Curating Living Archives Workshop #4

Resisting Recuperation: Articulating the unruly politics of artists' archives through open-source practices

# The Attic Archive



# **Digital Archive Box**

24th November 2021, 2-6 pm, Zoom

Compiled by Judit Bodor and Roddy Hunter

## Introduction to the past and present of The Attic Archive

The Attic Archive was conceived by artist Pete Horobin (b.1949) after graduating from Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, Dundee in 1975. It documents the lifepath of an artist through the emergence and disappearance of different identities reflecting the changing conditions in his own life within particular periods of history.

The first projects in the Archive were *The Accessibility of The Art Object* (1977-1978) and *Junk Into Art/Art Into Junk* (1979). The first involved Horobin distributing small collages randomly through the post and simultaneously selling products such as handmade books, badges, postcards & collages very cheap through the gallery system to make art both widely accessible and affordable. In the second he connected artist collectives in Paris and Dundee inviting artists to construct temporary artworks from recycling industrial waste, which he documented before the work was disposed.

These early projects were followed by four ten-year-long artworks (in essence artist 'diaries' or 'portraits') emerging through the work of separate identities:

## 1st January 1980 - 31 December 1989

## DATA (Daily Action Time Archive)

A self-historicization project documenting Pete Horobin's existence in his 30s, his ramblings in the Scottish landscape, and involvement in the 'Eternal Network' of correspondence artists internationally through mail art and <u>neoist activities</u>. At times he worked under different identities, including <u>The Acrobat</u> and <u>The Principal</u> Player, and became an 'actor' in his own life. He also used <u>multiple names</u> or 'collective identities, such as Monty Cantsin and Karen Eliot. He celebrated 1984 as the *Year of the Freedom* with PRAM (Pedestrian Rambles Around Myland), walking across Scotland carrying his belongings in an ordinary pram and sleeping in a canvas tent. Each campsite was signed by a 'chronogram'; an ephemeral Neoist symbol marking particular space and time in the landscape. He collected data from his activities every day on A4-size sheets which he then distributed widely via his then networks. He established the DATA Attic in a former squat on 37 Union Street Dundee in 1980, which housed the Attic Archive until 2010 and operated as an independent art space. He hosted <u>international artists and made spontaneous</u> collaborative works in Dundee, co-organised <u>Neoist Apartment Festivals</u>

Curating Living Archives Workshop #4: Resisting Recuperation: Articulating the unruly politics of artists' archives through open-source practices internationally, published several <u>SMILE Magazines</u>, and researched the lives of Scottish artists' living on the dole.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> January 1990 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 1999

The Marshall Anderson decade. Anderson emerged as a mixed-media artist, freelance art critic and journalist in his 40s. He travelled extensively in Scotland, for the most part on foot and lived mainly outdoors. He researched the work of outsider artists, curated the exhibition <u>'SOLOISTS: Outsider Art in Scotland'</u> for art.tm gallery, Inverness, and <u>worked collaboratively on several bookworks with Danish ceramicist Lotte Glob</u>. To make money he rented out the DATA Attic to art students and wrote articles and exhibition reviews for magazines such as Artist Newsletter and Variant. He also curated an exhibition with Lynne Nealon of decorated coffins by Dundee Women Artists.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> January 2000-31<sup>st</sup> December 2009

The Peter Haining decade. Haining was an artist in his 50s who also became the curator of the Attic Archive. He spent five years researching and documenting the works of autodidactic and naïve artists in Ireland as he bicycled around the 32 counties (HIBERNIA). Upon his return to Scotland, he spent his time (re)cataloguing, digitising, exhibiting, and separating The Attic Archive and securing its relocation, in parts, into different collections. Nobody wanted to take the archive as a whole but larger segments ended up in the collections of the National Library of Scotland, the National Irish Visual Art Library, Dublin; Artpool Art Research Center at KEMKI Museum of Fine Art, Budapest, and the University of Dundee Archives and Museum Collections with a few artworks also taken into the collections of The McManus Gallery, Dundee, the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, and other smaller collections in Scotland.

## 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

An entirely digital artwork by aitch, operating as ae phor, produced after the DATA Attic was sold. This work was borne out of an alphabetical pun (ae phor aitch). All artworks and animations were inspired by a single letter from the alphabet.. aitch also completed the relocation of material from the Attic Archive and <u>finished a</u> <u>few artworks from previous decades</u>. The ae phor work was accepted by the <u>National Library of Scotland</u> from the time of its conception and has been collected on hard drives [not yet catalogued in detail].

