

Screen Cultures 1970s-1990s in Basel and Beyond

Video and Net Initiatives

SCHÜREN

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Permanence as a Driver for Access

On the Transfer, Acquisition, and Consolidation of the Digital Holdings of the Video-Genossenschaft
Basel as a Resource for the Public, Research, and Teaching

Around 2020, *Point de vue*, the successor organization of the *Video-Genossenschaft Basel* (Video Cooperative Basel, here referred to as *VGB*), decided to make a substantial selection of 92 videotapes permanently, and as freely as possible, accessible online. The now digitized works of art and video culture date from its founding in 1979 to 1998. As a partner and platform for continuing online access, it selected the Mediathek at the Academy of Art and Design Basel (HGK) of the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW).¹ The collection is now embedded in the estate *Videonetzwerke*, like the underlying research project.² Here, further contextualizing materials are continuously being added, such as video interviews. With regard to the *Videonetzwerke* collection and the *VGB* holdings, for example, the interviews, which Piet Esch and Stefanie Bräuer conducted with former participants of *VGB* and their circles, and newly emerging resources, e.g., from teaching, that deal with this collection. This text presents the perspective of the Mediathek on the collection, the project, and the questions that typically arise in the context of collection transfers and acquisitions.

Because such transfer processes – particularly in the field of contemporary art and culture – can hardly be viewed independently of those affected,³ the text also considers multiple viewpoints. This represents the dynamics between the various interests of data owners, funding bodies, and the public,⁴ as well as the interests of videographic actors and audiences, of research and education, and of different generations, systems, and contexts. At the same time, the *VGB* collection serves to illustrate how the achievements of historical video cultures – discussed in this volume through the lens of “screen cultures”. Focusing on the future, the text considers, what happens, when works of art that were created from a subcultural, anti-institutional perspective – with the explicit aim of undermining hierarchies and power structures and fostering grassroots democratic permeability – are in the end, in fact, taken over by collecting, memory-preserving institutions. To explore this, the text presents three perspectives.

Chapter One addresses the transformation of historical screen cultures from an archival perspective. Aspects related to collecting and consolidation are highlighted – rather than the often-discussed socio-cultural implications. The focus of the text is on the organizational frameworks surrounding the *VGB* collection of the *Videonetzwerke* estate. With the transfer to the Mediathek, an archival stakeholder takes the place of the former cooperative practice and production community and, in doing so, renders the proximity to surrounding

1 <https://mediathek.hgk.fhnw.ch/>.

2 The *VGB* estate is available online at <https://mediathek.hgk.fhnw.ch/collection/videonetzwerke>. The physical tape archive is still held at *point de vue* (<https://www.pointdevue.ch/de>).

3 Since many videographers (copyright) and filmed individuals (privacy rights, possibly related rights) are still alive and/or use and viewing contexts remain active, various matters need to be clarified by those responsible before any content is published online. Consent to publication (rights of (re)use), in particular, frequently depends on communication with and the memory culture of the rights holders.

4 Funders and sponsors, such as cantonal governments (university performance mandates), as well as cultural and patronage actors, exert influence through statutes, institutional or funding-related guidelines. Increasingly, they stipulate that sponsored outcomes must be made freely accessible to the general public.

Videonetzwerke

Videogenossenschaft Basel (VGB), now known as Point de Vue, was founded in 1979. Throughout its more than 40-year history, it has repeatedly been a focal point for significant shifts in the history of video. The presented video art sources offer excerpts from the digitized collection. These works contribute to a comprehensive understanding of video history. Artistic autonomy, flexibility, small budgets, and differentiation from commercial actors and television are typical of the self-organized, collaborative network character and the early phase of local video art.

Exemplare sortieren nach Relevanz

In der Sammlung suchen

Suche

Exemplare (80)

Ansicht

<p>FILM Wegbeschreibung</p>	<p>FILM Trauma Teil 1: Wie der Tod</p>	<p>FILM Romeo & Julia (Theater ohne Grenzen)</p>	<p>FILM Even Though It's hard</p>	<p>FILM Transportgesichter: [Digitalisat: Digital Sub]</p>
<p>FILM Betäubte Sinne</p>	<p>FILM Portable Exhibition</p>	<p>FILM Vom Fortschritt - in progress</p>	<p>FILM 14 Tage danach 15.11.1986 - Teil 3</p>	<p>FILM Entschriftung der Greifengasse</p>

collections visible. Through this contextualization, networks of friendship become visible – networks that connect the existing sources, the key figures responsible for the transfer, and the newly added *Videonetze* collection, thus placing them on a broader foundation. The new digital environment stabilizes the cultural-historical, thematic, and personal narratives embedded in the works and in the relationships of the involved actors. In this way, the online publication counters gaps in memory.

Chapter Two centers on the balance between access and responsibility. It asks what happens when the viewing of these works of video art are no longer primarily steered and regulated by the creators themselves, as was the case in the early years. Instead, visibility is now organized by an institution that seeks to make the works as freely accessible as possible under the premise of scientific data management.⁵

The reciprocal relationship between video cultures and archival practices functions particularly well in the field of historical video and screen cultures, in part because many video (and video art) pioneers – often out of necessity – were highly technologically adept. The diversity of formats and the relative short lifespan of videotapes encouraged the development of their own storage, migration, and archiving structures.⁶ On the other hand, the environment of scientific data management proves to be compatible because its processes are conceived cyclically,⁷ with art-historical hierarchies in academic settings being replaced by production practices and the associated logics, demands, and, to some extent, creative freedoms of the artists. The research environment of the new custodian, the Mediathek, thus offers not only technical advantages and requirements for the sustainable operationalization of data but also introduces semantic, ethical, and cultural value discourses that resonate well with the original ethos of video and screen cultures.⁸

Chapter Three attempts to contextualize the preceding considerations and outlooks on the future. In doing so, the idea of archiving as a living practice takes center stage. Research data archives and collections such as the Mediathek are today expected not only to be publicly accessible but also to be capable of connecting to diverse publics that are not necessarily academic. Participation, inclusion, and the principles of open science again play an important role. This recalls the aims of early video and screen cultures, which likewise sought to appropriate not only aesthetic and technical, but also media and institutional spaces.⁹ Possible ways of implementing the conceptual effects addressed in this context are particularly evident in the field of the

5 See the position and reflection paper of the Swiss National Science Foundation: *Research Infrastructures in Switzerland Reflection and discussion paper*, ed. SNSF Presiding Board (2023), Bern. Available online at: <https://www.snf.ch/media/de/BiJK4zZIEcq0xIU/SNSF-White-Paper-on-Research-Infrastructures.pdf>.

6 Cf. the comments of Johannes Gfeller, who has followed and shaped the development of video (art) restoration from its tinkering beginnings in the late 1970s to its professionalization after the turn of the millennium: <https://www.rebelvideo.ch/portraits/johannes-gfeller/>. Also see the exhibition catalog Irene Schubiger et al. (eds.), *Schweizer Videokunst der 1970er und 1980er Jahre: Eine Rekonstruktion* (Geneva: JRP/Ringer, 2009).

7 <https://forschungsdaten.info/themen/informieren-und-planen/datenlebenszyklus/>.

8 Here one could think, for example, of the American journal *Radical Software* (1970–74): <https://www.radicalsoftware.org/e/index.html>.

9 <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

Mediathek's collections of performance art. As a field directly adjacent to historical video cultures in Basel, a short digression into this other collection segment is in order.

Overall, the topic thus spans a kind of triangle between the *VGB* as a historical actor in Basel's video and screen cultures, the Basel School of Design and later Academy of Art and Design (HGK) of FHNW, and its Mediathek as collecting institution. While the HGK appears here as a teaching, educational, and research institution, the Mediathek in this constellation assumes the role of managing the university's digital research data (data stewardship) and of fostering quality and continuity. Since all three entities are non-corporeal, the backgrounds and premises described may appear somewhat abstract. At the same time, this illustrates how structural considerations can lead to the implementation of specific workflows and forms of consolidation which, in turn, enable vibrant cultural practices and articulations – and, most importantly, remain oriented around the people, the actors, at their center.

Regarding current archival theory, it becomes evident that the still-rumbling archives (Wolfgang Ernst) are currently becoming more consciously aware of their (grassroots-) democratic origins. The liberalization of access and the continued rethinking of the archive beyond thresholds of access, toward society, participation, and inclusion re-establishes a kind of connectivity, which, is stabilized from the outside. This supports the cyclical transmission of values from one generation to the next, which fosters the tangible social need for a culture of remembrance as a living practice. If the now-online-accessible works of video art and -culture of the *VGB* – considered as individual works – take a back seat in this text compared to the other essays in this volume, this is not meant in an archive-centric sense. Rather, this distance may serve as a reminder that, for many video art works, various – often involuntary – technical tinkering had to occur before they arrived at the form in which they are perceived today.

