



Call for Papers: Archival Elements

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Submission Deadline: October 31, 2024

In 2008, the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) released its 70th anniversary manifesto reaffirming film’s status as the “optimal archival storage” of the moving image. “Don’t throw film away!” they urged, for unlike its digital successors, film elements tangibly embody traces of their own material history alongside a bygone cultural heritage. “No matter what technologies may emerge,” they write, existing film elements “connect us to the certainties of the past.”

For film archivists, the element is the inert container of audiovisual content subject to archival care and maintenance—the original artifact and source of any material or digital copies to come. Indeed, across scholarly and archival spheres alike, the element has remained the intrinsic foundation of the moving image, its archival preservation, and the theoretical study thereof. Whereas Caroline Frick has considered the ways that “original” media elements become bound up with notions of authenticity, cultural heritage, and nationhood, scholar-practitioners have increasingly turned to what Giovanna Fossati calls film’s “archival life,” a term that seeks to discursively address the expanding myriad of physical and digital spaces required in contemporary preservation. How, Fossati posits, might scholars and archivists alike better account for the ways that film and media are at once preserved, historized and politicized by archival processes? In other words, what might be gained from reflecting seriously on how different kinds of media traverse the archival sphere? What happens when a given audiovisual element also becomes an archival one?

This issue of *Media Fields* seeks to build on these conversations by examining how the proliferation and mediation of the archive and its elements is productive. Contemporary archival elements are often integrated into processes involving other forms of media, such as database and metadata development, digitization, interactive and public-facing archival digital interfaces, and larger multimedia collections. We ask: what kinds of political, theoretical, and practical connections arise when thinking about and *doing* the archive in these different spatial ways —traditional, alternative, or otherwise—and how might we better place these approaches in discursive conjunction with one another? Further, what are new ways in which theory (archival and otherwise) might intervene and inform archival practice, and historicizing therein? In turn, what does this mean for the (after)lives of the media themselves?

The Media Fields Editorial Collective at UC Santa Barbara's Department of Film and Media Studies welcomes submissions that critically engage the connections between space, media, and archival practice. We seek essays of 1500–2500 words, digital art projects, and interviews from scholars and practitioners alike. Potential submission topics include, but are not limited to:

- **Preservation:** Precarity and decay, fragility, physicality, ontologies of the film and media archive and its objects, broadly construed
- **Cataloging:** Metadata organization, archival etymology, reparative description and taxonomies, hierarchical data structures
- **Collection management:** Power and ethics, restitution and social justice, collections policy, community oversight, institutional and/or community-based funding structures
- **Memory:** Personal, collective, historical and/or cultural memories, archival modes of erasure, loss, and silence
- **Curation:** Accessibility, community engagement, digital interfaces
- **Provenance:** Found footage, orphan films, transnational displacement
- **Archival space:** Traditional institutions, digital databases, garages, basements

Past *Media Fields* issues and submission guidelines may be found at mediafieldsjournal.org.

Please email all inquiries and submissions to issue co-editors Kelsey Moore and Hannah Garibaldi at submissions@mediafieldsjournal.org by **October 31, 2024**.