



Making Sense of the (Internet) Archive: Negotiating Meaning, Memory and History in Artistic Practice

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Although the archive has been an object of fascination for contemporary artistic practice for a number of years, the continuously rising access enabled by digitization processes and the Internet to historical audiovisual documentation compels the exploration of original and critical ways in which to deal with the past. But while the archive is not an impartial structure in itself, the creation of meaning from historical materials is also a complex negotiation: “there are always too many documents and too many possible ways of reading them” (Baron 2014, 3). On the other hand, the excavation of historical media is in itself a diversified, dynamic and expanding current research field: the theoretical and artistic discipline of media archaeology explores precisely the “fold of time and materiality where the past might be suddenly discovered anew” (Parikka 2012, 3).

The archive is at the centre of the societal and individual understanding of “history” and “memory”. Historian Pierre Nora (1989) states that the

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difference between history and memory lies in the opposition between the construction of a (more or less stable) representation against an organic, living and always shifting “actualization”. This historical representation is built from documents, as Michel Foucault (1969/2002) writes: “History is one way in which a society recognizes and develops a mass of documentation with which it is inextricably linked” (p. 7). On the other hand, philosopher of history Eelco Runia (2014) argues that these documents are, in themselves, results of the operation to externalize memory: “through its invention of language, writing, printing and digitalisation, humankind has brought about (...) marvels of ‘spontaneous memory’” (p. 14). Therefore, it can be argued that the same entity is at the core of historical representation and memory externalization: the written document, the photograph, the moving image, in other words, the (Internet) archive.

In this chapter I propose to analyse the work with the archive developed by Portuguese photographer and visual artist Daniel Blaufuks. Throughout his artistic career, Blaufuks’ work has been centred around history and memory, with particular attention to the Holocaust. This attention is partly a direct consequence of the photographer’s personal family history: Blaufuks’ grandparents were Jewish refugees of Polish and German origins, arriving in Lisbon before the Second World War. I propose to focus particularly on a series of photographic compositions, *Constellations*, created from Internet content: these panels were part of Blaufuks’ solo exhibition *All the Memory of the World—Part One*, in Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea—Museu do Chiado, in Lisbon, in 2014. My analysis is focused on two main questions: firstly how can the discursive and physical dimensions of the archive be explored as an artistic (specific) medium and secondly how does Blaufuks’ work engage with the media archaeology goal of re-presenting the past.

The first section of this chapter is devoted to the construction of a theoretical perspective to frame the analysis: I will combine literature and art scholar van Alphen’s research on the archive with Rosalind Krauss’ most recent treatise regarding medium specificity to address the first question; the second question will be framed mainly by media theorist Vivian Sobchack’s term “re-presenting of the past” and Runia’s discussion of metonymy. The analysis and discussion of Blaufuks’ work will follow in the second section of this chapter.

THE DISCURSIVE ARCHIVE

In *Archive Fever*, Jacques Derrida (1995) approaches the archive starting with its name: *Arkhé* means *commencement* and *commandment*, connecting the origin (according to either nature or history) to the ordering principle. The archive is, according to its semantic root, the place where things commence and where things are ordered. The *place* of the archive derives from *Arkheion*, the house where those invested with power, those who represented the law, lived: they were the guardians and the readers of the archives.

As art critic Okwui Enwezor (2008) reminds us, the archive is not only concerned with the organization of objects but also a structuring principle in itself: “the standard view of the archive oftentimes evokes a dim, musty place full of drawers, filing cabinets, and shelves laden with old documents, an inert repository of historical artifacts against the archive as an active, regulatory discursive system” (p. 11). In other words, the archive can be seen as the fertile ground for the exploration of material resources, but also as an organizational tool, as a working framework with its own set of particular rules. Van Alphen (2014) maintains that the concept of the archive can be used literally or figuratively: the literal archive as the building (or digital environment) which holds documents and objects, and the figurative archive as Foucault’s idea of “the law of what can be said”, or a set of discursive rules”. In the case of the figurative use, the set of rules stipulates what can be included in the archive: objects and documents are included or excluded from the archive based on their usefulness or uselessness.

