From the community, for the community: online access to documents and collections of performance art

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

The article looks at the challenges and opportunities of collecting and disseminating performance art from an art library's perspective. Based on the collecting experience of the Mediathek at the Academy of Art and Design FHNW Basel (Switzerland), the text contextualizes its own digital collections within the Swiss performance art context. What is special about Mediathek's collection is; (1) the fact that a remarkable number of documents of performance art are accessible for free via the internet, without login, in a structured, searchable and sustainable way. Because the policy permits, upon certain conditions, the acceptance of content from individuals, groups, and institutions not associated with the university, there is; (2) a considerable amount of 'external' materials in the collections. The aim of the essay is to make this treasure of sources known. Therefore, digital access points to the projects and collections described in the text are mentioned in the references.

1. Introduction

The Mediathek collects documents, documentation, relics and collections on performance art. Now, about 2'300 works (including photo documentation and videos of whole performance festivals) with more than 26'000 files (18'500 pictures, 62'100 minutes of video sources, more than 800 PDFs and 830 minutes of audio recordings) of about 15'000 artists, groups and countless unknown ones are indexed [1]–[3] - most of them coming from the Bang Bang community platform. Bang bang - Translocal histories of performance art (2022) WAS an exhibition [4], displayed from 8 June to 21 August 2022 at Museum Tinguely Basel. The accompanying open call active a swarm upload [5] which is still publicly available and open for contributions. Fig 1 shows a tiny frame of the resulting data collection of the community platform. The small images derive from semantically indexed data sets. One can zoom into the image to see better details or out to improve the overview. Visually searching and comparing, contexts become apparent. By double-clicking on an image, one gets to the respective detail page of the entry. This provides detailed information such as the title of the performance, artists involved, performers, set, often when and where the piece was performed (e.g., festivals), and normally there is a short textual description. The community of the artists provides all data, so the authenticity of the discourse is maintained, including naming conventions. As well as this collage view, there is also a grid view and a list view on the left sidebar in the black area. They show the same dataset in ways that might be easier to research when looking for something already known.

Behind the Bang Bang platform and the collections mentioned below is the so-called Integrated Catalogue (InK), which integrates different sources via a searchable index. The materials are published as a scientific resource, which means that they are; (1) **f**indable; (2) **a**ccessible, estates are; (3) **i**nteroperable and the status of; (4) **r**eusability is declared. In a scientific context, these collection aspects are summarised under the label/acronym of FAIR-ness [6]. An important characteristic is that unique persistent identifiers such as handle or DOI are assigned to the artistic work entries. This makes

these works citable for the scientific community. In times when, on the one hand, we are experiencing an immeasurable flood of information and, on the other, data streams are becoming increasingly fragile, forgettable (deletions) and dependent on external influences, trustworthy collections and archives have a special role to play [7]. In addition to the university's productions, Mediathek can open its collecting infrastructure to data of persons or target groups that are not associated with the university if the material is relevant and fits certain collection guidelines. While the collection's activities have focussed on the local art environment and communities in Switzerland, this article intends to make the sources known beyond the local space. Even though many sources are German, much of the content can be understood internationally because performance art always has something gesturally situational and action-based that knows no language and few cultural boundaries.

Fig. 1. Digital see the interface of the Bang Bang Community Platform [8]. A double-click on an image directs to detailed information about the record. Additional functionalities can be reached via the menu on the left side. Design: Jürgen Enge

2. Method

From a methodological point of view, the interplay between; (1) Mediathek as a collecting institution; (2) the community of performance artists and data owners; and (3) artistic works as a thematic centre and stable reference point, the work of Mediathek can be compared with concepts of the 'Community of Practice' (CoP) [9]. In the CoP, the transfer of knowledge is based on practical communication: doing things together (performing), sharing knowledge, discussing and improving one's own approach, as well as cooperative and collective ideas. The participants communicate in network-like structures, in which the artwork/performances play the role of (network) nodes. Works and collections become stable reference points, activate within the network the discourse and can become – through the publication process – part of the scientific systems. At the same time, writing from the perspective of a collecting institution means shifting the focus from individual works of art to collections and holdings and from active research to questions of sustainability, data management and preservation. Metadata and infrastructures come into view. The methodological framework is determined by cataloguing the respective entries/performances, performance events, or holdings rather than classical research questions and methodological questions. For situating this special collection and Mediathek's performance collections in general, it makes sense to look at; (1) networking aspects (chapter 2); (1) different formats of appearance and communication of performance art (chapter 3) before considering; (3) the project (and funding) culture (chapter 4). Following the structure of the organisational performance cultures, this leads finally; (4) to the consideration of the holdings realised in collaboration with the PANCH, the Performance Art Network CH (chapter 5). In doing so, it becomes clear how open collecting and publishing engagements can encourage networking and creativity.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Re: Collecting and networking in Swiss performance art

The historically oldest collection of performance art at Mediathek is Performance Chronicle Basel. The stock presents 169 video documentations from 1987 to 2006 by nearly 130 artists/collectives, resulting from an eponymous research project. Fig 2 shows the collection entry point of Performance Chronicle Basel. Before the names of the participants are listed alphabetically in three columns at the bottom of the page, a short project description by the collectors, a search slot and the mission statement are presented. This statement related the collection, the artistic performances available via the linked names, and the broader concept of the data owners with what they call the 'digital sea'. Trying to explain the motivation, it states: "The Digital Sea is not a place, but an idea and attitude. Its goal is to make performance documentation of the free unbound scene accessible on the internet. It is not primarily about protection, storage or control over the material, but about: making this documentary, art-historical material accessible to people who want to work with it, in teaching, in research, in their own artistic research, in order to enable reception and to be able to publish and make it visible without restriction in these fields (teaching, research, artistic research)"[10].