SCREEN CULTURES IN TRANSITION

When reflecting on the nature of the historical networks of video art and screen cultures in Switzerland – or more specifically here in Basel – from today's perspective one is most likely to think of concepts such as networking, communal viewing, sharing, and participation. Hardware and know-how were jointly acquired, set up, shared, and knowledge about specific forms of use and production practices was passed on among one another. Knowledge and practice communities emerged. Societal organizational forms such as cooperatives and/or associations underscored then – as they do now – the

commitment to self-organized collectivity.¹⁰ Applied more generally to the early days of video art, the concept of “seeing” encapsulated in the medium’s name “video” (from Latin “*videre*”) can thus also be understood as something shared, as a communicative strategy of providing something to see. In other words, “video” – “I see” – not only individualized from the perspective of the first-person singular, of the nerd or the viewer, but always also in the plural: as a collegial process, a collective practice and organization of events (performance/screening, broadcast), or cast into exhibitable work formats such as installations.

Conceptually, the video communities can therefore be understood as dialogical counterparts. Technically and in terms of content, they did possess a certain sense of mission, but especially in the case of artistic works, they often sought physical proximity, exchange, and collectivity.

COLLECTING AS AN EXPRESSION OF CULTURAL MEDIATION AND IDENTITY FORMATION

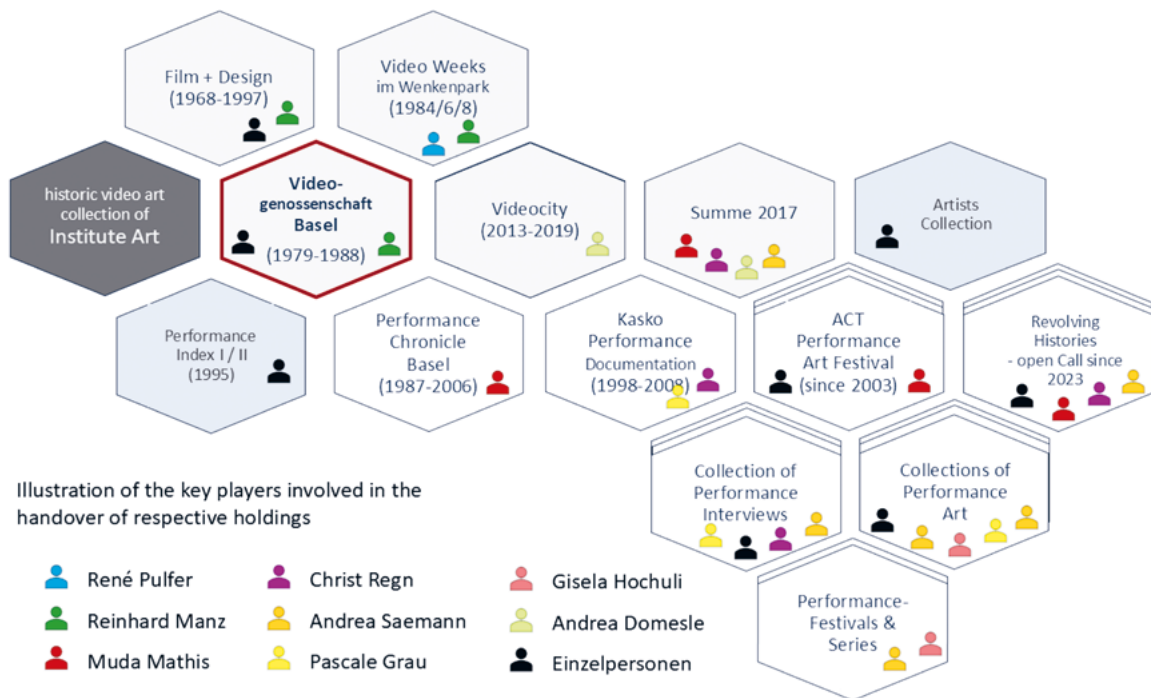
Looking at the collection history with a focus on key individuals underscores, on the one hand, the communal and collective nature: “collection” in Basel usually refers to a communal body of collected work, a kind of kaleidoscope of perspectives – though this should in no way diminish the actual efforts of the individuals here referred to as key figures. On the other hand, **FIG. 2** clearly shows that the collection of the VGB provides an important, previously missing puzzle piece in a gradually condensing and therefore changing image of Basel’s videographic past.¹¹

Communal viewing and discussion of the works of others as well as collecting activities have always also contributed to the identity formation of the respective groups. Whether as an effect of the then-new possibilities of copy (and zine) cultures, as a technical necessity against obsolescence, or as an anti-hierarchical practice of appropriation, the network-based collecting of early subcultural and artistic video actors has many facets.

Part of this history and culture is being preserved by the Mediathek in its video collections. As outlined following, René Pulfer, Reinhard Manz, and Muda Mathis play a decisive role in building up this collection.

10 Cf. Pablo Müller, “Ökonomien selbstorganisierter Kunstinitiativen. Zwischen pragmatischem Agieren und Handeln,” in *Unabhängig, Prekär, Professionell. Künstlerische Selbstorganisation in Der Schweiz*, ed. Rachel Mader and Pablo Müller (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2023), pp. 173–91.

11 The collection history of museum-related and patronage actors, such as galleries – particularly Galerie Stampa – is not addressed here.



2 Schematic representation of the relationships between selected collections of the Mediathek. Collection clusters are identifiable. Behind the front tile are fragmented and smaller sub-collections.

RENÉ PULVER AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE ACADEMIC COLLECTION OF VIDEO ART IN BASEL

It is hard to imagine the early artistic and design-oriented video communities in Basel without René Pulfer. As an artist and curator,¹² Pulfer was one of the pioneers of Swiss video art. Beginning in 1980, he organized film and video programs; in 1985, he established the video class at what was then the School of Applied Arts, before it was transferred to the Institut Kunst (today Institute Art, Gender, Nature) and eventually integrated into the Academy of Art and Design of FHNW. When the so called “Fachklasse” (degree course) in Audiovisual Art was still housed in the Baerwart school building by the Rhine (until 2014), Pulfer led the Institut Kunst and began collecting tapes of the internationally emerging video art for the university, making them accessible – alongside books – through the Institute’s media library (Mediathek). In 2015, parts of the collection that already had been transferred from VHS to DVD were consolidated along with the other institute libraries at the Dreispitz campus and handed over to the new/old Mediathek. While the retention of the departmental name is still understood today as a historical legacy and a continuation of the institution’s archival mission, the DVDs from René Pulfer’s collecting efforts that were still readable at the time were directly digitized and made accessible internally within the university (via login) through a newly developed research and viewing system. Following the analog model, the resulting “Integrated Catalog” (InK 1.0) combined the digital art sources with the bibliographic references from the library’s holdings of books, journals, and other media. Thus, from the very beginning of the Mediathek, curatorial, artistic, mediating, and scholarly contents have always seamlessly merged.

Even though different technological and legal framework conditions prevail today,¹³ the defining aspects of the Basel video and media art scene have been preserved: the friendly relationships among its members, the combination of personal commitment and strategic networking – sometimes financial, sometimes institutional – the sharing of knowledge, and the networking (see below). In this context, alongside René Pulfer, Reinhard Manz must also be mentioned.

12 In the realm of curatorial work, René Pulfer’s involvement in the video program of documenta 8 (1987) deserves particular mention.

13 Until 2019, this data could be accessed free of charge and freely as Open Data from Swissbib (<https://en.wikia.org/wiki/Swissbib>). When this source dried up due to licensing reasons with the transition to SLSP-AG, *InK 2.0* was launched (<https://mediathek.hgk.fhnw.ch/ink>). Although it is no longer allowed to index SLSP book holdings, it does include various other digital university sources as well as external digital media collections of the Mediathek, which can now be searched together. Currently, *InK 3.0* is under development, optimized for artistic ePubs, research data, and educational resources. The digital special collections received so far by the Mediathek, with a clear reference to the topic of Screen Cultures, are listed here. For this development, see also the 2017 activity report of the initial years: <https://doi.org/10.26041/fhnw-1302>.

REINHARD MANZ AND THE POTENTIAL OF VIDEO ART AS A MEDIATOR AND NETWORKING INSTRUMENT

Reinhard Manz was an independent film and video pioneer. As critical observer, gifted networker, and a supportive instructor, in 1985, he was a founding member of the *Video-Genossenschaft Basel*, and served on the board of the cooperative for many years. Same in his position at the Academy of Art and Design Basel he was an active and initiative colleague, often quietly operating in the background. He was, among other things, a lecturer at the Institute of Visual Communication at the HGK (now Institute Digital Communication Environments). From Mediathek's point of view he played a central role in the transfer of collections of early film- and video art, such as *Film + Design 1968-1997* (transferred in 2019),¹⁴ VGBs Videonetze (transferred in 2024), and *Videowochen im Wenkenpark 1984, 1986, 1988* transferred in 2017/2018).¹⁵ These projects and transfers were mainly possible thanks to many years of careful storage, cataloguing and preservation.

