

PERFORMING THE ARCHIVE INITIATIVE

Final Report

Prepared for the ICJMT Call for Curriculum/Program Proposals
University of Colorado, Boulder

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*Please find the complete proposal including sample curriculum and research documents online at: <http://pta.melhogan.com/>.

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ICJMT FACULTY GROUP FINAL REPORT: PERFORMING THE ARCHIVE INITIATIVE

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our proposal is for the implementation of Performing the Archive (PTA) Initiative, which situates the archive as a locus of critical inquiry, historical research and performance practices across the arts, humanities, and sciences/technology. Utilizing the growing and diverse expertise in the archive among CU faculty, we propose establishing Undergraduate and Graduate Studies programs in creative archival practices, including: (1) a Master of Fine Arts degree in Performing the Archive, (2) a PhD in Creative Archival Practices, (3) a BA/BFA in Creative Archival Practices, and (4) a minor in Creative Archival Practices. The institutional framework for the proposed degree programs could operate in a variety of administrative structures, including a new school, program, institute, center, or certificate program. In whatever institutional form it takes, Performing the Archive Initiative at CU Boulder will serve as a locus for pedagogic research, performance inquiry, seminars, a 'home' for visiting artists, scholars, and the institutional 'bridge' from CU Boulder to regional, national and international partners.

It is envisaged that Performing the Archive Initiative at CU Boulder will be a national and international hub for exploring the methodological, epistemological and performative issues pertaining to the archive as an object of historical inquiry and cultural practices in the arts, humanities, and sciences/technology. There are a growing number of national and international endeavors concentrating on innovative ways of thinking about and working with archives. (For a listing of such initiatives, please see the research document [“EXISTING ENDEAVORS”](#)). For example, in the USA, professional associations such as the Association of Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) and Performance Studies International (PSi), and Columbia University’s “Engendering the Archive” project (2008) have attempted to wrestle with the intersections of the archive, performance and history.¹ In Europe, two research endeavors have been founded that focus on bridging performance practices and historical inquiry,² however, none of these initiatives have thought of the archive on the pedagogic scale being proposed here. There is currently no institute, center, department or other institutional entity in the world with a focus on offering Undergraduate and Graduate Studies Programs in creative

¹ See: “Engendering the Archive,” *Columbia University’s Center for the Critical Analysis of Social Difference*. <http://www.socialdifference.org/projects/archives>.

² Note: The phrase “Performing the Archive” was independently developed from the institutes in Europe. See: “Performing the Archive,” University of Surrey. <http://www2.surrey.ac.uk/dft/research/currentprojects/performigthearchive/>; “Arnolfini Performing the Archive WIKI,” Great Western Research Project hosted by University of Bristol Theatre Collection’s Live Art Archives and Arnolfini Live’s archives, partnered with Exeter University Department of Drama. <http://oldproject.arnolfini.org.uk/cgi-bin/wiki/read.cgi?section=PerformingTheArchive&page=Home>

archival practices. Therefore, CU Boulder is uniquely positioned to be a pioneering site for this field of inquiry that has great appeal to virtually every discipline with the added immense potential for attracting students, artists and scholars to the campus of CU Boulder.