Fig. 2. The main page of the Online collection of Performance Chronicle Basel

Understood as a historiography for situated Swiss performance art, Performance Chronicle Basel was formally embedded in an artistic research environment, positioning itself between (independent) art (scene) and academy in a climate of scientific professionalization of the art departments. At the same time, Performance Chronicle Basel merged aspects of self-reflection and memorizing, sharing and distributing its own disciplines' past. While the project initially led to two book publications [11], [12], both edited by Sabine Gebhardt Fink, Muda Mathis and Margarit von Büren, the video documentation of the second sequence was handed over to Mediathek by Muda Mathis in 2016/2017. Muda Mathis, then a teacher in the art department, remains a central figure to this day. The relevance of Performance Chronicle Basel becomes apparent when recognizing that the project extends to the most recent, community-led project, Bang Bang [13]. Since the Bang Bang is remembered as an exhibition festival lasting almost 70 days with performances, workshops, discussions, exhibitions and many other lively happenings every day, a look at the festival culture of the Swiss performance art scene seems a good starting point.

1) Festivals, venues, and the plurality of different formats

Even if the term 'festival' is not clearly defined, performance events where several artists perform different works are often called festivals. They take place over the course of an entire day or more. Often a specific programme is announced. Sometimes performances occur parallel at different places, mostly nearby or dedicated places and spaces. Last but not least, the events culminate in a convivial meal, music and dance, reverberation of experiences, insights, and celebrating being together. Among the early performance art festivals in Switzerland with lasting character and great influence are the Bone Performance Art Festival (since 1998, Berne: associated mainly with Norbert Klassen, founded by Ralf Samens and Markus Hensler, Berne) and International Performance Art Giswil (since 1998, Giswil: founded by Ruedi Schill and Monika Günther) [14], followed by Migma (since 2001, Lucerne) [15], ACT (since 2003, different places) [16], PPP (Progr Performance Platform) (since 2009, Berne)

[17], Performance Reihe Neu-Oerlikon (founded in 2010 by Maricruz Peñaloza, St. Gallen), the Gathering (organized by Gisela Hochuli and Dominik Lipp since 2013, different places) [18], and Performance Open-Air St. Gallen (founded in 2018 by Maricruz Peñaloza, Zurich) [19].

The list is far from complete. On the one hand, the performance scene in the French and Italian parts of Switzerland is hardly mentioned here due to the author's lack of knowledge. On the other hand, smaller festivals and actors, often lasting only a few years or at irregular intervals, are missing [20], as well as the many series/sequences of events at venues such as Kasko (since 1994, Basel) [21], PROGR (since 2004 used as studio building, Berne) [22], (ort) (since 2017, Lucerne) [23], or ARSENIC (since 1989, Lausanne) [24]. Since performance festivals are often organised by single, often charismatic individuals and are located in off-cultural settings or public spaces, the quality of documentation varies. Texts, recordings, announcements, images, and additional sources are scattered among unknown persons. Very little is accessible through professional collections or archives. Figure 3 shows a typical situation photographed by the organiser of Performance Reihe Neu-Oerlikon 2022. It gives a good impression of why it is so difficult today to; (1) get access to sources of performance art and; (2) make them publicly accessible. Even though the community is often present at the festival, the public might be among the audience. This might cause personality issues if images are published and we see, in addition in the background, a housing block – often with people looking down on the spectacle. Things happen at different places at the same time. If there is money to pay documentarists at all, the sound and image recordings are sometimes poor because of the weather and spatial conditions, noise from the street, busses coming and going, aeroplanes passing overhead or children playing in the background. Fig 3 shows Ishita Chakraborty -Aargau/India's work, "The Soil we are born" (2022) at Performance Reihe Neu-Oerlikon.

Fig. 3. Ishita Chakraborty -Aargau/India, "The Soil we were born" (2022) at Performance Reihe Neu-Oerlikon. Excerpt of Photo: Maricruz Peñaloza ©

2) ACT performance art festival of students

These previously mentioned characteristics also apply to the student-driven Act performance art festival [25]. Initiated by Muda Mathis and Heinrich Lüber in 2002, ACT's first edition took place in Basel, Berne, and Zurich in 2003. As a vessel by students for students, ACT is publicly advertised and open to any audience. Being held annually in spring in the cities of the hosting Art Academies (Basel, Bern, alternately Lucerne and Sierre, and Zurich) students and visitors travel from weekend to weekend to the different hosting cities/places. Defined locations and dates are collaborative work days (called 'Mammoth Day'). For ACT, there is almost no curating. Students decide on their own what contribution they want to register and where and how many pieces they want to present/perform. In the 20 years since it was first launched, ACT has become a veritable institution [25]. It brings together the studying context and the public sphere, independent and collective practices and, not least, consolidates the Swiss performance art community across generations due to its recurring character as a festival. Fig 4 shows another challenge for the documentation and, at the same time, a specificity of the current, often socially engaged performance art. ACT 2022 has conquered the whole urban space of the city of Biel. The left side of the figure shows the places (columns) where performances and actions took place, often at the same time. The city map on the right side indicated the distance and specific locations, including different sceneries such as the river board and the lake, promenade, train station, off-space industrial wasteland, social hotspots, and the park of a museum. In addition,

there were guided tours in public spaces, sometimes with live transmissions and simultaneous viewing via private phones, Twitter, or TikTok.
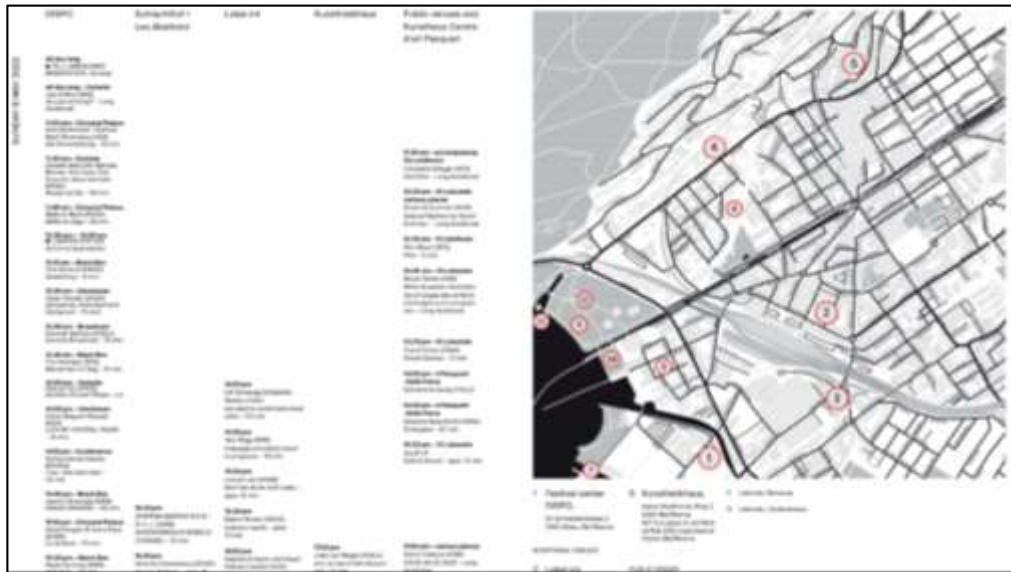