Reinhard Manz was involved in the development of all three collections from the outset. In 1984, 1986, and 1988, he co-organized and supported documentation of the *Videowochen im Wenkenpark*. In this format, invited international video artists – mainly from the U.S. – came for about a week to Riehen (near Basel) to do workshops, interviews, readings, and seminars with local artists. In retrospect, the *Videowochen* appear like a kind of video summer school *avant la lettre*. Together, they explored both technical and artistic questions, and possibilities of the then completely new and still largely inaccessible video technology. The video-documented exchange of ideas and the resulting works still show the artistic potentials and relevance of the medium.

A similar situation applies to the collection for the teaching module *Film + Design*. At the time this collection was created, Reinhard Manz was an assistant in Peter von Arx's graphic design class at the School of Design. The digitized materials are based on multiple recut 16mm film segments, which to this day bear witness to the close relationship between experimental film, video, and – particularly compelling in the Swiss context, given the tradition of the so-called “good form”¹⁶ – (graphic) design. Without the painstaking restoration work of Reinhard Manz and his reconstruction of provenance, this collection would not have become accessible.

14 The digital collection of *Film + Design* is accessible online at: <https://mediathek.hgk.fhnw.ch/amp/search/zotero2-2545256.3JZWF892>. The physical tape collection is preserved at the Cinémathèque suisse (Penthaz). For the accession of the collection to the Mediathek, see: <https://mediathek.hgk.fhnw.ch/#/de/bestaende/28>. An earlier monograph by Peter von Arx was published as: Peter von Arx, *Film und Design: Erklären, Entwerfen und Anwenden der elementaren Phänomene und Dimensionen des Films im gestalterischen Unterricht an der AGS Basel, Höhere Schule für Gestaltung*. (Bern: Paul Haupt Verlag, 1983).

15 The digital collection of the *Videowochen im Wenkenpark* is accessible online at: <https://mediathek.hgk.fhnw.ch/amp/search/zotero2-2545256.VC83GM36>. For the accession of the collection to the Mediathek, see: <https://mediathek.hgk.fhnw.ch/#/de/bestaende/5>. See also the monograph by René Pulfer, Reinhard Manz, and René Bauermeister: *Video Rewind: Videowochen Im Wenkenpark 1984, 1986, 1988* (Basel: Christoph Merian Verlag, 2013).

16 Uta Brandes, entry on “Good Form,” in Michael Erlhoff and Timothy Marshall (eds.), *Wörterbuch Design: Begriffliche Perspektiven des Design* (Berlin/Boston: Birkhäuser Verlag, 2008), pp. 184–6. (online: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-7643-8142-4>).

Last but not least, the delivery of the VGB at the *Videonetzwerke* project seems familiar. Here Reinhard Manz co-managed and maintained at the VGB stock for many years prior to their transfer. Although he did not live to see the completion of the project and the data were ultimately handed over by Piet Esch, the memory of Reinhard Manz is thus deeply inscribed in the history of not just the Mediathek.

MUDA MATHIS, THE GENERATIONAL TRANSFER, AND THE EXPANSION OF THE FIELD OF ARTISTIC VIDEO FORMATS

Another key figure and a bridge to the then younger generation is Muda Mathis. She studied under René Pulfer in the second Basel *Videofachklasse* (video masters class) and founded the production studio *VIA* together with other graduates in 1988. Like the VGB, the *VIA* is a cooperative association that is self-organised and run by its members. As a lecturer at the HGK, around the turn of the millennium, she helped establish the cross-institutional performance art festival *ACT* (since 2003).¹⁷ together with lecturers from other Swiss art schools. Until 2017, she collected the video materials, pictures, and documents documents for the Basel branch of this swiss-wide festival which is mainly organized by the students themselves. Since then, the stock of the *ACT* festival has been continuously updated and expanded.

Due to the ephemeral nature of performance art, video plays a special role. Today classical formats such as video performances, performance for the camera, and other genres continue to span the artistic spectrum and suggest an affinity with early video cultures. In addition to *ACT*, Muda Mathis also transferred the video documentation collection *Performance Chronical Basel 1987–2006* (2016/2017) to the Mediathek.¹⁸ This compilation emerged from two research projects. While the related text- and image-based knowledge has materialized in the two publications *Floating Gaps* (2011)¹⁹ and *Aufzeichnen und Erinnern* (2016), the corresponding online collection was later expanded into the open, i.e. continuously growing, collection. Based on the experience of *Performance Chronical Basel* and their huge network Muda Mathis established together with Andrea Saemann, Chris Regn, Sabine Gebhardt Fink, Lena

17 The website of the *ACT Performance Festival* is at: <https://www.act-perform.net/>. An impression of the artistic diversity is given in the publication: Darren Roshier and Marion Ritzmann, *Act: Twenty Years Building Bridges* (Basel: Existenz und Produkt, 2023). The digital collection of the *ACT Performance Art Festival* is only partially available online. As a nationwide festival organized in a largely self-directed manner by students from art schools, the Mediathek's cataloged holdings focus so far on Basel (entire run). In addition, there are documentation fragments from Zurich and Bern, which are accessible internally. In particular, the public holdings from 2017 onwards are accessible via the Performance Portal: <https://performance.sammlung.cc/grid/de?search=&collections=5%2C>.

18 The digital collection of the *Performance Chronik* is available online at: <https://mediathek.hgk.fhnw.ch/#/de/besttaende/6>, and on the community platform at: <https://performance.sammlung.cc/grid/de?search=&collections=1%2C>. The physical tape holdings are preserved at *Via*, with Muda Mathis. For related book publications, see n. 14. And the community website: <https://www.performancechronikbasel.ch/>.

19 Muda Mathis, Margarit von Büren, and Sabine Gebhardt Fink, *Floating Gaps: Performance Chronik Basel (1968-1986)* (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2011). As a kind of follow-up volume: Margarit von Büren et al., *Aufzeichnen und Erinnern: Performance Chronik Basel (1987-2006)* (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2016).

Eriksson, and Margarit von Büren the groundbreaking exhibition on performance art, *Bang Bang* (Tinguely museum 2022) and the later renamed collection (today called *Revolving Histories*). The *Revolving Histories* Collection is collectively²⁰ organized and curated. Here again, the Mediathek plays the role as host and facilitator. Today, *Revolving Histories* is the largest collection and most comprehensive collection of Swiss performance art, which is directly available online. For this reason, a dedicated research portal was created at <https://performance.sammlung.cc>, where other collections on performance art such as the collection of *Kaskadenkondensator* (Kasko) Basel,²¹ several projects with dedicated video interviews of performance artists such as *Perf en Bref*,²² art projects like *Doce en Diciembre*,²³ *Partout*,²⁴ and *Together Elsewhere*,²⁵ research projects on archiving strategies of performance art like *Archives of the Ephemeral*,²⁶ and others as well as individual collections of third parties were integrated.

CATALOGING AS AN INSTRUMENT AND BASIS FOR CONTINUITY

As previously mentioned, the VGB's video art and culture collection fits seamlessly into the profile of the media library's collection and complements it. The VGB tapes are divided into seven areas: In addition to the topics socio-political issues (16 works), documentary film (20 works), and fiction (6 works), there are also art video/experimental film (33 works), music (6 works), and theater (4 works). As was typical for early video cooperatives, which were easier to address as a group than the (still) lesser-known artists. The structure of the collection includes some productions that are characterized as commissions (7 works).

Even though these classifications were assigned at a later date, they still reflect the self-conception and reference frameworks of their then-active participants and of the now partly historical, anti-establishment discourse

20 <https://revolving-histories.ch/>.

21 The *Kaskadenkondensator* (Kasko) Basel collection documents Kasko's digital sources, with a particular focus on video. Memoriav supported the digitisation of the two video sections. Included are also flyer and programme announcements. Online available at: <https://performance.sammlung.cc/grid/de?collections=60>

22 The *Perf en Bref* collection results from an collective artistic research, involving interviews, discussions and a lecture performance. The project was presented in collaboration with far° - festival des arts vivants Nyon. 37 video interview from Olivia Jaques, Marinka Limat, Chris Regn, Darren Roshier, Andrea Saemann and Martina-Sofie Wildberger with others are online available at: <https://performance.sammlung.cc/grid/de?search=&collections=59%2C> .

23 *Doce en Diciembre* «Doce en Diciembre» documents an exchange project between 12 women artists from South America and Switzerland. The collection comprises 18 videographic documentations of performances and an moderated video program. Online: <https://performance.sammlung.cc/grid/de?collections=55>.