## Since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 -

The artist's lifepath now continues indeterminately (defined by fate) under the identity haha, which brings together the four previous identities in an acronym (Horobin, Anderson, Haining, aitch). Between June -July 2021, and as part of Curating Living Archives research project, Judit Bodor conducted 8-hours of oral

Curating Living Archives Workshop #4: Resisting Recuperation: Articulating the unruly politics of artists' archives through open-source practices history conversation with haha 're-mapping the Attic Archive following an 'alphabetical script' of keywords, concepts and people. <u>The map</u> reconnects the

content of the Attic Archive through memory to find what the artist describes as 'phylogenetic' links between the four identities.

The archive's unruly nature and politics appear in the works of different identities through their interest in:

- valuing of creativity and artistic practice beyond established systems of art (outsider art, peer-to-peer artist networks)
- free distribution of art (accessibility)
- co-creation, open artworks, multiple authorship
- destruction as creation (eg. allowing the loss and change of art via 'fatalistic' modes of distribution, ephemeral gestures, or by returning them to the landscape).

## Your Digital Archive Box

This Digital Archive Box comprises a selection of documentation and artwork (with links to optional further reading if you wish to explore more) from different stages of the Attic Archive and projects described in the Introduction, kindly provided from the collections held at the <u>University of Dundee Archives</u>, the <u>National Library of Scotland</u>, and, <u>Artpool Art Research Center</u>, and with the artist's permission. We will use some of these materials in the workshop so please spend a bit of time freely browsing through the material reading/looking at works as you wish. The workshop will be a collaborative exercise in imagining a potential future for the Attic Archive on an open-source online archival and curatorial platform to allow continuing engagement with the works that is sympathetic to its playful unruliness.



Peter Haining discusses Pete Horobin's work and the Attic Archive, DATA Attic, Dundee, 2005. Video by Judit Bodor and Roddy Hunter. <u>https://vimeo.com/643398894</u>

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Pete Horobin, 37 Union Street, Dundee. Scotland. Dear Whoever-you-may-be, Scotland. Jou have been chosen by fate to receive a piece of art This gesture from me to you does not obligate you in any way. If you are pleased by the besthetics of the work and thereby preserve it I will have achieved more than a gesture. yours faith rolling hills rolling hills rolling hill ille rollin

Pete Horobin, 'The Accessibility of the Art Object', 1977-78. Unsent artwork and letter. University of Dundee Museums, purchased with grant aid from the National Fund for Acquisitions administered by National Museums Scotland.

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## DATA Pete Horobin DATA 37 Union Street Dundee

## DATA Pete Horobin DATA 37 Union Street Dundee

#### UMBRELLA:

Recently my illustrious colleague Lon bplegelman submitted a passage from one of my letters to him for publication in The Los Angeles Times. I'm sure it was read by many artists, entrepreneurs, philanthropists and culture vultures alike and probably created more anger and puzzlement than it justified because, in some ways, I was painted as a right-wing reactionary.

The passage printed referred to recent rounds of art susidy cuts by your right-minded Reagan administration giving my support to these actions. I have chosen to expand on this via Umbrella in the hope that 1 may be redeemed and not seen as a supporter of any fascist and imperialist government.

It really is unfortunate that artists, through the passage of history, have become increasingly financially dependant upon society. In many ways society has encouraged this so much so that today the existence of the art world relies heavily upon the generosity of respective gevernments. This situation could quite easily be viewed as a deliberate man-Deuvre by governments to tighten control upon a potentially dangerous minority of the population. A minority, who in past eres, have instigated and led triumphant revolutions against the state. In short in today's western succelles artists have been bought and through strict controls of consorahip, via standards set by parliamentarians and educationalists, as well as financial ties have had their social and duitural freedoms curtailed. Artists have become society's lap-dogs communicatively castrated thereby unable to influence the masses that they were once able to when the media they employed were more popular.

#### continued.

So I welcome severe cuts in government spending on the arts because such an action loosens the political manacle and hopefully they will force artists to seek appropriate economic alternatives. Too many artists believe that government aid is the only way to perpetuate their creative energy. Surely an artist who accepts government aid endorses and condones the actions of that government. NO artist should accept government aid while that government chooses to jeopardize our lives and futures by engaging in nuclear insanity. This present American administration in particular seems to be hell-bent on bringing our wonderful little planet to a thunderous conclusion. It is time for artists globally to be more politically active demanding more from their respective governments than patronising and paltry sums of hush-money.