Fig. 4. Programme and site plan of ACT's anniversary edition, 2022 [25]. Excerpt

Fig 5 shows an excerpt from ACT's Corona Edition 2020 [26]. In this contribution, the audience became the performers. As the title explained, the participating spectators were shown to each other for 5 minutes and thus became actors. By entering ZOOM, they agreed to become part of the work. During the 5-minute online performance and experience, more than 50 video screens were displayed, some of which showed several people. Among them, some participants are prominent performance artists. Pairs and groups and even the fact of being there at the right time show that the performance did not start at the screen but activated the audience in advance.
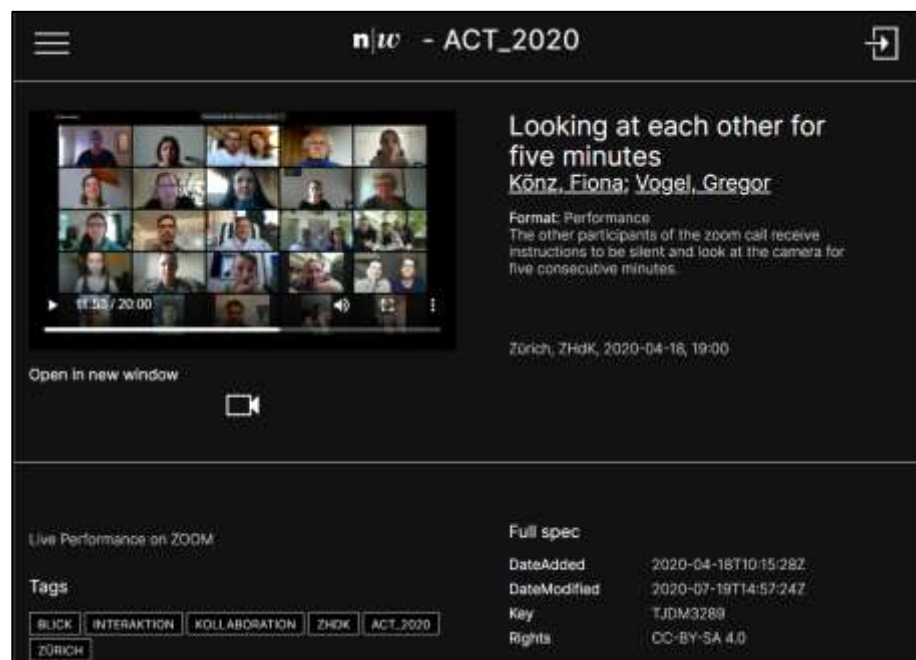

Fig. 5. ACT 2020 Sample: "Looking at each other for five minutes." Fiona Könz, Gregor Vogel (2020, CC BY-SA 4.0)

3) Placing and indexing performance art

Also remembered as a festival is Heinrich Lüber's Performance Index, which lasted for four days in September 1995 at the Warteck Areal (Workspace Warteck PP – as permanent provisional) in Basel [27]. Like Performance Chronicle Basel and seemingly typical for the scene of those days,

Performance Index materialized in addition to the Kasko live events in a trilingual book (German, English, French). Fig 6 shows a printed selection of the diverse accompanying materials as well as the laptop, which is also the data collection challenge. Because the data should actually be digitally retrievable. At the same time. The computer once ran a database, which indexed artist names, addresses and artworks. It came to Mediathek's collections in 2019 as a legacy object. An initial data review showed that most data consist of personal information (*e.g.,* addresses) that cannot be published for privacy reasons. Furthermore, the images included have, due to the technological conventions and possibilities of the time, a resolution and image quality that can hardly be displayed today

Fig. 6. Relics of Heinrich Lüber's Performance Index with publications, map, computer and Excel files.
Photo: Andrea Kovacs (2022, CC BY 4.0)

Nevertheless, quite some information has been published as a ring binder. This format allowed the continuation of a growing index. In fact, the 1997 update added 46 artists/collectives to the first edition of the *Performance Index* (1995) with 83 entries [28]. Each artist/collective has a double-page presentation sorted alphabetically by last name. In addition, an eponymous database project was set up and funded from 1996 to 2000. Even though the plurality of elements and the almost encyclopaedic character resulted from intense networking activities, it promoted the emancipatory gesture of self-empowerment of an art community, which is appropriating different presentation and publication formats, occupying spaces, (re-)inventing archiving tools and memorizing strategies, which had, until then, been reserved for other stakeholders.