24 The *Partout* collections documents performances, experimental exchange and discussions of more than 30 performance artists from different places around the world, which met in Lausanne and Basel from 2nd to 11th October 2020. Online available at: <https://performance.sammlung.cc/grid/de?collections=62>

25 *Together Elsewhere* is a monthly performance series organized by Pavana Reid (PAB - Performance Art Bergen) and Gisela Hochuli (PANCH - Performance Art Network Switzerland). It is streamed live online by the Mediathek of the HGK FHNW Basel and then archived. The project started in July 2021 and present until now about 50 Issues. Online available at: <https://mediathek.hgk.fhnw.ch/events/togetherelsewhere>

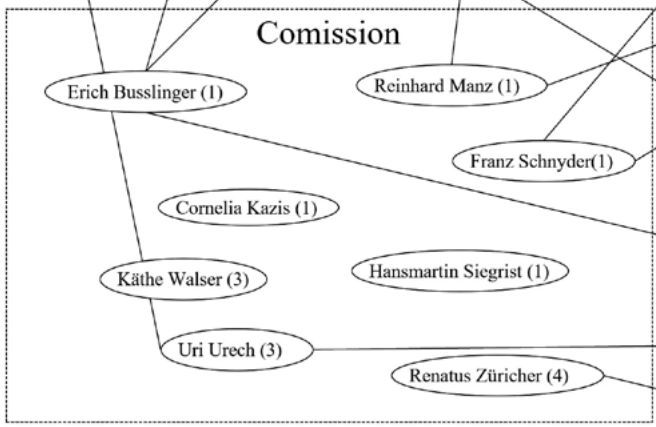
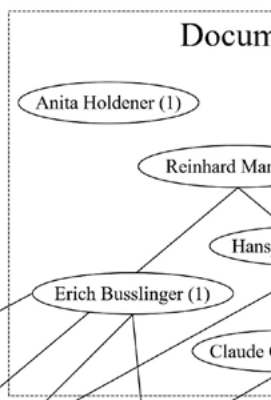
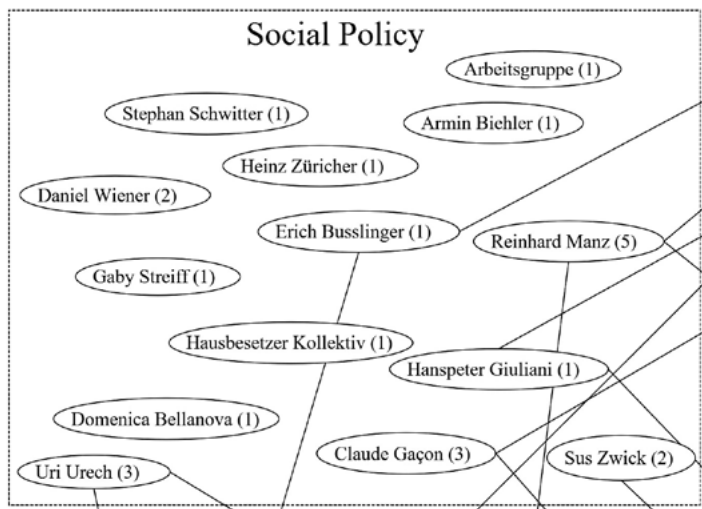
26 *Archives of the Ephemeral*, was a research project on archiving and institutional entanglement of performance art. Research documents, performances and lectures of the closing symposium are online available at <https://performance.sammlung.cc/grid/de?collections=11>.

surrounding video production and cultures: at the center of *VGB* were artistic perspectives, which, however, mostly diffused into other areas of activity and did not stop at public (urban as well as rural) or institutional spaces such as *Kaserne Basel*, *Theater Basel*, and others. **FIG.3:** tries to illustrate artistic engagements and contributions to previously named fields of activity. However, the content and artistic styles are often so similar that it is sometimes difficult to draw clear distinctions between them.

The titles of the tapes highlight the topicality and often the socio-cultural grounding that was generally typical for the communities of early video cultures.²⁷ In addition to the standard metadata, such as the title, authors (including those operating anonymously or collectively) and the year, various technical aspects can also be assessed in terms of the content. Therefore, **FIG.4** correlates the year of production with the different tape formats of the videocassettes.²⁸ Even today, this information still conveys something of the [technical] progress (german “Vom Fortschritt”),²⁹ as Reinhard Manz expressed this in 1990. As board member and artist, Reinhard Manz created the “Vom Fortschritt” entitled piece of (now) video art piece for the *VGB* general meeting, for discussing the succession of camera generations and the inherent format changes in video tape cassettes.

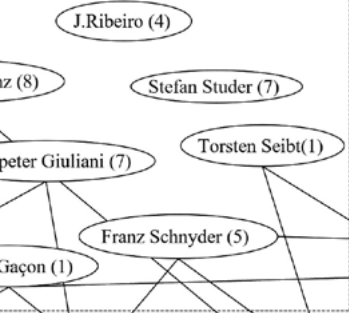
While in the context of art and exhibitions, the technical aspects are generally regarded as a means to an end, in preservation and digital archiving, particular attention is often paid to all technical matters.³⁰ Therefore, the varying runtimes illustrate that different target audiences and forms of presentation were addressed. Alongside clip-like spots lasting three minutes, there are half-hour videos and productions with tape lengths of up to 60 minutes. Multi-part works have also been documented. These also play a role in providing accessibility and playback on digital devices. If the original tape formats are further correlated with the chosen production languages, the sphere of influence and international networking of the *VGB* members and their associates become apparent.³¹

- 27 A well-selected compilation of key sources on the subject can be found at: https://monoskop.org/Video_art.
- 28 The original tapes in the following formats were transferred for further use into formats such as VHS, Betacam SP, U-Matic LB, Digi Beta, U-Matic HB, Digital Sub, and Digibeta: Japan Standart 1 (10 Bänder), open reel ½” (1 tape), VHS (1 tape), U-Matic LB (26 tapes), U-Matic HB LB (1 tape), U-Matic HB (29 tapes), Digibeta Beta (1 tape), Betacam SP (20 tapes), Akai 1/4 Zoll (1 tape), Hi8 NTSC (1 tape), and 1 inch C (1 tape). Fig. 4 shows the usage and allocation in the *VGB* estate.
- 29 Artistically, Reinhard Manz explored the topic in his video essay “Vom Fortschritt” (produced in 1990, U-matic HB SP, 3’30”, <https://mediathek.hgk.fhnw.ch/amp/detail/zotero2-4820753-ABFS8I5J>). For the diversity of formats, see also: Heinz Nigg, *Rebel Video: die Videobewegung der 1970er- und 1980er-Jahre London - Bern - Lausanne - Basel - Zürich* (Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2017).
- 30 An excellent example is the *Petit Guide* of the institution that also funded this project, *Memoriav*: https://memoriav.ch/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Guide_Film_Video_DE.pdf.
- 31 In addition to the national languages – French (3) and German (72, including Swiss German) – there are 3 works in English, 1 in Japanese, and 5 in Portuguese, four of which are bilingual.

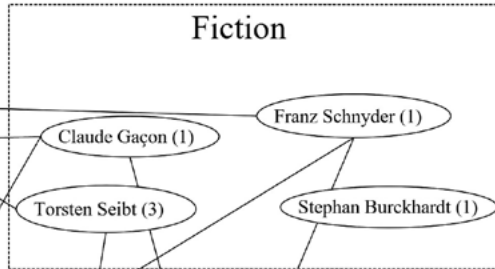


networks

Documentary Film



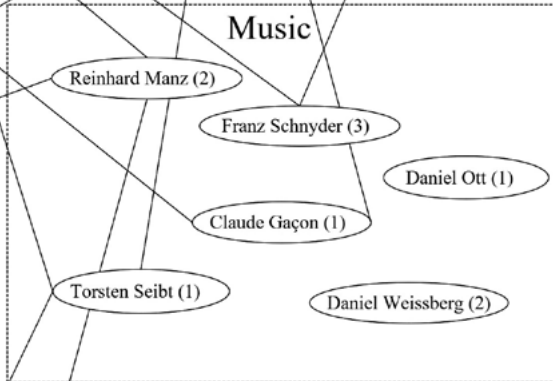
Fiction



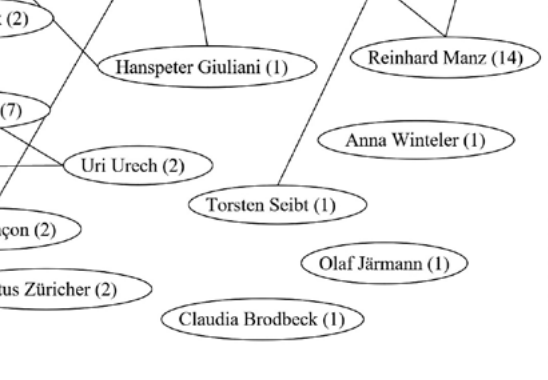
Theater



Music



Experimental Film



Originalformat	Akai 1/4 Zoll	Japan Standard 1	Japan Standard 1	Offenspule 1/2"	Japan Standard 1	VHS	Japan Standard 1	U-Matic LB	U-Matic HB	U-Matic LB	U-Matic LB	U-Matic LB	U-Matic HB LB	U-Matic LB	U-Matic HB	U-Matic LB	Betacam SP	1 Zoll C	U-Matic HB
Anzahl	1	1	7	1	1	1	1	7	1	6	2	3	1	4	5	2	1	1	1
Jahr	1979	1980		1981		1982	1983	1984	1985	1986		1987				1988			
Originalformat	U-Matic LB	U-Matic HB	U-Matic HB	U-Matic HB	U-Matic HB	Betacam SP	U-Matic HB	Betacam SP	Digibeta Beta	Betacam SP	U-Matic HB	Betacam SP	Betacam SP	Betacam SP	Hi8 NTSC	Betacam SP			
Anzahl	2	1	3	6	10	3	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	3	1	4			
Jahr	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993		1994	1995	1996	1997	1998								

ACCESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

As indicated above, individuals' commitment to collecting is indispensable for identity formation and establishing reference points. This is particularly evident in the early years. However, this attachment can become a sensitive issue when it comes to generational succession. Who will look after the collected memories after death? Institutions are often consulted during estate planning. Notably, in the case of the *VGB* and the previous collections, the actors themselves consulted the media library and ensured the continuity of the collection during their lifetime. This enabled rights to be clarified and other important matters to be arranged while this was still feasible.

As the following observations illustrate, attitudes are changing. What used to be a secret known shall now be made accessible to a wider public. Wherever possible, digitized resources shall be visible online, so that the memory and appreciation of past generations is preserved. In this context, institutions act as intermediaries between rights holders and society at large, implementing the intergenerational contract.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTINUATION AND CONSOLIDATION

The public visibility of sources is based on listings, indexes, catalogs and/or on websites. Inventories make the systematically recorded works searchable. Depending on the context, these lists may have a special, politically enshrined protective function. Examples include the UNESCO World Heritage Lists³² and the Swiss Inventory of Cultural Property of National and Regional Significance (KGS),³³ which, in accordance with the Hague Convention (1962), are to be protected first and foremost from the effects of armed conflicts, natural events, and other dangers.

Even though the collections of the Mediathek are not yet listed on any cantonal cultural heritage register, they are now declared in the inventory listing of MEMORIAV.³⁴ MEMORIAV is Switzerland's national network for the preservation of the country's audiovisual cultural Heritage. This association financially supported the archiving and mediation of the *Videonetzwerke* project. Therefore the *VGB* collection is accessible on the so called *Memobase* research platform.³⁵ While display is operated by Mediathek via the *Integrated Catalog (InK)*, the artworks of the collection are also indexed in the national

32 <https://whc.unesco.org/>. In 2017, for example, the Basel Carnival was added to UNESCO's representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (cf. <https://www.bak.admin.ch/bak/de/home/kulturerbe/immaterielles-kulturerbe-unesco-lebendige-traditionen/immaterielles-kulturerbe-unesco-in-der-schweiz/repraesentative-liste-des-immateriellen-kulturerbes/basler-fasnacht-.html>).

33 <https://www.bak.admin.ch/bak/de/home/baukultur/archaeologie-und-denkmalpflege/inventare/kgs-inventar.html>.

34 For the association MEMORIAV, cf. <https://memoriav.ch/>. The holdings of *Video-Genossenschaft Basel* can be found at: <https://memobase.ch/de/recordSet/hgk-004>. The so-called inventory project of MEMORIAV is explained here: https://memoriav.ch/de/projekte/inventar_inventaire_inventario/.

35 Memobase is a national collection portal that makes audiovisual cultural assets from various Swiss institutions centrally findable and networks the respective hosting institutions. For the *Videonetzwerke*, see: <https://memobase.ch/de/start>.

library system of the Swiss Library Service Platform (SLSP, see **FIG. 1**).³⁶ The option exists to add other mediation contexts.

However, online accessibility only arises relatively late in the archival processing chain.

INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFER

The terms on which works of art find their way into a collection, sources enter an archive/estate, and/or data are added to a library differ. In addition to mandatory deposits (e.g., in archives, dissertations, etc.) and paid purchases, there are forms of accession and acquisition such as (permanent) loans or donations. With the last, the cost structure is initially less visible to outsiders. However, the expectations toward the data-receiving institution are all the more tangible: Owners, administrators, rights holders, etc., generally expect the receiving institution to henceforth stand up for them or for something in areas where they themselves (no longer) can or wish to do this.

This was also the case with VGB: Following internal selection and rights clarification, *point de vue* transferred its collection to the Mediathek as a digital data collection in the form of a simple depositing donation. The handover hard drive was returned after the copying process. At this situation, called (pre-)ingest, the files were automatically indexed, transcoded, tagged with technical and descriptive metadata, and all of it is written into a database. Here data were merged with the content metadata recorded in the meantime, integrated into the Mediathek's catalog system, and prepared for long-term storage and publication.³⁷ This way, the Mediathek can later guarantee the permanent online accessibility of the works and fulfill the expected service in return for the cost-neutral transfer.

CLARIFICATION OF ACCESS REGULATIONS

The legal situation regarding reuse was not affected. Because authors rights are tied to individuals and their decisions, they and the rights of usage, which differ in our legal framework, cannot be automatically transferred. From an

36 https://fhnw.swisscovery.slsp.ch/discovery/collectionDiscovery?vid=41SLSP_FNW:VU1&collectionId=8177335930005518&lang=de.

37 Structurally, the procedure follows the model of the Open Archival Information System (OAIS), which was developed by NASA in 1969. In its generic form, it remains valid to this day and is recognized as an ISO standard (ISO 14721:2012). It states that the submitted data is initially treated as a package ("Submission Information Package", SIP), which after analysis and the addition of formal and preservation descriptions is converted into an archival package ("Archival Information Package", AIP). The technical management of this package is defined via preservation guidelines so that the package itself is only checked, but otherwise no longer accessed. Instead, a "Dissemination Information Package" (DIP) is provided for the actual users, which can be adapted to changing technological conditions. An example of such adaptations, induced by technological aging (obsolescence), would be the Flash format in the early 2000s, which has now largely disappeared from the market. Cf. Georg Büchler et al., *Referenzmodell Für Ein Offenes Archiv-Informations-System- Deutsche Übersetzung*, vol. 16 of *Nestor-Materialien* (2012), available online at: https://files.dnb.de/nestor/materialien/nestor_mat_16.pdf.

institutional perspective, the rights situation of therefore is often a particular concern, and possibly the highest risk for collection owners. For if works are not accessible, there is, on the one hand, a significant risk that no one will remember them once they finally enter the public domain 70 years after the death of the creators.³⁸ Only that which is known is missed when it is lost. On the other hand, at least one generation – even in times of shrinking resources – must finance the preservation efforts without being able to access the sources themselves.

Regarding the *VGB* collection at the Mediathek, the usage rights were carefully clarified from the outset. As the successor of *VGB*, *point de vue* took over the complete, non-exclusive members' access rights to all material and was therefore able to devolve them to the Mediathek. Here the artworks are visible but all rights stay reserved. Whatever happens to the works beyond individual viewing over the Internet – whether they are shown in exhibitions or at public events, whether and which images or audio-visual sequences may be used in publications, etc., and in what way – continues to be governed by copyright law, quotation law, and/or catalog law, by the artists and, up to 70 years after their death, by their legal successors. Only then does the protection against reuse expire. Distortions of content remain illegitimate even then. The term may be shortened or lifted by granting defined licenses, and the modalities of accessibility may be adjusted.

ACCESSIBILITY, VISIBILITY, AND TECHNICAL OPERATION

The transition to the Mediathek was particularly successful for the *VGB* because those involved were able to draw on their experience from the outset. At the same time, the immediate visibility and perceptibility of sources within the context of the arts is particularly important: However, the desire for visibility can be thwarted by the medium's fragility, complexity and accessibility. We have therefore prioritised the immediate visibility of digital resources at the *InK* interface. Various media players have been integrated into the detailed view of search results so that images, PDFs, audio files, video files, ePUBs and other files can be displayed immediately. Regarding access to recorded websites, interactive use is possible. The premise of artistic and creative media diversity and heterogeneity leads to continuous expansion and needs-based adjustments.

In the background, technical metadata elaborately transmitted along, structured storage routines are carried out, and processes for automated consistency and integrity checks (e.g., by means of checksums) are embedded

38

After the expiration of protection periods, works can, simply put, be used as intellectual creations without inquiry or payment of royalties. Referencing and naming of the author(s) is still appropriate. Cf. <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gemeinfreiheit>.

as part of preservation management.³⁹ All of this requires a performant technical infrastructure with complex media management, rights, and access management systems, as well as secure storage routines. Since universities are often required to retain their research data permanently, persistently, and, depending on context, in a verifiable way, they – including the Mediathek – are better positioned to develop or provide/host appropriate preservation systems than, for example, cantonal or privately run entities.⁴⁰

In a cultural context, community spirit and open, inclusive exchange are understood as such. However, in the scientific context Mediathek as library of the Academy of Art and Design Basel, these concepts are discussed under the heading of open science. The following considerations demonstrate the striking similarities between the two.