May 1 conclude by inviting all readers of Umbrella to write to me with suggestions and comments on how artists globally can pressure governments to offer us the standard of living and secure future that we are entitled to as human beings.

21:5:81

Pete Horobin, Letter to Umbrella, 21.5.81. The Attic Archive at Artpool Art Research Center, Museum of Fine Arts - Central European Research Institute for Art History, Budapest.

The principal H company of bec Once. Twice The principal players improvise. No not khearse. DATA Union Street. Dundee. D.DI. 4BS. Scotland.

Pages from Pete Horobin, 'The Principal Player' (unpublished), 1981. A5 size book with a script sent out with blank pages inviting other artists in the Mail Art network to fill the pages with their own scripts for The Principal Player. The Attic Archive at Artpool Art Research Center, Museum of Fine Arts - Central European Research Institute for Art History,

Budapest.



Pete Horobin, 'Chronograms'. PRAM: Year of Freedom, 1984. Original photo positive set on acetate in The Attic Archive at Artpool Art Research Center, Museum of Fine Arts - Central European Research Institute for Art History, Budapest.





#### TO BRITISH CORRESPONDENCE & MAIL ARTISTS

during a visit to robin crozier he expressed some concern about the future of his archived correspondence & mailart. A concern which i shared and one which i an sure we all share. for apart from the tate library there is no official private or state supported organised body equipped to hand be or expable of protecting the outpourings of our generation, the tate despite its healthy collection of sodern art does not have a policy to collecting mailart & correspondence art. even if we all bequesthed our collections is in doubtful that the tate would put enough resources into proserving & publishing the documents. I came away from sunderland clewing over this problem as an accompanisont to ny vegetarian dict.

after some days it struck me that between us we could organise our own brit ish archive for correspondence & mailart.

this would have obvious advantage? over any other form of personant preser vation, as a separate independent usasks it would be able to consentrate its resources upon archiving & publishing as well as estaloguing all the material of how the metwork functions.

aloarly the first thing to do is to be on the lockout for a suitable huld ing of a reasonable price. once this has been found collectively as must reise the finances to rake this dream come true. I will attempt to coordinate correspondence on this subject & enclose a list of all persons who have received this initial bulletin.

i lock forward to receiving your views & conments,



Pete Horobin, 'Open Letter', SMILE (at Archives), 1987. (unpublished), Call out for multi-authored magazine.

The Attic Archive at Artpool Art Research Center, Museum of Fine Arts - Central European Research Institute for Art History,

Budapest.

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Pete Horobin, 'SMILE, at Archives', 1987. (unpublished) Examples of responses to Pete Horobin's 'Open Letter'.

The Attic Archive at Artpool Art Research Center, Museum of Fine Arts - Central European Research Institute for Art History,

Budapest.

See also: tENTATIVELY, a cONVENIENCE, "Smiles". 2021. Idioideo. Pleintekst.Nl.