Van Alphen explains that the current cultural prominence of the archive can be seen as one consequence of the digital age and the ensuing shift towards the model of the database, as opposed to the previous narrative model, as the main cultural construction towards the creation of meaning. About this issue, Lev Manovich (2001) writes:

As a cultural form, the database represents the world as a list of items, and it refuses to order this list. In contrast, a narrative creates a cause-and-effect trajectory of seemingly unordered items (events). Therefore, database and narrative are natural enemies. Competing for the same territory of human culture, each claims exclusive right to make meaning out of the world. (p. 225)

As mentioned previously, Derrida connects the archive with the concepts of ordering and origin. Manovich is, in the previous excerpt, highlighting qualities of the database which are contradictory to the archive as a traditional notion. The order, according to Manovich, takes shape in the crystalized cause-and-effect trajectory of the narrative, but the database presents events or objects in an equal standing, unordered, waiting for the input of the user, of the individual who wishes to *create meaning*: “the user is made aware that she is following one possible trajectory among many others” (2001, 231).

For Manovich and van Alphen this change of meaning-making device was brought about by the ubiquity of the computer in the contemporary society. It is possible to say that the computer is the fundamental contemporary archiving machine, maybe even more so than photography or film. Enwezor (2008) argues that the medium of photography and film have a special link to the archive because the photographic camera can be seen as an archiving machine: “photography is simultaneously the documentary evidence and the archival record, (...) every photograph, every film is *a priori* an archival object” (p. 12). Like the photographic and the film camera (analogue or digital), the computer (and its connection to the Internet) can be considered at the same time an archiving machine and a resulting archive, or database. In a database, the subject can actualize a certain (micro)narrative by selecting and sequencing: a narrative is present in the database in a potential, not actualized, state and is therefore atemporal, out-of-time, until it is actualized by the subject. The database is a placeholder for potential (micro)narratives. Therefore, the database as a meaning-making, discursive device is a spatial and atemporal construction as opposed to the traditional temporal construction of the narrative device.

It is interesting to discuss the prominence of the database device, or the discursive dimension of the archive, in connection with Krauss’ notion of discursive unity, one of the ways in which Krauss proposes to re-define medium specificity. The author writes:

In this sense medium can be seen as what Foucault elsewhere calls an *episteme*, a coherent language (based on the poetic tropes, such as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, that Giambattista Vico had called “poetic knowledge”). This, Foucault argues, is a figurative language all authors within a given epoch will unconsciously speak at the same time. (2011, 15–16)

There are two relevant elements for the current discussion in the above quote: the coherent language and, connected to that, the poetic trope of metonymy. First of all, Krauss proposes to understand medium as a common language. In this case, the common language has been identified by scholarship under the terminologies “archival turn”, “archival impulse” or even “archive fever”. While this last term holds an obvious reference to Derrida’s book *Archive Fever*, it is its use by Enwezor which regards contemporary art. *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art* was an art exhibition held at the International Center of Photography in New York, in 2008, and organized by Enwezor. It compiled works produced within the previous thirty years, from different artists such as Tacita Dean and Christian Boltanski, among many others. In the exhibition’s catalogue, the curator writes: “*Archive Fever* explores the ways in which artists have appropriated, interpreted, reconfigured and interrogated archival structures and archival materials” (2008, 11). Regarding the “turn” terminology, Ruth Rosengarten (2013) explains the trope of turn as “a corporeal change of position and orientation (...) to make intelligible a structure of reflexivity, and importantly, with it, a shift in aesthetic and cognitive direction, if not paradigm” (p. 11). In Rosengarten’s opinion, the archival turn is the development of the curatorial turn, which, in itself, emerged from the ethnographic turn. At the centre of the archival turn is the status of the document, the collection and the archive and the discussion between its form and content.

But perhaps the most well-known term is Hal Foster’s “archival impulse”. Foster defines the figure of the artist-as-archivist as someone who is “concerned less with absolute origins than with obscure traces (...). These artists are often drawn to unfulfilled beginnings or incomplete projects—in art and history alike—that might offer points of departure again” (2004, 5). The archival impulse is concerned with creating a possible moment for the actualization of the contents and structure of formal or informal archives, in which “the here-and-now of the work functions as a possible portal between an unfinished past and a reopened future” (p. 15). Additionally, poetic tropes are also mentioned in the formulation of such a common language. When it comes to the context of the archive, the trope of metonymy is of utmost importance: this aspect will be further developed below in connection with media archaeology.