FAIRness AS A BASIS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

What exactly needs to be done technically to enable open science is defined, for example, by the aforementioned FAIR principles.⁴¹ The acronym summarizes features that promote long-term findability (F), accessibility (A), interoperability (I) – i.e., automated machine-to-machine exchange – and reusability (R). The principles recommend the use of standardized description systems (metadata,⁴² authority data) and so-called persistent identifiers (Handle, DOI, ARK).⁴³ Findability should remain guaranteed even if the digital resource has been physically transferred to a different storage location.⁴⁴ The previously mentioned lists and directory structures, both cultural and political, can be referred back to here. Accessibility, on the other hand, refers to the definition of where and under what conditions works of art or (re-)sources can be consulted, viewed, or experienced: physically or digitally, openly or closed, permanently or temporarily. In addition to human readability, machine readability is also advisable for digital content. The latter facilitates machine-to-machine

39 On desktop systems, the sources take up about two thirds of the screen area; on mobile devices, they appear before the descriptive metadata.

40 *InK* provides such an infrastructure. In order to withstand technological change, it is implemented as a MACH architecture. MACH is an acronym where M stands for “Microservices” – modular and transparent programming facilitates the exchange and/or extension of software components. A for “API First” means that internal system communication primarily takes place via standardized interfaces. C for “cloudbased” methodologically characterizes the software components. H for “headless” means that different user interfaces can be implemented, which are then adapted to the specific interests or requirements of the target groups without affecting the quality or sustainability of the data base. For the application of MACH architecture in *InK*, see <https://mediathek.hgk.fhnw.ch/front/#/static/system>. The modular system offers freely reusable software, which can be viewed here: <https://github.com/je4?tab=repositories>. These are mainly the continuously updated media server components. For checking format obsolescence, see for example: <https://www.loc.gov/preservation/digital/formats/sustain/sustain.shtml>.

41 Mark D. Wilkinson et al, “The FAIR Guiding Principles for Scientific Data Management and Stewardship,” *Scientific Data*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2016): p. 160018, <https://doi.org/10.1038/sdata.2016.18>.

42 The so-called Dublin Core is particularly widespread, for which various crosswalks (mappings) exist. See: https://www.loc.gov/marc/dccross_20010312.html.

43 <https://arks.org/>.

44 In the institutional context, the origin of the works also plays an important role: CIDOC CRM has long been considered one of the (meta)data schemas for describing the relationship between production (as an action) and provenance (as a socio-historical component), whereby the persons and actors involved and their roles can be formally described in terms of a so-called entity-relationship model (cf. <https://cidoc-crm.org/>).

exchange, which can occur via defined interfaces (e.g., REST, OAI-PMH) and protocols.

In addition to these technical aspects, the professional exchange among those working in the field plays an important role – a so-called “soft” or human factor. Cross-institutional collaboration can be reminiscent of the early video networks and ensures that the effort of continuous research on, and observation of, technical necessities is shared and remains manageable. Also people-affecting are the legal frameworks for access and consultation conditions (see above), which are technically identified through clearly stated and ideally standardized licenses.⁴⁵ This is the only way how future target groups can tell exactly which forms of (re)use are lawful (see above). Hence, it is advisable to release scientific findings and especially works of art during one’s lifetime, for example through appropriate licenses and/or at least to clarify use – as was done in the present case.⁴⁶

The last two aspects make it clear that, ultimately, it is still the human being who is at the center of all the activities. Humans are both the starting point and the goal of the efforts. Thus, it is still – or once again – a matter of how the technical proximity of digitally networked access can be meaningfully used to counteract human distance, and to bridge that which separates us through time, spatial-geographic distance, and other divides.

In recent years, it has thus become apparent that the archiving and publication of digital collection holdings not only shifts the relationship between producers and recipients in the archival context toward reception but also leads to an almost reciprocal opening. As external interest groups become more actively involved, the pressure on archives to open up increases. At the same time, certain tasks and responsibilities can be somewhat relieved, as not everything needs to be done within the institution itself.

In addition to the economies of consolidation hinted at above in relation to networking structures, there is the added benefit of utilizing the information and knowledge offerings of the community. What can be derived from the nature of research and dissemination cycles in the academic context finds its counterpart in sustainable “networks of care” in the preservation field.⁴⁷ Both can be reminiscent of the collective practices found in the early video networks as well as of academic information circles, the positive aspects of which are to be addressed here. Both are about the thoughtful sharing and preservation of knowledge. As a final aspect, however, we need to reconsider the issue of codetermination, which was an especially important principle in historical collective practices and is only gradually being

45 Widespread, for example, are the so-called “creative” commons (<https://creativecommons.org/>).

46 In the university context, the Creative Commons (CC) licenses play a special role because they support the principles of Open Science. CC licenses allow different forms of use in a modular system and belong to the internationally widespread licenses. They allow free, low-threshold accessibility, the technical operations necessary for preservation (e.g., text and image recognition, migration, etc.), and provide legal certainty for reuse.

47 Annet Dekker already developed this concept in 2018 in the context of her reflections on the preservation of net- and computer-based art. Cf. Annet Dekker, *Collecting and conserving net art: moving beyond conventional methods* (London: Routledge, 2018).

learned in the archival context. The CARE principles can provide helpful guidance here.

PARTICIPATION AS AN EXPRESSION OF CARE

The notion of care echoed in the term “Networks of Care,” can be linked to the CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance.⁴⁸ Aiming to prevent colonially appropriating, exploitative, and harmful data practices, they achieve this by establishing the premises of “collective benefit,” “authority to control,” “responsibility,” and “ethics” as a decision-making matrix. Hence, the CARE Principles thereby intentionally prohibiting data misuse and serve as an ethical corrective to the technically oriented recommendations of the FAIR Principles.

Applied to the data ecosystem of the Mediathek, CAREfulness begins with open accessibility. Because the implications of the CARE Principles may not be as widely known as those of the FAIR Principles and because they offer broader interpretive leeway, the individual elements are discussed here in more detail.

COLLECTIVE BENEFIT

Perhaps the most important aspect of the CARE Principles, the “C” for “collective benefit” stands for the common good. It indicates the intended direction by demanding that access be granted regardless of origin, cultural background, institutional affiliation, or the privileges associated with them. At Mediathek and within the *InK*, we try to avoid the use of login requirements or other access restrictions. Identity-based login processes are only required for particularly protected internal content.

However, open access can be read in different directionalities, especially from an institutional perspective. While typically the focus lies on the reception perspective – i.e., the unimpeded access to sources and resources – the call for open access can also be understood as permeability in the opposite direction: into the archive. In this case, it is also about opening oneself, as a collecting institution, to third parties, minorities, the underrepresented, etc., who have not yet been able to adequately inscribe themselves or their works into the – still often patriarchal and hegemonic – historical narrative, but who wish to do so. This perspective leads to the second aspect of the CARE Principles: the question of power, power structures, and the structuring of power, for instance, through (digitally) normative standards.

48 Cf. Stephanie Russo Carroll, Edit Herczog, Maui Hudson, Keith Russell, and Shelley Stall, “Operationalizing the CARE and FAIR Principles for Indigenous Data Futures,” *Scientific Data* vol. 8, no. 1 (April 16, 2021): 108. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41597-021-00892-0>.

AUTHORITY TO CONTROL

The “A” in the CARE Principles stands for “authority to control.” There are multiple dimensions to this concept too. On one hand, communities want to retain control over what is included and how access is defined. The importance of this demand – and how often this seemingly basic right has been disregarded – can be clearly seen in colonial contexts, for example. On the other hand, the concept of authority also plays a role in mechanisms of standardized regulation. Various directories that provide standardized entries for individuals, keywords, places, etc., and contribute to clear identification, are referred to as “authority data” or “authority files.”⁴⁹ These data sets are usually maintained by selected, internationally recognized institutions such as the Library of Congress or the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek. They include the Integrated Authority File (IAF),⁵⁰ as well as Getty Vocabularies Art & Architecture Thesaurus (AAT), Cultural Objects Name Authority (CONA), and Thesaurus of Geographic Names (TGN).⁵¹ While these institutionally curated authority files are subject to strict editorial control, there are alternative authority file directories used in research or community contexts that allow greater participation, such as ORCID,⁵² and/or are maintained collectively, like the entries in Wikipedia or Wikidata.