4) Respondings, maps, and memorizing culture between individuum and collective

While festivals and dedicated art venues offer presentation and networking facilities, interviews and the so-called 'respondings' focus more explicitly on reflection and memorizing practices. Perhaps less known and published responses. They deepen one or more topics or gestures raised by one or more performances mostly the other day. Presented by artists or art-related persons, they tend to report and comment on the previously perceived from a personal, empirical or experience-based perspective. Respondings address or rather (re-)activate the other participants' memories and tend to be performative. They provide feedback and review, remarks and connecting points. Most of the festivals previously mentioned offer/contain responses or familiar types of feedback sessions that follow the rules of collegial feedback. To date, there are just two samples of collected responses in Mediatheks' performance stocks: from Archives of the ephemeral [29] and 6×2 Performance-Duos [30]. The Bang Bang responses were professionally produced as a live radio broadcast by Lumpenstation under the title of Talking Gazes (2022) [31]. Thus, they seemed to be a fluctuating hybrid between different formats, mixing memories and personal experiences with theoretical reflections, performative presentations and sometimes even trying to become a spoken report. As the last type of response, the website Apresperf might be mentioned [32], which was founded in 2014 by Andrea Saemann and Dorothea Schürch. It presents text-based reflections mostly of artists, including statements and interviews. Since all have a clear focus on experience and subjective narrative in common, they come close to the responses.

5) Performance narratives as map

Focusing on the dialogical aspects of memory, it also recalls the DVD project Performance saga - encounters with women pioneers of performance art (2007-08). Andrea Saemann and Katrin Grögel organized the seemingly encyclopaedic project. Saga, saying something (German: Sagen), in this context, means to put something (the ephemeral) into a lasting format. Performance Saga initially contained; (1) a sequence of eight interviews, published as a DVD sequence with edition fink in 2007 [33]; (2) an eponymous festival, where artists performed 2008 their own works in memoriam/inspired by the previously interviewed artists. Over the course of time; (3) SAGA-Maps came across, which transformed the SAGA-Principle in the tangible form of large-scale wallpapers (about 1 x 5 or more meters). Fig 7 shows the dimensions of this approach, the graphic contextualisation and what is difficult to convey in the digital archive: the mutual overlapping, sketching, and relating to whatever seemed relevant to the authors
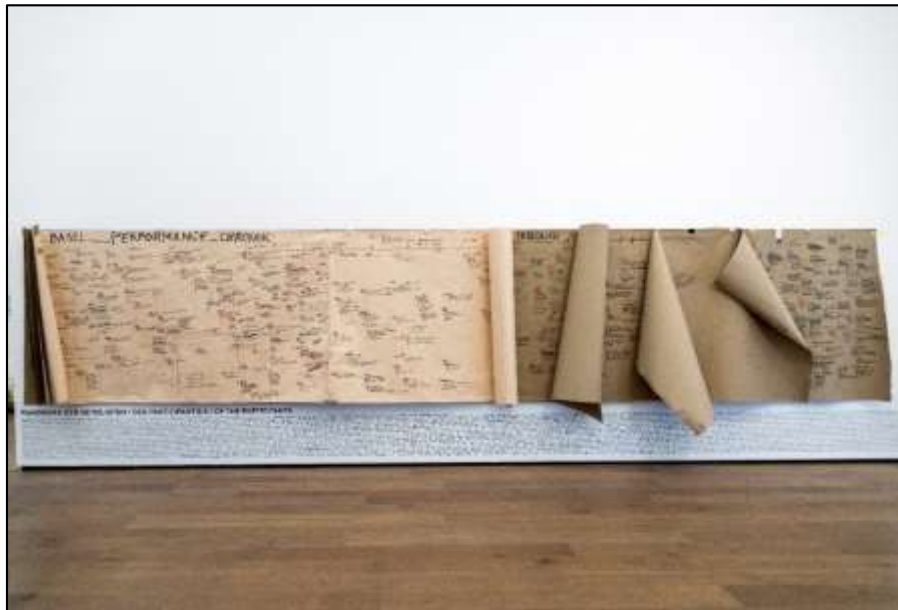

Fig. 7. Saga-Maps at the Bang Bang exhibition at Museum Tinguely Basel 2022. Photo: Ute Schendel ©

Since the photograph was captured in the Bang Bang exhibition, below the individual maps is also an excerpt of the name frieze that names the participants of the current show. They repeat names and terms mentioned above, thus showing historical reference. It becomes clear how, in the context of performance art, the present cannot get along without the past, and the other way around, the past is also only alive as long as an actualisation takes place. If one wanted to find historical antecedents or comparables, George Maciunas's slip box of the Learning Machine [34] might come to mind or Boris Nieslony's & Gerhard Dirmoser's global Performance Art Context-Map [35]. They all list artists. They all list artists, groups/collectives, networks, festivals, and important events or art styles. Nevertheless, the layout and semantic dimension vary: Mainly focusing on dedicated places or local contexts, the SAGA-Maps are produced during announced sessions or workshops, recording shared memories in a rather linear, chronological way.

6) Performance narratives as a timeline

The inspiring character of this format might be recognized in the web-based version of Lupe Luzern [36], which enhanced the methodological approach to a current digital format. At the same time, LUPE LUZERN is one of at least four regional LUPEN (magnifying glasses). With Lupe's reporting and documentation format, the Performance Art Network CH (PANCH) focuses on the performance art scenes in Switzerland [37], intending to raise its visibility and international outreach. The historical sequence of Fig 8 may recall the SAGA Maps. However, it was developed in the software of the so-called 'Research Catalogue'[36], which was developed for publishing Artistic Research. The goals of the system, to which the Journals for Artistic Research is affiliated, were, among others, to enable visual narratives, linked image- and media-based information and argumentation in order to make research processes in the arts dynamic and performative-structure perceivable [38]. One can literally see the urge of the Lucerne performance art scene to represent the historical events, performances,