THE LITERAL ARCHIVE

As mentioned previously, van Alphen formulates that, within artistic practice, the archive can be used figuratively or literally. This articulation can also be thought of in terms of discursive structure and physical content, respectively. In this section I propose to regard the physical archive considering another aspect of Krauss' medium specificity, the concept of technical support:

I am substituting “technical support” for the traditional idea of a physical medium—medium itself a “support” for the work of art—such as the canvas' underpinning for oil paint, or the metal armature's scaffold for plaster or clay. As opposed to these traditional foundations, “technical supports” are generally borrowed from available mass-cultural forms, like animated films, automobiles, investigative journalism, or movies—hence “technical” replaces the “artisanal” materials of the guilds; in the same way “support” neutralizes the individual names of the *muses*. (Krauss 2011, 16)

According to Krauss, each technical support has an intrinsic set of rules, which the artist must follow in order to be considered a “knight of the medium”, a champion of his or her own chosen technical support. Krauss considers the set of rules, the boundaries imposed by the physical object, as an imperative condition for medium specificity: “the inventors of technical supports (...) rely on the resistance of its walls to penetration, the way the sides of a pool provide the swimmer with a kicking post against which to propel himself in a new direction” (2011, 25). Krauss also makes use of a chess game metaphor to explain her concept: the technical support can be seen as the grid-like chess board; the piece of the knight must obey the set of *rules of the game*: “they traverse the board according to its rules. They cannot invent the rules but only obey them. This makes the board and its conventions the *technical support* of chess” (p. 102). When thinking about van Alphen's figurative and literal use of the archive, the literal use concerns the materiality of the archive as a support but the figurative use highlights its conventions.

Re-presenting the Past: A Media Archaeology Goal

Media archaeologist Jussi Parikka (2012) stresses that “thinking the new and the old in parallel lines” is the fundamental principle of media archaeology and that its theoretical and academic field has always been

juxtaposed with an experiment-based artistic practice, since media archaeology's emergence in the 1980s and 1990s. A central issue regarding media archaeological practice is the idea of presence: the presence of the past in the present moment, or, in Sobchack's term, re-presencing of the past. As I have argued above, this is a central issue regarding the discursive unity of the archive. According to Sobchack (2011), "much of media archaeology" regards presence as a "tranhistorical operative practice": "the transference or relay of metonymic and material fragments or traces of the past to the 'here and now'", and, through our engagement with them, they can be "activated and realized again" (p. 324). For the purpose of this analysis, activation can be understood as the agency of the artist working with the archive, but also the engagement of the viewer with that same artwork. This transhistorical activation, defends Sobchack, is concerned with the metonymic and material qualities of an object.

Runia (2014) has written extensively about metonymy and its capacity for the "transfer of presence". First of all, it is important to understand here the difference between metonymy and metaphor: while metaphor substitutes an object for another making use of an explanation, metonymy summons a particular object by using a certain attribute of that object or even an adjunct object. For example, saying that reading the diary of Anne Frank is like looking through a window to occupied Amsterdam during the Second World War is a metaphor: it is connecting the object (diary) to another object (window) by means of explaining the first object. On the other hand, the object itself, the diary, is a metonymy for that very particular period of time: the object itself summons the reality of the Jewish persecution during the war; it is a metonymy for that reality. Runia states that metonymy's capacity for presence derives directly from the lack of an explanatory dimension: because metonymy presents no meaning (meaning belongs to metaphor), it "insinuates that there is an urgent need for meaning", without, however, presenting an easy solution for that need (p. 71).

In this section I have articulated different theoretical perspectives in order to create an analysis framework focused, on the one hand, on understanding the archive as a physical and discursive medium-specific device and, on the other hand, on the characteristics of metonymic operations regarding an engagement, or a re-presencing of the past. In the next section, I will discuss the implications of such strategies in the particular case of Blaufuks' work.