Participation in descriptive processes is a central concern because it carries the potential for discrimination and exclusion. To reduce the power imbalance between the artists whose works are being collected and the collecting institution, the curators of the *Revolving Histories* collection, for example, were involved not only in the development of the cataloging interface but also in defining the descriptive key words. Terms were and continue to be categorized under headings like “References,” “Genres,” “Actions,” “Materials,” “Material Type,” “Media,” “Players,” “Qualities,” “Spaces,” and “Themes,” as shown along the right edge of **FIG. 5**. The vocabulary was applied to the documents in this collection during so-called tag-a-thons in small groups (typically pairs). After each tagging session, the group discussed in the plenum missing or redundant terms.

The question of appropriateness – here, of description – leads, within the CARE logic, to the next principle: responsibility.

49 Authority data are mainly used with regard to persons and/or subject headings. While the personal authority data of the Integrated Authority File (GND) allow the distinction between two persons with the same name as well as different spellings in various languages, biographical developments (e.g., marriage), and the use of acronyms, the standardization of terms and their usage contexts in internationally maintained directories supports multilingual searching.

50 https://gnd.network/Webs/gnd/DE/Mitmachen/DokuRegeln/dokumentationRegeln_node.html.

51 <https://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/index.html>.

52 <https://orcid.org/>. Even though institutions can create ORCIDs for “their” researchers or automatically enrich them with their metadata, the decision-making authority lies with the researchers.

SEARCH

found items: 1761

Polyomorphic Sensibilities (2019)
Broecker, Johanna et al.
3 C 1

MONSTERHOOD Part II. Samenrausch, a cultural appropriation (2020)
Wiersch, Latsfa et al.
C 1

REBELLIO! AMail, Auflehnung, Aufrund (2020)
Broedbeck, Claudia et al.
1 C 1

The Other Things (2018)
Mhaylova, Albena et al.
1 C 1

On Every Grain - Performance #1: PROCLAIM (2019)
[Parve] et al.
C 1

Wasting Time (2020)
Perillo, Maricruz et al.
C 1

Et La Nigéte (audio pdf) (2020)
Kokki, Pina et al.
5 C 2 + 1

Lecture Simultannée (2012)
Kokki, Pina et al.
35 C 2

Why You Are Taking My Picture (2018)
Mhaylova, Albena et al.
1 C 1

Ritual für Kybele (2006)
Mhaylova, Albena et al.
1 C 1

Kosmetika (2021)
Morger, Martina et al.
14

womanland (2020)
Vidone, Virginie et al.
10

Ultima cena per la Sirena trichechus manatee cucurbita (2015)
Broedbeck, Claudia
C 1

SONG (Version 2) (2011)
Chramosta, Martin et al.
C 1

Palm Reading of Tumaroh (2019, 2020, 2021)
Langscheid, Till et al.
10 C 1 C 1

42,7 - sacred (2008)
Flecher, Steila et al.
10

Die Blume (2004, 2008)
Eriksson, Lena et al.
1 C 4 C 1

Masked Identity In Color / Colored Identity In Mask (2020)
[Pirmez] et al.
3 C 1

Rags 2 - Recherche (2021)
Magou, Gabriel
26

Hommage an Paul Weibel und

Kalmfel (1998)

luckspiel (2019)

Revolving Histories

- Kasko 178 Performance Chronik Basel 16-1 ACT 106
- Archiv des Ephemeren 2,3 Must or Not 8
- Together Elsewhere 4,5 Perf En Bret 3,7
- 6x2 Performance-Duos 3,5 Partout 3,7
- Doce en Diciembre 18 Interviews: Archiv Performativ 11

References

- Feminism 78 Daily life 73 Politics 77 Ritual 77
- Sculpture 71 Sound Art 56 Video art 50
- Pop culture 91 History 4 Individual mythologies 4
- Architecture 38 Food Art 3,3 Painting 3,3 Queer 2,7
- voc_Drag 2,9 Movie 2,9 Land art 2,9 Appropriation 2,1
- Literature 2,2 voc_Butah 2,1 voc_Wissenschaft 2,1
- Fluxus 2,0 Myths 2,0 Popular culture 2,0
- Gesamtkunstwerk 1,7 voc_Physical Theatre 18 Fashion 16
- Religion 16 Postmodern dance 1,5 voc_Akrobatik 1,9
- voc_Zirkus 1,3 voc_Dada 1,2 voc_Medizin 1,2 Comics 7
- Entertainment 7 voc_Social Media 8 voc_Digitale Kultur 7
- voc_Strassenhüter 7 voc_Sport 6 voc_Punk 5
- Game culture 9 Karaoke 1 Fairy tales 2
- voc_Science Fiction 2 voc_Street art 2 voc_Arte Povera 1
- voc_Tanz 1

Genres

- Action 18,7 Scenic performance 10,2 Site specific 3,5
- Intervention 7,4 Staging 7,2 Execution of action 7,1
- Music performance 8,6 Dance performance 8,4
- Multimedia performance 7,7
- Long-duration performance 7,5 Body Art 6,7
- Lecture performance 6,6 Improvisation 6,3
- Living sculpture 5,7 Walk 5,1 Theater performance 4,2
- Happening 4,1 Service performance 4,0
- Painting performance 3,7 Nude performance 3,2
- Parallel actions 3,2 Show 3,2 Material investigation 2,6
- Tableau vivant 1,6 Song 1,1 voc_Reperमाण 5
- Social sculpture 1

Actions

- Transforming 12,6 Posting 8,6 Handling 7,7 Dancing 6,7
- Walking 6,6 Activating 5,7 Connecting 5,3 Singing
- Working 4,4 Standing 4,2 Lying 2,1 Circling 2,0

“Responsibility” is a core task in the archival context from the outset. Granting and restricting access seem as two sides of the same responsibility coin. Not all content is suitable for free, public access via the internet. While guidelines for sustainable data management in repositories speak less of responsibility and more of trust, the characteristics of trustworthiness appear especially helpful here. Lin et al. (2020) have, in turn, defined the TRUST principles to address environmental factors (soft criteria) for durability and reliability.

This acronym refers to the interplay of “transparency,” “responsibility,” “user focus,” “sustainability,” and “technology” watch.⁵³ Both the TRAC Metrics⁵⁴ of the Center for Research Libraries and the certification process of the Core Trust Seals⁵⁵ rely, too, on the concept of trust. Even the basic concepts of current network infrastructures call for trustworthiness, though they do so invertedly based on the principle of “zero trust.” Infrastructure providers today must therefore assume that hostile attacks such as hacking, data theft, etc., no longer fail at the level of access control (logins, passwords). Consequently, the data must be protected within the system in such a way that it remains secure even if attackers are already behind the firewall, located in immediate proximity.

ARCHIVING AS A LIVING PRACTICE

Returning to the VGB estate and the initial thesis that accessibility guarantees permanence, it is noticeable that recent developments at the institutional level of archival discussions clearly demonstrate the need for archiving to be not only an ongoing but also living practice. Even though the situation in the mid-2020s appears to have changed compared to the 1970s and 1980s certain conditions still resemble one another. Starting with differences one might mention a) different historical terms, b) internet-based rather than tape-based formats of video and/or digital film, while at the same time game cultures gain importance, c) technically, the production and reception of video content

53 More specifically, “transparent” means that the task and scope of the repository should be clearly indicated. This includes explanatory notes on the terms of use of a) the repository and b) the datasets. In addition, the minimum retention periods and special circumstances that affect the data, such as information on sensitive data and their handling, should be indicated. “Responsibility” is demonstrated through the identification of metadata and curation standards, the commitment to compliance with and communication of these guidelines. It also includes the provision of search interfaces, data services, and interfaces. Finally, information on technical management mechanisms such as specific quality control mechanisms is desirable. “User focused”: A user-centered perspective implies enabling the findability of data, their exploration, and (re)use. Use and access should be made as easy as possible. “Sustainability” means in this specific context uninterrupted, continuous access to the data, including associated risk mitigation mechanisms. “Technology” reminds to trustworthy repositories and should demonstrate technological capabilities/competencies and keep themselves regularly updated.

54 TRAC stands for Trustworthy Repositories Audit & Certification. Specific criteria and a checklist are additionally provided on the website (<https://www.cr1.edu/archiving-preservation/digital-archives/metrics-assessing-and-certifying/trac>).

55 <https://www.coretrustseal.org/why-certification/requirements/> (Last accessed October 3, 2022).

have become more closely linked, d) and not least various socio-historical disruptions need to be processed.