festivals, and people in the image as well as to convey something performative through the arrangement.
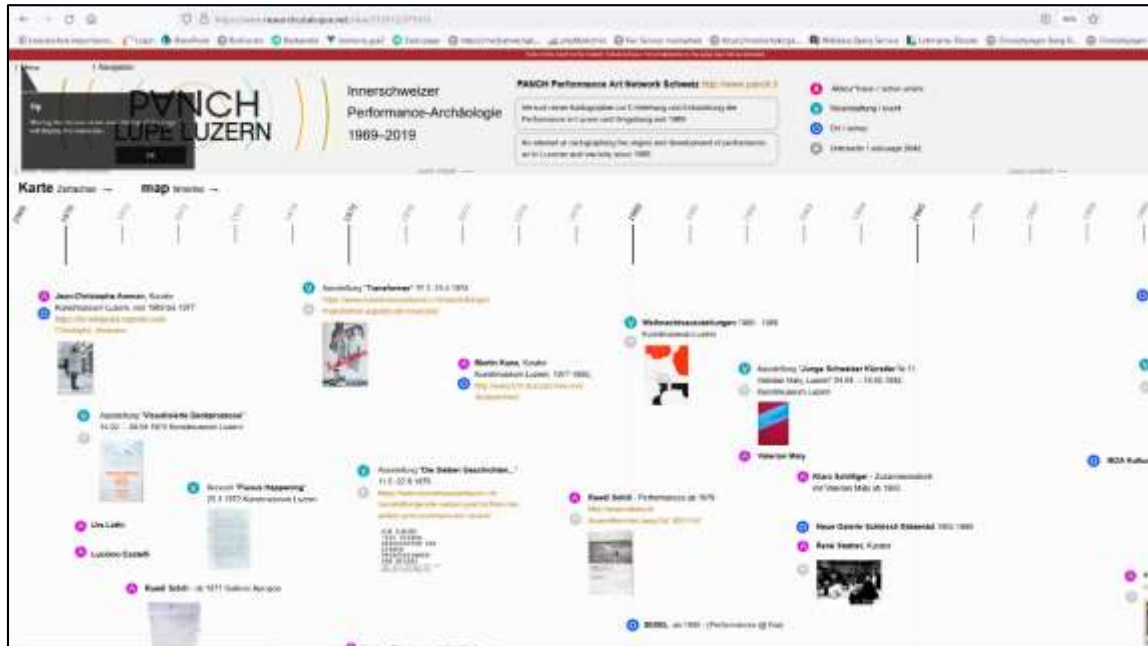

Fig. 8. Main Page of Lupe Luzern at Research Catalogue [36]. Design: Jan Schacher, Margarit von Büren, Zita zb Bucher, Judith Huber

7) Performance narratives as spatial environment and exhibition

Looking back, the Saga principle seems to be an artistic tool which is applied in many different contexts and formats. It merges historiography and narrative, personal and collective memories, trying to find or (re-)invent new formats of articulation. So far, it differs fundamentally from classical library work of administration and storage of sources. Even cluster objects with different sources, as in Fig 9, appear isolated and detached since creative information, relationships and contexts are usually transformed into metadata.
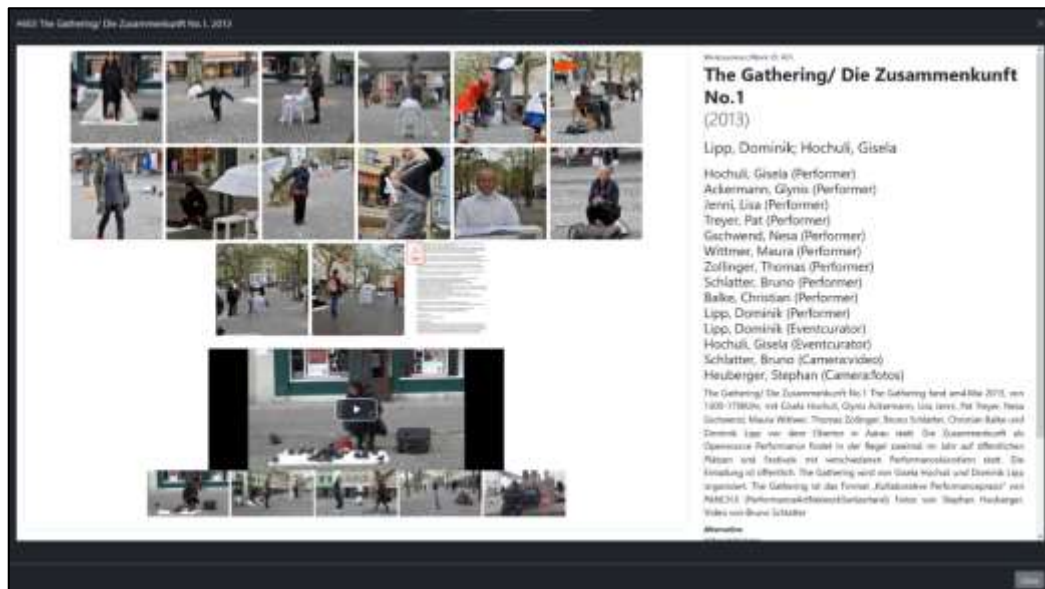

Fig. 9. Cluster Entry of The Gathering (2013) by Dominik Lipp and Gisela Hochuli at the Bang Bang plattform, 2022

As for isolation and emptiness, the archival context can perhaps be compared to an empty exhibition space, as in Fig 10. Fig 10 shows the complexity of the different elements of the Bang Bang exhibition. As already mentioned with the Saga-Maps, the show was both historically informed, in part, even encyclopaedic, but functioned, at the same time, as a current event and venue for the

performance. Above the Saga-Maps in the background of Fig 7 is the so-called 'thematic frieze' on top of the wall, giving each of the exhibition's chapters a textual and visual presence. Two of the four multiscreen installations can be seen in the middle ground. These stations consisted of different numbers of screens in varying formats and displayed carefully curated (synchronous) programs. These coherent thematic clusters' audio-visual material (video documentation of performances, interviews, photographs) resulted largely from the artists' submissions, which were collected via the Bang Bang online platform (open call).

Fig. 10. Installation view on BANG BANG exhibition with installation resources, Saga-Maps in the back and drawings on top, 2022. Photo: Ute Schendel ©

Last but not least, in the foreground, one can see the former stage props of the Forest, which was part of the theatre play Old Animals Stacked High by the performance artist and music group Les Reignes Prochaines. While the piece was initially performed at Theater Basel (2021), within the exhibition, the audience was invited to sit during the visit and especially during the many performances and discussion rounds. A better impression of how the richness of the Bang Bang exhibition, the abundance of performance documentation and collected materials, and the intensity of the networking capacity given by the programme for the performance day Come and Show in Fig 11 gives a better impression of how rich the Bang Bang exhibition and its intensive networking capacity was and still is. More than 70 performances from about 180–185 artists performed during one day in the museum area in the outdoor space, partly without announcements [39]. The handwritten numbers indicate where the performances took place. The sequence of numbers follows the temporal progression of the day. Due to the abundance, certain contributions were performed in parallel.