ALL THE MEMORY OF THE WORLD—PART ONE

In the book *All the Memory of the World—Part One*, published on the occasion of the photographer's eponymous exhibition, Blaufuks (2014b) provides an interesting first lead into his idea of the archive: the idea that the Holocaust “encloses the whole encyclopedia of human sentiments and fates, so that all possible stories can be shaped into it and be touched by it” (p. 182). Additionally, the title of the exhibition (and book) provides another lead: it refers to Alain Resnais' 1956 film *Toute la mémoire du monde*, about the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Resnais' documentary film follows the journey of the inclusion of a book (entitled *Mars*) in the all-encompassing archiving machine which commandeers the building, while the narrator's voice explains this process. However, Blaufuks purposefully challenges the sense of completeness that is proposed in Resnais' film: by including the “part one” in his title, Blaufuks acknowledges the impossibility of completeness and, instead, presents us with a continuous work in progress. As Mark Durden (2014) writes: “*All the Memory of the World, part one*—a title beautifully poised between the sense of a totality and a perpetual incompleteness” (p. 168).

The third floor of Blaufuks' exhibition displayed several panels entitled *Constellations*. In these panels, Blaufuks creates compositions which function as a kind of visual transposition of W. G. Sebald's and George Perec's novels *Austerlitz* and *W, or The Memory of Childhood*, respectively. While some panels present direct sections of the books, for instance, the panel *Austerlitz I (pages 1 to 100)*, other panels are less direct and are focused, instead, on certain events (for example, *The Way to Auschwitz* or *The Way to Treblinka*) or particular concepts (for example, *Archiv* or *Library*) which also permeate the two books. About the process of transmission between the texts of Sebald and Perec and his compositions, Blaufuks writes:

Some represent a name, others a word or sentence, an event, or even, more ambitiously, several pages of a book. They could be called albums, archives, maps, and atlas, like in Gerhard Richter, visual thesauri, scrapbooks, journals, puzzles, of which Perec was so fond of, libraries, compendiums, constellations, almanacs, labyrinths, reflections, or montages. (2014a, 213)

Blaufuks uses visual material gathered mainly from the Internet to create these compositions. This is the result of a conscious choice of the

photographer: not to photograph but to gather existing images and to create conditions for “making sense”, to enter into a dialogue with the overwhelming archive that is the Internet. Blaufuks insinuates that “as an artist there is possibly only one way: to debate with all these images and all these possibilities of other images, to refer to them and to recreate from them. In short: to try to make some sense out of them” (2014a, 212).

*Revisiting the Visual Database of Aby Warburg in the Age
of the Internet*

Blaufuks (2016) has explicitly mentioned the influence of Warburg’s visual methodology in connection to his work. As with *Constellations*, and with the photographer’s regard to the tremendous quantity of images of the archive of the Internet, Warburg aimed to “make sense” of the history of art by creating what he called “constellations”. Warburg researcher Christopher Johnson (2012) writes:

Warburg thus dedicated his last years to constellating and then reconstellating images to plumb the depths and dynamics of historical memory. He believed such constellations could make his *Kulturwissenschaft* (science of culture) comprehensible to all who cared to see. (p. 12)

Warburg’s experimental method aimed to translate the historical dimension of images, how images would “travel through time”, into a spatial display which would allow the observer the possibility to “comprehend” the history of art—in which he included every kind of image, from the art canon to popular prints. Warburg was indeed trying to translate the art history narrative into a *Kulturwissenschaft* database, through which the observer could create his or her own personal micronarrative. This resonates strongly with Manovich’s and van Alphen’s considerations discussed previously. Furthermore, Warburg believed that his visual database (or constellations, or *bilderatlas*) could be a conductor of collective memory: Warburg’s theory of collective memory “rests on the notion that visual symbols function as archives of the mental state of the producer” (Rampley 2001, 319). Matthewa Rampley explains that Warburg believed that the emotional state of the producer could be “imprinted” in the visual symbol. Warburg named this visual symbol an engram or dynamogram. When confronted with an “unmediated exposure to a primitive engram”, the observer would receive the transmission of the emotional state of the

producer. As such, Warburg regarded his database as a receptacle and activating agent of collective memories.

