics_of_participative_art_in_practice.

47 See the definition provided by Estelle Zhong-Mengual, *L'art en commun: réinventer les formes du collectif en contexte démocratique* (Paris: Les Presses du Réel, 2019).

48 Franck Leibovici, Des documents poétiques (Dijon: Les Presses du Réel. 2007).

49 Unfortunately, there is not enough space here to deal in more depth with the question of actions in the realm of art, which tend to use and highlight the document, notably by differentiating between a "documentary tendency in art," as well as an "artistic tendency of the documentary," and what could, in the wake of the latter be considered "documentary art." Aline Caillet identifies several avenues to pursue in this area. Generally speaking, she identifies "artistic tendencies of the documentary" as with Kassel's Documenta X in 1997. Curator Catherine David reserved a large space for documentary, as such, at least for artistic forms that confront the question of the representation of the real in the era of globalization. Aline Caillet, "Introduction: l'hypothèse d'un art documentaire," in *Un Art Documentaire* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2017). Caillet states that this turning point is confirmed by curator Okwui Enwezor in 2002 who, along with Hal Foster, evokes the ethnographic tendencies of art: Hal Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer?" in *The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology*, eds. George E. Marcus and Fred R. Myers (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 371.

50 Regarding the question of archival practices and republication in the field of contemporary art, see Virginie Bobin and Mathilde Villeneuve, eds., *Republication 01—Archives Journal Hors-Série*, (Dijon: Les Presses du Réel, 2016).

51 As early as the beginning of the 1970s, Daniel Buren raised the issue of the role played by the generalization of the form of the installation in what he perceives and conceives as a form of "devitalized displacement" of works: "This sensation that the essence of the work was lost somewhere from its area of production (the atelier) to the space where it is 'consumed' (the exhibition), pushed me extremely early to examine the problem and the signification of the place of a work. A bit later, I understood that what was being lost, what was certainly disappearing, was the reality of the work, its 'truth,' namely its relationship with the place of its creation, the atelier. A space where you can generally find finished works, some that will forever remain so, sketches, etc. The context created by these visible traces simultaneously generates a comprehension of the work in progress, which the Museum definitively extinguishes in its desire to 'install.' Isn't it true that we increasingly speak of 'installations' rather than 'exhibitions'? And isn't the process of installation closer to that of instituting, establishing?" Daniel Buren, "Fonction de l'Atelier," in *Ecrits* vol. 1 (Bordeaux: CAPC-Musée d'Art Contemporain, 1991), 195—205.

52 The ten spaces were not all what is referred to as "intermediary artistic spaces." They are represented here because they are considered by the curatorial team as "pioneering spaces that explore and experiment with collective processes to occupy the world and construct the commons." See encoreheureux.org/projets/lieux-infinis/ and lieuxinfinis.com/.

53 Breviglieri, *L'usage et l'habiter*.

54 We are in fact far from a rapport with the object that would enable, through its activation beyond the everyday, to focus on the relationship of familiarity and intimacy that one maintains with objects, and their use, such as that proposed by the oeuvre of Lygia Clark.

55 The term is a variation of the term in French *terrestration*, borrowed from the artist Till Roeskens. The reference to the Earth rather than land as territory is aimed at distancing from approaches based on identity linked to a space: Roeskens, Till, "Tentative d'atterrissage," *Terrestres, Eprouver*, no. 14 (2020), www.terrestres.org/2020/06/01/tentative-datterrissage/.

56 Regarding the constitution of a commons by affinity, see Olga Koveneva, "Les communautés politiques en France et en Russie: regards croisés sur quelques modalités du 'vivre ensemble'," Éditions de l'EHESS, *Annales, Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 3 (2011): 787—817; Laura Centemeri, "Entre expertises et émotions" and Luca Pattaroni, "La trame sociologique de l'espace," *SociologieS, Penser l'Espace en Sociologie* (2016), sociologies.revues.org/543.

57 In his article "Difference and the Common of the City," Pattaroni shows how, in the case of the Quartier des Grottes in Geneva, the creation of a narrative of the experience enabled the occupants to share the particular tone and ambiance of their daily life which also contributed to making the quarter a common space, not merely a spatial one, as well as symbolic, a commonality through affinity: Luca Pattaroni, "Difference and the Common of the City: the Metamorphosis of the 'Political', from the Urban Struggles of the 1970's to the Contemporary Urban Order," in *The Making of the Common in Social Relations*, eds. Alexandre Cotovio Martins and José Manuel Resende (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 141—172.

58 Koveneva, "Les communautés politiques en France et en Russie."

59 See Note 51 for a contextual explanation.

60 Nicolas-Le Strat, "Faire politique latéralement."

61 See Thomas Arnera's Projet Memento at the Friche Lamartine in Lyon: autresparts.org/memento-une-introduction/ and palimpseste.autresoie.com/category/acte-ii/memento-acte-ii/.

62 Despite its wide use in the field of archival studies, I am not a fan of this term. It refers to the act of extraction, which ineluctably removes something from the object removed, thus reducing or dispossessing it to a certain extent once this act is accomplished. Using another term to qualify archival work would undoubtedly enable us to see this activity in a different light, even if, on the contrary in many respects it resembles an act of care, even of reparation, as conceptualized by Françoise Vergès.

63 Henni is an historian, theorist, educator, and curator of built, destroyed, and imagined environments. Her research and teaching address questions of colonization, wars, extraction, deserts, forced displacement, and gender. www.samiahenni.com/.