Fig. 11. Page 1 of the programme flyer for the Come and Show event of the Bang Bang exhibition. Scan: Panch 2022

3.2. Projects, stakeholders, partners and networks

The projects presented have in common that memory sediments itself in different layers and media. At the same time, in addition to the local (both as a place and as an institution, see above), stakeholders, partners and networks play an important role. This is particularly evident when looking at the projects and their organizational structure, as the following examples illustrate.

1) Performance memories as part of research projects

The first example might be the Archiv Performativ - The performance archive research project. A model concept for practices of documentation and actualisation of performance art (2010-12) [39]. The project was initiated by Pascale Grau [40], Margarit von Büren and Irene Müller at Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK) for researching, exploring, and guiding ways of documenting and communicating performance art from an archival perspective. Extensive research processes resulted in a 'model archive', a symposium organized by Siegrid Schade [41], live performances of earlier and newly developed works, and interviews. Today, the Mediathek and its collections are associated with the project for two reasons; (1) the video documentation of the first decade of Kasko performances was delivered to Mediathek; (2) Twelve interviews (including transcriptions) reached our collections in 2019 via the Swiss Institute of Art History (SIK/ISEA).

2) Archives of the Ephemeral

In 2018 Pascale Grau's and Margarit von Büren's former research questions and Julia Wolf, who had entered the former research project shortly before it was finished, led Olivia Jaques, Valerian Maly and Tabea Lurk to the Archives of the Ephemeral project (2017-19). This time as part of PANCH, the focus shifted to rather strategic considerations of policymaking, funding and archiving within the (official) framework of cultural politics. Aiming to set the ground for an understanding of where archiving is institutionalized while remaining alive and where documents remain permanently accessible and become (re-)usable in the sense of (re-)activation, different stakeholders were brought together for presentations, workshops, and a museums' symposium. Whereas a political result of the wide-ranging discussion was the integration of the words 'performance art' into the national cultural policy (*Kulturbotschaft* 2021-2024), all recordings and findings were published via Mediathek, contextualized in a wiki, and published as a bilingual booklet and open access report, summing up further findings. Fig 12 shows an excerpt from the project wiki. It traces the project's structure and focuses on visual resources of the five think tanks (including the symposium).
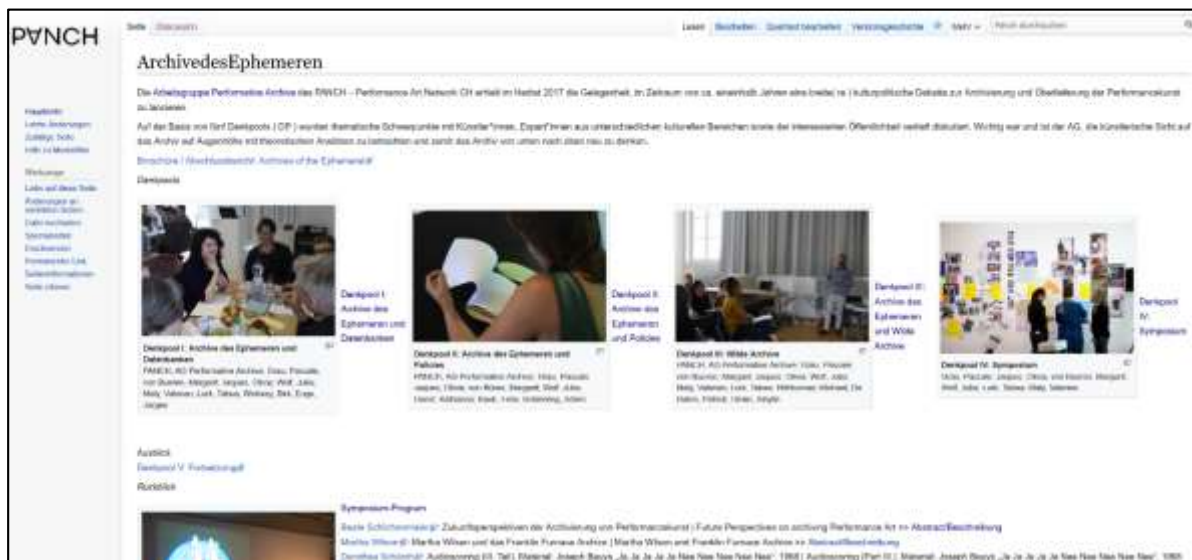

Fig. 12. Panch-Wiki of the Archives of the Ephemeral Documentation, 2019

The wiki was chosen to enable the community to participate in the ongoing discussions initiated by the project and become part of a network. While the data derives from Mediathek's collections to keep it safe, the wiki is still open. Even if this functionality is only partially used, the approach, especially the Bang Bang experiences, shows that performance art rarely stops at resources. Memory institutions must increasingly strive to enable participation and sharing.