II. RATIONALE FOR THE PERFORMING THE ARCHIVE INITIATIVE

A. Value and Opportunities of Establishing The Performing the Archive Initiative at CU

- The archive is an indispensable apparatus that undergirds multiple forms of scholarship. As an epistemological space, it has interdisciplinary reach; and as a field of humanistic inquiry lends itself to the methodologies and epistemologies interdisciplinary practice.
- There are no existing majors or minors in archival studies at CU. For a listing of existing archival studies programs, please see the research document [“SUMMARY OF EXISTING ARCHIVAL PROGRAMS”](#)). We are aware that CU faculty weave the use of archival materials into their curriculum in both scholarly (e.g., the university’s Center for Humanities and Arts recently submitted a proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities which includes a section entitled “Archival Studies”) and creative ways but it is difficult to identify this from the course catalog description.
- There is a growing global trend on this theme of creative uses of the archive and digital curation. (For a listing of national and international endeavors, please see the research document [“EXISTING ENDEAVORS”](#)).
- There is the potential for national and international partnerships not only with other entities that have similar interests; but also with archives, museums, libraries, historic sites, etc.
- There are a large number of archival collections at CU and in the region; many of which are untapped. (For a listing of collections, please see the research document [“LOCAL AND REGIONAL ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS”](#)).
- This is also in line with the revisioning of undergraduate education as per the [1998 Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University](#) and building on programs such as we have in the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program ([UROP](#)) and the [Honors Program](#).

III. COMPONENTS OF THE PERFORMING THE ARCHIVE INITIATIVE

The Performing the Archive initiative would draw on existing strengths at CU Boulder, as well as within the region and nationally, to develop an innovative curriculum at both the undergraduate and graduate level. As noted above, the authors of this document are unaware of any other degree program in this country that focuses on creative interactions with archives. In addition, a Center for Performing the Archive would serve as a laboratory for student and faculty projects, as well as a host for visiting scholars and artists. The Center would likewise serve as a “bridge” between the university and various partners, from local to international.

A. The PTA Initiative consists of the following:

- 1 **Curriculum** - The Performing the Archive curriculum allows students to blend practice and theory through a series of courses that position them as innovators in this burgeoning field. For sample curriculum that could be offered, please see the Performing the Archive Faculty Group website: <http://pta.melhogan.com/>.
 - a **Graduate program (MFA, PhD)**
 - i **MFA in Performing the Archive**
 - 1 Students will indicate a specific area of creative interest such as art, dance, theatre, music, film, digital curation, etc.
 - 2 The program will also have a special emphasis on technology, where all students will engage in use the latest trends in technology in their explorations with the archive.
 - ii **PhD in Creative Archival Practices**
 - b **Undergraduate program (BA/BFA; major and minor)**
 - i The undergraduate program follows the model of the graduate program; and would adhere to the university’s current policy regarding credit hours
 - ii The undergraduate program can become a feeder for the graduate program.
- 2 **Center for Performing the Archive - Performance Lab**
 - a This program, center or institute would fund faculty members (e.g. course buyouts, team-teaching, etc.), visiting practitioners, and postdocs to conduct a research-creative endeavor pertaining to the archive. During the fellowship period, the practitioner will also conduct workshops with students and present his/her work in a public forum.
- 3 **Partnerships** (local, regional, national, international) - Partnerships and collaborations can occur in all components of the PTA Initiative (e.g. curriculum,

performance lab, etc.), in symposia/conferences, and even in outreach to K-12. Some potential partnerships include:

- a Collaboration with other universities outside of Colorado
 - i [PAC 12 Schools](#)
 - ii Other entities, including University of Oklahoma archive
- b Archives, regional and national
 - i Partner with "[CU in DC](#)" to foster collaborations with the Smithsonian, National Archives, etc.
- c Museums
- d Historic and cultural heritage sites
- e Libraries
- f Other entities, centers, organizations, and scholars who are conducting similar work related to the archive (For a listing of potential collaborators, please see the research document "[POTENTIAL COLLABORATORS](#)").

B. Resources Needed

- 1 Graduate Assistantships
- 2 Fellowships for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars
- 3 New faculty lines
- 4 Staff for the Center

IV. FACULTY GROUP SAMPLE WORK

We have created a Performing the Archive website to provide (1) sample curriculum; (2) research documents listing other initiatives/institutions/programs which relate to the theme of "performing the archive" and all of which could serve as potential collaborators; (3) a bibliography of texts that could be implemented in curriculum; (4) additional ideas brainstormed by this faculty group; and (5) further information regarding relevant work of our faculty group members. Please visit: <http://pta.melhogan.com/>.