Another notion at the heart of Warburg's method is the fact that Warburg regards the role of the researcher not only as an observer but as an operative actor who makes decisions to include, exclude or rearrange certain images, in an ongoing search: "For Aby Warburg, the *Bilderatlas* was in no way a graphic summary of his thinking, but its pure essence" (Tartás Ruiz and Garcia 2013, 230). The atlas can be seen as a constant process of mapping connections between receptacles of collective memories, in an atemporal display, a visual database constantly being updated by the researcher's personal input. Researchers Tartás Ruiz and Garcia explain:

The atlas proposes an open cartography, ruled by its own criteria, with blurred semantic boundaries (often dealing with personal obsessions), always opened to a new field or content additions. (...) the atlas is essentially incomplete, an open net of cross relationships, never closed or definite, always extendable to additions of new data or discovery of unknown territories. An Atlas is a "work in Progress" *stricto sensu*. (2013, 229)

This idea of incompleteness, of "work in progress", not only is present in the atlas as a device, as seen above, but also refers back to Blaufuks' exhibition title, which was previously discussed.

Warburg's formulation of the researcher as an operative actor also resonates strongly with Blaufuks' own operative command over the *Constellations*. A good example is a comparison between the two panels *Archiv* and *Library*: while the two concepts might bear some similarities, Blaufuks makes certain choices that highlight their differences. In *Library*, Blaufuks creates a composition which highlights the links between images, by positioning the images above or under certain sections, in a circle which denounces contiguity and accessibility. On the other hand, the composition of *Archiv* conjures the opposite: the images are separated, without touching points, without connectors, relinquishing a notion of secluded containment. This difference relates directly to Blaufuks' choice of images and choice of arrangement within the panel.

Another example of Blaufuks' role as an operator of memories is the panel *The Departures (of G. Perec and J. Austerlitz)*. In this panel there is a central image depicting children in a place that can be discerned as a train station, with a conductor and train carriages in the background. Above this central image, and in a diagonal axis, two images from covers of

magazines of Charlie Chaplin's character Charlot (otherwise known as The Tramp, depending on the country), with the character in a parachute, one in the lower left side and the other in the upper right side. Finally, in the opposite diagonal axis, two images occupy the remaining lower and upper corners: one postcard of the train station of Prague and one of the Gare de Lyon in Paris. While these images relate to particular memories from the writings of Perceval and Sebald, and a web of significations stems from Blaufuks' rationale, the pattern of this composition forms an uncanny resemblance to a swastika.

Blaufuks' Medium Specificity

While revisiting Warburg's methodology, Blaufuks is also connecting the atlas, the database device, to the structure of the Internet: the spatial display highlights the potential connections between images; it displays the inner logic of the Internet, as an archive of images in constant movement, separated by and connected by hyperlinks: "they are constructions of images with more or less the same meanings, relating to one or various places, memories or rational connections, like hypertext in writing or film" (Blaufuks 2014a, 213). As such, Blaufuks is visualizing the inner logic of not only the system of correlations, connections, jumps and correspondences from the writings of Sebald and Perceval but the database of the Internet as well.

Other researchers have also highlighted this aspect of Blaufuks' work: for example, Daniela Agostinho (2016) discusses memory in connection to the Internet archive: "What this digitally networked archive affords memory with is the possibility of simultaneity of temporalities, of indeterminacy, recursiveness, appropriation and the uncontrollable reassembling of the old into the new" (p. 21). Following this reasoning, I propose to consider Blaufuks' *Constellations* as open cartographies of collective memories. More particularly, because the inner logic of the Internet is focused on transmission and connections, it is possible to talk about intensive cartography. Architect and creative researcher Renske Maria van Dam (2018) explains the difference between intensive cartography and extensive cartography:

An extensive map shows the stable properties of a site, whereas an intensive map signifies the potentials of a site: rather than the end product of a process, it indicates the process itself. For example, intensive cartography can show a movement of a rhythm, but also a sense, feeling, or social-aesthetical-ethical value. (p. 105)

Blaufuks' *Constellations* function as intensive, unstable and potential cartographies of memories built from the photographer's engagement with his own research, his own memories and the memories of others, fictional and real, which flow through that "immense block of granite" which is the Holocaust.