3) Networking Stakeholder of Swiss performance Art

From a political and institutional perspective, the Foundation Swiss Performing Arts Archive (SAPA) is the archive which is funded for archiving Swiss performing arts. In addition, most of the public and private art collections, SIK/ISEA, and some libraries contain (sometimes extensive) documents and relics of performance art. Examples are the Schauwerk by René Schmalz, stored at the Cantonal Library Appenzell Ausserrhoden (Trogen CH), and Black Kit by Boris Nieslony (now in Cologne, D). At the same time, some of the previously mentioned questions are deepened within scientifically funded research projects such as Collecting The Ephemeral. Conditions and possibilities of collecting performance art (2019-2023, HSLU) or Performance: conservation, materiality, knowledge (2020-2024, HKB) [42], which position performance art within an institutional setting such as the art market and art conservation, PANCH-related projects tend to be realized by the community for the community. Accordingly, curating artists such as Andrea Saemann, Chris Regn, Pascale Grau, Judith Huber, Gisela Hochuli and Albena Mihaylova have handed over documents and documentation of performance events to archives for raising (global) visibility, strengthening their networks and gaining lasting memorability [40]. Fig 13 tries to capture this network idea of collaborative exchange. It is based on the online resources of Mapping Europe [43]. Panch launched the project within the framework of Eurovision (Judith Huber, Andrea Saemann). While with Mapping Europe, individual artists can visit other countries' performance art scenes and then return with impressions, reports, texts and image materials, Eurovision aims to improve the visibility and presence of European performance art networks. Project-based exchange is documented with PAErsche (Cologne, D), LADA (Live Art Development Agency, London) or PAB (Performance Art Bergen), to mention just a few.
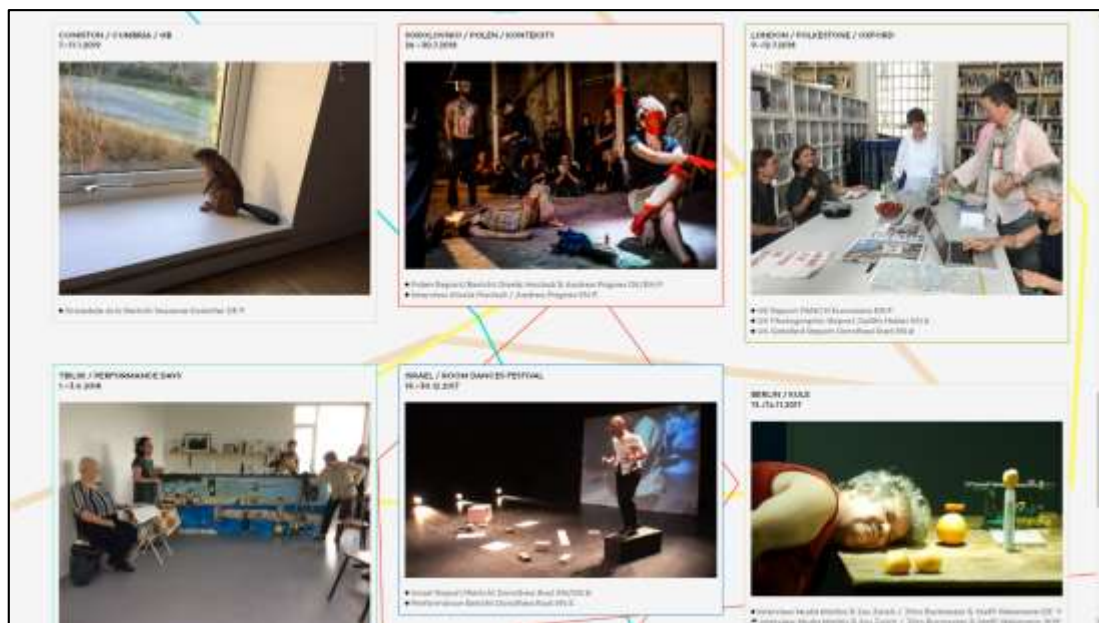

Fig. 13. Excerpt from PANCH-Website of Mapping Europe, 2022. Design: Nicole Boillat

3.3. Panch-related special collections at Mediathek

However, the often temporally downstream aspect of source-based communication (in the sense of documentation and cultural transmission) becomes apparent in the Panch-related holdings of Mediathek such as Must or Not (2020), 6×2 Performance-Duos (2020), Doce En Diciembre - Oceanic Message (2020), Partout (2020, in transmission), Together Elsewhere (2021) or Bang Bang (2022). A brief look at the projects illustrates the diversity of artistic interests and approaches, which are then also reflected in the heterogeneity of the data:

1) Must or Not

Like almost all the events, MUST OR NOT started with an open call and was open to the public. However, the project aimed to produce freely available resources of (re-)performed pieces and gestures. Thus, special attention was paid to the photographers, who documented in parallel and decided on the subsequent selection process, together with the performers of the material to be

published. The CC BY 4.0 licence further designates both parties as equal. This type of equality still seems unusual and emancipatory. Photographers are often forgotten in the common historiography and discussion. This is not only legally inappropriate but also ethically difficult. Fig 14 attempts to capture this performance-specific desideratum by showing five photographers while one artist performs.

Fig. 14. "I want to Act Like". Iris Ganz, Ute Schendel CC BY 4.0 (2020)

2) 6x2 Performance-Duos

Shared authorship is also a crucial aspect of rather fixed artistic collaboration when artists work, for example, as a duo. With 6×2 Performance-Duos Pascale Grau invited collaborating artists to perform both as a duo as well as individually. In contrast to artist pairs, whose collaboration is related to partnership, the designation duos aim more at constellations in which jointness comprises fellowship as one artistic practice alongside others. Duos thus appear as a special case of a collective. Fig 15 shows the initial duo of the organiser of the event when talking about their common practice at the end of the performance.
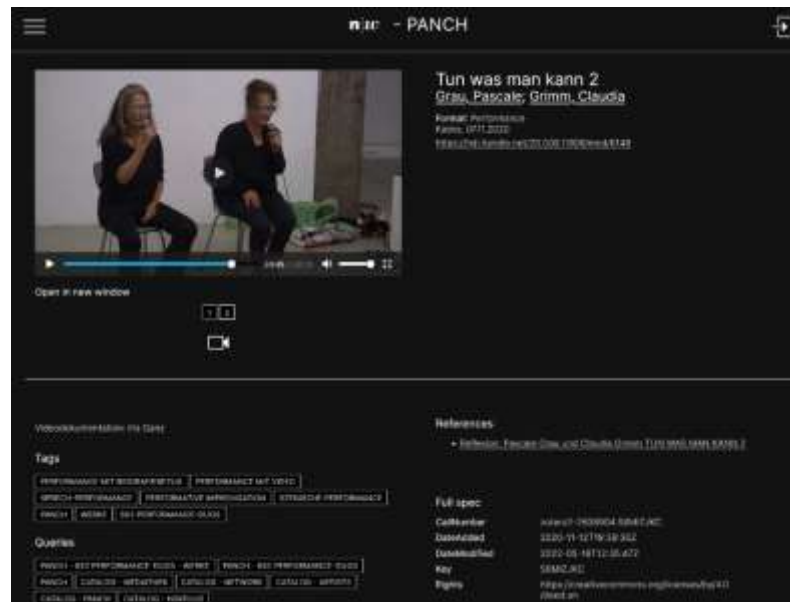