However, the similarities and differences remain surprisingly similar: On the one hand, technological developments such as the invention of mobile devices with complex onboard video technology have rapidly accelerated access to means and cycles of production and distribution. Added to this are communication services such as email, messenger apps, and various web formats (websites, blogs, social media, etc.), fundamentally simplifying global accessibility and circulation of videographic and artistic content. On the other hand, communication today appears in part even more customized: closed networks rely on “personal” suggestions rather than open, text-based inquiry.⁵⁶ Structured collecting (and cataloging) aimed at sustainability also still seems to be distributed among individual persons (as opposed to institutions) and has grown more complex. For when content is streamed in real-time to closed (social) networks, where it is then almost instantly – or after a standard retention period – deleted by the service without recourse to meaningful download options (resolution, watermarking, etc.), then the talk of a digital dark age feels more relevant than ever – we are talking about Ephemera 2.0.⁵⁷

VIDEO COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SCREENS

Taking this into account, the intersection of recurring interests within early video communities and the institutional objectives of preservation, as well as the alignment with the academic principles of accessibility and networking, reveals various potential avenues for long-term continuity. As a historical constant, the effects of visibility are still often associated with appreciation. What was once tied to the broadcast character of the video-based institution of television in early video cultures today resonates with the trust in global connectivity via the internet. Just as television once constituted an intangible societal institution – one that could be occupied, activated, questioned, ignored, and more – there remains a complex plurality of screen-based cultural expressions and practices that play with proximity and distance, participation and exclusion, identity formation and collective disintegration. Surprisingly similar, in this context, is the auratic distance, as it were, between the utopian idea of a materializing attention economy and the reality of what is technically, legally, and practically achievable.

Much like it quickly became clear in historical screen and video cultures that access to technology could not be separated from ownership

56 There is indeed a great deal of reading and viewing happening, but more extensive lines of argument presented through longer texts seem, in certain areas, to have been replaced by shorter formats (news tickers, headlines, headings). Though the sales volumes and markets of certain book sectors buck this trend.

57 A case in point is the archive of the nationwide Swiss performance festival *ACT*, which is documented by the students themselves and collected by the Mediathek. Since massive real-time documentation via social media has become commonplace – also to represent different locations and parallel occurrences (co-presence) – the scope and quality of the sources submitted have significantly declined.

structures, dependencies, and practical constraints, today's digital data and communication spaces continue to reflect the power dynamics of the technology-holding entities, infrastructures, and institutions. This is especially true for so-called "social" services, whose seemingly collective character is often subject to capitalized, neoliberal interests and increasingly influenced or dictated by political power calculations.⁵⁸ Not every virtual friendship proves robust or reliable enough in moments of crisis (such as system failure) to function like a trustworthy network and stand up for the other.⁵⁹ Scientific networks, too, are never entirely immune to manipulation and error.

Policies and the Institutional Understandings of Continuity

However, their policies, process definitions (such as peer reviews), and funding models are generally based on principles of transparency and traceability.⁶⁰ For that reason, they reject fake news and manipulative filters just as they formally prohibit net- or forum-based echo chambers, illegal data use, and irregular surveillance within forums or networks. Increasingly, the operators of these infrastructures are also aiming to limit system-based bias or make it transparent when identified.

In the first section of this essay, the connotation of "social" as it pertains to networked digital friendships was therefore contrasted with a concept of friendship that stems from an artistically driven, community-oriented approach to collaboration, often organized cooperatively (as with *VGB* and *VIA*). From an archival perspective, the impact and networking of these bonds of friendship were understood as the foundation for the collecting and accumulating activities that resulted in the digital holdings eventually transferred to the Mediathek to be made publicly available.

The advantages as well as the challenges associated with systematically involving external stakeholders in the context of digital university collections and archives have been outlined. Beyond the classical, often unidirectional understanding of outreach (from the archive into the communities), the networking strategies of the *VGB* and *VIA* that were constitutive of the collections served to identify the historical, cultural, as well as personal overlapping proximity between the video art circles in Basel and the performance art scene. In a further step, the *Revolving Histories* collection served to illustrate how valuable and sustainable a community's own curatorial care can be – particularly when that community is still able to shape the access and presentation of "its" works even after their formal transfer to the archive.

58 "Social" here explicitly refers to the use of the word in the standard term "social networks" for platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, as well as YouTube and Vimeo, where users who have created an account can usually contribute their own content free of charge. This content can be made visible either only to their circle of friends or worldwide, and with the support of the platform, the can be further disseminated by third parties. Due to the ease of use, popularity, and built-in automation, data volumes grow so rapidly that the content review must be automated. By contrast, many university infrastructures appear "exclusionary," as they restrict participation, upload permissions, etc., to university members and generally conduct case-by-case reviews.

59 Technological concepts of torrents remain exciting in this context.

60 On the role and criticism of peer review processes, see: Andreas Finke and Thomas Hensel, *Decentralized Peer Review in Open Science: A Mechanism Proposal*, arXiv, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.48550/ARXIV.2404.18148>.

The continued activation of this core group structurally recalls principles more commonly associated with the preservation⁶¹ of intangible cultural heritage – such as repetition, remembrance, iteration, updating, or continuation⁶² – the integration of the media library’s collection activities within a university context also enables an alignment of archival practices with open life and research data cycles. While, academic publishing processes, which are typically guided by the FAIR principles, the anti-discriminatory imperatives of the art context were discussed under the concept or rather alignment of CARE principles.⁶³

ACTIVATION AND ARTISTIC APPROPRIATION

In a long-term perspective, the ongoing evolution and activation of the archive suggest a vision of archival practice as something conceived to be living, determined, and open. This opens up new fields of action. The evolution of the *Revolving Histories* collection as well as the *Videonetze*⁶⁴ collection were given as examples for continuation. Living forms of archiving point in many directions. They influence both the archives and the communities. They have the ability to influence specific modes of reception, and archiving but also artistic production. This can include the methods used to describe resources and the ways in which these resources are made available, including embodied activation formats.⁶⁵

The influence and demands of the communities directly impact the evolving approaches to data curation.⁶⁶ Archives and long-term collections respond to the vulnerability of forgetting with the robustness of active discursive practices. That the empowering, community-driven strategies for appropriating archival practices have become increasingly relevant within the context of screen cultures is hardly surprising. After all, the ephemeral

61 Examples include research projects such as *Archiv performativ* (Pascale Grau, Margarit von Büren, and Irene Müller, 2010–2012), <https://archivperformativ.zhdk.ch/> and the associated blog (<https://archivperformativ.wordpress.com/>); *Performance: Conservation, Materiality, Knowledge* (Hanna B. Hölling, Jules Pelta Feldman, Emilie Magnin, 2020–2024), <https://performanceconservationmaterialityknowledge.com/events/revolving-documents/>; and the long-term study *Performatorium* (Olivia Jaques, Marlies Surtmann, 2017–), <https://performatorium.wordpress.com/>).

62 In the context of intangible cultural heritage, languages, customs, and traditions are passed on from generation to generation in physical, sensually active (e.g., craftsmanship) or oral forms as practices or narratives. Cf. UNESCO, Intangible Cultural Heritage, *What Is Intangible Cultural Heritage?* (<https://ich.unesco.org/en/what-is-intangible-heritage-00003>), and Swiss Federal Office of Culture, *Immaterielles Kulturerbe UNESCO/Lebendige Traditionen*, n.d. (<https://www.bak.admin.ch/bak/de/home/kulturerbe/immaterielles-kulturerbe-unesco-lebendige-traditionen.html>).

63 When academic and archival stakeholders seek to prevent overly low-threshold functionalities such as uncontrolled posting, liking, further processing, and manipulation of archival content, the impression may arise that they are buying – at least to some extent – their infrastructural robustness against overly dynamic, situational, or opinion-based convictions or hypes by consciously sacrificing user-friendliness.

64 In addition to the interview project by Stefanie Bräuer and Piet Esch events at the Haus der Elektronischen Künste Basel, a symposium at the Institute Experimental Design and Media Cultures of FHNW, and this present publication might be mentioned as forms of continuation for the VGB estate in the *Videonetze* collection.

65 A kind of reading of archival documents in an almost physical sense is exemplified by Rebecca Schneider’s term “fleshy kinds of documents” (cf. Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains. Art and War in Theatrical Reenactment* (London/New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 33. For the “fleshy kinds of documents,” see <https://base.uni-ak.ac.at/showroom/n6d88tSbawNaoFVzdUggmL>).

66 The Latin “curare” means to take care of, to nurse, to look after, and in the present context can be well applied to acts of friendly and responsible data stewardship.

nature of the material has been an inherent part of the medium and its cultural practices from the outset – be it the degrading film stock, the transition away from and abandonment of magnetic-tape-based electronic media (and their decay), or the shutdown of terrestrial broadcasting functions. Similarly, in performance art, the ephemeral – the (self-)dissolution – has always been (or still is) part of the understanding of the work or action.

Combining these two approaches yields to the following thesis: Networks of care and responsibility should not only exist within conservation and archival communities but should also be linked to artistic and cultural stakeholders as well as socially engaged groups. These groups, on the one hand, provide a necessary counterbalance to institutional responsibility. On the other hand, as demonstrated by the example of early video and performance art scenes, they can draw on established and resilient structures. A reciprocal opening of archives and communities – or a mutual rapprochement – therefore seem particularly promising for the future.