Re-presencing the Past

In this section I will analyse the ways in which Blaufuks' work enables a re-presencing of the past. I will argue that this happens in two levels: the first one is connected to the artists' own personal engagement with the production of the work and the second is connected to the metonymic qualities of photographic objects.

In the first instance, Blaufuks' personal history, born in a family of refugees, of survivors of a trauma such as the Second World War and the Holocaust, plays an important part. In this context, it is relevant to discuss Marianne Hirsch's concept of postmemory. Hirsch writes:

Postmemory describes the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experiences that they "remember" only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right. Postmemory's connection to the past is thus not actually mediated by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation. (2008, 106–107)

Postmemory, then, is defined as agency towards the creation of something out of a memory which is not one's own, precisely because of that: because one is not able to *recall* it. In this concept, we can recognize Blaufuks striving to "making sense" of memories which are not his own. Researcher Ana Quintais (2016) regards Blaufuks as a *carrier* of memories: "a carrier of memories is, then, someone who transmits someone else's memories, is an agent of postmemory whose responsibility is to guarantee that the knowledge of the events are transmitted to the future generations"(p. 206). In this active engagement of Blaufuks, as an agent of postmemory, it is possible to recognize already a possibility of individual engagement with the past, but the fact that Blaufuks works with photography to do so adds a further dimension, which also involves the spectator of the work.

Hirsch (2008), in particular, addresses three issues at the core of post-memory, which are also at the core of Blaufuks' work: memory, family and *photography*. She argues that the familiar and the individual mediate a "living" connection with an otherwise distant historical and institutional archive and that the photograph is the vehicle which enables that actualized living connection. She goes further to state that the photograph is the space where the need for making sense of the observer is articulated as a "projection". This brings the operative dimension back to the observer, and it is interesting here to understand the creation of meaning in connection to Roland Barthes' concept of *punctum* and *studium* and also Jacques Rancière's revised proposal about the same concepts.

Barthes, in his influential work *Camera Lucida*, proposes two concepts for the spectator to relate to photographs: one is the idea of *studium*, which concerns the general cultural information that the spectator is already in possession of when observing a photograph, and the other is the *punctum*, which can be a partial object which "prickles" the spectator, or it can also be the notion of time (1980/2000). Following Barthes' definition of *punctum* as a partial object, the *punctum* functions as a metonymy. Barthes writes:

However lightning-like it may be, the *punctum* has, more or less potentially, a power of expansion. This power is often metonymic. There is a photograph by Kertész (1921) which shows a blind gypsy violinist being led by a boy; now what I see, by means of this "thinking eye" which makes me add something to the photograph, is the dirt road; its texture gives me the certainty of being in Central Europe; I perceive the referent (here the photograph really transcends itself: is this not the sole proof of its art? To annihilate itself as *medium*, to be no longer a sign but the thing itself?), I recognize, with my whole body, the straggling villages I passed through on my long-ago travels in Hungary and Romania. (p. 45)

This means, according to Barthes, that the *punctum* is a partial element present in the photograph that has the power to bring something else with it, something that is not present in the photograph, such as one's own memories: in other words, that the photographic *punctum* functions as a metonymy for the recalling of a particular memory that one might possess and that this information varies from person to person. But then, is this metonymic dimension of the *punctum* different from *studium*? Rancière (2014) argues that it is not, and he bases his argument on several examples

extracted from *Camera Lucida*, namely regarding the connection of *punctum* to time (and death). Barthes explains *punctum* as the notion of time when discussing the image of Lewis Payne, as photographed by Alexander Gardner, waiting for his execution, and stating that the *punctum* of this image is the spectator's knowledge that he will die (but that he is still alive in Gardner's photograph). Rancière challenges this definition as he argues that "nothing in the photo tells us that the young man is going to die. To be affected by his death, we need to know that the photograph represents Lewis Payne, condemned to death in 1865 for trying to assassinate the US secretary of state" (p. 112). Therefore, in this case, it is previous knowledge that triggers the *punctum*; it is, in fact, the *studium* that triggers the *punctum*.