Fig. 15. Catalogue entry of Pascale Grau, Claudia Grimm: "Tun was man kann" (2018/2020)

3) Doce en Diciembre

Doce En Diciembre was instead conceived as an artists' exchange series, starting with six female artists from Switzerland visiting Buenos Aires and meeting up with six female artists from South America. The exchange fell in the middle of the Corona pandemic and could only be realized under

difficult circumstances. One effect was that the original visit in December 2019 could not take place. Instead, the documented performances in the aftermath of the event in Buenos Aires, resulting from the cooperative togetherness there, were shown first as a live stream on Vimeo and delivered to mediathek for continuous online display. It was not until a year later, when travel and meeting in a room became possible again, that the artists from Argentina and Brazil were invited as guests and continued their exchange with the Swiss artists at Kasko. The recordings were shown again and added with live performances in front of the audience. Fig 16 shows the invitation postcard with all participants, partly as a collage. Initially intended to invite people to the live event, it was then used for the online presentation and later reappeared in the announcement of the live meeting. As the performance can still be viewed online, it is easy to see the feminist approach of both artist groups and the differences given by cultural and local distance.

Fig. 16. Postcard: Doce en Diciembre Collective (2020). Collage: Monika Dillier (CC BY-SA)

4) Together Elsewhere

Again, related to Eurovision was the festival Partout [44]. It brought over 30 performance artists from around the world for ten days first to Lausanne and then to Basel, to present and expand their artistic practice through experimental formats, discussions, workshops and publicly presented performances. Here Gisela Hochuli and Pavana Reid met first and developed the idea and concept of Together Elsewhere. Starting in 2021, Together Elsewhere grew into a long-term networking performance exchange between PAB (Performance Art Bergen) and Panch (Performance Art Network Switzerland). Lasting for 30 minutes each, Together Elsewhere takes place once a month as live streaming and is afterwards preserved at the Mediathek. Fig 17 shows the first performance of the series and the two curating initiators. Both work in their kitchen with natural materials. Each of them performs for herself and yet together. Even though they have not seen each other, one senses how surprisingly close the two performances come in special situations. Following their previous exchange, the recording shows the uniqueness of the encounter of performing together in the virtual space for the first time.

Fig. 17. Pavana Reid, Gisela Hochuli, "Together Elsewhere I" 2021 (CC BY 4.0)

4. Conclusion

Taking a closer look at the collections at Mediathek in its historic sequence, we recognize a fluctuation from a rather object or work-oriented, individualized culture of remembrance towards a publicly (or by the artists' community) expressed claim for participation and sharing. Whereas former collections were built based on mostly known events and items, more recent approaches extend the emancipatory gesture of performance art to the level of sustainable infrastructures and – in this case – artistic representation. This does not mean that classic collection practices disappear. On the contrary, collecting has become a culture/attitude of its own within the arts for years. From an institutional perspective, however, it becomes apparent that access requires not only the availability of (re-)usable (re-)sources. It also means that institutions such as Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLAM) must meet the demand from externals to inscribe in directories and discourses, regardless of class, cultural and/or academic, gender or any other discriminating factors. Thus, they must provide publicly available interfaces for bi-directional communication. Expanding the academies' repositories and horizons is useful in circular terms to get *and* provide access to otherwise unknown or even lost resources. Sharing infrastructures of record-keeping and documentation seems especially relevant in the field of the arts, where precarious working conditions and mechanisms of exclusion can often still be observed at different levels. Regarding performance art as a specific topic, the situation may seem at the same time paradoxical: on the one hand, performance art seems more popular than ever and so established as an art genre that it is even increasingly traded as a market commodity. On the other hand, only a few collections, at least in Switzerland, make their acquired performance documents and digital resources publicly accessible and reusable. This withholding of sources seems unreasonable for an art form based on collaborative exchange and participation, even if legal obstacles are always connected with publication. In addition to SAPA, the efforts of the Commission of Fine Arts of the City of Lucerne and its peer in Basel-City (Kunstkredit Basel) might be mentioned. Kunstkredit Basel was founded as one of the first institutions in Switzerland a working group for 'action art' in 1985. It mentioned 'performance art' in a call for entries for the first time in 1990 and announced the first nationwide performance competition in 2002.

A look at the personnel may underline the connection to the above-mentioned beginnings of Swiss performance art: Initiated by Hedy Graber (Head of Kunstkredit), Kunstkredit Basel was artistically directed by Heinrich Lüber and Muda Mathis. The competition was expanded in 2011 and renamed by Peter Stohler (then Head of Kunstkredit) to the Swiss Performance Art Award. Cantons of Aargau and Geneva joined into a financing partnership, and other cantons followed from 2014 onward. 2011-2017 Andrea Saemann took over the coordination, who was already a commission member since 2008, followed by Madeleine Amsler (from 2018) and Eva-Maria Knüsel (from 2022). The text tried to introduce the collections of performance art at Mediathek and relate them to their historical, regional and artistic contexts. Documents and (re-)sources mentioned are waiting to be found, explored, questioned, and processed. Aiming for inclusion into lasting environments, looking for permanency regarding access and digital resources as commons, new types of partnership have been established. Thus, it has become clear how far allowing resources to enter the domain of the commons can enable or rather activate creativity – as is intended by naming a widespread licence package 'Creative Commons'.

Declarations

Tabea Lurk (From the community, for the community….)

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