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INTERNAL / EXTERNAL	<b>INTERNAL / EXTERNAL</b>
NAME PETE HOROBIN PLACE 0560 345454	NAME PETE HOROBIN PLACE 0545 737-835
<b>PULSE</b> 60 TIME 07:44	▼ PULSE 59 TIME 07:34
TEMPERATURE 35-9 TEMPERATURE 12	TEMPERATURE 35.7 TEMPERATURE 9
BLOOD PRESSURE //0/78 BAR PRESSURE /050	BLOOD PRESSURE 1/6/82 BAR PRESSURE 994
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FOOD break hat : 2 oatrakes with honey darjeeling. Lunch: 2 boiledegg pieces, chamed rice with brambles: a stice of bread with honey fruit tea. Afternoon: a mars bar. Lake: 2 pieces of Sp	FOOD butak hast: brose with honor & bowdered milk a biece of shortie. dargeling. Lunch: Ash exits. Lake: a mars bar. Afternoon: 12 semes with marg. dageeling.
ACTIVITY bloto tent, take notes from confessions of a surgeon, mbair low, help kenny with his last spiral, make line, sit & chot. 14:00 leave to walk to Port Ellen. See kenny onto the peny.	ACTIVITY photo fait & back up. 09:17 more on in rein & take the forest track from West Bogton by Clenskinnan to Moss side. Hen walk B-roads by Mill of Cammie & Bridgen of Feuph into Banchory arriving at 13:00. each visit fle. Post office & shop Leave at 14:50 & unik out by Woodend & Uninskalloch to Camp by the Bo Burn at 16:05, have the Read The Yaggoou Herdel & do Burn at 16:05, have MAME PETE HOROBIN PLACE 0538 727993.
NAME PETE HOROBIN PLACE 0560 345454	Lea Read The grappin Keddel & do guide cossion. NAME PETE HOROBIN PLACE 0538 727993.
PULSE 54 TIME /8:22.	PULSE 62. TIME /8:22.
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BLOOD PRESSURE 1/8/84 BAR PRESSURE 1048	BLOOD PRESSURE /22/86 BAR PRESSURE /0/2
MOOD WEATHER broken grey, blue	MOOD WEATHER clear, stary of
Westerly wind	MEMORECED TRED APATHETIC TENDEMETICULE (2/M).
STOOL	
FOOD evening meal = egg noodles with a vegetable stock. cube & a hated boiled egg, a chresse piece. steved dates & Hubarb with creamed rice. Supper: 2 oatcakes with honey.	FOOD evening real = mustard seeds fried in marganine Ken a large hin of macaroni cheese & cheese added. "a biece of bread. Supper: 2 2 scores with marg. drinking chocolate.
ACTIVITY cook & plan travel itinerary. cat. check maks \$ skw mubars with dates. eat. write. eat. 22=12 prepare for bod.	ACTIVITY cook & start lage crossword & cort. write. study maps. eat. ponder crossword. 21:33 prepare for bred to read.
SCOTLAND SCOTLAND SCOTLAND	SCOTLAND SCOTLAND SCOTLAND

Pete Horobin, 'Data Sheets: Year of the Tent', 1989.

The Attic Archive at Artpool Art Research Center, Museum of Fine Arts - Central European Research Institute for Art History,

Budapest.



Pete Horobin, 'Data Sheets,' Year of Freedom, 1984, and the pram – painted golden – with chronograms exhibited at University of Ulster, Belfast, 2006 as part of *I Confess I Was There: Art, Archives and Locations*[s] curated by Sarah Pierce, Julie Bacon and

Declan McGonagle.

See also Dickson, Malcolm. 2007. "Peter Horobin". Review in MAP Magazine.



Installation view, *Moving Images from the Attic Archive*, 19 Mar–18 Apr 2010, Cooper Gallery, University of Dundee [curated by Laura Simpson].

See also Baxter, Jonathan. 2010. "Moving Images from the Attic Archive". Review in MAP Magazine.



Installation view, *Pete Horobin: DATA*. Street Level Photoworks, 20 April-3 June 2012. [Curated by Malcolm Dickson] Photo: Alan Dimmick.

See also: Mulholland, Neil. 2012. "I Do Not Belong, I Participate: Daily Action Time Archive". Neilmulholland.co.uk. An article was

published to coincide with the show.



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Marshall Anderson, 'Wilderness', c1994

The Attic Archive collection at University of Dundee Archives.

See also an example of Anderson's writing: <u>Anderson, Marshall. 1998. "A Quality Cinema Experience". Variant 2 (6): 21-22.</u>



Marshall Anderson's Journal. Drawings, essays, notes. Portfolio covered in blue, red, green and gold tartan, 1994. The Attic Archive collection at National Library of Scotland.



Lynne Nealon: Decorated coffin. Exhibition by Women Artists in Dundee. Roseangle Gallery, Dundee. [A project started by Marshall Anderson and finished by Lynne Nealon when Peter Haining was in Ireland], c.2000-2001. The Attic Archive at University of Dundee Archives.



Peter Haining, Drawings and a photograph of Pat Lawlee's decorated cottage in County Cork. 'HIBERNIA (Haining's Irish Biketour in Eire & Round Northern Ireland (Arts)', 2000-2005.

The Attic Archive at the National Irish Visual Arts Library, Dublin.





ae phor aitch, 'T4 Terrain', 2015, YouTube.

The Attic Archive collection at National Library of Scotland

See also: Stefan Szczelkun: 'T4 - a multimedia work by Ae Phor 2015'.