Blaufuks (2014a) concurs with the idea that the knowledge of the observer is paramount regarding the connection to the photograph: "the value of a photograph, as a document or as a memento, as an emotional trigger of sentiments, depends on the information surrounding its contents. In a way, the photograph is a vault of many cabinets, each one with its own key" (p. 216).

Let us consider the two panels *The Way to Auschwitz* and *The Way to Treblinka*. In these panels different photographs are displayed, portraying people entering trains, the cargo carriages, the railway tracks between departure and arrival stations. Blaufuks creates rippling lines from the positioning of formal features of each photograph in combination with another. There is a sense of movement within the composition. But, as an observer with no direct connection to survivors of the Holocaust, what I see is people on their way to two concentration camps, which might mean that they were heading to the place where they died. I see this not because the panel shows me that. I see it because of what I know about Auschwitz and Treblinka, about the transportation of Jewish people to concentration camps and about a person using the emblem of a star on their coat. The panel does not explain this to me, but it functions as a conjurer, as a trigger for the knowledge that I already have and that I actualize it within my gaze. As such, the photographic panel functions as a metonymy which urges the creation of meaning, which I engage with by bringing forward my previous knowledge, maybe also recollections of films or other images I have seen in connection with Auschwitz and Treblinka, previous memories associated with it, to name a few possibilities. As mentioned previously, Runia writes that the metonymy urges the creation of meaning precisely because of its lack of explanation.

And that this creation of meaning can only be articulated by the observer. Therefore, it is possible to consider Blaufuks' photographic panels as a metonymy for the observer's own memories and, as such, as a device for the re-presencing of the past.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have discussed Blaufuks' artistic methodology which exposes how the artist works within the rules of his medium specificity: by highlighting the inner logic of the Internet and its hyperlinks, Blaufuks builds intensive cartographies of collective memories, making use of Warburg's visual methodology. This process gives way to a visual database, an atemporal and spatial construction, a map of potential connections and associations. As such, in *Constellations*, Blaufuks uses the archive literally and figuratively. If the conditions for a re-presencing of the past are already present in the structural device of the *Constellations* (which require the observer to choose a certain trajectory, to actualize a certain personal narrative), this is reinforced by the metonymic dimension of the photographic object, which might summon the observer's own memories. What is created then is a complex and personal web of associations and connections delivered by memory.

Blaufuks' medium specificity is also determined by the rules of his technical support: the connectivity between objects. If the computer is the ultimate archiving machine, then the Internet is the ultimate "marvel of spontaneous memory", to use Runia's expression. Besides its archiving function, the Internet enables that same association capacity (in the form of the hyperlink) and continuous transformation which is characteristic of memory: "[memory] remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived" (Nora 1989, 9).

Blaufuks' technical support, the substance which dictates the rules of his specificity, is a category of objects which follow the rule of connectivity: an example of this is the novels of Sebald and Perec, at the core of *Constellations*. Blaufuks (2014a) writes: "The writings of W. G. Sebald and of Georges Perec, with their constant use of links between adjacent subjects, remind me of the ways of the Internet, because you can quickly get lost in them as well" (p. 212).

By articulating general and personal constructions of what history and memory are, contemporary artistic practices that deal with the archive are able to contest and transform our relationship with the past (Foster 2004, 22). That is a privileged position, but also one of great responsibility. Van Alphen (2014) reminds us that artistic practice should use the archive critically, in order to make sure “that art does not represent what already occurred, but that art sets up conditions for relating to the event”, and, as a consequence, creates a rupture in the traditional temporality by including the past in our present (p. 266).

My contribution focused on the creation of a theoretical approach which enabled me to explore a discursive and non-discursive archive which doubles, at the same time, as a discursive and non-discursive medium. In addition to the media archaeological nature of Blaufuks’ work, this framework of analysis proved useful to explore the complex ways in which making sense of the world is, to a large extent, a mediated experience.

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